**Teaching the Child’s Singing Voice**

**Presented by Dr. Bradley Almquist**

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balmquist@murraystate.edu

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Dr. Bradley Almquist

**The Child Voice**

* A unique instrument with a unique quality (tone/timbre)
	+ Not a small adult (mini-adult) as promoted by the commercial world such as Disney, Country or Contemporary Christian
	+ Child voice is capable to a wide variety of vocal qualities and dynamics
		- Head Voice vs. Chest Voice (inside voice vs. playground voice)
		- Commercial practice places the child voice in the chest register
		- Help children “find” their head voice (head range)
			* Sirens
			* Basketball
			* Fly fishing
			* High “Cuckoo”
			* Through modeling and imitation
				+ Play at making sound
	+ The child voice is stronger and clearer the higher the pitch
		- Brilliant and clear from A-F

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* + Middle register is usable and beautiful but should not be pushed for loud dynamics. Untrained singers will push into chest register.

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* + The child voice does not produce tone healthfully low and loud. The singers will shift into the chest register.



**Teaching the Child Voice**

* Establish the pattern of singing behaviors you want to see/hear in your Middle/Jr. and Sr. High School singers
	+ Posture
		- Feet about hip width apart
		- Spine long
		- Neck free
		- Head resting on spine, slightly back
		- Jaw free, opens down and back
		- Long torso
		- Open rib cage
		- Relaxed shoulders
		- Hips under torso
		- Thumbs or fingers on side seams of slacks/pants
		- Look at singers from the side
		- Look for:
			* Jaw and head jutting forward or tipping back
			* Long straight spine, line from middle hip to jaw hinge
			* Model – Watch – Respond – Model
	+ Breath
		- Low, full, fluid inhale
		- Listen for closure in the throat, gasping
		- Watch for rising chest on inhalation/lowering on exhalation
		- Even, measured and fluid exhale.
		- What moves in the body?
		- Work slowly, then speed up
			* Blowing out candles
			* Blowing gently to make the candle fire flicker
			* How does the body respond?
			* Air speed?
			* How does a singer crescendo?
			* Increased air speed?
			* Push the air?
			* How does a singer decrescendo?
			* Decreased air speed?
			* Release the air?
			* Work for easy exhalation for an entire length of the phrase
			* Hiss rhythms (use F, Th, J, Sh, Ch)
				+ An S can cause tension on the throat
				+ If you feel closure or tension, it is wrong
			* Experience precedes explanation
			* Explain only on a need to know basis
			* Do It – Feel It – Describe It
			* Model – Watch – Listen – Respond – Model
	+ Tone Building
		- Vowels carry tone – work on vowel sounds
		- Lifted soft palate
			* Rounds the sound
			* Opens the sound into the head resonance
			* Helps to eliminate nasal tone
			* Sirens
			* “Snore Spot”
			* Approach high notes from the head register
				+ Siren up and then come down to the pitch
				+ Do not push chest register up!
		- Vowel Modification
			* Regional accents – sing with pure vowels
			* “OO, “Oh,” or “Ah” sirens depending on the vowel needed
			* Place vowels in the siren
			* Listen – Respond – Model
			* Quick fix is to round lips “Fish Lips”
				+ Not really a long-term technique – will not transfer to later singing in Middle/Jr./ or Sr. High School
	+ Part Singing (Building Independence)
		- Difference between Part 1 and Part 2 is really quality/weight of the voice – color
			* Darker/heavier voices tend toward Part 2
			* Brighter/lighter voices tend toward Part 1
			* I tend to mix both on each part – keeping a balance –
			* Listen – Respond – Model
			* Be sure that the parts are:
				+ Equal in range, give or take a step
				+ Equal in melodic interest
				+ Balanced in step vs. leap
				+ Balanced in expressiveness
				+ Balanced in text/emotional importance
				+ Partner Songs/Canon
				+ Well –crafted intentionally composed two-part songs

**The Rehearsal**

 **A. The Warm Up**

Purpose: Activate mind/body connection; get the children prepared for

the “work” of singing.

