

Developing Expressive Singing and Independent Musicianship
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Dr. Sylvia Munsen, Clinician

Program Supervisor, University of Arizona; Conductor, Tucson Girls Chorus
sylvia.munsen@gmail.com ~ 435.938.8824 (c)

***We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.***
(Aristotle)

Vocal Preparation

Purpose: to prepare to sing accurately and expressively with healthy production

- general preparation and engagement of whole body (body, mind, spirit, voice)
 - freedom of movement while singing at all times
- experiment with expressive elements in vocal preparation (and literature)
 - utilize and develop specific exercises for musical concepts/challenges
 - phrasing: 1) question/answer 2) short-short-long 3) 4-equal phrases
 - dynamics (*pp p mp m mf f ff* < >)
 - tonal patterns / mode / harmony
 - rhythm
 - independence (from partner-songs and canons to two-part + literature)
 - have singers respond to visual (conducting) cues
 - crescendo/decrescendo
 - legato/staccato
 - change in tempo
 - unpredictable changes
 - psychomotor reinforcement (cresc./decresc., phrases, descending patterns)
 - exercise whole body to energize the singing (in order to 'carry' phrases)
 - movement ('musical' walking; turn new direction for new phrase)
 - show phrases (arms, yarn, lighted wand)
 - singers conduct (lead sections/choir)
 - motivational toys: magic sphere, flashlight wands, puppets, etc.
 - develop self-evaluation/assessment skills of singers
 - guide students to make aesthetic choices
 - evaluation of own singing and singing of whole choir in rehearsal
 - evaluation of videotape / audiotape of rehearsals and performances
 - questionnaires (performances: intonation, expressivity & preferences; self-evaluation)
- vocal placement within the choir: vocal quality, intonation, range, phrasing, expressivity
 - singers learn that placement must be based on musical issues (not behavioral)

Development of Independent Musicianship Skills

- security of expressive line (hear it modeled by teacher, students, recordings)
- development of music literacy skills
- broaden experience with and understanding of differing styles & periods of music as well as diverse cultures and traditions
- provide opportunity to make aesthetic choices
- provide opportunity to sing one's part independently within a group (SA, SSA, SSAA)
- sing all parts during vocal/choral experience
 - young singers are 'uni-voice,' they are not 'sopranos' or 'altos'
 - change voice part from piece to piece, concert to concert, and/or year to year
 - analogy: describe changing the voice 'placement' to playing a different part in a play

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Guidelines for Singing Musical Phrases

Focus on the musical phrase as the foundation of musical experience & understanding

- one idea, then that idea in relation to other ideas; whole is truly greater than the sum of the parts
- either going some place or coming from some place like the ebb/flow of the sea <>
note that the > is far more challenging than the <; don't let the > 'collapse' ☺
- what is the character or shape of the phrase? how is the musical phrase influenced by the tempo?

Dende Ghana song (this version learned at an ACDA Children's Choir Conference)

Concepts 1) solfege: diatonic (*d r m f s l t d'*) 2) short-short-long phrases 3) canon
Motivation challenge of musical independence singing in canon; song + mvmt

Dende de senwah dende Dende de senwah dende Dende de senwah dende de senwah dende de senwah dende

Process Day 1 learn song by rote w/ motions reinforcing short-short-long phrases

- Day 2 review song + motions; n. walk macro beat w/ singing (turn for new phrase) + motions
Day 3 review song + mvmt + walking (reinforce phrases); n. sing in 2-pt canon
Day 4 review 2-pt canon (each voice part stays in same area); n. 3-pt canon (parts same area)
Day 5 review u – 2-pt canon; n. sing walking anywhere – so parts are mixed up
Day 6 review u – 2-pt – 3-pt canon; n. sing walking anywhere in 3-pts

Super Bubblegum (words/music learned from Mary Goetze in the mid-late 1970s)

Concepts 1) solfege (*d r m f s*) 2) dynamics (> > <>) 3) canon 4) voiced 'm'
Motivation sing w/ actions; 'magic' sphere (show dynamics); lead canon

