

**Reading Packet: REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES**

Spring 2009

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# CHORAL CONDUCTOR AS VOICE TEACHER: INCORPORATING MOVEMENT INTO REHEARSALS

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- I. Introduction
  - A. Choral conductor = Voice teacher (responsibility to teach good vocal technique)
  - B. WHY? Benefits to students, choral ensemble, choral art
  - C. OK, but HOW? WHEN?
- II. Brief overview of how voice operates: Functional Unity Pyramid (FUP)
  - A. Five components of singing voice
  - B. For visual learners, lots of pictures!
- III. Effective vocalises and movements to encourage functionally unified singing
  - A. Put theory into ACTION! Learn by DOING.
  - B. Use singing and movement together to create healthy, artful singing.
  - C. Group Share: anyone have any favorites we can't leave without learning?
- IV. Transfer of learnings to singing of choral literature in rehearsal and performance
  - A. Get the choir MOVING! Go on...take some risks.
  - B. Appropriate movement based on musical style, conductor's preferences, etc.
  - C. Conducting gestures to cue vocal technique concept
  - D. Application: some useful teaching pieces
- V. Closure discussion & questions.

## WHY STUDY SINGING?

from *Reasons for Studying Singing*, The American Academy of Teachers of Singing (New York)

### Singing

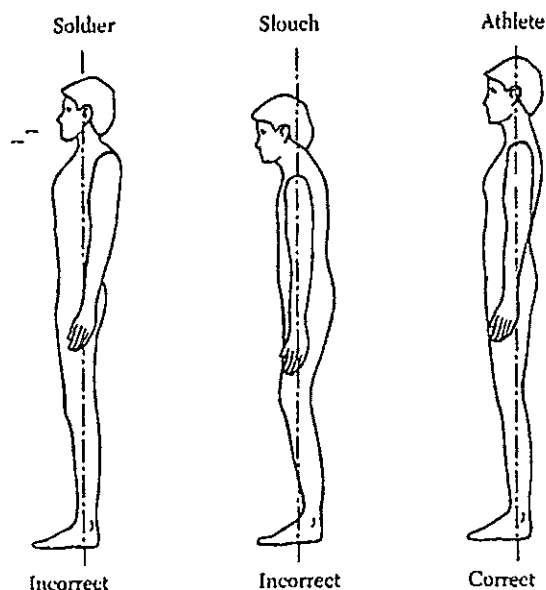
- fortifies health, widens culture, refines the intelligence, enriches the imagination, makes for happiness and endows life with an added zest.
- is healthful; it develops the lungs and purifies the blood by emptying more completely the lungs of used air and filling them deeply with fresh air.
- promotes good bodily posture and graceful carriage.
- lends expressiveness to the countenance and animation to the mind.
- increases poise and self-confidence and develops character through difficulties overcome.
- develops a more pleasant, richer speaking voice and improved speech, thereby adding to the charm of personality.
- strengthens the memory and the power of concentration.
- acquaints one with the inner meaning of words, and thus stimulates deeper insight into poetry and prose.
- enables one to understand and enjoy more fully the art of great singers.
- awakens living interest in the beauties of music and admits one to the rich and varied treasure of the literature of song.
- brings new aspirations and new buoyancy into life through the absorbing pursuit of an ideal.
- as a means of self-expression is a medium of release for pent-up emotions.
- though followed with no thought of professionalism, gives pleasure to one's self and ultimately to one's friends. Its appeal is universal.

## ESTABLISHING EFFICIENT BODY ALIGNMENT

[from Ware, Clifton "Basics of Vocal Pedagogy," p. 50]

1. Start with "rag-doll" exercise to create spinal stretch from the bottom to the top of the body. Beginning at the feet, slowly straighten up from the bottom upward: first to knees; second to the buttocks and waist; then vertebra by vertebra upwards to the top of the neck and head.
2. Back up against a wall, allowing as much body surface as possible to touch the wall. Relax all over. Place one hand behind in the small of the back and the other hand behind the head for a cushioning effect.
3. Assume the stance of an athlete ready for action, vital and balanced with feet planted firmly on the floor. One should feel weighty, yet buoyant.
4. Place feet apart 6 to 8 inches with one slightly in front of the other for total balance. For most persons, the left foot will be placed slightly forward of the right foot.
5. Keep the knees flexible and unlocked.
6. Tuck the posterior slightly to avoid a swayback and to balance the pelvic area.
7. The abdominal area remains relaxed on inhalation and the lower abdominal areas remains firm (but not tight) on exhalation.
8. The chest remains comfortably high but not pushed out and upward in the manner of a soldier at attention (see Fig. below). The rib cage is also slightly expanded outward.
9. The shoulders hang loosely and relaxed with the arms dangling at the sides.
10. The neck is held in erect position, but not rigidly.
11. The head is balanced on top of the spinal column so that it can roll easily in any direction. A good analogy of this flexible balance is a bowl turned upside-down and balanced on the tip of a pencil.

### Incorrect and Correct Body Alignment



## STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY BREATHING AND EFFICIENT COORDINATION OF SINGING TO BREATH ENERGY

### 1. Isolated breathing exercises:

#### a. Remember that breathing should be:

- (1) inaudible
- (2) unnoticeable (though active, buoyant, energized)
- (3) rhythmic
- (4) a natural expansion of the normal breathing process

#### b. To feel abdominals in action:

- (1) sit with elbows on knees, hands on chin, breathe and feel expansion, let air out slowly on "ss" as if through leak in an inner tube; concentrate on "normal" breathing, then lengthen time of inhalation and exhalation
- (2) lie on back with books on stomach and *breathe naturally*;
- (3) feel base of ribs with thumb and stretch pinkies to waist to create vertical alignment and feeling of space; also measure space in similar way between epigastrium (triangular patch below sternum) and belly button;
- (4) be aware of ribs up & out, sense expansion of abdominals -- inhale naturally "downward and outward," exhale with connection to low breath energy.

#### c. Other helpful techniques/imagery exercises

- (1) "Hook, sip/silent ah, ssss"
- (2) "Smell the rose"
- (3) "Cold glass of water in shower" (quick catch breath)
- (4) "Blow the candle out" (awareness of action in abdominals)
- (5) "Expand balloon" in abdomen

### 2. Awareness and coordination of breathing to singing (lots of air flow forward resonance)

#### a. Exercises

- (1) Sigh-glide on "ah"
- (2) Siren and owl "who" (focus on head tone ring through round vowels)
- (3) lip buzz and raspberries
- (4) encourage proper humming with lots of mouth space, relaxed jaw, buzzing lips, forward placement in "mask," and lots of air spin
- (4) moaning and whining (avoid pressing or tightening tone); panting
- (5) connect to nasal resonance with "m," "n," or "ng" before open vowels

#### b. Relate theoretical or isolated breathing/coordination exercises immediately to vocalises (def., vocal compositions using vowels sounds instead of words)

#### c. Encourage movement during vocalises to encourage full body connection (functional unity) to the act of singing. Remember Charlotte Adam's general teaching scheme (see video) and incorporate multi-modal approach:

- (1) [Conceptualization] -- introduce concept verbally or nonverbally
- (2) Visualization -- formulate mental picture
- (3) Movement -- kinesthetic motions and gestures to enhance sound
- (4) Reinforcement -- encourage individuality and praise proper vocalization

#### d. Find the natural timbre and unique aspects of each voice. Encourage efficient operation of voice; focus on quality of resonance (air flow and vowel production) and appropriate quantity of sound (not under- or over-singing). Keep voice free, easy, buoyant, energized, kinetic, flexible.

## PHONATION AND REGISTRATION

[#1 and #2 from Ware, *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy*]

### 1. Three Register Theory

- a. chest register (or heavy mechanism) -- physical sensation (vibrations) in chest; may be abused: "belting" or forcing high notes, sometimes referred to as "Annie syndrome"
- b. head register (or light mechanism) -- higher and "softer," though when developed usually becomes quite powerful, particularly in higher range
- c. mixed or middle register -- results of blending qualities of head and chest (light and heavy mechanisms) in the middle range of the voice; approx. 1/3 of entire singable range.

### 2. Auxiliary registers

- a. falsetto register -- primarily associated with male voice; caused by the thin, long, stiff, and bow-shaped true vocal folds vibrating only at marginal edges (borders); as a technical device, particularly useful for helping hyperfunctional males gain more ease in accessing upper-middle and high notes; healthy and efficient way for signers (especially young tenors) to negotiate higher tessituras and navigate the passagio (break area).
- b. flute/whistle register -- high range extension of female voice above C6; often well-focused, penetrating, and "squeaky" or whistle-like. While use of this register is often resisted by many women, it offers opportunities to explore coloratura potential and expand range and expression. Also called "flageolet," "piccolo," and "bell."
3. Stroh bass ("straw-bass" and Schnarr bass ("growl-bass")) are terms normally associated principally with eastern European choral basses who sing very low notes below the level of normal male range that sound like "popping" or "frying." If used, should be used infrequently for short periods, preferably with a teacher's supervision. Probably an extension of the "glottal fry" technique supported by ample breath flow.

### 3. Goal: to sing an *even* scale, where "registers blend, vowels match, and dynamics merge, so that the differences shade into each other with no perceptible line of demarcation -- every tone from lowest to highest matching as perfectly as possible in quality and passing smoothly from one to another, or 'homogenized'" [Anna Russell as found in Ware, p. 124]. This is best accomplished by developing good vocal technique:

- a. Cultivate and develop head register
- b. Bring head register down to blend/mix registers
- c. Use more air at passagio (register transitions, pivot notes)
- d. Use "shifting gear analogy" to help students understand nature of register changes (relate to air flow, vowel space, light/heavy mechanism, etc.)
- e. Emphasize importance of vowel formation and appropriate mouth space according to pitch being sung
- f. Concentrate on quality of sound in terms of resonance, spin, air flow, etc.
- g. Accept vibrato (even fluctuation of pitch that does not draw undue attention to itself) as a product of a freely functioning voice; wobble -- fluctuations too slow, tremolo -- fluctuations too fast. Listen for an even vibrato in solo voices, "match" vibratos in the choral ensemble through vowel unification and good singing
- h. Practice effective vocalises with accompanying gestures and motions that encourage and reinforce good vocal technique
- i. Perform quality choral music with stylistically appropriate sound and articulation

## PHONATION AND REGISTRATION (cont'd)

4. Tension (the singer's worst enemy): Symptoms, Causes, Cures
  - a. If singing does not feel like a releasing of energy to sustain voice, something is being held -- let it free through emphasis on air flow and vowel space.
  - b. Encourage physical involvement (movement) to free muscles in neck, shoulders, back, stomach, arms, legs, etc.
  - c. Use breathing exercises to release tension.
  - d. Use well-formed vowels to open and relax throat, jaw, and other articulators
  - e. When jaw tightens, neck and face muscles stiffen causing poor intonation. Release jaw tension through awareness and letting go, use of yawn-sigh, and feeling indentation at jaw joint in front of ear when jaw is opening freely.
  - f. Emphasize facial expression and mouth mobility during songs or just move the jaw during vocalises to aid development of freedom.
  - g. Tension in jaw and tongue results in throaty tone quality, often occurs when singer tries to force or push to make a big sound. To eliminate throaty production, consider the following:
    - (1) Develop good posture and breathing habits
    - (2) Relax jaw and encourage healthy head position
    - (3) Phonate and resonate well
  - h. Poor intonation (flat/ sharp) may be the result of one or more of the following factors: tension, poor vocal technique, lack of energy, careless vowel formation, unfocused concentration, or lazy listening. [Bet you can think of other reasons?!] The effective conductor is aware of these issues and offers specific suggestions to help students solve these problems. Successful solutions are usually based on a firm knowledge of how the voice works. Remember, all of these issues are "fixable!"
  - i. Forcing the voice beyond the range of its capabilities results in tension and faulty intonation. It is important not to attempt to move too quickly in the development of range and dynamics. Extending range and dynamics are largely the by-products or end-results of first establishing the basic fundamentals of a functionally unified singing voice (including good posture and alignment, efficient breath management, healthy phonation, free resonance, and crisp articulation).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING VOCAL WARM-UPS AND CHORAL VOCAL TECHNIQUES FOR CHORAL REHEARSALS

Sequential "Rehearsal Plan" includes:

1. Music to be rehearsed: composer -- title -- pages -- concepts/problems  
(musical learnings are outcome of diligent score study and preparation)
2. Physical exercises for relaxation, stimulation, group engagement
3. Strategies to encourage good posture and breathing
4. Vocalises for individual vocal development and ensemble  
(flexibility, range, stylistic concepts)
5. Creative activities to promote vitality, energy, animation, buoyancy, and musical understanding (dynamics, articulation, eurhythmics, facial expression)
6. Aural skills (tonal and rhythmic exercises)
7. Schedule rehearsal with attention to pacing, variety, interest, and active learning  
(balance Experience-Analysis-Experience (Synthesis))
8. Closure activity: students demonstrate learning best by doing; show understanding of musical concepts through musical performance.

Wis, Ramona M. "Physical Metaphor in the Choral Rehearsal: A Gesture-Based Approach to Developing Vocal Skill and Musical Understanding." *CJ* (Oct. 99).

## A Suggested Repertoire of Gestures

Gesture	Description	Application
Directional pointing intonation	Point upwards while singing a descending line.	To assist intonation; to prevent a dead tone.
Spiral gesture	Rotate index fingers around each other in front of the body or in the area above or on the sides of the head. Make continuous circles with both hands.	To keep the sound moving; to keep air line moving forward; to create energy in the sound.
Hands on face	Use hands to help shape jaw and mouth opening; e.g., back of hands, fingers pointing down on cheeks; or index fingers pushing cheeks in slightly.	To create relaxed, open vowels; to form vowels into desired shape; to create space; to change color of vowel (from dark, pulling down on cheeks, to bright, with a back-of-hands, fingers downward gesture).
Dart throw (or throw the note)	Send an imaginary dart to a focal point ahead (may use two hands in successive and repeated throws).	To achieve clarity on entrances; to be on time with an entrance to create a good unison sound as a section; to focus tone.
Pick note out of the air	Pick an imaginary note out of the air—lightly, but cleanly.	To sing a precise entrance without glottal attack or accent.
Football pass (or golf swing)	Throw an imaginary football, paying attention to: the breath preceding the tone; a complete extension of the arm; and the follow-through as pass is released.	To project the sound; to sing with supported tone; to prepare with a full body breath before singing.
Basic throwing gestures	Use a one- or two-arm throwing gesture.	To project the sound; to sing with energy; to get the body under the sound.
Frisbee toss	Throw an imaginary frisbee; watch it fly upwards and soar far before gracefully landing.	To create a line with an arch to it; to sing with energy and support; to project the sound.
Arm cross and press	With elbows bent, make an X with the wrists in front of the chest; press down, out, and up in one fluid motion that extends the length of the phrase. Must feel resistance with this gesture, as though moving through water.	To sing with support throughout the phrase; to keep energy in the sound throughout the phrase.
Recline position	Lie on back and feel the action of the abdominal muscles upon exhalation/inhalation	To engage breathing muscles fully; to help singers become aware of location of breathing apparatus.
Karate chops	Create a rapid chopping motion with two hands, placed vertically in front of the body; may choose to start gesture on a higher plane and move it downward during the phrase	To sing in an articulated or staccato, separated style.
Stretching gesture	Use a fluid, conducting-type stretching gesture away from the body.	To emphasize the correct word or syllable in a non-accented manner.
Violin playing	Play an imaginary violin with a long, down-bow	To stress a particular word or syllable with a weighted, non-accented feel.
Rubber band stretch	Stretch an imaginary rubber band in a vertical position.	To create a long vowel; to create space.
Growth gesture	Start by creating a small space with the hands, gradually making it a larger space; keep hands below chest height to ensure proper breathing	To create a "large" sound; to create a full, supported tone; to create space in the tone.
Foot stomp	Stomp foot on the particular beat desired.	To emphasize an entrance; to create an accent; to account for a rest.

Gesture	Description	Application
Clapping/tapping	Clap or tap lightly to the smaller subdivisions within the phrase.	To keep intensity or energy going by feeling subdivisions within a phrase that has a slow tempo or long note values.
Candle blow	Blow out an imaginary candle.	To pronounce aspirated consonants strongly.
Standing on cue	Stand when your section sings its opening phrase or when your section sings the motive in this fugal passage, etc.	To call attention to section entrances by the singers' own section and others.
Brush stroke (or palm raising/lowering)	Paint a long, fluid brush stroke horizontally or vertically in front of the body.	To create a legato line.
Body with the phrase	Move the whole body (e.g. turn slowly in a circle) with the phrase.	To create a consistent <i>crescendo</i> or <i>decrescendo</i> ; to sing a long, legato line.
Directional pointing (tone placement)	Point forward from the forehead; point along the side of the face, arching up and forward.	To give focus or point to the sound.
Focus in the mask	Place hands, palms down, near the ears, fingers resting on the area just below the cheekbone; focus on a spot in front of the room. Imagine singing from above the fingers.	To sing from the mask; to focus sound forward.
Flat hands to point	Start with hands, palms down, chest high and a body width apart. Gradually point forward as you sustain the tone.	To move from a spread to a focused tone; to move from a darker to a brighter tone.
Ladder climbing	Climb an imaginary ladder, using hands on rungs as you climb.	To move cleanly and firmly from note to note or chord to chord.
Toe lift	Raise up on your toes as you sing.	To assist in intonation, especially ascending leaps.
Hold/lift pitch	Use one or two hands and hold or slightly lift the pitch in the palm of the hand.	To support the final pitch in a phrase; to lighten up a pitch; to reinforce sustaining a pitch.
Pulling up/picking up	Pull up the pitch as though picking up a small object.	To assist intonation; to lift pitch.
Clap and release	Experiment with different ways of making a clap: a flat clap; a sliding clap (hitting lightly and moving away from the base hand); clapping close to the body vs. farther away from the body.	To become aware of the quality of the release of sound; to apply these qualities (resonant vs. clipped) to vocal releases.
Finger releases	Tap index finger of one hand into the palm of the other at the moment of release; quickly touch thumb and index finger of one hand together at the moment of release.	To create a precise release, especially of consonants.
Small circles	Draw small circles with the index finger in front of mouth; make two circles using the thumb/index fingers of both hands and extend these circles from the face forward (or start with hands extended and bring circles toward you).	To create a round, hollow "oo" vowel.
Shaking arms	Shake arms, releasing tension.	To release tension, especially that which causes sharpening problems.
Vibrato/no vibrato	Vibrate hand or create a smooth brush stroke.	To create vibrato in tone; to smooth out or eliminate the vibrato in tone.



## Choral Ensemble Vocalises

① *Sustain pitch → listen for warbles (3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>)*  
*hum → oo → oo → oh → oh*

② *One One One One ... → One Day Night High Low*

*Continue ↑ + ↓ by 1/2 step at various dynamics + articulations*

③ *Use solfège, numbers, vowels, syllables (doo, dah, etc.)*

*Repeat ↑ 1/2 step*

## Somagwaza

*He who carries a spear  
no longer needs his mother.*

*, Traditional South African Song*

Ah weh, ah weh somagwaza — Ah weh, ah

somagwaza man yo — weh yo — weh

Ah man yo — weh, Ah man yo —

weh somagwaza — Ah weh, ah weh somagwaza —

somagwaza man yo — weh yo — weh somagwaza man

weh somagwaza — Ah man yo — weh ah man yo — weh somagwaza

# I'm Goin' Home on a Cloud (Excerpt)

American Folk Song  
Arr. Sean Diebl

(MELODY)

1. One these fine morn - ings at break of day, I'm go - in' home on a

2. Ev' - ry morn - ing, ev' - ry day, Close my eyes and I be -

3. Spread my wings and fly a - way, Fly up to hea - ven on a

4. Al - le - lu - ia, Sing to the Lord a song of love and

4

1. cloud. King Death goin' find me here at my play,

2. gin to pray, Thank the Lord for all His ways,

3. big white cloud. I'm goin' fly high up - on a

4. joy! Al - le - lu - ia, Sing His name.

7

1. I'm go - in' home on a cloud. CODA

2. Close my eyes and pray.

3. white cloud.