* Posture
* Breath
* Tone (Head Voice – Vowels; say/sing phrases with lifted soft palate; rehearse text with lifted soft palate. Practice rhythmic consonants).
* Literacy Skills (Mother tongue approach)

***Pitch (Grades 2, 3, and 4)***

1. Model Tonal Patterns on neutral syllable
* Students imitate teacher
1. Model Tonal Patterns on solfege
* Students imitate teacher
1. Model Tonal Patterns on neutral syllable
* Students sing back solfege
1. Add hand signs as kinesthetic reinforcement
2. Students identify patterns aurally when they sing them in the music being studied

***Rhythm (Grades 2, 3, and 4)***

1. Model Rhythm Patterns on neutral syllable such as “Bah,” or “Pah.”
* Students imitate teacher
1. Model Rhythm Patterns using rhythm syllables
* Students imitate teacher
1. Model Rhythm Patterns on neutral syllable
* Students chant back using rhythm syllables
* Reinforce steady beat
1. Define terms observed in the music such as tempo terms, expressive markings, etc.
2. Use games such as Instant Recall; Rhythm/Pitch challenges
3. Students identify the patterns aurally when they sing them in the music being studied

***Pitch (Grades 4, 5, and 6)***

5. Add notation for the easy and medium difficulty patterns

* Students associate patterns with notation
* Students write patterns using notation when they hear them
* Students visually identify patterns when they see them in the music

***Rhythm (Grades 4, 5, and 6)***

6. Add notation for the easy and medium difficulty patterns

* Students associate patterns with notation
* Students write patterns using notation when they hear them
* Students visually identify patterns when they see them in the music being studied

**B. Song Teaching**

 Purpose: Teach the repertory – reinforce the tonal and rhythm patterns

as observed in the music. Continuously reinforce good tone and

expressive singing.

* Begin with something that the choir can sing so that the beginning is successful.
	+ Practice good posture, breath management and tone
* Depending on the length of the rehearsal … choose 2-3 songs to teach.
	+ “Line out” the phrases (Alice Parker/Suzuki)
		- Teacher models the phrase using good posture, breath and tone.
			* Teacher may model using the text, a neutral syllable or solfege.
		- Choir sings back the phrase. If incorrect, teacher sings the phrase again until the singers sing it back accurately.
		- Teacher models the phrase with the expression desired.
		- Go on to the next phrase
			* Connect what they know to the new phrase
		- If a particular phrase is giving the choir problems, isolate the patterns and teach them separately using the same procedure that you teach the tonal/rhythm patterns.
		- Reinforce good posture, breath and expressiveness
	+ Do not teach the whole song, unless it is short and can be done within a short period of time. Today’s children have short attention spans. Keep them active – do not give them a chance to misbehave
	+ Do not reinforce mistakes by ignoring bad tone or wrong notes/rhythms. Stop and fix by isolating/modeling.
* Between songs practice tonal/rhythm patterns; reinforce posture, breath management and tone.
* Develop cues that you can show the young singers so that they may self-assess and self - correct (i.e. tapping on the sternum, drawing down the jaw).

**C. Concluding the Rehearsal**

 Purpose: Remind the singers of the joy and fun of singing; provide a

successful conclusion to your time together as a community of musicians.

* Conclude the rehearsal by singing a song that the singers know and that you may use as the final song at all of your concerts. This allows for a sense of closure and success.
* Do not end rehearsals frustrated or negative. You do not want the children carrying with them a negative energy for music and singing as they leave your rehearsal.

**Selecting Repertory**

* Appropriate Range
* Age appropriate texts
	+ Novel (fun, rhyming, etc.)
	+ Meaningful (profound, student composed, address contemporary issues, feelings, etc.)
	+ Balance of stepwise motion with small leaps
	+ Balance of the melody between parts
* Parts? (requires/teaches independence)
	+ Partner Songs/Canons
	+ Difference between part 1 and part 2 is really the color of the voice, the quality/weight of the vocal timbre
	+ Parts should be roughly the same range (within a minor 3rd)
* Themes
	+ Folksongs/Patriotic Songs
		- United States
		- Other Countries
* Languages
	+ Any number of octavos in various languages are available.
	+ Young ears are far more adept at learning languages than “old” ears.
* Student introductions of the pieces
	+ A brief history of the song
	+ A translation of the song
	+ A brief biography of the composer
	+ Establish an historic/sociological context

**AUDITIONS**

Auditions serve several functions for the choral music educator. Unfortunately many music students only see one, the admission to or exclusion from the best performing ensemble. However, for a music teacher, an audition can serve several other purposes, such as:

* + 1. Diagnostic: An audition permits the teacher the opportunity to identify in the student the strengths and weaknesses of their performing and musical competency. It may be used to assist the teacher in designing appropriate curriculum in order to assist in the musical development of the students.
		2. Vocal Placement: An audition may be used to help the choral music educator identify the voice range, voice classification, the vocal maturation and development, and the appropriate seating arrangement for the singer in an ensemble.
		3. Ensemble Assignment: Indeed, auditions are used to place students in various ensembles. While every school should have an auditioned ensemble, one in which the musically gifted are challenged with the finest repertoire, there also must be performing opportunities that are developmental in nature. These opportunities are essential for the art of singing and for providing the opportunity for younger, less experienced and knowledgeable singers to gain in experience and skill.

Teachers obtain two kinds of information from auditions:

1) Personal Information, and 2) Musical Information.

**Personal Information**

1. **Contact information**
2. Parent/Guardian Information
3. Address
4. Telephone numbers
5. E-mail information
6. Emergency contact information
7. **Educational information**
8. Grade level
9. Musical experience (Vocal and Instrumental)
10. Instruments played
11. Private study

**Musical Information**

1. **Musical Achievement:**

*Activities:*

1. Singing a song
2. Sound of the voice
3. Level of achievement of performance skills
4. Level of achievement of basic vocal function
5. Level of achievement of advanced technique
6. Level of achievement of musical knowledge
7. Vocalization
8. Range
9. Location of lift points (breaks – tension – transitions)
10. Stage of vocal development (voice change)
11. Timbre of the voice
12. Knowledge of Vocal Technique
13. Choral Section assignment
14. Sight-Reading
15. Level of achievement of musical independence-literacy (Pitch/Rhythm/Expression)
16. **Musical Aptitude**

*Activities:*

1. Tonal Memory
2. Ability to remember and sing back melodic patterns
3. Rhythm Memory
4. Ability to remember and echo rhythm patterns

## Auditioning Children

### Tonal Memory

1. Do Re Mi Re Do (1 2 3 2 1)
2. Do Mi Sol Fa Mi (1 3 5 4 3)
3. Do La Fa (1 6 4)
4. Do Re Ti Do (1 2 7 1)
5. Do La Ti Do (1 6 7 1)

**Rhythm memory**

1. Ta Ta Ta Ta
2. Ta Ta Ti Ti Ta
3. Ta. Ti Ti Ti Ta
4. Ti Ta Ti Ti Ti Ta
5. Ti Ti Ta Ti Ti Ta

**Paducah Symphony Children’s Chorus**

**Information Form**

**Contact Information:**

Name of Singer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade in school: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 City State Zip

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Volunteer Information:** (Please check the items for which you are willing to volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Room Monitor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Transportation Coordination

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Snack/Lunch \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Musician (instrumentalist)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Publicity (writing) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Name Instruments)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Publicity (public speaking) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grant Writing/Funding

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Publicity (photography)

**------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

**Audition Information:**

Song: 1 2 3 4 5

Pitch Matching: 1 2 3 4 5

Rhythm Matching: 1 2 3 4 5

Voice Quality: 1 2 3 4 5

Part: 1 2 3

**The Repertory**

**Annabel Lee (Leeann Ashby)**

**Colla Voce 24-96250**

**Voicing: Unison/2-part (Optional Descant)**

**Structure:**

1------------ 4 ; 4----------------------------------------------- 17 ; 18------------- 20 ;

Introduction Section A Interlude

 4 -------- 8 ; 8 ---------- 12 ; 12 ----------- 17

Piano Unison Piano

C major C major

21 ------------------------------------------- 33 ; 33 ---------------------------------------------- 47 ;

 Section A1 Section B

 21 -------- 24 ; 24 --------- 28 ; 28 ----- 33 ; 33 ----- 37 ; 37 ----- 41 ; 41 ------ 44; 45 ---47

 M-part 2/D-Part 1 Reverse Unison

C major A minor

48 ----------- 50 ; 50 -------------------------------------------------- 63 ; 63 ----------------- 67.

Interlude Section A

 50 ----- 54 ; 54 ----- 58 ; 58 ----- 61 ; 62 ---- 63 ; 64 ----------------- 67.