Super bubble - gum Super duper bub - ble gum
Super duper double bubble Super duper double bubble Super duper double bubblegum

Process Day 1 learn song from *d r m f s - s f m r d*; show phrases w/ dynamics ('magic' sphere)

- Day 2 review song w/ dynamics; add movement (turn to R for each new phrase)
Day 3 sing in 2-pt canon (after 2 beats) w/ dynamics and mvmt
Day 4 sing in 3-pt canon (after 1 beat)

Breathing Prep (heard variation with Helen Kemp at AOSA Conference in the late-70s)

Concepts 1) breath 2) articulation 3) performing in 2-4 pt canon – after 4, 2, 1 beats
Motivation personal success performing one-beat canon + conducting

Ch Ch Ch Ch (blow) ch (blow) ts ts ts ts ts ts ts Ch Ch Ch

Process Day 1 learn pattern with appropriate singer's stance

- Day 2 r. pattern; n. pattern + conduct in 4; n. perform in 2-pt canon after 4 beats
Day 3 r. 2-pt canon after 4 beats; n. 2-pt canon after 2 beats
n. transition from own conducting to T's conducting and entry on beat 1 or 2
Day 4 r. 2-pt canon after 2 beats; n. 2-pt canon after 1 beat (future: continue thru 3-4 pts)

1-2-T-4-5-6-7-8 (first part going down learned from the Sebelius Chamber Choir from Helsinki in 2002)
 Concepts 1) solfege (*d m s d'*) 2) canon – vocal independence 3) staggered breathing
 Motivation personal success, being a team leader, fun “game”

Count to 8, then 4, then 2, then 1 from head (d'), shoulders (s), thighs (m), ankles (d)
 then count 4 beats w/ four hand claps low, then reverse pattern (ankles to head, 1,2,4,8)

process Day 1 Ss learn song (sing + actions) head to ankles: 8, 4, 2, 1
 Day 2 sing in canon: 2-part
 Day 3 Ss learn song reverse – ankles to head: 1, 2, 4, 8 each
 Day 4 sing all (down and up) in canon in 2-pts
 Day 5+ sing in canon up to 4-pts (in sections or groups)
 Day 6+ sing in canon: 2-pts to 4-pts (number off by 2s, 3s then 4s in circle)

Jubilate Deo (Praetorius, last note changed S. Munsen)

Concepts 1) solfege (*d r m f s l t d' r' m'*) 2) canon 3) mvmt – phrases 4) legato
 Motivation personal success, use egg shakers (move w/ no sound!); being a team leader

Handwritten musical notation for 'Jubilate Deo' with solfege letters and lyrics. It includes three phrases: 'Ju-bi-la-te De-o', 'Ju-bi-la-te De-o', and 'Al-le-lu-ja'. Above the lyrics are solfege letters and rhythmic markings. A bracket above the first two phrases indicates a movement: 'walk forward 4 steps' for the first and 'turn & walk back 4 steps' for the second. A third instruction says 'arms go from hi to low (opposite of melody)'.

assumptions know solfege + hand signs, have sung in canon

process Day 1 Ss learn song via solfa patterns (sing + sign); sing whole song + add movement (legato movement to accompany legato singing – use egg shakers w/ ‘no sound’)
 Day 2 r. then sing + mvmt in 2-part canon (two sides of circle w/ leaders in middle)
 Day 3 r. then sing + mvmt then in 3-part canon (circle in 3rds w/ leaders in middle)
 Day 4 r. then sing + mvmt in 2-part canon (number off by 2s around circle)
 all ‘1s’ raise hands, all ‘2s’ and all ‘3s’ raise hands (see who is on your team)
 Day 5 sing + mvmt in 3-pt canon (# off by 3s – identify who is on each #)

Sit on a Potato Pan (melody learned from Melodie Duple in the mid-1990s)

Concepts 1) solfege (*d r m f s*) 2) canon 3) articulation 4) staggered breathing
 5) augmentation + diminution 6) conducting in 2s
 Motivation challenge of being successful w/ staying on own part in 3s; conducting