4. Sing of love and joy!

# Non nobis, Domine

"Not unto us, O Lord, but to thy Name  
be glory given"

Words from Psalm 115:1  
Music by William Byrd (1543-1623)

I. Non no bis, Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da

II. Non no bis, Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed

III. Non no bis, Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed no - mi - ni tu -

6

I. glo - ri - am, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am. Non no bis,

II. no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri -

III. o da glo - ri - am, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am Non

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I. Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am,

II. am. Non no bis, Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed no - mi - ni tu -

III. no bis, Do - mi - ne, non no - bis, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri -

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I. sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am. Non no bis, non

II. o da glo - ri - am, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am Non

III. am, sed no - mi - ni tu - o da glo - ri - am Non no bis, non

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## Symposium Presentation for CU, Boulder, 10/26/04

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### “Rehearsals That Re-\_\_\_\_\_ . . .” (Fill in the Blank)

re- a prefix meaning: 1. back [repay, restore] 2. again, anew, over again [repay, retell].

Refresh, Reinvigorate, Renew, Reinterpret, Reinvent, Recreate, Review, Retrospect, Refine, Reflect, Refurbish, React, Respond, Reappear, Reappraise, Reassure, Rebel, Reborn, Rebuild, Recall, Remember, Reconcile, Reconsider, Reconstruct, Recover, Relate, Release, Relax, Relevant, Relish, Relevant, Renaissance, Renascent. . .

#### I. Spicing up the day-to-day

- A. Since the majority of our time working with our singers is spent in rehearsal, what can we do to keep things interesting, fresh, alive, and educational?
- B. Choosing great literature is a priority.
- C. What are the most effective and efficient ways to teach so that students can learn and successful performances become a way to share that learning with audiences who are mentally engaged and emotionally moved?
- D. A strong philosophy must lead your actions, and well-planned rehearsals must utilize teaching techniques that empower the students to become independent, confident, skilled, and sensitive musicians.

#### II. Philosophically speaking, what floats your boat?

- A. What is philosophy and why is it important?
  1. Provides underlying sets of beliefs about nature and value of subject.
  2. “Collective conscience” for field.
  3. Like a map, it gives a comprehensive overview of territory; provides direction and guidance; shows best way to get there.
- B. Bennett Reimer: Music Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE)
  1. Music is “material organized to be expressive” (Suzanne Langer) of **feelings**, where an aesthetic experience is a peak emotional experience (goosebumps) that occurs when one is completely “into” the music.
  2. Teachers/conductors work to facilitate students’ capacity to experience and create intrinsically expressive qualities of sound; to develop **aesthetic sensitivity** - the ability to respond feelingfully to the expressiveness of music.
  3. Teach toward aesthetic experiences by (a) increase students’ ability to perceive the music (become aware of its inherent tendencies and inhibitions) and (b) provide students with opportunities to react to the musical material.
- C. David Elliott: Music in Action (Praxialism)
  1. Music is a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon that **people do** or make.
  2. Musical works are multi-dimensional “thought generators” to be enjoyed on many levels (performance, design, standards and traditions of practice, cultural-ideological information, *possibly* as expressive of emotion, *possibly* as representational or programmatic).
  3. Music must be **performed** to be understood; listening is an aspect of musicianship that is sharpened through music making; music is situated and context dependent; understanding extra-musical qualities is essential.
- D. Methodologies as Means to an End
  1. Music methodologies aren’t just for the Middle Schoolers or Elementary kids!
  2. Eclectic and appropriate use of ideas developed by Kodály, Dalcroze, Orff, et. al. offers multi-modal learning for any age.
  3. Such exploration requires flexibility, open-mindedness, discipline, and yes. . . discovering the child within each of us.
  4. Energy and enjoyment are prerequisites for excellent performance.

### III. Singing: A Full-Bodied Endeavor

- A. Teach good vocal technique.
  1. Functional Unity Pyramid.
  2. Functional Unity "Fred."
- B. Use movement in rehearsal
  1. Briefly review the "approach" of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950).
  2. See handout. Practical application.
- C. Each Friday at Chico State, we have an "M & M Day," where movement brings it all together. In general, MOVEMENT...
  1. Balances:
    - posture and alignment
    - tension and release
    - aerodynamic and myoelastic
  2. Energizes:
    - singing and thinking
    - breath flow and gets the blood circulating
    - articulation (vowel and consonant)
  4. Connects:
    - phonation to breath stream
    - body to singing
    - singing to musical material
    - music-making to soul/spirit
  5. Expresses/Reflects:
    - mental involvement
    - conquering of musical concepts and vocal techniques
    - expressive nuance
    - awkward or inefficient action
    - musical "tension and release"
    - musical elements: phrase shape, line, direction, pulse, rhythm, harmonic events, articulation (legato, staccato, marcato, slightly detached, etc.)
  6. Encourages:
    - cultivation of kinesthetic intelligence (see Howard Gardner M.I.T.)
    - creative exploration of sound and sensation
    - kinesthetic connection to the abstract and ineffable
    - singing and thinking outside of average comfort zone: stretching
    - musical activity and risk-taking action (why it's important to create "safe" environment for this kind of rehearsing)
    - enjoyment and just plain fun

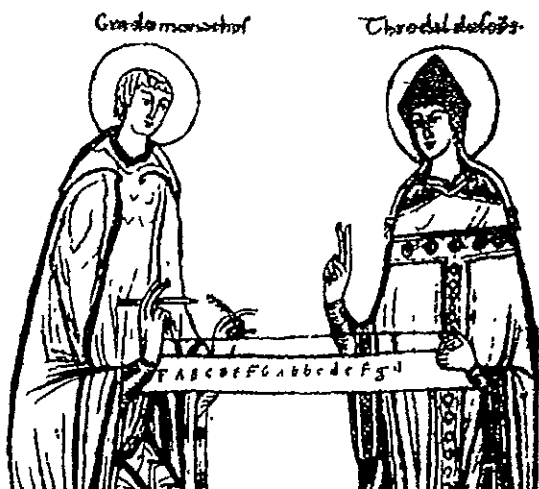
### IV. Solfege: A Most Helpful Tool

- A. After moving for vocalises, a natural transition can be made to hand signs and solfege.
  1. Use CU, Boulder techniques (Charlotte Adams, "Daily Workout for a Beautiful Voice") or vowel gestures (Jeff Johnson, "Ready, Set, Sing" video).
  2. Seque into Curwen gestures; see handout for historical references.
  3. Why solfege and hand signs?
    - interaction of mind, voice, ear, eyes, body
    - time-proven tool is logical and well-developed (use movable "do")
    - gives sound solid handles and something to hold on to: CONTEXT
    - interval relationship in scale improves tuning; especially useful for modes
    - helps students learn how to read; encourages musical independence
    - provides solid technical foundation on which to build expressiveness
  4. How to introduce?
    - echo patterns; drone w/ scale, two part counterpoint, etc.
    - "Bicycle canon": s m s m s l s s s l t d r d m r d t l s f s f m r d t d

- B. Kodály methodology proposes logical and sequential approach to reading musical notation, a central goal of the method; however, it is important to note that Dalcroze also encourages use of *solfeggio*.
- C. Application to literature;
  - 1. Joshua Shank: "David's Lamentation"
  - 2. Nathaniel Harnack: "In paradisum"
  - 3. Bradley Nelson: "For Whom the Bell Tolls"

**V. Back to the Future! Historical Performance Practice and "Outside of the Box" Ideas**

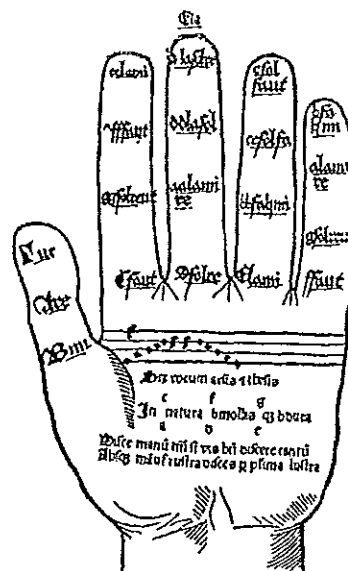
- A. Sistine Chapel analogy.
- B. Specific ways to explore:
  - 1. Renaissance performance practice
  - 2. Dialectal Sound and Style characteristics
- C. Brainstorm of Playfully Creative Rehearsal Techniques inspired by my work with students, former teachers/professors, and visiting guest artists to Chico State, including:
  - Mark Ross Clark, Indiana University,  
*Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera:  
A Guide to Singer-geitics* (Indiana University Press, 2002)
  - Anonymous 4
  - Paul Hillier and Theater of Voices
  - Kenneth Jennings and Chanticleer
  - Christoph Wolff
  - John Butt



Guido of Arezzo and Bishop Theobald of Arezzo with the monochord. From a twelfth-century German manuscript.

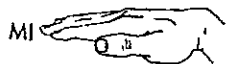
## HAND SIGNS

The "Guidonian hand," a mnemonic device used as an aid to sight singing.



### Hand Signal Chart

#### ORIGINAL CURWEN SIGNALS



#### REVISED SIGNALS



Thumb held down for So, raised for Si

Revised Signal for Fa is used, Thumb down is for Fa, the opposite (thumb up) is for Fi

The English clergyman, John Curwen, devised hand signals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Tonic Sol-fa (a system, used particularly in English music at that time, to assist sight-reading and ear training).

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Tonic sol-fa is a system of syllables – do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do – in which do is considered to be the keynote or tonal center in all major keys, and la is considered to be the keynote or tonal center in all minor keys.

Tonic sol-fa is without equal as a way to train the musical ear, since it focuses the attention initially not on a specific pitch, but on pitch relationships and pitch functions.



Northern California Renaissance Conference 2000  
Chico, California  
May 6, 2000

**BACK TO THE FUTURE!**  
**MODERN OPTIONS FOR RENAISSANCE CHORAL PERFORMANCE**

*Presented by*  
**Jeffrey S. Gemmell, D.M.A.**  
Director of Choral Activities  
California State University, Chico  
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*with assistance from the*  
California State University, Chico  
**Chamber Singers**

+ + + + +

**Repertoire**

O quam gloriosum	Chant Parallel Organum
<i>O how glorious is the kingdom in which all the saints rejoice with Christ! Clad in white robes they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.</i>	
Motet: O quam gloriosum	Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)
The Silver Swan	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
April is in my mistress' face My bonnie lass she smileth	Thomas Morley (1558-1603)
My bonnie lass she smelleth from <i>The Triumphs of Thusnelda</i> (S.1601) Edited with feeling by Professor Peter Schickele	P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742)?

+ + + + +

**Chamber Singers Personnel**

Karen Bell, Andrea Belanger\*, Elizabeth Carrell, John Cavellini, David Clyne,  
Joe Farey\*, Karl Iverson\*, Nicholas King, Marji Lagomarsino, Anastasia Legatos,  
Elizabeth Mabry, Ryan McCann, Brenda Olds, Kenya Ray, Ben Rosales,  
Paul Stringham, Marquesa Versola\*, Candace Zylman

\* Soloists for "April is in my mistress' face"

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## Back to the Future: Modern Options for Renaissance Performance Practice

As we introduced our children to the movie *Back to the Future* a few weeks ago, I was intrigued by the movie's premise and inspired to apply it to the history of choral music. Of course, you remember that charming movie: Michael J. Fox uses a 1980s DeLorean time machine, engineered by Christopher Lloyd, to travel back in time to the year 1955. While there, he has quite an adventure and learns two lessons that have become law in time travel theory, at least in television and the movies: (1) the reality of the past is much different than the version of the past one observes and participates in first-hand; and (2) any interference with the past changes the future. The former theme, the reality of the past versus our current impression of it, will be the foundation of my talk today.

Just think, if we were able to travel back in time and listen to the choral music of the Renaissance Period, I bet the reality of that experience would be much different than the version of Renaissance choral performance we hear today. Our current efforts have been clouded by hundreds of years of performing varied music of contrasting genres and styles. In addition, wildly conflicting theories and practices as to how and why choral music was performed in the Renaissance make it difficult to understand choral music's unique role in society at that time. Obviously, the main question is: How can we recapture an authentic sound and style in the modern performance of Renaissance choral music without the benefit of a DeLorean time machine?

Perhaps a visual analogy will clarify this situation and provide some answers. Certainly everyone in this room is aware of the recent restoration of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. A December 1989 National Geographic article presents a stunning array of dramatic photographs that document this event and describes the project thusly:

The restorer's credo is like the physicians: First, do no harm. The treatment was to lift layers of Rome's dust, sooty grease from burning candle tallow, and other substances -- even the residue of Greek wine used as a cleaning solvent some 275 years ago. All had obscured Michelangelo's work. Worst of all were varnishes made of animal glues. Applied in various centuries to brighten the darkening surface, they did so for a time. Then each deteriorated and turned the ceiling darker than before. Despite its dingy appearance, most of the fresco remained in good condition. (p. 697)

As the accumulated grime [and faulty "restorations"] of nearly five centuries were removed, the once gloomy masterwork was renewed to a glory of color and light. A "light to amaze the eye and blind the soul." (p. 688).

In choral music, I believe we can do a similar kind of restoration to our performances; we can clean, renovate, and reawaken pieces that have become staid, boring, dark and gloomy. Let's begin where it all began, by listening to an example of the earliest type of Western choral music, Gregorian chant or plainsong. This genre was the foundation for Renaissance choral composition, and, with its emphasis on curvilinear phrasing and dynamic shape, provides a model for singing Renaissance choral works. You will hear two versions of the chant: one in unison, the other in an early form of harmony called *organum*, where the chant is harmonized by different voice parts singing the chant at parallel intervals.

[SING "O QUAM" CHANTS]

Now, with that sound in mind, let's explore some options concerning the most important visual element in choral music, the score.

Score Option 1 is a 1922 edition, still very much in use today, of a motet by Spanish composer Tomas Luis de Victoria, "O quam gloriosum," which we will perform for you in a moment. Notice the abundant use of editorially added markings and expressive directions to dictate dynamics, articulation, tempo, breathing, phrasing, etc. This heavy marking of the score is an outgrowth of 19th-century Romanticism, making this version appear like it was written by Wagner, Puccini or Tchaikovsky.

The inappropriateness of Score Option 1 becomes startling clear when contrasted with Score Option 2. Here, we travel back in time to see a facsimile of the original 1572 edition of Victoria's "O magnum mysterium." In this case, after adjusting to the different "look" of the notes, you'll notice the absence of the editorial apparatus found in Option 1, especially the lack of bar lines and expressive markings! Notice, as well, the "part-book" format of this edition, where singers have in front of them only their own part. This is quite different from Option 1, where all four parts are available to each singer.

This "original" edition implies important factors to incorporate into our performance, namely: individual responsibility for one's own part and listening to others, simplicity of expression, feeling of continuity and line, and a natural impulse to let the music speak for itself. The over-editing found in most modern editions could, in my opinion, simply cloud the issue and get in the way. Like removing the dirt and grime from the Sistine Chapel ceiling to reveal the nuance of Michelangelo's masterpiece, I believe we need to remove, as much as possible, the unnecessary editorial scaffolding from our printed editions to reveal the clarity and strength of the composer's musical notation.

Score Option 3 is an attempt to find a healthy balance between the possibilities of the past and present. I have edited this score from a collected works edition available on the web. (Please notice the comments about the Choral Public Domain website below the example!) Along with this score, I distribute to students the list of general rules found in your handout. As we rehearse, we strive to internalize the expressive elements so they occur naturally and become an integral part of our singing technique; expressive elements then become synonymous with the music itself, rather than something added artificially or mechanically; overuse of editorial markings then becomes unnecessary. These expressive concepts are also general enough to apply to other pieces in this style and provide a framework for interpreting Renaissance pieces in the future. This process serves the music most authentically, as you'll hear in our performance of Victoria's motet, "O quam gloriosum."

#### [SING MOTET, "O QUAM GLORIOSUM"]

Two primary performance options that are hotly debated in circles of Renaissance choral performance include the size of the ensemble and whether or not to use a conductor. Since madrigal literature was originally intended for recreational use, where a few friends would gather to entertain themselves, a case can be made to perform madrigals with one-singer-to-a-part and without a conductor. In this way, madrigals become more intimate and personal, performers interact with individuality and heightened expressivity, musical textures become cleaner and, most importantly, text declamation becomes clearer.

#### [SMALL GROUP SINGS "APRIL IS IN MY MISTRESS' FACE"]

Now to the final and most controversial option: choral timbre. During the preparation for this presentation, the CSU Chamber Singers and I have discovered another sound-oriented approach that improves text clarity, enlivens choral performance, and even makes rehearsals more enjoyable. Inspired mostly by the English vocal ensemble Red Byrd, whose efforts at authenticity include a robust and rough-and-tumble approach to the music of William Byrd and Orlando Gibbons, we have been experimenting with dialect, diction and articulation as a means of creatively coloring tones. Our efforts at this point are purely empirical and fun in nature, though the positive impact of this exploration on the sound and style of the music cannot be ignored. A demonstration will help illustrate this point. First a conventional rendition:

[MABRY READS "SILVER SWAN" TEXT]

[SING FIRST HALF OF "SILVER SWAN"]

Now the same piece, with dialectal modifications:

[ZYLMAN READS "SILVER SWAN" TEXT IN DIALECT]

[CHOIR SINGS "SILVER SWAN" IN DIALECT TO END]

I think you'll agree the contrast is rather dramatic. Of course, this sound may not be for everyone. When a friend of mine in Baltimore first heard Red Byrd, he said, "YUK! Is that what's popular in musicological circles these days! That's awful!" I would argue, however, that, historically, this type of sound is probably closer to what a group of amateurs in the Renaissance period sounded like! Remember, our ears are accustomed to the *bel canto*-inspired sounds first cultivated in the mid-17th century as a simple and songlike quality. Ultimately *bel canto* sing developed in the 18th and 19th centuries to include frequent displays of virtuosity and an overall emphasis on beauty of sound and brilliance of performance. Contemporary vocal technique still centers primarily on this style of singing.

Our only realistic mode for time travel in this case includes writings of the period and our own musical imaginations. It is our responsibility, however, as modern performers to seek to discover the sound and style that most effectively conveys the music as it was heard in the Renaissance. Like the visual rejuvenation and freshness of the Michelangelo's newly renovated frescoes, I believe this dialectal approach to singing and style brings the music to life with personality, energy, brightness, directness, and a humanistic simplicity.

Our presentation concludes with a performance of two madrigals that present a balanced approach to these performance practice issues, Morley's "My Bonnie Lass She Smileth" and PDQ Bach's "My Bonnie Lass She Smelleth." The latter composition, especially, reminds us that humor and enjoyment are integral aspects of the human experience. These pieces also glow with stylistic attributes that reinforce the central theme of this paper: certainly, our contemporary enjoyment and understanding of Renaissance music requires a genuine effort to uncover and re-discover the lightness, brightness, and creative spontaneity of the period's master composers. This musical expedition can occur only if we are willing to re-think and re-interpret our current way of doing things. Guided by careful research and healthy experimentation with vocal production and style issues, we can construct performances of Renaissance choral music that more effectively allow the composers' voices to be heard most authentically. In this way, our performances become an opportunity for audiences to travel back in time, much like in a Delorean time machine, and experience a little of the golden reality of the period.

[READ AND SING "MY BONNIE LASS SHE SMILETH"]

[READ AND SING "MY BONNIE LASS SHE SMELLETH"]




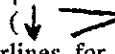




**Figure 3. Score Option #3.**  
Gemmell's Performance Edition. Victoria's "O quam gloriosum."  
Collected Works edition from Choral Public Domain Library (<http://www.cpdll.org>).  
(Note: With a list of over 800 available scores that can be quickly and easily downloaded and printed, this web site is a great resource for those interested in obtaining FREE and legal choral octavos.)

**Tomas Lms de Victoria  
(1548-1611)**

[illegible]

#### Figure 4. Top 10 Rules for Expressive Singing of Renaissance Repertoire.

1. Let the music SING!
2. Illuminate head motives [beginning of structurally important phrases labeled with - 3. Be sensitive to syllabic stress; text-centered approach [stress underlined syllables].
- 4. Strive for subtle simplicity, naturalness, and artistry through interplay of parts.
- 5. Sing "linear lines" with constant attention to phrasing; ignore barlines.
- 6. Internalize rhythmic motion and life (pulse) with dance-like lightness, lilt, and grace.
- 7. Emphasize subtle dynamic expression (macro- and micro-levels) with use of rather consistent interpretive techniques, including:
  - (a) messa di voce (  ) on medium and longer note values;
  - (b) crescendo on ascending lines (  );
  - (c) decrescendo on descending lines (  );
  - (d) crescendo on tied notes over barlines for suspensions (  );
  - (e) cresc. to peak of phrase, taper phrase endings (  ).
- 8. Allow your individual expression and musicianship to fall into the fabric of the group; work together for ensemble.
- 9. Be continually aware of tuning melodic (horizontal) and harmonic (vertical) elements.
- 10. Above all, sing with RENAISSANCE expression NOT ROMANTIC exaggeration.