Piano Unison Piano

C Major

**Teaching Concepts:**

Compound Meter

Relative minor

Anacrusis

Legato vs. Marcato singing

Accents

Descant

Stepwise motion

Sol – Fa – Mi

Mi – Re – Do

La – Si – Ti – Do

Mi – Sol – La

**This Shall Be For Music (Mark Patterson)**

**BriLee Music BL363**

**Voicing: Unison**

**Structure:**

1 ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------ 36

1 ------------ 4 : 5 ----------------------- 20 : 21--------------------------------------------------- 36

Introduction Verse 1 Refrain (2 sections) 21--- 28 : 29 -------- 36

Piano Unison Chorus (solo)

G major

37 ------------------------------------------------- 45 : 46 ------------------------------------------ 65

37 ------------------- 40 : 41 -------------------- 45 Refrain (2 sections/like 21-36)

Section B (Sequential) 46 ----- 53 : 53 -------- 61 : 61 --------- 65

Unison Melody (part 1) with descant (part 2)

Eb Gb G Major

66 ------------------ 69.

Coda

Unison

G Major

**Teaching Concepts**

Octave leaps (Sol – Sol)

Leaps (Mi – La – Re)

Stepwise motion

Descant

Legato

Sequence

Coda

Do – Re – Mi – La – Re

La – Do – Re

Fa – Fa – Mi – Re – Ti – Do

**Fairest Lady (Nick Page)**

**Boosey & Hawkes 48004859**

**Unison/2-part (Descant)**

**Structure**

1 ------------------- 8 : 9 --------------------- 17 : 18 ---------------------- 24 : 25 ------------------- 33

Introduction Section A Section B Section A - modified

Piano Unison Unison Unison

F Major

34 -------------------- 41 : 42 -------- 43 : 44 ------------------------ 51 : 51 ----------------------------- 69

 Section C Transition Section A embellished A + C combined

 Unison (A in Part 2/C in Part 1)

 Eb F

70 ------------------------------------ 77 : 77 ---------------------------------87.

 Repeat of Section C Coda

 Unison 2-parts (Dominant pedal in Part 1)

 Part 2 is like 25-33

 F (g dorian) F

**Teaching Concepts**

Syncopation

Anacrusis

Ties

Dotted Rhythms

Marcato vs. Legato singing

Sequence (Mi – Fa – Sol : Re – Mi – Fa : Do – Re – Mi – Re)

So – Mi

Ti – Do

Mi – Re – Do – Re – Mi

Re – La – Re – Do

**Blessing (Katie Moran Bart)**

**Kjos Ed 6305**

**Unison**

**Structure**

 1 ------- 2 : 3 ------------------------- 12 : 13 ------------------------ 19 : 20 ---------------------------32

 Intro Section A Section B Section A repeated

Piano Unison

C major a minor C major

33 ------------------------- 37.

Coda

Melodic material from end of

Section A

Unison

C Major

**Teaching Concepts**

Stepwise motion

Compound meter

Relative minor

Dotted Rhythms

Tie vs. slur

Legato

Do – Re – Mi – Mi – Fa – Sol

Mi – Fa – Sol – Sol – La – Ti

Mi – La

Do – La

**The Mountains Are Calling Me (Tom Shelton)**

**Santa Barbara Music Publishing (SBMP 943)**

**SA**

**Structure:**

1 ---------------- 8 : 9 ----------------------------------------- 27 : 27 ---------------------------------- 46

 9 --------------- 16 : 17 --------------- 27 27 ----------- 35 : 35 ------------- 46

Introduction Verse 1 (Unison) Refrain

 Verse 2 (melody in Part 2/Descant in part 1) 42 (1st ending)

Eb (with hints of Ab)

47 --------------------------- 53 :|| 54 ------------ 58 : 59 --------------- 62 : 62 --------------------- 70 :

Interlude with Glock. (2nd. Ending) Interlude B Section (2-part)

70 -----------------74.