Handwritten musical notation for 'Sit on a Potato Pan' with solfege letters and lyrics. It shows the phrase 'Sit on a potato pan Otis sit on a potato pan Otis sit on a potato pan' repeated. Above the lyrics are solfege letters and rhythmic markings. A bracket above the first phrase indicates a movement: 'Sit on a potato pan'.

process Day 1 Ss learn speech slowly and expressively – discover it’s a palindrome
 solfege *d r m f s f m r d* – sing solfege and text expressively (<> overall)
 Day 2 review, then sing in 2-pt canon; sing in augmentation (stagger breathing)
 Day 3 sing with medium tempo and augmentation – always check for expressive phrases!
 ½ sing medium tempo + ½ sing in augmentation + switch parts; conduct while singing
 Day 4 review; all sing medium tempo then diminution (articulation) then ½ + ½ then switch
 Day 5 review medium – augmentation – medium – diminution; sing in 3-parts (+ conduct)

notes - progress from singing in divided parts of the circle to numbering off by 2s or 3s
 - have Ss in each group raise hands (1s, 2s, 3s) to identify others on their team!

Many Mumbling Mice (text – Dr. Seuss; melody learned from Melodie Duple in the mid-1990s)

Concepts 1) solfege – la-pentachord (l, d m) 2) ‘s’ and ‘t’ releases together
 Motivation using mice finger puppets

4
 l, l, d d l, l, m (+) m d l, (s)

Many mumbling mice are making midnight music in the moonlight - mighty nice!

- Process** Day 1 use finger puppets (motivation); expressive speech – song w/ solfege; tap for 16th notes to reinforce articulation; tap release of ‘t’ of ‘midnight’ and ‘s’ of ‘mice’
 Day 2 review melody + solfege – choose singers to use finger puppets
 Day 3 sing in 2-pt canon
 Day 4 sing in 3-pt & 4-pt canon

O is Very Useful (text – Dr. Seuss; melody learned from Melodie Duple in the mid-1990s)

Concepts 1) Q/A phrase form
 Motivation conduct choir with lighted wand, conductor puppet, ostrich

4
 d m s l s f l s s m f r m m r d

O is very useful we use it when we say Oscar's only ostrich oil is what we sing today

- process** Day 1 learn melody + show phrases
 Day 2 Ss make up new verses: B is very useful... Brahms, Bach, and Beethoven is...

Body Percussion Canon

Concepts 1) focus on conductor/leader 2) canon
 Motivation lead canon

- process** Day 1 T does variety of 4-beat patterns (one level of BP) / Ss echo 4-beats later in canon
 Day 2 r. canon (T/S); utilize S leaders; 2-pt canon after 2 beats
 Day 3 r. canon; progress to 3-pts (T ~ 1/2 Ss ~ 1/2 Ss)

‘Morning’ Solfege (adapted from *Peer Gynt Suite* by Grieg)

Concepts 1) solfege – pentatonic (d r m s l) 2) canon (enjoy the dissonances ☺)
 3) expressive phrasing with dynamics (> < >< >>) & movement
 Motivation lead canon

6
 C s m r d s m r d s m r d r m s m r d

- process** Day 1 Ss learn melody in solfege (phrasing + dynamics: > > >< >)
 Day 2 r. melody w/ swaying movement; sing in canon

Orff Canon (melody from *Music for Children I – Pentatonic*, Schott)

Concepts 1) solfege – do pentatonic (d r m s l d') 2) canon 3) phrasing/dynamics
 4) transposition to new tonal center (from C to F to G penta on PP)
 Motivation play PP; lead canon

4
 d d r r m l s l s m r r d d' d d r r m l s l s m r r d'

- process** Day 1 Ss learn melody in solfege (w/ <> + phrasing)
 Day 2 r. melody; sing in 2-pt canon after two beats
 Day 3 sing in 3-pts; play on PP (solfege and letter names)
 Day 4 r. melody on PP + singing; n. play/sing in 2-pt canon
 Day 5 3-pt canon