#### Figure 5. Notes on Red Byrd's Dialectal Sound and Style Characteristics.

(As heard on the recording *William Byrd: Consort and Keyboard Music, Songs and Anthems*)

Sound characteristics that encourage clarity of text declamation and clarification of musical texture:

1. Brighter, lighter, more direct (sometimes piercing) sound; vocal sound = viol sound
2. Less unified ensemble sound, but supremely coordinated musically; individuality (color) of voices adds personality and interest to performance
3. Reedy sound at times, but with fine control and technique (open, resonating spaces, connection to low breath energy, valid breath management)
4. Quick, crisp consonant articulation energizes rhythm
5. Little dynamic contrast, great intensity, less legato articulation
6. Spread vowels: [u], [o], [E]
7. Super bright: [I], [i], [a]
8. Emphasize [r]
9. Equal value given to both vowels of diphthongs
10. Exaggerate #8 and #9 on final chords, as well as final consonant if necessary (e.g., "Lord")

#### Bibliography

Jeffery, David. "A Renaissance for Michelangelo," *National Geographic* (Dec. 1989): 688-713.

Walsh, Meg Nottingham. "Out of the Darkness: Michelangelo's 'Last Judgment,'" *National Geographic* (May 1994): 102-123.

#### Recommended Recordings

Byrd, William. *Consort and Keyboard Music, Songs and Anthems*, performed by the Rose Consort of Viols with Red Byrd. Recorded at Forde Abbey, Dorset in November, 1992. Naxos 8.550604.

*The Christmas Album: Festive Music from Europe and America*, performed by the Taverner Consort, Choir and Players, Andrew Parrott, conductor. Recorded in 1992. EMI Classics CDC 7 54529 2.







VATICAN MUSEUMS (ABOVE AND BELOW)



Jeffrey S. Gemmell  
August 12, 1996

## Comprehensive Exam Question: Dr. Barbara Doscher

### The Development of Choral Vocalises to Acquire Proper Choral Sound and Style for the Performance of Palestrina and Brahms

#### Introduction: Schools of Sound vs. Music-centered Sound

The concept of sound production for choirs has been a controversial issue in this century. Different "schools" of choir-sound developed with characteristic and contrasting qualities. These sound ideas were established and reinforced by the choral conductors who led these groups and it is by these personalities and institutions that we identify their concept of sound. Two contrasting examples will illustrate this:

- 1) the "St. Olaf sound" (F. Melius Christiansen) is characterized by pure and refined singing, an emphasis on creating a straight tone, and an overall attempt to achieve a perfect and impeccable blend;
- 2) the "Westminster (Choir College) sound" (John Finley Williamson)<sup>1</sup> is characterized by a more robust and full-bodied sound, perfection of blend is secondary to the strength and emotional power of the sound.

Although there was a subjective reason on each conductor's part to encourage his "ideal" sound, practical performance considerations were also an issue: St. Olaf performed primarily a-cappella literature with an emphasis on Baroque or Renaissance literature and Westminster Choir College performed (and commercially recorded) large choral orchestral masterworks, usually interpreted in a "Romantic" way by such conductors as Toscani, Walter, Bernstein, etc., with the

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that under the current conductor, Joseph Flummerfelt, Westminster's sound has evolved into one which is more varied and flexible than under Williamson. A hearing of their most recent CD of the Brahms Requiem will attest to this fact. However, the full-bodied, large-scale sound is still a characteristic because of the vast number of trained musicians in the ensemble and the requirements of performance still expected (e.g., choral orchestral works requiring large choral sounds).

New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Obviously, the performance demands, both in terms of literature performed and the conditions under which they performed, influenced the type of sound that came to be associated with them.

Through the work of alumni or by the example of recording and/or live concert, these "schools" of sound then made their way into the psyche of American choral conductors who sought to duplicate these efforts.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, the development of a particular sound became a primary goal of the choral performance. While the type of literature performed may have varied, the nonstop production a consistent sound based on a standard quality was most important. A conductor who favored the "St. Olaf" or "Westminster" sound employed it because they thought it was the "best" and most desirable tone. Their work was marked by an effort to achieve this quality of sound at all costs; an emphasis on tone production seemed to dominate other areas of performance practice. Rather than attempt to vary timbre, articulation, phrasing, etc. according to the style of the music, these style qualities were subservient the attainment of an ideal interpretation based on one sound/style concept. The outcome was an "artificial aesthetic" where every piece sounded alike. Hence, a piece of music from the Renaissance period sounded the same as a piece from the Romantic period, but the conductor, audience, and choir were pleased and satisfied because the main goal of duplicating a "school" sound had been accomplished.

Fortunately, this state of choral performance and sound production is changing. Choral conductors are now more aware of other issues relating to choral performance. This been brought on by (1) more widespread interest in musicological research regarding the "authentic" performance of earlier music, (2) the availability of recordings utilizing period instruments and appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> The following discussion on adherence to certain sound "schools" and how they were applied by the general public is somewhat oversimplified and stereotyped, but it will suffice to show general trends in the development of the choral instrument.

performing forces (e.g, Harnoncourt, Gardiner, Hillier, Goodman, etc.), and (3) the education of conductors who are better educated in the importance of appropriate performance techniques through a working relationships with the allied fields of musicology, voice, ethnomusicology, and theory/analysis. The latter is demonstrated by the increased number of D.M.A. programs available in the U.S. compared to thirty years ago! Many choral conductors have emerged from the "school-sound cave" and are striving for performances that do more than just emulate another conductor's interpretation of how a choir should sound and how a piece of music should be performed.

I like to think of myself as one of these cave-dwellers who has seen the light. As a former student of Westminster, I fit the mold described above. Study at CU Boulder has been gratifying, enriching, and beneficial because I have learned that there is more to choral performance than just how the choir sounds. This learning can be divided into two main areas:

(1) Through my work in the choral area with Drs. Whitten, Kaptein, and Conlon and in the musicology area with Drs. Luhring and Kroeger, I have been encouraged to discover the purely musical and textual content of a vast diversity of choral literature. These experiences have also helped me to realize other important aspects of performance that are music-related and how to convey these ideas to a choir through the effective use of gesture and economical speech.

(2) But every bit as important and practical has been my work the belated Dr. Doscher. Through the "hands-on" experience of private study in her studio for one-and-a-half years, Dr. Doscher taught me the enjoyment of a using a functionally free and physiologically unified singing technique. This has enabled me to sing more healthily, with greater ease, and with more color and timbral contrast. Therefore, through the eye-opening experiences in both choral-musicological and vocal-pedagogical fields, I feel more comfortable and excited by a

philosophy of choral music performance that is more multi-faceted in approach. This paper will deal exclusively with area (2). In particular, I would like to present some ideas and vocalises for the rehearsal of two contrasting selections, Palestrina's Pope Marcellus Mass and Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem. Rather than take the "schools"-approach as described earlier, I would like to apply what I have learned from Dr. Doscher and suggest some alternatives and possibilities that empower a conductor in his interpretation of a wide variety of choral genres and styles. It is through vocalises, performed at the beginning and, if necessary, in the middle of a rehearsal that a conductor can develop and encourage a sound that is MUSIC-CENTERED rather than artificially imposed via conductor's preference for an unrelated sound and style aesthetic. This approach is more true to the nature and value of the choral art.

#### General "Warm-Ups"

Each rehearsal should begin with an 8-10 minute "warm-up." A general sequence of body preparation and vocalises will normally precede the more specific vocalises which address particular style differences. The establishment of a basic well-produced sound and appropriate use of the voice is the first step. Modifications for style nuance are easily and effectively achieved by a choir who has a basic knowledge of how the voice works. It is especially important at this time in the rehearsal that a conductor fulfill his responsibility as voice teacher. For many singers in the choir, this may be their only chance to learn healthy vocal technique and other important aspects of singing (e.g., vocal health). The conductor must have a firm and secure knowledge of the physiological/acoustical aspects of singing and of relevant vocal health concerns and must impart this knowledge in a user-friendly manner (not too much talking!), to the group under his direction. Too many choral conductors neglect this all-important responsibility of the profession. While this paper will not address issues of vocal health, it is hoped that vocalises

herein presented will demonstrate the type of knowledge that should be conveyed to singers. The primary goals of the following general vocalises are:

- (1) a relaxed physical presence,
- (2) a posture and body stance that is well-aligned and balanced,
- (3) a coordinated and controlled use of the breath (equally proportioned and appropriate use of breath flow and pressure),
- (4) the coordination of breathing mechanism with resonance and phonation areas,
- (4) a development of resonance through work on focused vowels,
- (5) an extension of range through instructions pertaining to vowel modification and use of the "unused" register (Vennard)
- (6) the building a repertoire of kinetic activities (moving arms, tapping face, etc.) that may be used to outwardly convey physio-aural concepts and aid their internalization; in addition, such gestures may be used later in the rehearsal as a visual cue to remind singers of technical concepts or even, in a modified form, as part of a repertoire of conducting gestures.

These broad general goals are the basics for the development of a well-produced sound and are approached initially in the general warm-up exercises. They are refined and tailored to address more specific vocalises, and are reinforced throughout the entire rehearsal. The broad nature of these aspects of vocal technique make them appropriate and important regardless of the music to be performed. Whether singing Palestrina or Brahms, South African or Indonesian, Atonal or Tonal, the basics of a healthy, well-produced sound is the foundation of the music.

Given a group of 40 singers (Doscher's suggestion), who will be identified as typical college-age students, the first order of business will be to relax them, creating

an atmosphere of comfort conducive to music-making. Many will have entered the rehearsal after some stressful event (e.g., exams, quarrel with significant other, etc.), so a time of simple stretching ("reaching for the sky," trunk twists, shoulder rolls, etc), followed by back-shoulder rubs, will help to de-stress them. Such activities also make them aware of themselves physically and build camaraderie; for this reason, talking and such should be permitted. Singing in a choir is an inherently social activity and there is nothing wrong with encouraging this at appropriate times.

With the next procedure, a time of focused attention should begin, concentrated on the developing good vocal technique. The real foundation of healthy singing is an aligned and balanced posture. Very often, a rapid improvement in an individual's sound will occur with simply the suggestion to "raise your sternum." The difference in sound quality and ease of production convinces the singer immediately of the benefit of standing this way: a self-reinforcing technical change! It should be noted that postural inadequacies and other misuses of the body (e.g., jutting chin, crammed chin, high shoulders, tense neck, over-extended mouth positions, etc.) are the easiest of general vocal technique issues to address because they are so obvious. It may take time to correct such problems, but in group-singing these areas are easy to observe and, consequently, usually easy to address and "fix."

For aligning and balancing posture, begin with a suggestion that singers feel comfortable in how their feet are positioned (usually one foot in front of another), feel a buoyancy and bounce in their knees to prevent them from locking, and feel a "readiness" to sing that is similar to how one might feel when surfing or skateboarding.<sup>3</sup> After the lower body is ready, an imagery-type posture activity that

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<sup>3</sup> In private lessons, the "K" or balance board helps singers to achieve this sensation of balance without tightness. Having such a device available during rehearsals would, after a lot of initial commotion, be beneficial. Anything that can reinforce a physical concept with direct physical involvement ("hands-on") usually works better than simply repeated admonishments from the conductor.

works well is "...Going Fishing." In this scenario, the conductor pretends to cast out a fishing line that hooks on to the singers' sternums. The line is pulled up slightly, which causes the students to raise their chests to a comfortable level, though higher than they are probably used to, and then the line is "tied" to the wall...where it will stay. Of course, throughout this little game suggestions such as "relax your shoulders," "sway gently from side to side," "shoulder rolls," etc. prevent a stiff or frozen stance. Other suggestions that work well include: (1) "Keep thumb-to-pinky (outstretched hand) distance between lower ribs and hips," (2) Keep thumb-to-pinky between solar-plexus and belly-button," (3) "Feel like a puppet or marionette suspended on a string," (4) "Feel like your backbone is growing, extending, etc." Anything to expand the upper torso and engage the intercostals to keep the rib cage up and out (so that the lungs can expand fully and the abdominals can react normally) is helpful. Vertical alignment should also be encouraged. It is crucial, however, that singers not tighten or freeze. They must remain relaxed and free.

A purely breathing exercise may follow (e.g., "hook-sip," where singers experiment with their vital capacity by taking in three sips of air, as if through a straw [focuses the air intake and encourages low breathing], and letting it out on a "tsss"; then one sip, out on a "tsss"; then a silent breath, still focused, and out on an "tsss"), but I have come to realize that it is better to begin with vocalises that treat breathing and singing as a functional unit, rather than separate activities.

Progression of events for the next "general" vocalises are:

(1) Begin with middle-voice range (co-ed) exercises that get things going; proceed downward first, then ascend to upper-middle range. The object of these exercises is to focus the middle voice, especially important in female voices, so emphasis on pure vowels and forward placement is important. The following vocalises also encourage air-flow to spin out naturally, propelled by unvoiced ([th], [p], [t]) consonants that also serve to free and forward the tongue. Mixture of open



and closed vowels helps focus and keeps the mouth from opening too wide. The object here is to activate and focus the voice on lots of air flow, which is more important than amount of sound. Also good for establishing a balanced posture.

#### Examples #1-4<sup>4</sup>

① Circular hand movement + arm extension

tho the tha

② "Martini Shaker" hand movements

su ma-ma su ma-ma su  
puti puti + or combination puti puti puti

③ Not too much mouth space (Candy Kiss, Oreo Coolie)

la me da me ni po tu la be

④ Rising rt. hand, rt. hand down, left hand up together

yi na tho

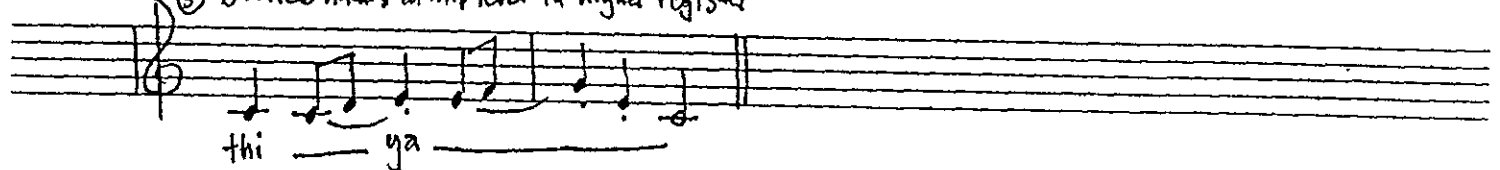
(2) With choir now "warm," another co-ed vocalise will extend the range somewhat, though not to the degree of the divided vocalises presented below, and encourage flexibility and agility. These vocalises again depend upon considerable air

<sup>4</sup> These are not original vocalises, but come Dr. Doscher's studio and Charlotte Adams "Vocal Workout Exercise" video.

flow, and the gentle staccato articulations help to coordinate the breathing mechanism and the phonation/resonance functions. Bright and pure vowels (esp. Italian [a]) should be utilized.


### Examples #5-7

⑤ Bounce hands at hip level in higher register



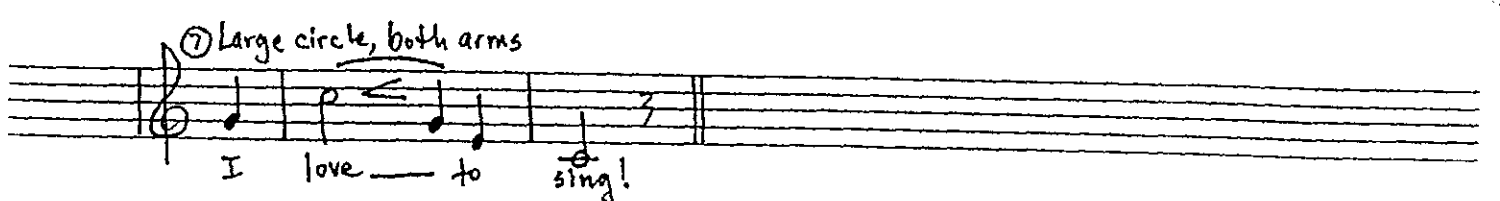
thi — ya —

⑥ Right arm circles in, Left arm, both arms



thi e thi o thi ya —  
(or a) (or a)

⑦ Large circle, both arms



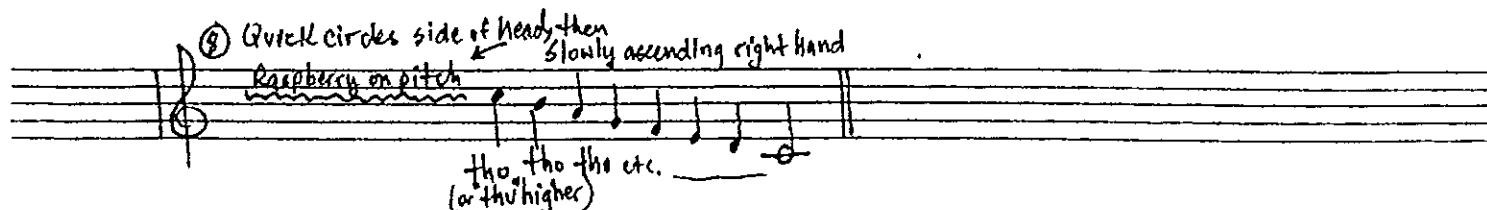
I love — to sing!

(3) With the co-ed vocalises now complete, which ideally have encouraged an ensemble sound as much as healthy individual vocal benefits, it is a good idea to rehearse voice parts separately according to gender (S/A and T/B) in order to

account for their physiological differences in vocal apparatus. Here is where the significance of vowel formants and its singing manifestation, vowel modification, comes into play. "Vowel modification is an acoustical and physiological necessity for healthy, resonant singing; the more the voice operates on sympathetic vibrations, the better will be its production."<sup>5</sup> Since men and women modify vowels differently in their respective ranges, presentation of vocalises in voice-part sections leads to better results. In general, high range singing needs to be developed in both males and females, but needs to be handled carefully. The most significant difference is: women *open vowels* as they sing higher and must concentrate on extremely focused vowels in the middle register; men must *close vowels* as they make their way through the *passagio* and open the vowels as they enter their highest and lowest ranges. The importance of tuning the vowels is crucial because vowels have pitch. Vocalizes, as presented here, need to accommodate these differences in modification so that the sung vowel closely matches its natural formant (peak in frequency).

a. **Male vocalises:** Begin with light mixer for focus (#8); proceed to more buoyant exercise that engage more air flow and pressure (#9) but use "yo-a" if air pressure is too heavy; to continue a well-energized mix, use vocalise (#10) to and bounce the arpeggio, if necessary to keep it from getting too heavy; end with vocalize (#11) that encourages consistent, resonating sound from top to bottom of range with a unified concept of linear vowel placement.

#### Example #8



<sup>5</sup> DeArmond's "Voice-Building in Choral Rehearsal: Correct Usage of Selected Vocalises toward a functional, versatile, and healthy vocal production." CU Boulder D.M.A. Document [1992 D421].

## Examples #9-11

⑨ Conducting Pattern - show different articulations

yo-a yo-a yo-tha  
i-a i-a i-tho

⑩ tap palm paint pictures

he he he he tha-tho-tha-tho-tha

⑪ Raspberries on pitch

tho tha tho tha tho tha tho tha  
the tho the tho the tho the tho

Important practices to keep in mind when vocalizing the men is to keep the air flowing moving, which is why the raspberries are so important (they also correctly balance air flow with air pressure), and to strive for a round and ringing sound employing abundant head resonance. The latter can be accomplished by slightly rounding and protruding the lips to lengthen the resonating chamber. Another common problem with the men is that they tend to sing, perhaps, too loud and open vowels too much leading up to and through the passagio. Reminders about not singing too heavy and remembering to close the vowels from c. D4-F#4 will help them negotiate these register smoothly. In addition, men should be asked to vocalize in their falsettos on [u] in order to practice the "unused voice." Such falsetto practice will help develop a feeling of head resonance and the freedom to use their entire range.

b. **Female vocalises:** Since they have already practiced middle voice focusing vocalises (#1-4), it is not necessary to do these again, unless there is more focus is required in this range. Next to developing the upper register, which the following vocalises emphasize, a focused middle voice is extremely important in the female physiology. Too often, women sing too loud and heavy in this register, and need to be reminded to lighten, focus, and brighten in this area.