Coda

Melody from B section

Repeated *ad libitum*

**Teaching Concepts**

Verse/Refrain

Stepwise motion

Skips (Tonic Chord)

Accidentals

Word Painting

First/Second ending

Hemiola (44-45/56-57)

Cadence

Do – La

Sol – Mi – Fa

La – Sol – Mi

Do - Te

Te – La – Fa

**Two Poems of Emily Dickinson (Neil Ginsberg)**

**SA**

**Santa Barbara Music Publishing SBMP 230**

***There is No Frigate***

**Structure:**

1 --------- 4 : 5 ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- 21.

 5 --------------------- 11 : 12 ---------------- 15 : 15 ------------------ 19: 20 ---- 21

Introduction Section A Section A repeat (3rd section of A) Coda

 (2 + 2 + 4) (2 + 2)

Piano Unison Piano

D Major F Major (G)

**Teaching Concepts**

Modulation

Anacrusis

Subdivision (piano)

Dotted Rhythm

Do – Re – Mi – Fa – Sol

Sol – Mi – Do

Sol – La – Te – Sol

***I Never Saw A Moor…***

**Structure:**

1 ------------- 4 : 5 ----------------- 8 : 9 --------------------------- 12 : 13 ---------------------- 16 :

Introduction Theme 1 Theme 1 with Descant Theme 2

Piano Unison Part 1 (descant)/Part 2 Melody Unison

E Major

17 ---------------------- 20 : 21 ------------- 23 : 24 --------------------------------- 31 :

Theme 1 in imitation Interlude Canon using Descant

2-part Piano 2-part

On the beat vs.

Off the beat

32 ------------------- 34 : 35 ----------------------- 38 : 39 -------------- 41.

 Theme 2 Interlude Coda

 Unison Piano 39 --------- 40 : 41.

 Unison Piano

**Teaching Concepts**

Anacrusis

Descending scales

Syncopation

Subdivision

Imitation

Canon

**Appendix: Bibliographies/Resources**

**Books**

Bartle, Jean Ashworth. (1993). *Lifeline for Children’s Choir Directors*. Rev. ed. Toronto, Canada: Gordon V. Thompson Music.

McRae, Shirley W. *Directing the Children’s Choir*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books,

Nastal, David T. (1999). *Children’s Choir Basics*. Portland, OR: Pastoral Press.

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Tagg, Barbara. (2013). *Before the Singing: Structuring Children’s Choirs for Success.* New York: Oxford University Press.

**Repertoire**

**Anthologies**

Ready to Sing… Folksongs

Compiled and Edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 17173

Ready to Sing… Spirituals

Compiled and Edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 19809

Alice Parker’s Hand-Me-Down Songs

Edited by James Heiks

GIA Publications (G-6533)

Old American Songs (Set 1)

Arr. Aaron Copland

Boosey & Hawkes (M-051-902050-7)

Old American Songs (Set 2)

Arr. Aaron Copland

Boosey & Hawkes (M-051-902060-6)

Five Folk Songs (Vol. 2 – Medium Voice)

Arr. Luigi Zaninelli

Shawnee Press (IA0074)

Folk Songs for Solo Singers, Vol 1 (Medium High)

Compiled and Edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 4952

Folk Songs for Solo Singers, Vol 2 (Medium High)

Compiled and Edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 16300

International Folk Songs for Solo Singers (Medium High)

Compiled and Edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 16959

Spirituals for Solo Singers (Medium High)

Compiled and edited by Jay Althouse

Alfred 11696

Arnold Book of Old Songs

Arr. Roger Quilter

Boosey & Hawkes BHVAB-27

**Holiday**

Christmas for Two

Ed. Jean Anne Shafferman

Alfred 00-21518

Holiday Partners!

Arr. Albrecht, Beck, Donnelly, Moore, Schram and Strid

Alfred 35669

Ready to Sing Christmas

Ed. Jay Althouse

Alfred 00-20195

**Developing Harmony (Partner Songs and Rounds)**

Albrecht, Sally K. and Jay Althouse. (2001). *Grab a Partner! 12 Terrific Partner Songs for Young Singers.* Alfred Publishing Co.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (1992). *I Sing, You Sing: 41 Echo songs for Young Singers*. Alfred Publishing.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (2000). *Shakin’ It Up! 10 Unison Songs with rhythm instruments for singing, playing and learning*. Alfred Publishing Co.

Gilpatrick, Elizabeth. (1996). *Come Join In!: 52 New Rounds, Partner songs and Short Songs*. Alfred Publishing Co.

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