



**(Trans)itioning Voices:
Inclusivity through Line Recombination**
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Promenade 2, Conference Room 202 B/C

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Session Description

This session presents a new methodology to promote the inclusivity of transgender and gender expansive (trans) individuals in choral ensembles. Line recombination involves creating a new vocal line by combining portions of the existing alto and tenor lines in order to provide a singable, intermediate part that supports the student’s gender identity while accounting for vocal health during and after transition. Choral directors can use this concept to address the potential uncertainty surrounding the inclusion of trans singers in choral ensembles by providing an alternative that meets their students’ vocal needs without compromising musical integrity. In this session, participants will gain an understanding of some basic trans terminology, dive into line recombination, and have an opportunity to put the methodology to the test.



Session Outline

1. Thesis
 - a. Through the recombination of vocal lines in their repertoire, choral directors can help to combat the potential bias and uncertainty surrounding the inclusion of transgender and gender-expansive (trans) singers in choral ensembles by providing an alternative that can meet the vocal needs of those individuals without compromising musical integrity.
2. Goals
 - a. To provide a broad understanding of terminology and potential vocal issues trans singers may actually experience in a choral ensemble
 - b. To give directors a set of parameters that can assist them in creating accommodating, recombined lines for singers looking for acceptance while transitioning.
3. Terminology
 - a. General Terms
 - i. AMAB, AFAB, Cisgender, Transgender, Gender Expansive (alternative to transgender)
 - b. Trans-Specific Terminology
 - i. Gender Dysphoria, Vocal Dysphoria, Transwoman, Transman, Non-binary
 - c. “Transitioning”
 - i. What does this mean and what are some common misconceptions?
4. Medical Transition’s Actual Effects on the Voice
 - a. Side-Effects of Feminizing Hormone Replacement Therapy
 - b. Side-Effects of Masculinizing Hormone Replacement Therapy

5. A Potential Accommodating Solution: Line Recombination

- a. Creating an individual vocal line by combining portions of the alto and tenor lines in order to affirm the student's gender identity while also accounting for vocal health and optimizing their choral experience.

6. Hypothetical Singers

- a. Sally (she/her) - 30, transwoman, 5 yrs HRT, ex-baritone, countertenor: 5 yrs, alto/sop II
- b. Sam (they/them) - 22, non-binary AMAB, no HRT, current Baritone, wants to sing alto
- c. Tom (he/him) - 26, transman, no HRT, soprano with vocal dysphoria; wants to sing tenor
- d. Jake (he/him) - 18, transman, 6 mo on HRT, former Soprano, has vocal dysphoria
- e. Jodie (she/her) - 25, transwoman, 1.5 yrs on HRT; Sings Tenor; No vocal dysphoria

7. Line Recombination:

a. Guidelines to consider:

- i. Tessitura of A3-F#4, allowing for some flexibility higher and lower for brief periods. Avoid extremes of range and focus on "singability."
- ii. Consider the identity of the singer when creating the recombined line in addition to their natural range.

8. Examples in Repertoire:

a. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina - *Sicut Cervus*

- i. Compositional Characteristics and Recombination Methodology
- ii. Conclusions: Exemplifies the versatility of early music for recombination due to the flexibility of performance key and the similar ranges of the inner voices.

b. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - *Ave Verum Corpus, K. 618*

- i. Compositional Characteristics and Recombination Methodology
- ii. Conclusions: Due to the static nature of the inner voices, one can make a variety of decisions regarding recombination to fit almost any circumstances for your individual singers.

c. Johannes Brahms - *Warum, Op. 92, no. 4*

- i. Compositional Characteristics and Recombination Methodology
- ii. Conclusions: Disjunct lines with extended ranges may limit the capability of creating part-specific recombined lines

d. Francis Poulenc - *Gloria*, no. II, "Laudamus Te"

- i. Compositional Characteristics and Recombination Methodology
- ii. Conclusions: The priority is to create a singable line in a manageable range for the individual.

e. Eric Whitacre - *Seal Lullaby* (not included in presentation; found in full handout on QR Code)

- i. Compositional Characteristics and Recombination Methodology
- ii. Conclusions: This piece demonstrates the flexibility and creative possibilities of line recombination.

While still aiming for a neutral line, one does not have to think by phrases or even measures. Borrowing from one line or another can even be done from note to note, depending on the piece.

9. Concluding Thoughts:

- a. Musical Integrity and Selection
- b. Challenges and Advice
- c. Encouragement
- d. Why is This Important?
- e. Recombined Choral Library, www.transitioningvoices.org