**Examples #12-14**

Exercise 12: *the tha tho tha the*

Exercise 13: *tha the tha the tha the tha*

Exercise 14: *ja tha*

The above exercises for women (#12-14) encourage breath flow, agility, flexibility, and freedom. The sensation should feel as though one is singing with simply space and air. Women may be asked to breathe as though their ribs are expanding horizontally and the air should be released with an incredible feeling of flow. Notice how closed vowels [e, o] in the lower ranges aid focus by keeping the

mouth opened the right distance, while vowels open (e.g., [a]) as they go into the top and allow the mouth space to open freely and easily (relaxed jaw, no jutting chins). Lightly stroking cheekbones to create a real "cheeky" smile, a feeling of buoyancy, and an 11-year-old lightness to their whole being may help alleviate any unwanted tension or feelings to hold back. Women, both sopranos and altos, should be vocalized quite high in order to extend their ranges, even into the whistle register. While they may not actually perform these pitches in concert, the exploration of their very top register will improve the quality throughout their entire range.

### More Specific Vocalises: Getting to the Music

It goes without saying that all of the above exercises cannot be accomplished in an 8-10 minute period. Numerous vocalises have been provided to show the variety and type that are available. In practice, certain ones may need to be modified to better relate it to a particular composition under study. In addition, after separate male-female vocalization, all four parts may be combined for sustained chordal exercise that concentrate primarily on the matching and unifying of vowels, attention to balance, etc. However, at this point it is time to discuss Palestrina and Brahms.

In preparing the choir to sing these two selections<sup>6</sup>, one must first observe the compositional features of each and employ vocalises that will create the kind of sound and style necessary for appropriate performance. As mentioned previously, the general warm-ups/vocalises described above will serve as the underlying vocal quality of both pieces. However, the differences in style influence how these are vocalises are used and if others are necessary. The object is to attempt to produce the kind of sound the composer intended.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Doscher asked me to devise two sets of vocalises for pieces of contrasting styles. I am combining the two as though the same choir is preparing both pieces simultaneously in the same rehearsal. I believe the ability of a choir to traverse various styles in a single rehearsal/concert is an important goal.

Palestrina Pope Marcellus Mass is an a-cappella<sup>7</sup> setting of the Mass composed during the Renaissance Period; it represents the culmination of the polyphonic genre. The distinguishing characteristics include a transparent multi-voiced texture (SATTBB) where individual vocal lines must keep their independence (melodically and rhythmically), while concurrently sustaining an overall timbre and a calm and relaxed melodic flow. The main compositional conception is linear in nature, not chordal, even in the isorhythmic sections. It is in Latin and Palestrina worked at the Sistine Chapel in Rome, so an Italianized pronunciation (bright, forward) should be used.

To prepare a 40-voice choir to sing this composition, a number much larger than Palestrina had in mind, requires much sensitivity on the part of conductor and choir alike. A "light mix" type of vocal production must be used. This type of technique, governed by vowel selection and breath management, uses a higher percentage of what Vennard calls "light mechanism." In the Palestrina, this is especially crucial for the men of the choir. Since their part is divided, TTBB compared to only two female parts (SA), the danger is that the lower voices will destroy the transparent texture by being too "weighty." To prepare for such a performance, vocalises must encourage the "light mix," especially in the men's sections. Such exercises have already been presented! The women's vocalises above encourage the type of production necessary for this composition; they need to be reminded to sing "on a cushion of air" with an agility and gentle rhythmic touch that articulates the many freely-flowing rhythms. Probably the strongest request is that they not sing with a large quantity of sound, but instead concentrate of a well-focused and gentle rhythmic declamation. The men, in similar fashion, must work to keep their sound focused and ringing. Emphasis is on a focused and ringing

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<sup>7</sup> A-cappella does not imply without any accompaniment, for it is possible for organ to accompany Renaissance motets. However, since the Sistine Chapel did not have an organ, unaccompanied voices would be desired here.

quality rather than abundance of sound. In this way, vocal colors can be as subtle, varied, and bright - much like the newly cleaned and restored frescoes of Michelangelo that adorn the stunning ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Most likely, it will be the men who must work the hardest to remain within the style of this piece. **Vocalise #8** will be especially helpful to achieve the kind of tone quality necessary, perhaps closing to [thoo] to create even more ringing resonance. In addition to utilizing the vocalizes already presented, singing on neutral vowels (e.g., [thu] for men, [tha] for ladies) will help increase sensitivity to sound and melodic line without having to worry about unifying the numerous vowels of many words; or, isolating phrases for practice at the beginning of the rehearsal during the initial "warm-up" could also be a helpful technique (see below).

#### Vocalise #15

⑮ Start here, or higher, + proceed up by 1/2 steps

♀ the the the tha — the the the — thi thi - tha  
 ♂ thu thu thu tho — thu thu thu — thu tho - tha  
 Latin ky - ri - ee lé - i - son

Using vocalises that help develop the "light mix" will enable the choir to sing lighter, with an emphasis on the horizontal motion of the phrase. Such production will make it easier for them to listen to each other sing the other vocal lines. This is counterpoint (note-against-note) and everyone needs to be aware of this and listen for it. Rhythmically, such a tone production will allow the subtle rhythmic nature of the line and interplay with other lines to be heard in a non-legato style of singing. Singing this music in too legato a fashion completely destroys the independence of the separate vocal parts. A performance utilizing "light mix" production, awareness of rhythm declaimed in subtle non-legato singing, careful attention to



ensemble sound, and variety of Renaissance-style color changes makes for an enjoyable experience: the choir will enjoy the interplay of the interweaving melodies and sensitivity in listening will create the kind of blend that pleases most conductors.

The Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem is piece whose style calls for quite a different performance from our 40-voice choir. In this case, a large Romantic Period piece, where the choir is on equal footing with a large orchestra, will make contrasting demands on our singers; however, as has been stated before, the basic vocalises already presented will serve as a basis for creating the kind of sound, style, and vocal production necessary for this piece. Since a relatively small choir will be used, some vocalises will need to be added in order to encourage more full-intensity coordination. The nature of singing with a large orchestra also involves voices projecting their way through a thick accompanying texture -- the "singer's formant" will aid in this respect, especially considering the high tessitura of the tenor part. Aside from the reality of the performing forces involved, the lyricism and beauty of Ein deutsches Requiem, with its wide range of emotional and musical extremes, from the lieder-like lyricism of the first movement to triumphant fugues or fugal passages throughout, from the doom and gloom of the funeral march in the second section to the extremely expressive vocal lines in "Wie lieblich," all of these musical extremes will certainly put our choir to the test!

To develop the kind of full intensity singing necessary for this work, vocalises will have to be used that effectively join the registers and increase, in a healthy way, the amount of breath pressure, breath flow, and quantity of voice (vocalis) used. This is not to diminish the importance of continued work on color and "light mix" which will also be used in this work, albeit more "hooked up" with breath energy and intensity of sound. More sound should not mean inflexibility. Functional freedom and unity of all aspects of the voice must be a priority, especially

as the amount of sound increases. Vocalises #16 & #17 below show the type of singing that will effectively join the registers and help singer use their full voices in a healthy and energized way.

⑩

♀ thae — tha — tha tha tha tha tha —  
 ♂ thæ — tha — the the the the the — tho — tha

⑪

♀ ya — tha —  
 ♂ ya — tho — tho —  
 (or "thv") (or "thv")

Notice the arch of the vocalize and how the higher pitches are sustained on vowels that reinforce the formant frequencies, which would, of course be modified as necessary as the pitch ascends. Using other vocalises (e.g., #7, #8, #11, #14, with appropriate modification of vowels for gender) taken to higher pitches, and the addition of a raspberry on pitch before the singing of the vocalise is another way to put the singers in touch with the amount of energy, healthy antagonistic muscular work, and balance of breath flow and breath pressure that is necessary. Producing larger sounds is one concern for our choir singing the Brahms, but the more

pressing and musical demand is the constant changes of color. Singers must be encouraged to "search their souls" and be as expressive as possible; the expression of these feelings will only be conveyed to the audience through a vocal production that allows the singers to express themselves freely and without undue effort. In short, getting the most out of their voices as tools of expression with the least amount of effort. The kind of vocal production described in this paper is the first step in accomplishing this goal.

The information presented in this paper is not newly invented or even original: there are dissertation projects that have covered this area extensively [see Hobbins, 1993 H622; Lynn 11987 L851; Guthmiller 1982 G881; DeArmond 1992 D421; Taylor 1979 T383]. However, it is relatively new to me and I am excited by the potential it holds. Already, I have seen vast improvement in the performance of those who utilize these techniques. The best part about applying this information to choral performance is that such vocal development benefits not only the entire choral ensemble, but each student individually in their quest to sing better and healthier. From a choral conductor's standpoint, these techniques foster an approach to choral sound where music is at the center. This is empowering and intrinsically rewarding for choral singers, for they are able to sing a large variety of music in a way that is stylistically correct, appropriate, and expressive, ultimately able to reach greater heights as musical artists.

The "Daily Workout" exercises are designed to help singers develop a free warm tone, to sing with ease, and to increase range. They are clustered into five dynamic groupings. The sequence of these groupings is significant. The concepts focused upon in each group progressively build upon one another. Light, gentle exercises that are easy to execute come first. As the exercises progress, the difficulty increases.

Each group consists of two to three exercises that work on technique and end with a relaxation exercise. The five groups combine to comprehensively cover the most important principles of good vocal production.

After you become familiar with all sixteen basic exercises, you can customize your daily workout to fit your specific needs. You can select one or two exercises from each group to create your own vocal workout. It is important to stay with the sequence of groups, beginning with Group #1 and ending with Group #5.

Remember, the last exercise in each group is designed to relax the voice before continuing onto the next group. Whatever exercises you select in each group, always finish with a relaxation exercise.

Once you have created an effective 10-minute exercise routine that best fits your needs, try to repeat the same routine every day. This prompts concentration on technique and sound.

Focus on three key training techniques to support the exercises:

1. **Visualization** - Formulate a mental picture to accompany each exercise.
2. **Movement** - Motions and gestures enhance the sound.
3. **Reinforcement** - Encourage individuality and praise proper vocalization.

These three elements combine to reveal the natural timbre and unique aspects of the voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

When conducting the exercises, alter the beat pattern to correspond to the number of beats in each measure. The final rest of each exercise is for the singer's breath; the piano plays the preparatory chord for the repetition of the exercise on this rest.

It is important that you know the ranges of your singers. The ranges given are merely suggestions. Listen carefully to hear if the singers are straining and stop the exercise at this point. We should not force our singers to sing too low or too high. Most vocalizing should be done in the comfortable mid-range, gradually expanding outward.

For women, I start the exercises on a pitch that places the entire exercise above the chest range. Usually the key of C sharp works. When women are supporting all tones and have a free, ringing sound, they can vocalize upward to a' or b flat' on an open "AH" vowel.

For men, BB flat or BB is a good starting point. If your tenors cannot sing that low, have them join with the basses at a comfortable pitch; or, the tenors can sing in unison with the altos, either in head voice or unchanged voice, dropping down an octave around A or B flat.

Working in the head voice and through the break area is critical. Exercise #11 is wonderful for this. To develop head tone, start around a (in octave above middle c) in head voice and go up as far as is comfortable. Eventually, men will be able to sing with a free, relaxed throat almost as high as the women. To smooth out the break areas around middle c, start on the same pitch and descend through the break area. Remind your singers to use more air in this area and to try to mix smoothly as they pass from one register to another. My singers like the "OO" vowel best for head voice exercises.

As they move into the chest tones below middle c, "THOH" is a good choice. When asked what helps them make the shift properly, my students said:

*Think about a smooth switch; think about more breath for mixing; carry high voice down as low as possible to avoid cracking; use your ears; imagine a smooth water slide into the pool (head voice into chest voice.)*

In general, young men should start to mix head tones with chest tones starting around the area of b below middle c to d above middle c.

Remember to breathe with your singers. Insist that your singers sing every exercise in tune. Particular attention must be paid to the initial pitch and to the third of the scale. You should represent the desired sound of each exercise in as many ways as possible—with conducting gestures, head movements, facial expressions, and arm gestures. I encourage you to stand in front of your choir and physically model the correct posture and motions for them as often as possible. Whether you use conducting gestures or movements suggesting the sound, the motions must be upward, free, flowing, buoyant, and legato.

You must be consistent in doing these exercises every day. The progress will be steady and continuous. Do not be afraid to have fun with the exercises and the movements. Let the students create motions and images as you fashion these exercises to your own needs. Remember, the goal is to encourage your singers to use their most beautiful tone from the first note to the last. Good luck!

Charlotte Adams has taught music at Cherry Creek High School since 1974. She holds a B.A. degree from Colorado College and a M.M. degree in choral conducting from Indiana University.

Charlotte says, "Trained first as a pianist, I have worked to improve my own voice while exploring ways to get vocal concepts across to my students. I have frequently brought voice teachers into my classroom, have attended numerous voice workshops, and have sought the advice of voice professors. I believe that if you first develop the individual voices in your choir, you will have a strong base on which to build a beautiful choral sound."

Under her direction, Girls' 21 has performed at state and national conventions sponsored by CMEA, MENC, and ACDA. In 1984 at the CMEA Convention in Colorado, Charlotte was presented with the "Colorado Director of the Year" award presented by the Colorado Chapter of ACDA. Charlotte was the first high school director to receive this award.

In 1989 Charlotte was invited by Weston Noble to present vocal techniques at the Northern California ACDA Summer Conference. She is a frequent adjudicator of solo and ensemble festivals, and director of All-City and Honor Choirs in her home state. Most recently, she has conducted the 1991 California All-State Choir.

# Vocal Workout Exercises

## I. 1. Resonance, air flow

(Circular hand movement by ear, arm extension up)

thoh ay ah

thoh ay ah

\* Recommended starting pitch  
\*\* Highest pitch of exercise

## I. 2a. Resonance, engagement of diaphragm, relaxation of facial muscles

(Index finger draws circles in middle of forehead or above head)

thoh ay ah

thoh ay ah

## Resonance, relaxation of facial muscles

(x finger draws circles in middle of forehead or above head)

bee bee bee bee bee

bee bee bee bee bee

## I. 3. RELAXATION, resonance

(Brush cheeks with thumbs in upward motion  
Bounce hands at hip level in high register)

nee yah ah ah ah

nee yah ah ah ah

## II. 4. Resonance, sustained breath support, unified vowels

(Lifted circle by ears, upward movement on descending notes)

ee oh ee oh ee oh

ee oh ee oh ee oh

## II. 5. Breath stream, resonance, relaxation

(Big circle with one arm; two arm circle on "thoh")

yee wah thoh

yah wah thoh

yee wah thoh

yoh wah thoh

(use in upper register)

(use in upper register)

## II. 6. RELAXATION

(Beach ball tossed from hand to hand with wrist snap on top and bottom of 5 note pattern)

SA  
blah blah blah blah blah — blah blah blah blah blah

TB  
blah blah blah blah blah — blah blah blah blah blah

## III. 7. Lifted soft palate, breath support (Thumb on roof of mouth; cup hand by ear)

SA  
thih thah

TB  
thih thah

## III. 8. Unification of vowel sounds, resonance, extended phrasing (Candy kiss, oreo cookie)

SA  
lah beh dah meh nee poh too lah beh

TB  
lah beh dah meh nee poh too lah beh

## III. 9. RELAXATION (Puff out cheeks)

SA  
dou-ble bub-ble dou-ble bub-ble gum

TB  
dou-ble bub-ble dou-ble bub-ble gum

## IV. 10. Range expansion, lifted soft palate (Swing both arms in, then out, then in a two arm circle.)

SA  
ay ah ah

TB  
ay ah ah

## IV. 11. Range expansion (Pull mouse whiskers)

SA  
vah vah vah vah vah

TB  
foo foo foo foo foo (use light head voice)



IV. 12. Legato, deep breathing, uniformity throughout registers  
(Hand on neck to encourage low larynx)

SA  
TB

oo\_ah ah

IV. 13. RELAXATION, buoyancy, activation of articulators  
(Bounce bubbles with hands)

SA  
TB

bum bid-dl-y bid-dl-y bum

V. 14. Range expansion, facial expression  
(Two arm circles, up on toes)

SA  
TB

I love to sing.

V. 15. Range, agility, diaphragmatic support  
(March with swinging arms)

SA  
TB

fah see yah

\*see yah  
\* may be substituted for "fah"

TB

fah see yah

V. 16. RELAXATION, range, agility, breath articulation  
(Clown smile on inside, temple to temple; two arm circles, up on toes)

SA  
TB

fah ah

## Ten Top Conductor Essentials... Remember, "Rome wasn't built in a day."

Lawrence Kaptein, Director of Choral Activities  
University of Colorado at Boulder

1. Create a joyful rehearsal (and concert) environment. [Latin: "gadium" and French: "joie" - to rejoice, be glad] Webster: (joy) - "the emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good; a condition or feeling of high pleasure, delight or satisfaction; gladness." Each rehearsal should ideally be conceived as an entity, each with a beginning, middle, and end. The singers should sense a progression of events that follow one another in a systematic, yet gratifying manner. Spend the rehearsal making music and making the music more accurate and beautiful each time you sing it. The selection of music to be rehearsed is critical to keeping rehearsals positive and productive - if everything's too easy or too difficult, motivation diminishes and you lose the joy. Keep your sense of humor. Keep your perspective. Remember, "Rome wasn't built in a day." William Vennard reminds us that "learning to sing is a slow and patient undertaking, in which a good ear is a prerequisite, the imagery is an aid supplied by the teacher, and the experience is gradually accumulated until it is so powerful that merely calling up the memory will reproduce it."

Productive rehearsals (and concerts) are: joyful, pleasurable, satisfying, fun, enjoyable, challenging, expressive, energetic, imaginative, artistic, musical, gratifying, lively, friendly, varied, caring, organized, accurate, precise, captivating, focused, active, productive, meaningful, learning experiences, music and singer centered.

Unproductive rehearsals (and concerts) are: monotonous, severe, harsh, tedious, trying, rigid, boring, endlessly repetitive, authoritative, stringent, narrow, solely conductor/conductor agenda centered.

2. Teach and accept only good vocal technique. Air flow (I think a better descriptor than "support") as an essential to good singing. The idea of an energized, continuous column of air flowing from low in the body out the mouth or out the top of the head is extremely useful with singers. Insist on good posture (it quickly becomes automatic) and is essential to energize the sound and air column. Kinesthetics (movement-related activities) can reinforce and add critical vitality to the singing. Find ways to get the choir moving in rehearsal to reinforce vocal (and musical) concepts/goals. Talk about, constantly model/reinforce tongue, jaw, palate placement. Use the warm-up (voice building is a better term) time to focus these important elements for each singer. Make use of downward vocalizations. Start everyone in high voice enabling singers to "mix" the desirable head voice quality with lower vocal register. Keep a forward "ring" or "ping" in the sound, while at the same time keeping the soft palate lifted and the throat open and relaxed. Oftentimes, singers (and even directors) expect an overly dark quality in the sound; some people think this makes the tone "mature" sounding. This often results from placement in the throat rather than more in the front of the face or middle of the mouth. I like to focus on both the hard and soft palates for that reason. Modify vowels / words in the extremes of ranges to enhance the sound; this critically-important technique is called "vowel modification." It is also fun (and effective) to depart from some of the "Western" vocal principles when singing non-Western repertoire, varying the basic production concepts.

3. Use your imagination and creativity. Be creative. Take chances. Experiment with rehearsal and programming ideas. Try the juxtaposition of diverse repertoire; try linking shorter pieces to create larger musical units within programs; create progressions and expectations in programs, so that the entire concert evolves from beginning to end. Utilize a variety of techniques in rehearsals. Use movement, metaphor, visual aids, recordings, demonstrations, vary standing arrangements to create different effects (in both rehearsal and performance); explore new ways to communicate and don't be afraid to fail... you'll succeed most of the time. Look to textual punctuation to create appealing and meaningful phrases and smaller phrase units in the music.

4. Sing with mental and physical vitality. Both mind and body need to be energized, alert, and active in rehearsal and performance. Posture, breath, resonance, diction; as well as attitude, listening, and communication are all essential elements in quality music making. Sit, stand, move. Vary the physical experience in rehearsal. Make use of knowledge of learning styles to maximize your impact in rehearsal.

5. Sing expressively. Our goal should be expressive, meaningful communication. Communicate the text and the expressively of the music to your audience and to your inner self. Strive to understand the musical structure and as best you can; the composer's intent. Develop an understanding of the text, its structure, and the nuances of the words. Allow the music and text to be internalized and "become a part of you."

6. Teach listening, independence, and accuracy. Most people (especially younger musicians) learn most quickly through imitation. Vocal demonstration and modeling are therefore effective tools in rehearsal. Developing (and relying upon) each singer's ability to hear/evaluate and respond is essential to any successful ensemble. Presenting music (or components of a piece aurally) and then immediately reinforcing it with the written music works well. Experiment with various seating arrangements/choir configurations to enhance listening skills. Accept only accurate intonation.

7. Select quality literature. Fortunately, there is almost a limitless amount of excellent choral music from which to choose. Expose the singers to a variety of languages, musical styles, historical periods, accompaniments, and challenge in general. Explore ways to demonstrate the "sound differences" between contrasting pieces (i.e.: vocal colors, articulation, variety of vocal productions). Seek out the best editions of all music; avoid too many "arrangements."

8. Be an artistic conductor. The conductor's gesture should mirror and reinforce the musical instruction given in rehearsal and the artistic singing that should result. If ensemble members have to continually ignore (can even be unconscious on their parts!) the gestures of the conductor in order to perform musically, the musical experience for everyone can be frustrating. While patterns are essential for us all, one must find ways to create a meaningful (ever flexible) gestural representation of the music within traditional conducting patterns. Remember, "beating" is not conducting and usually yields monotonous, often "wooden" music.

9. Be true to the style and medium. Choral music, more than any other type of music, has an immense repertoire that is seemingly limitless. It is theoretically possible for any human being to produce the sounds of any another human being, we have the opportunity to authentically (or as close as our particular situation allows) perform vocal music from any historical period and/or any continent, language or style on earth. It is the responsibility of the choral conductor to provide each ensemble with a variety of repertoire so singers can experience the tremendous wealth of choral music available to us. Singers should also render each piece with integrity and authenticity. This is just as true of the music of Mozart and Stravinsky as it is of the spirituals of Black America and the folk songs of the South Pacific. Do your homework. Research style, appropriate ensemble size, color/timbre, etc. before presenting the music to the choir. Talk about the culture and social context in which a particular piece exists to broaden the experience for your singers.

10. Teach musicianship. Find ways to incorporate music literacy, critical listening, technical vocabulary and beautiful singing into every rehearsal. While sectional rehearsals are often essential, avoid learning solely by rote; never just "pound-out" notes. Talk about structure, form, harmony, modes, rhythmic and melodic elements; also historical background/context, style/articulation ideas. Build vocabulary and deepen the experience and joy.

hipping shoulders - rhythmic wiggle; integrity  
"Body" of group - placement of singers; hand dryer effect  
let your gesture inform your face -

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"Middle vault"  
Closed vowels through passaggio,  
but open back up in very high.

**TITLE: Music in Motion! Movement as a Means to  
Vocal Freedom and Expressive Performance**

**PRESENTER:** Jeffrey Gemmell, D.M.A.  
Director of Choral Activities,  
California State University, Chico

**DESCRIPTION:**

After a brief discussion entitled, "Philosophically Speaking, What Floats Your Boat?," participants in this workshop will launch into a practical, participatory exploration of activities designed to promote effective choral rehearsals. Useful techniques to encourage healthy vocalizing and productive rehearsing will focus on the use of creative kinesthetic strategies to enhance musical learning.

**PRESENTATION OUTLINE:**

**I. Philosophically Speaking, What Floats Your Boat?**

- + What is philosophy? Why is it important?
- + Reimer: A.E. = P X R
- + Elliott: Music in Action
- + Methodology as means to an end
- + Eclectic use of Kodaly, Dalcroze, Orff encourages multi-modal learning

**II. Music in Motion!**

**A. Gesture:**

oo-ee-oo-ee-oo	painting (circles, infinity sign, paint the barn, etc.)
Thi-eh, thi-o, thi-a	right, left, both
Tha-The-Tha-The-Tha	martini (milkshake) shaker
John is (as) the son of my mom	juggling, frisbee, pizza; bounce ball for arpeggio
Solfege practice/tuning	Curwen hand signs for Solfege

**B. Larger scale movements (gesture plus full-bodied movement):**

Many mumbling mice	step pulse
Su-ma-ma	step melodic rhythm
Yi-wa-tho	step text, use arms
Thi-thE-tha-tho-thu	skating
w/8ve arpeggio	tip-toe
Yo-a-mo-cantar	step, sway, use opposite arms

**C. Application to Repertoire:**

Ice Breaker: Row, row, row your boat  
New piece: One these fine mornings  
Renaissance: Palestrina "O bone Jesu"  
Gospel: Kum-bah yah/Come By Here

**III. Closure Discussion: Reflection, Feedback, Questions**

**From Choksy, Lois, Robert M. Abramson (Dalcroze chapter), Avon Gillespie, David Woods. Teaching Music in the Twentieth Century. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986, pp. 27-69.**

1. Approach named after the Swiss pedagogue Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) who, while teaching harmony and solfege at the Conservatory of Music in Geneva, discovered that many of his pupils, although technically advanced on their instruments, were unable to feel and express music. He believed they possessed a mechanical rather than a musical grasp of the art of music.

2. Jaques-Dalcroze spent the rest of inventing ways to help students:

- a. develop their abilities to feel, hear, invent; sense and imagine
- b. connect, remember, read and write; perform and interpret music
- c. convert musical knowledge into musical understanding
- d. learn solfege and theory through experience with musical sounds, not as abstractions
- e. free his students of conflicts between mind and body, between feeling and expression

3. Eurhythmics is an approach to music education based on the premise that rhythm is the primary element in music, and the source for all musical rhythm may be found in the natural rhythms of the human body.

4. The total method consists of three parts -- Eurhythmics, Solfege, and Improvisation (piano) and sought to arouse and develop musical awareness, understanding, and response simultaneously with training the musical ear. Worked for less fragmentation and specialization of various musical studies, so that music was approached in a more holistic fashion.

5. Initially experimented with students. Developed techniques combining hearing and physical response, singing and physical response, and reading-writing and physical response, in an attempt to arouse vivid sensations of sound.

6. Began with arm- and hand-levels to express diatonic major scales, but felt that something was missing, something deep and mysterious about the musical process, something to unify vibrations and sensation, feeling and thought, temperament and spontaneity, imagination and willpower; that is, all those faculties found in truly talented musicians.

7. Noticed natural, automatic reactions common to all ages and cultures; students changed movements when following a crescendo; sometimes they physically demonstrated the accents they heard; noticeably relaxed their muscles for a phrase ending; appeared to allow the music to penetrate, feeling its effects.

8. The questions he asked and the answers he found foreshadowed more modern theories of learning and learning situations:

*a. What is the source of music? Where does music begin?*

Human emotions are translated into musical motion.

*b. Where do we sense emotions?*

In various parts of the body.

*c. How do we feel emotions?*

By various sensations produced by different levels of muscular contraction and relaxation.

*d. How does the body express these internal feelings to the external world?*

In postures, gestures, movements of various kinds. Some of these are automatic, some are spontaneous, others are the results of thought and will.

e. *By what instrument does a human being translate inner emotions into music?*  
By human motion.

f. *What is the first instrument that must be trained in music?*

The human body! The base of all musical art is human emotion. It is not enough to train just the mind or the ear or the voice; the entire human body must be trained since the body contains all of the essentials for the development of sensibility, sensitivity and analysis of sound, music and feeling. Any musical idea can be performed by the body and any movement of the body can be transformed into its musical counterpart. There must be an immediate reaction between the mind that conceives and the body that acts.

[Marten, Frank. *Jaques-Dalcroze*, unpublished translation by Robert Abramson as found in Choksy, et. al. *Teaching Music in the Twentieth Century*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1986.]

9. Hoped to find connection between the ear that hears; the body that performs, feels, and senses; and the brain that judges, imagines, and corrects.

10. In the beginning, thought it would simply be a matter of teaching to students by training the muscles to contract or relax

- a. at a specific time (the speed or tempo of a sound)
- b. in a specific space (the duration of a sound)
- c. with a particular force (the dynamic energy of a sound)

This was a new application of the laws of mechanics of motion discovered by Sir Isaac Newton. Using correct proportions of time, space, and energy in a gravity field.

11. Exercises in regulating hearing and body movement responses through knowledge of the rules of time-space-energy proportions, coupled with special gravity exercises in the use of weight and balance, became the basis for diagnosing rhythmic movement problems. Worked out exercises to help students strengthen their feeling for metrics and their instinct for the many flows of motion called rhythm. He was determined to find the missing link in the chain of responses that begins with listening and ends with moving.

12. Jaques-Dalcroze postulated that when the body moves, the sensation of movement is converted into feelings that are sent through the nervous system to the brain which, in turn, converts that sensory information into knowledge. The brain converts feelings into sensory information about direction, weight, force, accent quality, speed, duration, points of arrival and departure, straight and curved flow paths, placements of limbs, angles of joints, and changes in the center of gravity. Today, this process is called *kinesthetic sense*. It combines with the other organs to convert sensation into information regarding feeling. This was precisely the tool that Jaques-Dalcroze needed to help his students control the rapid communications between the exterior senses of hearing, seeing, touching, and moving and the hidden, interior activities of the brain which control memory, memory retrieval, judgement, willpower, and imagination. Child learning to roller-skate, artist drawing from a model, musician studying a score, and an athlete practicing a high jump are all using this same combination of moving--feeling--sensing: *kinesthesia*.

13. Chain of connections essential to success of his methods: Hearing could be linked to moving; movement could invoke feeling; and feeling could trigger kinesthetic sensing to bring information directly to the brain and then back to the body via the nervous system. In this way the exterior forces of the body and the interior processes of the brain could be harmonized and coordinated.

14. Primary goals of Eurhythmics training:

- a. development of attention
- b. conversion of attention to concentration

- c. social integration (awareness of similarities and differences and appropriate responses between oneself and others)
- d. responses to and expression of all nuances of sound-feeling

Training "in music by music" was more than a musical education. It was, in fact, a general education using music as a humanizing force. It was designed to teach students to use all of their faculties in solving problems. His methods are complementary to many other methods and fields of study.

## 15. SUMMARY OF THE GOALS OF EURHYTHMICS

### A. Mental and Emotional

- 1. awareness
- 2. concentration
- 3. social integration
- 4. realization and expression of nuances

### B. Physical

- 1. ease of performance
- 2. accuracy of performance
- 3. personal expressiveness through performance, using the laws of

time--space--energy--weight--balance

\_\_\_\_\_

gravity field

C. Musical: Quick, accurate, comfortable, expressive personal response to hearing, leading to performance, analysis, reading, writing, and improvising.

Jacques-Dalcroze and his associates had finally found the processes and methods that connected in a constant spiral of learning:

hearing to moving  
moving to feeling  
feeling to sensing  
sensing to analyzing  
analyzing to reading  
reading to writing  
writing to improvising  
improvising to performance

## 16. MOVEMENT VOCABULARY Two types:

### MOVEMENTS IN PLACE

Clapping  
Swinging  
Turning  
Conducting  
Bending  
Swaying  
Speaking  
Singing

### MOVEMENTS IN SPACE

Walking  
Running  
Crawling  
Leaping  
Sliding  
Galloping  
Skipping

With this vocabulary an almost infinite number of combinations can be created to express everything from the simplest to the most complex rhythmical time--space combinations and flow qualities. Movements in place or space can be combined with high, low, or middle body position in space to show changes of weight and height of sound as well as melodic contour.

By adding gestures and postures to these movement combinations, the student can express melody, harmony, polyrhythms, counterpoint, and phrasing. By using other movements, varieties of dissonance and accent can be explored and expressed. In Eurhythmics the body is used as an orchestra to express physical, vocal, and instrumental rhythms.

**17. TOTALITY OF MOVEMENT EXPERIENCE** A total kinesthetic sensation must be invoked in every movement experience. The sequence of response is always from preparation, to attack, to prolongation, and then return to preparation.

**Example, clapping in place:**

- a. *Preparation* breathe, along with a lifting swing of the arms and shoulders away from the center of the body measuring the tempo (time-space) of the beat (inhaling)
- b. *Attack* (Initiation?) the instant of striking the hands together (exhaling)
- c. *Prolongation* pulling the hands apart to feel and measure kinesthetically the full length of the beat
- d. *Return to preparation* lifting the arms upward and outward and breathing (inhaling for recycling of energy)

In **walking exercises**, too, it is important not to allow tactility to replace kinesthesia. The instant the foot touches the floor in a walking step is only the attack of the beat; it is not the real rhythmic sensation which occurs in and carries through the preparation, attack, and prolongation of the walking step and is created by motion in the foot, ankle, knee, and hip joints and in the movements in the muscles of the trunk, thigh, calf, and foot. Remember to use preparation techniques for good walking, and be aware that students who use their bodies poorly (dragging or slapping feet, slouching posture, or lack of balance) will not receive the proper kinesthetic sensation of a walking rhythm in music and will probably have difficulty in expressing clearly what they hear and feel in music.

The Eurhythmics teacher is trained to observe and respond to all worlds of rhythm, movement, and music and to engage in a lifetime study of them.

18, Rhythm is the central subject of each and every Eurhythmics lesson. In Jaques-Dalcroze's view rhythm is not simply timing but is the constantly changing flow of motion that gives vitality, color, and interest to the regular events -- the beat -- in Western music. Like an electric current of varying intensity, rhythmic movements may vary in qualities of tension and release between the two poles of nonmovement -- total tension and total relaxation. Jaques-Dalcroze used the word *rhythm* to mean a balance and ratio of the flow among body, mind, and feelings, as well as a balance between conscious and unconscious movement. In his theory, rhythm *exists* in a time--space--energy context, but is *produced* by complicated interactions among many elements of motion.

**19. REGULAR BEATS--EXTRINSIC FORMS** (Crusic, Metacrusic, and Anacrusic Qualities)  
Extrinsic beat occurs in music when the regular beat is very forcefully presented (e.g., rock music). Jaques-Dalcroze's theory of rhythmic beat qualities goes on to classify beats as the *crusic beat*, seen as a release of energy; the *metacrusic beat*, seen as a gentle carryover or a dying away; and the *anacrusic beat*, seen as a preparation of energy for release. Human breathing in a relaxed state is the ideal basis for an understanding of the anacrusic (inhaling), metacrusic (holding the breath), and crusic (exhaling) qualities of a beat. This is the three-beat norm of human respiration. In any Eurhythmics class these qualities should be expressed even in the simplest clapping and walking exercises. Attack, prolongation and decay, and renewal of beats should be carefully studied.



20. ARTICULATION (Staccato, Legato, Portamento; Attack, Release, Sustain; Vibrato Possibilities). Possibilities of articulation of the arms, hands, shoulders, and torso. Articulation requires the exploration of many ways and places to begin a motion and many ways and places to connect or stop motions.

21. RESTS always express inner activity. The most important focus in the study of rests is to keep the beat internally while inhibiting outward motion.

**From Landis, Beth and Polly Carder. The Eclectic Curriculum in American Music Education: Contributions of Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Orff. Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1972, pp. 7-38.**

1. The source of musical rhythm is the natural locomotor rhythms of the human body.
2. The Dalcroze approach contributes to self-understanding by helping a person to become aware of and to develop the expressive possibilities of his body. The range of feeling inspired by music is recognized and developed. Mental processes are sharpened and coordinated with physical and emotional processes. A person develops a new expressive dimension that goes beyond the usual verbal one. Self-development grows out of this self-awareness and understanding.
3. Related to Abraham Maslow's concept of self-actualization, where a person performs toward the extent of his potential, is self-motivated and inner directed without the need for extrinsic stimulus.
4. A person becomes absorbed in musical sound and the expressive possibilities of movement, and performs beyond his own expectations. He learns to use his body as easily as his voice. In this experience, individuality is valued and encouraged.
5. Dalcroze formulated his whole approach to music education on synthesis of theoretical knowledge and skills and application of them. Sensory and intellectual experiences are fused. He believed that the skills and understandings of the least and most accomplished musician are built on active involvement in musical experience.
6. Through listening to music and experiencing it in movement, the children can develop healthy self-concepts, and their inner feelings can be explored, expressed, and shaped.
7. Important to the Dalcroze plan is its stress on the feelings of the student in response to music, and on the channeling of these feelings into expression. There is an emphasis on personal experience (as compared to textbook learning).
8. Sound meant combination of pitch, timbre, dynamics.
9. Rhythm is really motion.
10. Basic principle: time, space, energy are interrelated, as tempo, dynamics, and other elements in music are interrelated. By synchronizing his movements with music as he hears (performs) it, the student experiences these interrelationships. He analyzes simultaneous elements and successive musical events by realizing them in movement.
11. Spontaneous quality of movement is derived from fact that music is created while students listen.
12. Rhythm as link between mind and senses.

13. Individuality of movement is encouraged.

14. The body becomes an instrument; the student will hear, analyze, internalize, and become one with the music. As a musical instrument, the body is called upon to perform in complex ways, often with the arms interpreting one pattern, the feet another, and other parts of the body others.

15. The student responds instantly and in good form to what he hears. A result of such exercises is the ability to respond sensitively to the most refined nuances in music. Students express the rise and fall of phrases, intricate shading of timbre, tempo, and dynamics in addition to basic musical elements. An observer has the interesting experience of *seeing* people *feel* music. A teacher, watching students respond to music in this way, is concerned entirely with movement as evidence of the students' comprehension of musical elements. The students are not performing for others, but are internalizing musical concepts through physical experience.

16. From a 1934 book by Karl Gehrken on instructional methods in the elementary school.

*Rhythmic Training and Dalcroze Eurhythmics*

The word rhythm means literally "flow" and *flow* implies movement. Rhythm in music, therefore, always means movement, and in modern music it implies motion in grouped units, the smaller groups being measures and sections; the larger ones phrases, periods, and various even longer parts.

repeat of p. 98

21. **REGULAR BEATS--EXTRINSIC FORMS** (cont'd) Human breathing in a relaxed state is the ideal basis for an understanding of the anacrusic (inhaling), metacrusic (holding the breath), and crusic (exhaling) qualities of a beat. This is the three-beat norm of human respiration. In any Eurhythmics class these qualities should be expressed even in the simplest clapping and walking exercises. Attack, prolongation and decay, and renewal of beats should be carefully studied.

22. **ARTICULATION** (Staccato, Legato, Portamento; Attack, Release, Sustain; Vibrato Possibilities). Possibilities of articulation of the arms, hands, shoulders, and torso. Articulation requires the exploration of many ways and places to begin a motion and many ways and places to connect or stop motions.

23. **RESTS** always express inner activity. The most important focus in the study of rests is to keep the beat internally while inhibiting outward motion.

### III. Practical Application: Music in (is) Motion! Let's do it!

#### A. Gesture [Movements in Place]:

oo-ee-oo-ee-oo	painting (circles, infinity sign, paint the barn, etc.)
Thi-eh, thi-o, thi-a	right, left, both
Tha-The-Tha-The-Tha	martini (milkshake) shaker
John is (as) the son of my mom	juggling, frisbee, pizza; bounce ball for arpeggio

Solfege practice/tuning

Curwen hand signs for Solfege

#### B. Larger scale movements (Movements in Space):

Many mumbling mice	step pulse
Su-ma-ma	step melodic rhythm
Yi-wa-tho	step text, use arms
Thi-thE-tha-tho-thu	skating
w/8ve arpeggio	tip-toe
Yo-a-mo-cantar	step, sway, use opposite arms

#### C. Application to Repertoire:

Ice Breaker: Row, row, row your boat  
New piece: One these fine mornings  
Renaissance: Palestrina "O bone Jesu"  
Gospel: Kum-bah yah/Come By Here

### IV. Goals, Benefits, and Final Thoughts on Music in Motion

A. Main goal: to promote a heightened awareness of musical events so that all are contributing to the music-making process and not simply (or only) reacting to the conductor's gesture. Such activity will encourage a deeper connection and heightened sensitivity to the music. Allow opportunities for students to explore their musical options:

1. Move to rhythmic notation
2. Express internal energy, direction and flow of any note (especially longer values) and the relation of one note to another; in larger view, relate one phrase to another and, simultaneously, one voice part to another.
3. Understand the musical direction (feeling) a phrase might take
4. Understand articulation (legato vs. detached)
5. Understand the musical energy, impulse, context of rests

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## **BRAINSTORM: PLAYFUL IDEAS FOR CREATIVE REHEARSALS**

1. Martini shaker -- low connection to buoyant breath
2. Pulling resonance stream --
  - a. facial beam; phaser beam; unicorn horn; pulling water focused water spray
  - b. tall vertical arm movement
  - c. pulling string from between eyes
3. Painting fence -- legato line, breath energy constant
4. Bouncing ball -- buoyant energy; releasing tension; rhythmic impulse and coordination; low connection to breath
5. Stepping w/ full body:
  - a. marching with arms
  - b. toe bounce
  - c. deep seated speed skating; gliding; sliding
  - d. fencing posture and thrust ("lunge")
  - e. bowling w/ balls of various weights
  - f. dancing; waltzing; hustle
  - g. lava lamp body
6. Hands/arms: shaking wet hands; splatting wet brush (handbell click); wring out hands
7. Hug a [redwood] tree; full, open, and tall
8. Lighthouse with radar dish
9. Dig a hole; plant a tree; play in water
10. Glowing coals; updraft of air up a chimney
11. Throw a pizza; throw a frisbee
12. Champagne bubbles in belly
13. Hold hands; skate together; swing arms together
14. Pet a dog
15. Polish a brass door knob; wax the car; clean, wipe, scrape the windows to see clearly (establish clarity of sound); cut through thick fog; make it glow, shimmer, sparkle
16. Sustain Yoga poses; fencing poses; start a running race (ready-set-go)
17. Deep knee bends
18. Facial energy:
  - a. stretches (prune, apricot)
  - b. looks: amazed, wonder, scared, happy, sad, etc.
  - c. raised eye brows
  - d. look "up" to stars
  - e. raise cheek bones
  - f. relax jaw: sense sensations, shave, use hands to feel; chewy hum

18. Facial energy (cont'd):
  - g. lips as zoom lens; focuser; Christmas card characters around a candle
  - h. oral cavity as zoom lens, hose nozzle, etc. to focus tone
  - i. breathe through "ah" (open throat & other resonating cavities)
  - j. middle vault "lift" (oreo cooking; gothic cathedral)
19. 72-point vowels vs. 9-point
20. Focus closed vowels, open open vowels, elongate spread vowels, unify all vowels.
21. Lip bubbles, raspberries, hum
22. Conducting:
  - a. patterns
  - b. circles
  - c. staccato (ttoo) vs. legato (yah or ah or just vowels)
23. Kinesthetic awareness/expression of music; individual control:
  - a. tap chest, thigh, toe (pulse)
  - b. low accordion or bellows motion (feel downward, outward expansion of breath), focus especially on "negative space"/ non-singing between sung vocalises
  - c. concentrate on "negative space" of vocalises and let tones sing themselves
  - d. arms up; arms down; arms up and down
  - e. shake, wring, snap, flick, paint, pull, push, pat, pet, circle, fingers, palm
  - f. pose, act, charades, sign language
24. Nonverbal communication related to horseback riding (visual, feel, sense, smell)
25. Use of conducting-inspired gestures; conductor instinct shared with choir; choir instinct shared with conductor
26. DRAMATIC intent of text:
  - a. act (verbally, nonverbally, pose, statues)
  - b. face only
  - c. eyes only
  - d. body only
  - e. music only (no words; neutral syllable; vowels only)
27. Movement in place vs. Movement in space
28. Move w/o performing (step, skip, dance, tip-toe, prance, stomp)
29. Sing w/o movement, but incorporate feeling of movement
30. Movement in space:
  - a. step to pulse
  - b. step to melodic rhythm of line
  - c. move to line (non-rhythmic) to show direction, shape, feel, time of line
  - d. focus on: preparation, initiation, sustain, and release of tone
  - e. keep adequate and appropriate posture and alignment of body for singing: high sternum, low and buoyant connection to ribs, abdominals, hips, thighs, legs
  - f. relate movements to others personally, musically, expressively, dramatically

31. How do musical lines relate to each other?

- a. unison
- b. harmony
- c. canon
- d. polyphonic
- e. homorhythmic
- f. homophonic
- g. suspension
- h. cadence
- i. consonance or dissonance
- j. similar or contrasting musically
- k. rhythmic or melodic
- l. primary, secondary (melodic interest vs. harmonic/rhythmic accompaniment)
- m. similar or contrasting in musical/text articulation (legato vs. staccato; long vs. short; many words vs. sustained fewer words)
- n. tempo or rhythmic movement
- o. energy levels

32. AWARENESS: sensitivity, energy, perception, response (reaction), focus, unity

33. Increase ENSEMBLE awareness: musical, physical, psychological, mental concentration, spiritual, aesthetic,

34. Movement as a means to heighten, encourage, unify an awareness of various complimentary areas:

**a. Functional Unity of Singing Voice [Vocal Technique]**

- (1) posture and alignment
- (2) breath management
- (3) phonation
- (4) resonance
- (5) articulation

**b. Musical Awareness and Sensitivity [Music Education]**

- (1) actualizing philosophy; making music real
- (2) AEE=PXK
- (3) musical elements (sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, form, text)
- (4) digesting notation (reading, knowing, feeling, hearing, writing)
- (5) improvisation/composition
- (6) going beyond notation (see (1) & (2))

**c. Choral Ensemble [Group Goals of Understanding]**

- (1) performance characteristics (sound, intonation, blend, balance)
- (2) expressive characteristics (musical, textual, extra-musical)
- (3) group bond -- many speaking as a single voice: "e pluribus unum"

**d. Spiritual-Expressive-Artistic Self [Individual Spirit]**

- (1) mind opening
- (2) experienced-based
- (3) meeting personal challenges (musical and extra-musical)
- (4) self-discovery/exploration
- (5) satisfaction of accomplishment
- (6) "Be the best you can be!"
- (7) Me + Us = We
- (8) grounded self-confidence
- (9) high self-esteem
- (10) flexibility, trust, unity
- (11) FUN!
- (12) freedom of a productive good time
- (13) aesthetic sensitivity/awareness; artistry; feelings

**d. Spiritual-Expressive-Artistic Self [Individual Spirit] (cont'd)**

(14) posture, breathing, mind

(15) mind, body, spirit

(16) thinking & feeling

(17) develop performer's self: discovering a state of relaxed concentration (importance of preparation; non-judgmental inner self; live and perform in the present)

**35. Computer analogies:**

a. point value of text

b. click and save/delete/bold/italic

c. Caps lock

d. 0 or 1

e. memory banks

f. cursor lines/curves

g. color monitor vs. black and white

h. laptop vs. desk top vs. old room-full

**36. Music related to sports or other activities:**

a. fencing

b. golfing

c. racquet sports (racquetball, tennis, badminton, hai-alai)

d. bike riding

e. ice skating

f. horseback riding

g. hockey

h. croquet

i. swimming

j. aerobics

k. football (ready-set-hike)

**37. Train analogy: movement of train (up, down); smoke stack puffs**

**38. Swan analogy: paddling of webbed feet vs. smooth look on surface**

**39. Rubber band, taffy pull, elastic**

**40. Food analogies:**

a. souffle

b. omelette

c. yeast

d. pizza (throwing, Italian (lasagna, Mama Celeste, mozzarella)

e. dough

f. pop and fresh

g. candy (taffy; butter brickle; caramel; Krackle vs. Milky Way; Hershey's milk chocolate w/almonds vs. without; chocolate covering on Dairy Queen cone vs. chocolate fudge Sundae; cotton candy; Jolly Rogers; Oh Henry!

h. buffet

i. McDonald's drive through (super-size)

j. Marshmallow man from "Ghostbusters"

k. "Fat Bastard"

l. cereals (honeycomb vs. rice crispies; grape nuts vs. puffed rice; cornflakes vs. lucky charms)

m. hot dogs, apple pie, Chevrolet



41. Words:

- a. engage
- b. page, system, measure number
- c. fewer = better
- d. inviting ownership
- e. strive to facilitate, not dictate; lead to discovery; be less dictatorial ("let's" vs. "I") in approach; strong leaders encourage strong group involvement in musical decision-making process;
- f. cooperative learning (small groups to increase individual responsibility)
- g. creative rehearsal strategies and arrangements, capitalize on small groups/individual performance to reinforce musical concepts, and personal ownership
- h. fusion
- i. synergy

42. Groups and group dynamics: Schools of fish; flocks of birds; herds of sheep; gangs of thugs; group of politicians; athletic teams; musical ensembles; swim team vs. baseball team vs. volleyball team vs. tug-of-war team vs. parachute team vs. human knot team -- individual performance vs. group performance, percentage of individual performance responsibility vs. full group endeavor. Percentage of individual accomplishment recognition in large-group endeavor (Heisman trophy vs. National championship)

43. Interpersonal relationships vs. intrapersonal relationships

44. Yoga, Tai chi, other body-mind-spirit endeavors

45. Developing "macro" (large-scale) kinesthetic understandings in rehearsal that can be cued by "micro" (smaller-scale) reminders of conducting gesture.

46. Short singing: doo, doot, text, doo-bee, pulsing doos, vee, shoo-bee-doo-bee-doo

47. Breathing ("tss") on singing lines; Raspberries (with pitch) on singing lines to activate diaphragmatic breathing and use of abdominals to sustain breath energy.

48. Combine various vocalises to lengthen them (more breath for longer phrases) or vary articulation w/ a single sung line.

49. Use solfege and handsigns to provide framework/tools for defining pitch -- tools. (means to an end; cannot become end in itself). Handsigns are good means of (a) nonverbal signal of pitch, (b) kinesthetic awareness of pitch, (c) nonverbal cue for pitch problem tendencies (e.g., arch palm more on "la" to raise pitch (lift middle vault).

50. Blow the candle out (not enough air flow); don't let the candle flame move (sound too breathy)

51. Motivate and increase ensemble focus through:

- a. choosing good music to perform
- b. rehearsal techniques
- c. enjoyment of musical experience
- d. achievement of meeting musical goals
- e. extra-musical situational reminders (e.g., "TGIF," reward of some sort)
- f. staying focused on musical experience
- g. "all the way through, no stopping, no matter what"
- h. guests observing (administrators, other schools, experts)
- i. guests joining musical endeavors
- j. individual or small group performance (ideally non-threatening)
- k. Friday Favorites
- l. upcoming concert
- m. running piece like a dress rehearsal

51. Motivate and increase ensemble focus through: (cont'd)

- n. performing by memory
- o. good music, giving them tools to do it, performing it well
- p. audition for solo or soli section (change a tutti section to soli)
- q. model energy, excitement, enjoyment; doesn't work? ask them to model you, while you do a reverse [less positive] model
- r. record rehearsal (video and/or audio) and play back
- s. let choir hear exemplar performance (professional recording)
- t. tour or competition
- u. sight read a new piece of a completely different style
- v. add instruments
- w. have student conduct while you step out and listen
- x. have choir perform w/o conductor, especially beginnings and endings
- y. tune carefully, especially cadences
- z. tell a joke or story; have a student tell one

52. Count-sing alla Shaw (see videos)

53. Know solfege of opening note of piece; Sing scale on solfege to find it.

54. Sing just vowels; just consonants

55. From Dr. Clarke (Indiana University, Opera Workshop):

- a. dramatic and expressive intent as way to motivate and encourage good vocal technique
- b. body involvement (Yoga) to encourage:
  - (1) freedom, energy, sustaining power
  - (2) air flow (appropriate air pressure)
  - (3) functional unity from head to toe! [esp. lower body (legs) to strengthen tone and make it buoyant]
  - (4) release of tension
  - (5) sustain, not hold
- c. text meaning - express it outward from you; use dramatic energy to release inner tension
- d. gesture cues: (1) focus; (2) facial expression; (3) release tension (head/neck)
- e. movement:
  - (1) bend knees to engage lower body
  - (2) step strongly to find low connection
  - (3) yoga statues for balance, sustain, breathe, express, awareness
  - (4) speed skating
- f. theater games for relaxation, bonding, connecting to each other, energy, creativity, fun, interpersonal relations, expression (non-verbal, verbal)

56. "Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera" Dr. Michael Clarke, Indiana University

- a. musicality and sight-reading are very important
- b. Singergetics (from synergetics -- working together)
- c. theatrical vs. dramatic
- d. work together to develop trust
- e. focus exercises (theater games): (1) gibberish dialogue; (2) circle game -- individual action, everyone imitates
- f. what to focus on when not the conductor
- g. energizing exercises -- at clap: find focus, face, pose; sustain w/ no tension; energize; think charisma (spirit-filled)!
- h. individual, separate poses
- i. team works together to make poses (small groups, full ensemble)

56. "Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera" Dr. Michael Clarke, Indiana University (cont'd)

j. stretches:

- (1) arm up, opposite heel up and down (l & r)
- (2) should lifts (l & r)
- (3) trunk twist at hips; knees released, feel thigh muscles
- (4) boxing moves

h. let go!; be "in the moment!"; energy without tension; express through vowel - avoid locked facials

57. The ideal music educator embodies:

- a. the "literacy" of a Kodaly specialist
- b. the kinesthetic expertise and awareness of the physical of a Dalcroze specialist
- c. the creative, improvisatory, experienced-based focus of an Orff specialist. . . and it's OK to use instruments, too!
- d. the spontaneous, productive-play orientation of a fun teacher
- e. the well-grounded expertise of a vocal pedagogue
- f. the conceptual focus of comprehensive (breadth and depth)
- g. the feelingful approach of an aesthetic educator (connect to feelings)
- h. the unique and creative individualism that YOU bring to your setting; what can you do to make learning fresh and invigorating for your group?
- i. What is musical? What is an educator? What is old, traditional, been there, done that?  
What is new, innovative, furthering the field? What is your contribution that goes beyond the ordinary, the common, the simple act of accurate performance?

58. Take time to listen. Be patient to let the music happen. Energy, yes, but thoughtful energy. Engage and motivate through focused attention and awareness of musical details. Beginning with the first note, build chords from the bottom up so that students can LISTEN for the overtone series (fundamental, octave, perfect fifth, perfect fourth, major third, minor third, etc.). Beginning with a single section, e.g. bass, refine the fundamental tone and have everyone match the vowel, pitch, and quality. Create beautiful timbre (tone color) and vibrant partials. Other sections listen for overtones "in the air" and tune to those. Be specific in pointing out intervals to listen for and tune to. Have other sections sing fundamental pitch (not just bass) and build chords from the top down or middle out.

59. Inner lift of middle vault and forward inner smile is so crucial for activating light mechanism in sound. Of course, this top mechanism must be connected to the depth of low breathing and downward expansion. Resonating cavities are "the nozzle on the hose" (intense and focused beam vs. spread and wide spray) or "the lens of a camera" (focus and zoom in on subject).

60. Diction never sits out, has a rest day, or takes a vacation.

61. Prepare...pay as much attention to...take as much care with...the ends of the phrases as you do with initiating them. Hold final notes longer than notated and release with attention to what hangs in the after the release.

62. Use chant to refine choral tone and lead the way to proper performance of Renaissance motets and every other style. Unison singing is the most difficult in terms of ensemble precision, matching vowels, pitch purity, and quality of tone. Independent lines of polyphonic pieces encourage musical independence, arched shaping of phrases, and refined musicianship. Challenge your choir with difficult music that may take time to conquer. The sharpening of skills necessary to perform such a piece will transfer to other compositions and the choir will improve! Hard work is worthwhile.

*Jeffrey Gemmell, February 14, 2002*

**THE ADOLESCENT VOICE:  
FOCUS ON THE MALE CHANGING VOICE**

**I. The Physiological Situation (not a "problem")**

**A. Adolescence:**

- + Parameters for this discussion:
- + Outward appearance:
- + Inward selves:

**B. Adolescent Voice:**

- + Actual physical change:
  - a. vocal folds lengthen c. 1/6 of an inch and become thicker;
  - b. larynx become larger
- + Since the voice works as a functional unit with the rest of the body...

**C. Historical Views on the Changing Voice:**

- + The traditional and most prevalent view, which was popular to mid-20th century, was that the voice should be "rested" during the change.
- + During mid-20th century, three music educators began to take the issue of the changing voice more seriously and pursued it more scientifically than ever before.

**1. Frederick Swanson --**

- \* theory: vocal change rapid
- \* at time of vocal change, voice often quickly drops an octave (See Fig. 2)
- \* "adolescent basses"
- \* "area of silence" (around middle C),
- \* changed/unchanged and genders receive separate training

**2. Duncan McKenzie --**

- \* theory: voice change gradual process
- \* adolescent male singer begins to lose notes in the upper range and add them on to the bottom, finally settling into the tenor or baritone range (See Range Fig. 3)
- \* during transition process, there may be a period of time when where range is only 4 or 5 notes
- \* As change begins, voice moves down through the treble range and into an area with a distinctive sound: between unchanged treble quality and sound of a newly changed junior high baritone. Labeled: "alto-tenor"
- \* After moving through "alto-tenor" range, voices becomes a junior high baritone, after which it settles into tenor, baritone, or bass range.

### 3. Irvin Cooper --

- \* theory: voice change was gradual and should be monitored carefully
- \* as voice moves from characteristic treble quality of unchanged voice into changed quality, voice moves initially into the baritone range before settling into the tenor or bass range of the completely changed voice
- \* referred to range of changing voice as the cambiata range; method of dealing with voice known as the cambiata plan. (def. from *cambiata nota* meaning *changing note* and adapted it to *cambiata voce* or *changing voice* (See Range Fig. 4)
- \* published several collections of songs arranged for ensemble with changing voices with cambiata vocal line
- \* his students and others have continued to write SACB music since his death in 1971.

### D. More Recent Developments: John Cooksey

- + "Contemporary Eclectic Theory" (See Range Fig. 5)
- + theory based on a synthesis of Swanson, McKenzie, and Cooper
- + Theory:
  - a. 5-step process of vocal change takes from 1 to 2 years
  - b. Symptoms of vocal mutation onset in young men include changes in:
    - 1) vocal range and tessitura
    - 2) timbre
    - 3) quality of the speaking voice

## The Approach: Methods and Materials

### A. Practical Pedagogical Pointers:

1. Observe, listen, and learn.
2. Reclassify voices, if necessary, at regular intervals.
3. Shift seating arrangement of choir as voices change; keep young men seated together.
4. Develop good vocal technique and encourage healthy singing to ease the vocal transition.
5. Rehearse intelligently and practice variety and diversity in programming.
6. Choose repertoire that is appropriate for the voices: vocally, musically, intellectually, emotionally, expressively, etc.
7. Teach musical concepts through active involvement and performance of quality choral literature. Research all available resources to find new and innovative pieces.
8. Make learning an enjoyable experience for everyone. Quality, hard work, and excellence CAN be FUN!!! Encourage ensemble ownership of the musical product.

## **B. Aspects of Warm-Ups/Vocalises/Vocal Technique**

1. Posture (Balanced, Aligned, Comfortable)
2. Breathing (Air Flow)
3. Phonation (Aerodynamic-Myoelastic Approach)
4. Resonance (Vowel Sounds)
5. Articulation (Crisp and Clean Consonants; use them to propel vowels)
6. Kinesthetic Awareness (Movement encourages flexibility and buoyancy)
7. Individual Differences
8. Vocal Health (Primary Concern)

Note: Purchase Charlotte Adams' video!

## **C. Repertoire**

See following sources for ideas:

1. Collins. Teaching Choral Music. Appendix A & B (very comprehensive).
2. Hylton. Comprehensive Choral Music Education.
3. Sacred Music and Secular Music in Print Series.
4. Macmillan Music and You series.
5. Choral Journal. (special issues)
6. Music Educators Journal.
7. American Choral Review
8. Collected Works, Historical Sets, Monuments
9. Recent Researches (Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Early American)
10. The list is ENDLESS. Seek out and explore new literature. Be creative in programming choices!

**Joanne Rutkowski's Adaptation of Cooksey's Material  
with Descriptive Comments Regarding Each Phases**  
(Source: The Choral Journal (December 1981): 12-13)

**1. Unchanged Voice (Pre-Mutation)**

Range: a to f2  
Tessitura: d1 to c2  
Speaking: c1

**Description:**

- + usually until ages 10-12 and lasts about 1-2 years
- + boy-like quality to voice; physical appearance is boy-like (baby-fat)
- + voice is at maximum range
- + no life points
- + excess air signals voice is starting to change

**2. Mid-Voice I (Early Mutation)**

Range: a-flat to d2  
Tessitura: c1 to b-flat 1

Speaking: b

**Description:**

- + 7th or early 8th grade (12-13 years old); lasts about 6 months
- + loss of upper notes; no falsetto
- + volume diminishes and timbre darker
- + physical appearance: height and weight increase

**3. Mid-Voice II (High Mutation - Cambiata)**

Range: f to a1  
Tessitura: g-sharp to f1

Speaking: a

**Description:**

- + 13-14 years old; lasts 3-12 months (plateau at 8 months)
- + husky speaking voice
- + break from g1 to a1 into falsetto
- + "Adam's Apple" appears
- + voice becomes hard to manage
- + very high "whistle register"
- + crucial period for careful voice cultivation

**4. Mid-Voice IIA**

Range: d to f-sharp1  
Tessitura: f-sharp to d-sharp1

**Description:**

- + lasts a few weeks to several months
- + top quality like Mid-Voice II
- + husky quality - baritone sound appears very breathy
- + register lift around d1

**5. New Baritone (Post-Mutation)**

Range: B to d-sharp1  
Tessitura: d-sharp to b  
Speaking: d/e

**Description:**

- + 14-16 or 17 years old; lasts 1-2 years
- + settling period; not child-like, but not adult sound
- + light voice usually does not want to sing above c1
- + not much vocal agility
- + trouble with leaps of more than a 4th or 5th

**6. Settled Baritone (Early Adult)**

Range: G to d1 (or f1)  
Tessitura: c to a

**Description:**

- + ages 17-18-?
- + adult tone appears

# Range Sheet

○ = Range  
● = Tessitura

Fig. 1 - Gackle's Adolescent Female Ranges + Tessituras

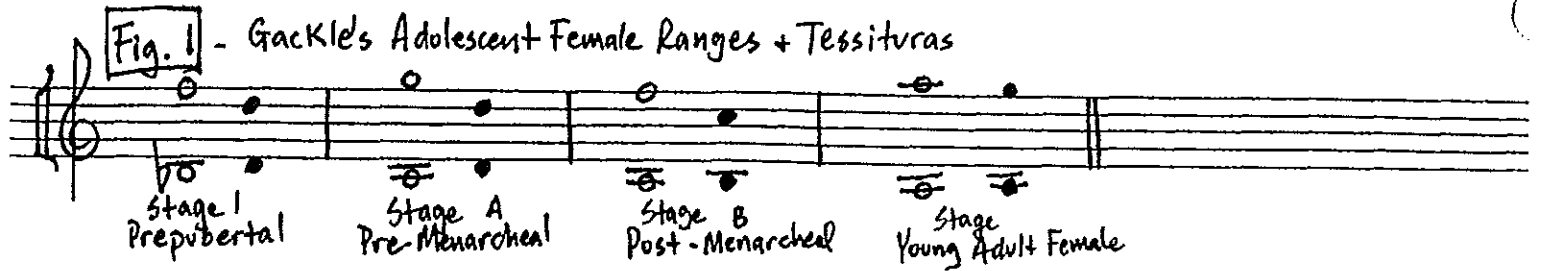


Fig. 2 - Swanson's Adolescent Bass Range

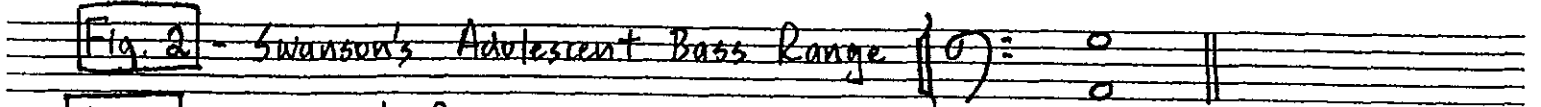


Fig. 3 - McKenzie's Ranges

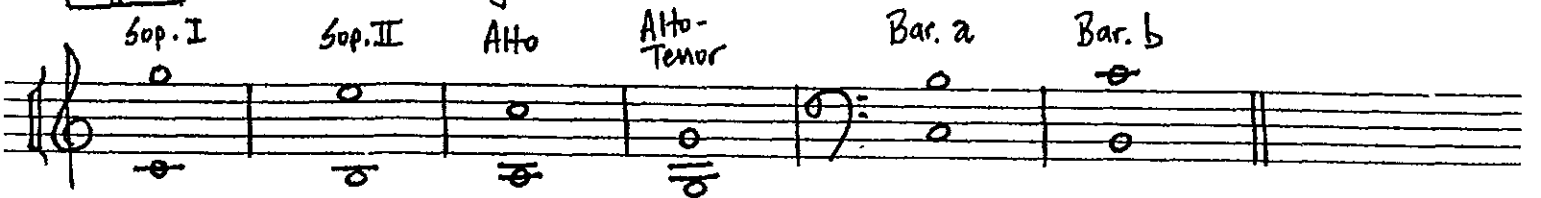


Fig. 4 - Cooper's Ranges

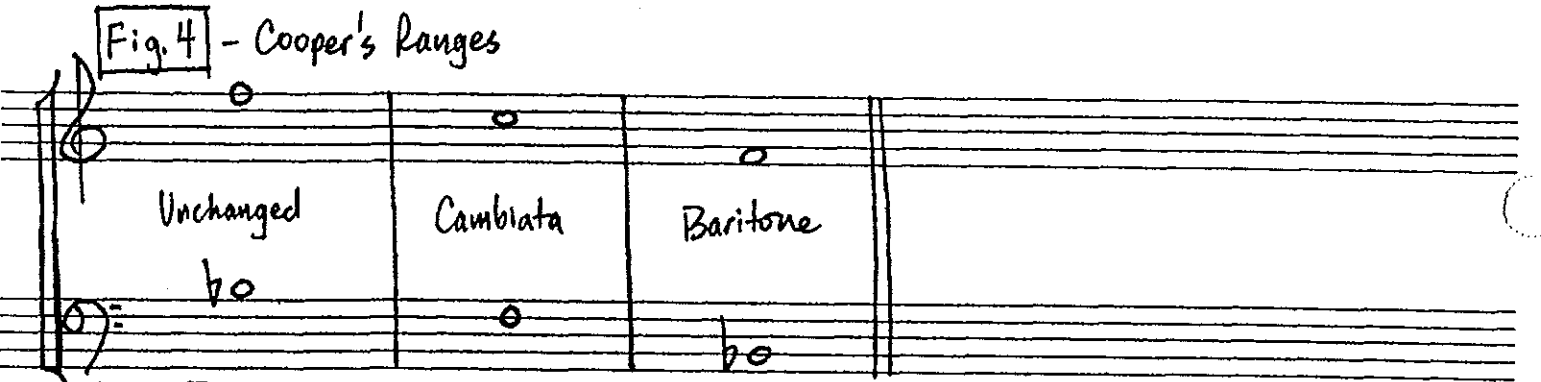


Fig. 5 - Cooksey's Ranges

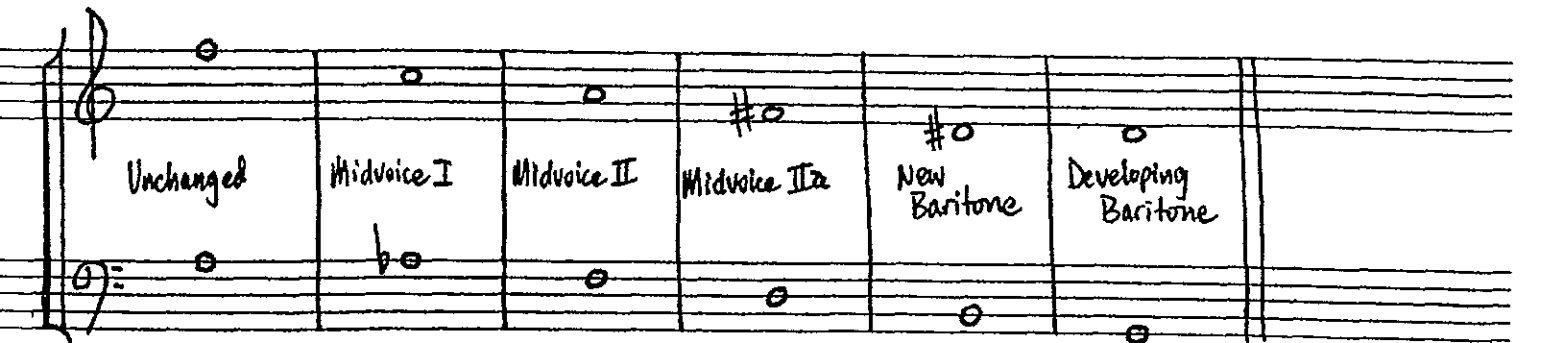
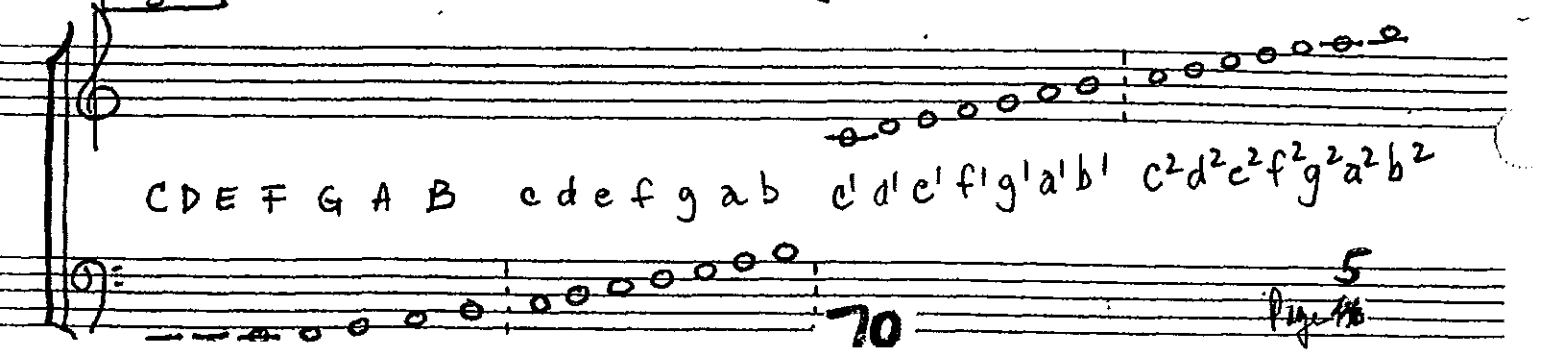


Fig. 6 - Note Identification / Numbering System.





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# COMMONSENSE TRAINING FOR CHANGING MALE VOICES

*Young men can be trained to sing during their adolescent years with great success through phonation techniques and vocal exercises.*

BY CHRISTOPHER D. WHITE AND DONA K. WHITE

**R**ecruiting, retaining, and training male singers are perhaps the most challenging tasks that public school choral teachers face. Music educators often discover that, when students first begin to make elective choices in middle or junior high school, fewer males than females select choir. In high school, teachers continue to be concerned that male participation in choir remains less than female participation. The male disenchantment with singing arises from several related factors: sociological perceptions about music and singing, the male's psychological and physiological development during puberty, and inappropriate choral literature and training. To keep young men interested in singing, teachers may benefit from an examination of the physiology of the male voice change, the psychology of the adolescent male, the unique physical properties of the male singing voice, and specific vocal exercises.

## The Physiology of the Male Voice Change

As the human body grows and matures, the muscles and cartilage of

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When singing, an adolescent boy can change vowels as his voice descends and thus disguise the break

the larynx change in position, size, strength, and texture; accordingly, the singing voice changes in range, power, and tone. At birth, the larynx is high in the neck; then, in the first five years of life, the larynx descends to the level of the seventh cervical vertebra. Thereafter, the child's vocal folds do not significantly change; they remain approximately six to eight millimeters in length for males and females until puberty. The infant's singing voice phonates most sounds at pitches near C<sup>5</sup> (C above middle C). From age four to seven, the child's speaking voice drops, while the singing voice extends one octave from C<sup>4</sup> up to C<sup>5</sup>. At this stage of development, the singing voice produces a light natural

tone in a forward placement without a change in register. From age seven to ten, the child's speaking voice does not change in pitch; however, the singing voice increases in clarity and agility. The range extends from C<sup>4</sup> to E<sup>5</sup>. Further, the older child's singing voice sustains tone in one of two registers: the head register or the chest register.<sup>1</sup>

At the onset of puberty—between ages nine-and-a-half and fourteen—physiological changes occur in the organs, muscles, cartilage, and bones that support the phonatory process. The epiglottis grows, flattens, and ascends. The neck usually lengthens. The chest cavity grows larger, especially in males. As the skeletal structure of the head grows, the resonating cavities

increase in size and change in shape. More important, the larynx grows at different rates and in different directions according to gender. The male larynx grows primarily in the anterior-posterior (front-to-back) direction, leading to the angular projection of the thyroid cartilage, the Adam's apple, a visible indication of the impending voice change (see figure 1). In fact, the male's vocal folds lengthen four to eight millimeters. In contrast, the female's larynx increases more in height than in width, thus at this point becoming distinctly different in acoustic function and sound.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

*The most obvious attribute of the changing male voice is the emergence of two very distinct registers.*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

### The Psychology of Prepubescent and Adolescent Males

In general, young children are curious about the world around them—given proper reinforcement, they remain enthusiastic about learning and eager to try new activities. With regard to music, the child's attitude, preferences, and appreciation are influenced by family members (parents or older siblings), television, and exposure to music at school.

At puberty, a young male enters a process of self-discovery—he begins to identify and value masculine attributes. Accordingly, he selects male role models: fathers, older brothers, coaches, teachers, youth pastors, and, of course, prominent sports or entertainment figures. For example, a middle school boy will probably put pictures of males (e.g., John Elway, Michael

Jordan, or Bruce Lee) on the walls of his bedroom. Further, the adolescent male associates with peer groups that share common values and interests. In social settings, he often adopts his peer group's collective opinion rather than professing his own. For example, though the young man may inwardly enjoy singing, when he sits with his buddies at school or at church, he will not sing if the group believes it is not masculine or "cool"! Finally and most important, the rate and nature of physiological change, combined with the growing sexual awareness that occurs at the onset of puberty, cause the young male to be self-conscious and uncertain. His self-concept frequently suffers from his physical inability to meet the performance or appearance standards set by his role models and peer group. Likewise, he may have skills or talent in areas—such as music, art, or scholarship—that are not prized by his friends. As a result, he loses his self-confidence,

eagerness to explore the world around him, and the wide-eyed innocence that so characterized his learning attitude as a child.

### The Physical Properties of the Male Singing Voice

During puberty, the speaking voice of the young male drops approximately one octave. According to Robert T. Sataloff and Joseph R. Spiegel, two physicians who frequently write for the *National Association of Teachers of Singing Journal*, the singing voice may change in one of four ways:

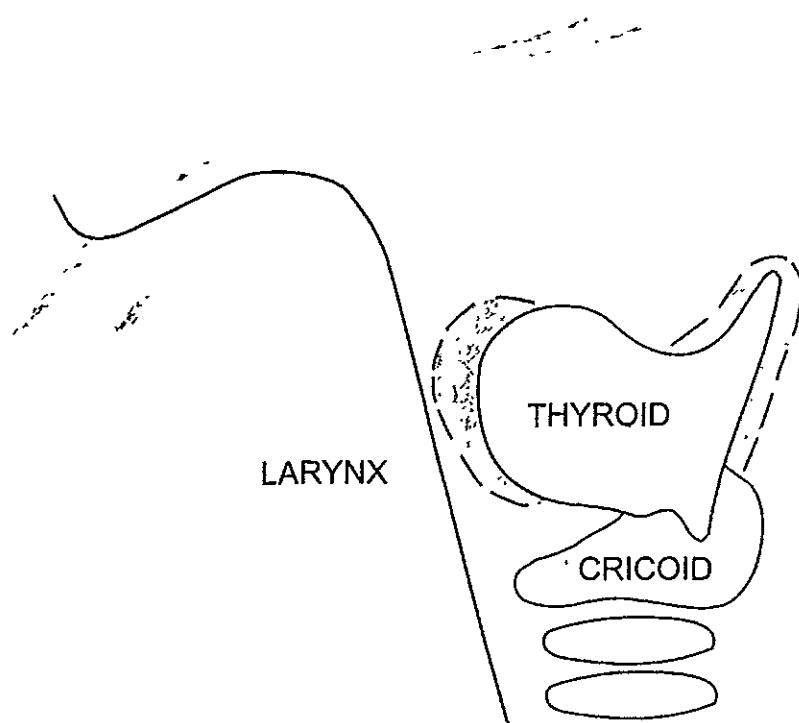
1. The voice drops to a full register in the bass range very quickly, leaving no treble range. This voice may experience difficulty singing in the head register.
2. The voice lowers gradually one or two pitches at a time while retaining the treble range. As the chest register becomes stronger, a distinct break emerges between the chest and head registers.

### Key to Phonetic Symbols for Vocal Training

Symbol	Sound	Word Example
[ʌ], j[ʌ]	ū	"yup"
[a], j[a], h[a]	ah	"ha-ha"
[ae]	a	"yak"
[e], j[e], h[e]	ā	"Yale" or "yea"
		"hale"
[ɛ]	ě	"yet"
[i]	ē	"yield"
[o]	oh	"yoyo"
[ɔ]	o	"yacht"
[u], j[u]	oo	"you"
[j]	y	"yes"

Note: Symbols used are taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet. For further reference, see Joan Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers* (Dallas: Pst ... Inc., 1989), or William V. May and Craig Tolin, *Pronunciation Guide for Choral Literature* (Reston, VA: MENC, 1987).

**Figure 1. Anterior-Posterior Growth of the Male Larynx**



according to the pitch being sung—the harmonic overtones of the vowel must align to strengthen the harmonic overtones of the pitch being sung.

■ Vowel modification varies according to gender. For the most ringing, pitch-centered tone, women must open the vowels at the top of their range and close progressively as they descend. Conversely, men must open the vowels at the bottom of their range and close progressively as they ascend.<sup>4</sup> (In other words, in terms of vowel modification, men and women are upside down from each other.)

Bolster concluded that, when the vowel is modified according to these principles, "it will sound more like the intended vowel than the pure vowel."<sup>5</sup>

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

*The larynx grows at different rates and in different directions according to gender.*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

3. The voice retains the treble range using a head register and is capable of singing several pitches in the bass range; however, the voice is incapable of singing in the middle range between the bass and treble. Essentially, this voice has a hole in the range; sadly, the respective individual is often classified as "tone-deaf" because he cannot match pitch in midrange.

4. The voice retains the young treble quality and, at the same time, is capable of singing comfortably in a full register with baritone quality and range. This rare voice can be remarkable in the ringing quality of the high range, the ease of transition to the low range, and the absence of register breaks.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the nature of the change, the young male is still capable of free, natural singing throughout puberty, provided he receives encouragement, good training, and the opportunity to sing appropriate literature.

Perhaps the most obvious attribute of the changing or changed male voice

is the emergence of two very distinct registers. The lower voice, or chest register, is characterized by a full-bodied tone. The upper voice, or head register, is characterized by a lighter tone that employs more nasal pharynx—or facial mask—for effective resonance. Of course, between the two areas is the break, or *passaggio*, a snap or bump in the flow of the sound as the voice crosses the registers.<sup>3</sup>

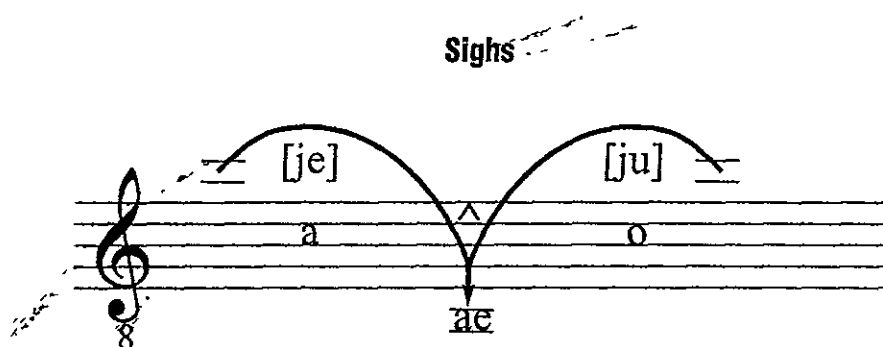
Another remarkable, and somewhat unknown, characteristic of the changing or changed male voice is the contrast in physical acoustics or resonating properties of the two registers. In 1983, Stephen Bolster wrote an insightful article in *Choral Journal*, in which he discussed the acoustics of vowels. In the article, he stated several fundamental principles:

■ Vowels have a fixed pitch. The length and shape of each vowel's connected resonating cavities determine a pitch or formant.

■ When singing for optimum resonance, the singer must adjust the vowel

As every parent or middle-school teacher knows, adolescent males often encounter coordination problems resulting from sudden physical growth during and immediately following puberty. Many experience difficulty in normal physical activities (e.g., walking, running, and hand-eye coordination). Yet, in choir, they must try to balance greater subglottic air pressure (resulting from an enlarged chest cavity) with a lengthening larynx and increased head resonance. Further, due to peer-group attitudes—and the fact that they generally carry forty-pound backpacks full of textbooks—they sit or stand with a slouching, poor posture. Thus, in addition to the challenge of coordinating innumerable muscle groups in a growing physical body, they must overcome the inhibiting habit of poor body position.

**Figure 2. Vocal Sighs for the Changing Male Voice**



**Figure 3. Vocalises for the Changing Male Voice**

### Vocalise Number 1



*\*(Continue as low as possible without crossing into chest register)*

### Vocalise Number 2



*\*(Continue to arpeggiate major chords, descending chromatically to G major.)*

## Solutions

To positively shape a young man's attitude, a choral teacher must demonstrate that singing is a worthwhile activity, appropriate for both men and women. To begin, the teacher should structure the choral curriculum to provide gender-specific ensembles, especially during the critical time of early middle school. In other words, he or she should organize male choruses (with mixed SATB voicing) for grades six and seven. The advantages are many:

- In warm-ups, the teacher can focus on training the changing or changed male voices.

- In an all-male setting, young men are less self-conscious and, thus, more easily persuaded to sing.

- More important, the teacher can work to establish a peer group within the ensemble in which singing is readily accepted as a male trait. Thus, the young men's attitudes may become more positive and their behavior more disciplined.

Second, the choral teacher should provide appropriate male role models that sing. In middle school rehearsals, the teacher can use older volunteers, such as brothers, parents, alumni, colleagues, pastors, and youth-choir directors, to demonstrate the use of the head voice and the proper performance of vocalizations. Further, both high school and middle school choral teachers might invite men's glee clubs, barbershop quartets, or male soloists to perform periodically in concert with, or for, the choir.

Finally, the teacher can provide frequent and unique performing opportunities for the young men in the choir, for example, a father-son performance of two selections during a school concert.<sup>6</sup> The teacher could also organize or participate in a men's choir festival with the schools or colleges in the region.

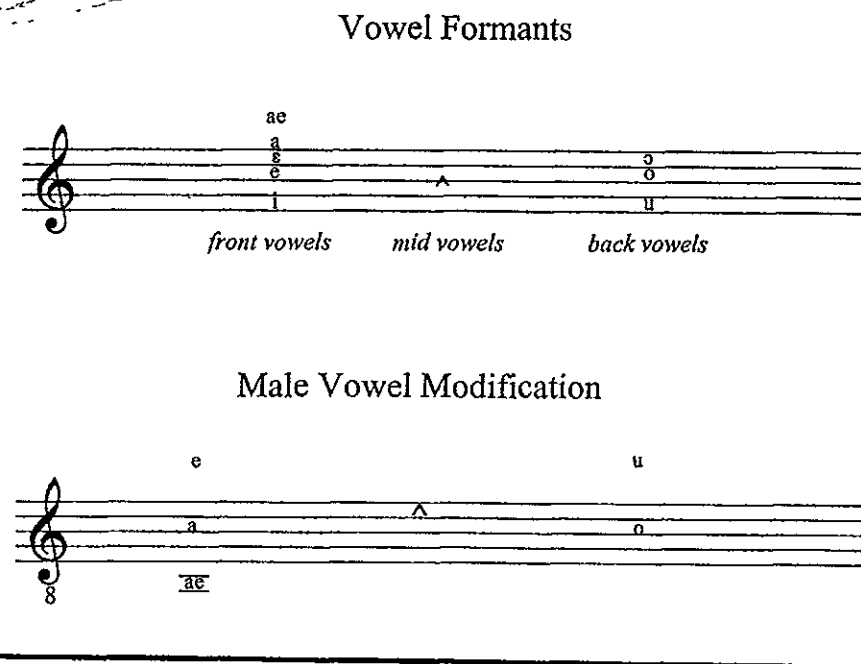
To train the male voice during and after the voice change, the choral teacher should use a series of descending vocal exercises. First, the teacher should prompt the discovery of the head voice by using sighs and sirens. Then, following the theory of vowel formants, singers can be trained to begin a sigh high in the head voice on

an [e] vowel (as in the word "fame"), shift to [ʌ] (as in "fun") as they cross the *passaggio*, and then modify again to an [a] (as in "farm") and eventually to an [æ] (as in "fat") at the bottom of the range (see figure 2 for vocal sighs). By carefully and appropriately changing the vowels as the voice descends, singers can completely disguise the break. A shorthand list of symbols and sounds for the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is used throughout this discussion, is included in the Key to Phonetic Symbols sidebar.

At the same time, the choral teacher can use a five-step vocalise on [je] (as in "Yale" or "yea"), beginning high in the head register and descending by half-steps with each performance (see figure 3, vocalise 1). The teacher should take the exercise as low as the young men can sing without crossing the *passaggio*. During the exercise, the men should be encouraged to focus on nasal-pharynx resonance.

After the men master the sigh and the technique of disguising the break, the teacher can introduce the most critical and defining exercise of the training: performing an arpeggio, an exercise of three descending leaps separated by rests (see figure 3, vocalise 2). The exercise should begin high in the head voice and descend by half steps with each performance. During the rests between leaps, the singers should change vowels according to whether the first pitch of the leap is above, in the middle, or below the *passaggio*. For example, if the singers begin on C<sup>5</sup> (in the male head voice), the director should tell the singers to perform the first descending leap to a G<sup>4</sup> on [je], the second from G<sup>4</sup> to an E<sup>4</sup> on [je], and the last leap from E<sup>4</sup> to C<sup>4</sup>—crossing the *passaggio*—on [jʌ] (as in "yup"). As the sequence of performances moves down by half-steps, the singers learn to change the vowels accordingly. For example, when the exercise begins on G<sup>4</sup> (still in the head voice), the first leap would be on [je], the second leap from D<sup>4</sup> across the break would be on [jʌ], and the final leap from B<sup>3</sup> to G<sup>3</sup> in the chest voice on [ja] (as in "yard"). Of course, for proper blending of the registers, each leap needs a tone similar in quality and volume.

**Figure 4. Vowel Formats and Male Vowel Modifications**



As the singers begin to master the technique of blending the registers, the choral teacher diminishes the time of the rests between the leaps (the time at which the singers change vowels). Eventually, the singers will be able to connect the intervals (still changing vowels as they have been trained) and sing across the *passaggio* without pause. Thus, they will blend the registers in such a way that no listener can define the exact point at which the singers crossed from head to chest voice.

With regard to warm-up exercises and the performance of the music, the choral teacher must take into account the differences in gender when it comes to vowel modification and efficient resonance. When warming up the voice in the upper range, the teacher should not require the same vowels for men and women. For example, when using an ascending arpeggio, the men should sing on [he] (as in "hay"), while the women sing [ha] (as in "hard"). Further, when working for a uniform vowel between all sections, the teacher should not require the same vertical mouth opening from men and women. If the pitch is high, the women will need to open more than the men. Conversely, as the pitch descends, the men will need to

open more than the women (see figure 4 for male modification of vowel formants). The teacher will discover that, as Bolster noted, the corporate sound of the vowel is pure and ringing and, in fact, better blended.

## Summary

In summary, problems in recruiting and retaining males in choir arise from several sources. First and foremost, males experience a radical change in their voice that changes its pitch and resonating properties. They experience coordination or balance problems that hinder their ability to sing correctly. Finally, they identify with males and adopt male role models; consequently, they often embrace values that devalue or disparage artistic talent and participation in music activities.

To positively address these issues, the choral teacher needs an effective psychological and physiological approach. Through the use of male role models, gender-specific ensembles, and creative performing opportunities, young men can experience singing in choir as a rewarding, masculine activity. Further, if the teacher understands the physiological development and distinctive acoustical prop-

*continued on page 53*

## Commonsense Training

continued from page 43

erties of the male voice, the singers will be trained accordingly, emphasizing the blending of registers and proper vowel modification for efficient resonance. As a result, the teacher will soon develop a strong male choir or male sections in a mixed choir that sing comfortably and confidently with a rich, ringing tone.

## Notes

1. For further reference, see Meredith Bunch, *Dynamics of the Singing Voice* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982); Helen Kemp, "Understanding and Developing the Child's Singing Voice," *Children Singing His Praise*, ed. Donald Rotermund (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1985); Frederick J. Swanson, *The Male Singing Voice, Ages Eight to Eighteen* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Igram Press, 1977); Graham F. Welch, "Children's Singing: A Developmental Continuum of Ability," *Journal of Research in Singing and Applied Vocal Pedagogy* 9, no. 2: 49-52.

2. Robert T. Sataloff and Joseph R. Spiegel, "The Young Voice," *National Association of Teachers of Singing Journal* 45, no. 3 (Jan./Feb. 1989): 35-37.

3. It is interesting to note that, when the male sings in the chest register, he can place his hand on his chest and feel sympathetic vibrations; however, when he crosses above the break as the voice ascends to the head register, the vibrations in the chest vanish.

4. Stephen Bolster, "The Fixed Formant Theory and Its Implications for Choral Blend and Choral Diction," *Choral Journal* 23, no. 6 (1983): 27-33.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

6. If you are interested in this father-son performance, I have several recommendations. For students living in single-parent families or with fathers who are not available, pastors, neighbors, older brothers, or fellow teachers may serve as substitutes. Maintain a list of men who are willing to serve as a surrogate father in the performance. If the music is selected carefully and distributed early with a cassette tape, only two or three rehearsals are necessary—plan three rehearsals and ask the adults to attend two of the three. Schedule these rehearsals before school or early on Saturday mornings. Most important, tell the young men in the choir that each must help his father learn his part. By the way, at our schools when we initiated this father-son performance during a holiday concert, I found that it quickly became an expected tradition—the men and the audience loved it. ■

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# THE CHALLENGE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS

*Teaching middle school chorus calls for knowledge of the adolescent voice and appropriate repertoire, as well as awareness of middle school students' developmental needs.*

BY STEVEN M. DEMOREST

This month, the *Music Educators Journal* focuses on the much neglected field of middle school/junior high chorus. Few teaching assignments inspire as much fear in the hearts of choral music educators as the prospect of conducting a group of adolescent singers. This fear may be due to the relative scarcity of information about this age-group and their needs. Adolescents face crucial transitions on all fronts. Vocally, they do not have the beautiful bell-like tone of the children's choir, nor can they sing most mixed-chorus literature. Developmentally, they are becoming more like adults as they face a time of life that many of us would rather forget. Socially, they are just beginning to recognize a whole new set of pressures and priorities. While seeming to shun adult contact, they actually look to adults more closely than ever for guidance, respect, and models of how to behave.

Steven M. Demorest, guest editor of this month's special focus, is associate professor of music education at the University of Washington in Seattle.

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*Many of the adolescent qualities that frustrate teachers can be turned into positive attributes through the right kind of engagement.*

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Most articles on teaching adolescent singers have focused on their vocal needs, which are considerable. Teachers can find a great deal of information on identification and training of the boy's changing voice<sup>1</sup> and, more recently, the girl's changing voice.<sup>2</sup> From these writings, we have learned

much about identifying the various stages of the voice change, the vocal limits of changing voices, and strategies for training students to sing through the change. There has also been considerable attention paid to the difficulties associated with matching pitch and the importance of clear, age-appropriate models and consistent training.<sup>3</sup> Although a good deal of literature has focused on the vocal needs of this age-group, there has been comparatively little information about the other unique musical and educational needs of the adolescent singer. Yet it is often the ability to meet these other needs—interpersonal, social, and musical—that determines whether or not a teacher will be successful at this level.

The articles in this issue deal with a range of challenges that are unique to the middle school/junior high choral setting. Anthony Barresi surveyed a number of successful middle school choral teachers to determine the secrets of their success. "The Successful Middle School Choral Teacher," which presents his findings regarding teachers' personal, professional, and technical attributes, is a "must-read" for prospective music educators.



Middle school students respond with energy and enthusiasm when presented with exciting and challenging music-making opportunities.

In "Positively Adolescent!" Sue Williamson offers practical suggestions for teaching and managing a middle school choir rehearsal. She illustrates how many of the adolescent qualities that frustrate teachers can be turned into positive attributes through the right kinds of engagement.

Noted composer and arranger Emily Crocker deals with the crucial issue of finding the right literature in "Choosing Music for Middle School Choirs." Her discussion focuses on what to look for, what to avoid, and how to adapt music for specific situations.

"Encouraging Male Participation in Chorus" takes a look at the perennial challenge of getting boys to sing. It looks at past explanations of why boys do and don't sing and suggests identifying choir not as a macho activity, but simply a male one. The article describes a boy singers' workshop that is having a positive impact on male participation in middle school choir.

Kathleen Keenan-Takagi's "Embedding Assessment in Choral Teaching" deals with the important issue of assessment in the choral rehearsal. While more and more is being written about musical assessment, many writers seem to focus on either the elementary or high school levels.

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*Middle school is a  
crucial link in the chain  
of vocal music  
participation.*

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Keenan-Takagi offers a case study of an assessment approach that works for middle school choir.

We hope that this issue offers valuable information to current and prospective teachers and prospective teachers of middle school choir. Middle school is a crucial link in the chain of vocal music participation, and these students deserve talented and dedicated teachers who are aware of and sen-

sitive to their needs. As any successful middle school choir teacher knows, the rewards of working with children of this age are great. Their energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to work are unmatched when they are presented with exciting and challenging music-making opportunities.

## Notes

1. Sources on the male changing voice include the following:

Anthony L. Barresi, *Barresi on Adolescent Voice*, videotape (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1986).

John M. Cooksey, "The Development of a Contemporary, Eclectic Theory for the Training and Cultivation of the Junior High School Male Changing Voice," four-part series, *Choral Journal* 18, nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5 (1977-78).

Kenneth H. Phillips, "The Child and Adolescent Singer" (chapter 4), in *Teaching Kids to Sing* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992).

2. Sources on the female voice change include:

Lynn Gackle, "The Adolescent Female Voice: Characteristics of Change and Stages of Development," *Choral Journal* 31, no. 8 (1991): 17-25.

William V. May and Bonnie B. Williams, "The Girl's Changing Voice," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 8, no. 1 (1989): 20-23.

3. The following studies explored a number of variables related to vocal pitch matching and singing accuracy:

Mary Goetze and Yoshiyuki Horii, "A Comparison of the Pitch Accuracy of Groups and Individual Singing in Young Children," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 99 (1989): 23-34.

Georgia A. Green, "The Effect of Vocal Modeling on Pitch-Matching Accuracy of Elementary Schoolchildren," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 38, no. 4 (1990): 225-31.

Cornelia Yarbrough, Georgia Green, Wilma Benson, and Judy Bowers, "Inaccurate Singers: An Exploratory Study of Variables Affecting Pitch-Matching," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 107 (1991): 23-34.

Cornelia Yarbrough, Judy Bowers, and Wilma Benson, "The Effect of Vibrato on the Pitch Matching Accuracy of Certain and Uncertain Singers," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 1 (1992): 30-38. ■

# THE SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORAL TEACHER

*Technical competence, professional understandings, and personal qualities all seem to play a role in the development of the successful middle school choral teacher.*

BY ANTHONY L. BARRESI

One day last year, a student from my methods class appeared at my office door looking rather confused and more than a little upset. Pat had just returned from a practicum session at one of our local middle schools. In fact, that day she had taught her first lesson to a fifty-voice eighth-grade chorus of boys and girls in various stages of physical and vocal development. Despite the fact that we had discussed what she might encounter, the actual experience, while "interesting" and even "exciting," to use her terms, was very unnerving. She asked me, "How will I ever become good at this when there is so much that I have to know and be able to do?" Of course, I offered the usual words of comfort and encouragement, advising her to take one step at a time and reassuring her that experience would answer many of her questions. But Pat had posed the eternal question asked by aspiring middle school teachers: "What are the attributes, both



File photo

Besides being a fine musician and vocal model, the middle school choral teacher must motivate students and help them realize that chorus is a valued activity

personal and professional, of successful middle school teachers, and how do I acquire them?"

For many years, I have been convinced that the most important determinant in the success of a middle school choral program is the teacher. In fact, I have traveled around the country leading workshops and clinics

in which I constantly enumerate the personal and professional qualities necessary for success in this area. I have amassed my information on these qualities from personal research in adolescent voice development, personal experiences as a teacher of voice and supervisor of middle school choral programs, and professional interaction

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Anthony L. Barresi is professor of music and education and associate director of the School of Music at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

with many middle school choral directors of varying abilities and experiences. Yet Pat's question still gave me pause.

I was rethinking my response to the question when my phone rang and Steven Demorest of the University of Washington asked me to consider contributing an article to this series on middle school choral programs. It became clear that this was an opportunity to focus my thinking on the question of teacher attributes that are most critical to middle school choral success. For this purpose, Steve and I identified and contacted eleven successful middle school choral teachers, five from the state of Washington and six from Wisconsin. These teachers, who were from urban and rural settings, were deemed successful because of their reputations for musical and expressive excellence in choral performance and the large numbers of students involved in their choral programs relative to the size of their schools.<sup>1</sup>

In my questionnaire, I asked the teachers to list five personal or professional attributes they considered to be most important to professional success as a middle school choral director. More specifically, I asked them to think of attributes along the lines of personal qualities, professional training, and technical skills. While this collection of data was by no means a controlled research endeavor, I trust the responses because they are representative of varied socioeconomic school settings, teaching experiences ranging from three to twenty years, and various teacher preparation programs. Additionally, the music performance background of the respondents varied widely, distributed across various instruments, piano, and voice.

I anticipated that the three major areas of personal, professional, and technical attributes would be noted as highly influential in the potential for teacher success in middle school choral programs, and indeed, this was the case. Under the classification of personal qualities, interaction skills were identified as a necessary element of effective student-teacher relations in the learning environment. Responses concerning professional training

included knowledge relating to teaching approaches; general information about school and program administration, school policy, and classroom management; background experiences related to program development and implementation; and vocal and musical training necessary for middle school program success. Technical skills identified in the responses included abilities to effectively implement professional training, to choose and use repertoire appropriate for young singers, and to interest and motivate students.

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*The middle school choral director must be self-motivated, energetic, and willing to accept day-to-day changes.*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

While the responses received were, for the most part, anticipated, I was enlightened and sometimes moved by explanations in support of them. Throughout the remainder of this article, I will refer to these responses by highlighting teacher comments and sometimes augmenting them with observations and conclusions drawn from my own research and teaching experiences. The surveyed teachers have agreed to my listing their responses and giving their names, in parentheses after a quote. The teachers' full names and school affiliations are listed in note 1 at the end of this article.

### Personal Qualities

As I read through the teachers' responses, I was struck by the similari-

ties among the personal qualities listed as elements necessary for success. One teacher characterized middle school students as "ever changing, developing, and challenging" (Albert). This means the teacher must have a strong, decisive personality and be able to set boundaries for behavior and goals for learning. In addition, these students, though they may sometimes complain, appreciate and even seek teachers who are tenacious but patient and who maintain high musical and behavioral standards (Albert, Schmidt, and Krunnfusz). A "passion for what you are teaching" and a full commitment of oneself to the program and the students were also noted as essential; the teacher must model the kind of commitment and dedication that is needed from young singers (Clements and Patterson). One teacher observed, "Too many middle school teachers sell their students short on both counts. The students will go in the direction of your standards. If you have the knowledge to lead them, they will rise. If you let them, they will decline" (Krunnfusz). Another teacher said:

Having a well-managed classroom allows learning to take place. The kids ... like a teacher who can balance being not too strict and not too lenient. They like clear expectations and consistency from the teacher. They need boundaries and clear expectations of their work, behavior, and the basis for their grade. (Fulmer)

The middle school choral director must be self-motivated and energetic and needs to "be motivated to welcome day-to-day changes" (Morrissey). There was a general consensus on the need to be caring and understanding of the special psychological, physical, social, and musical needs of the middle school age-group. Love and devotion to children were highlighted by one teacher, who contended that the effective teacher must focus his or her "energies on the children" (Larson). Another teacher stated, "If the teacher is fair and friendly to each learner, respect follows. Students can sense warmth and caring in a teacher and will respond wholeheartedly if