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## A Plan of Weekly Lessons in Choral Techniques for Students in High School Choir

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A PLAN OF WEEKLY LESSONS IN CHORAL TECHNIQUES  
FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington College of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
LeRoy Earl Spitzer  
August 1956

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed among such authorities as John W. Melnar, Henry E. Eisenkramer, Walter Buchanan, and Ivan Kortkamp that members of a musical organization that has attained a degree of excellence must have training in the basic essentials of choral technique, namely breathing, voice production, and ear training. The student must also have a general knowledge of music fundamentals.<sup>1</sup>

"The immediate goal in our teaching must be the satisfaction of the child's basic needs."<sup>2</sup> This thought should be one which is uppermost in the mind of any teacher who is trying to teach children. Children should be taught through music.

### THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. At Franklin Pierce High

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Melnar, "Self-Evaluation by Students," Music Educators Journal, February-March, 1948, pp. 49 plus; Henry E. Eisenkramer, "Techniques in Voice Blending," Music Educators Journal, February-March, 1949, pp. 48-9; Ivan Kortkamp, "Give Your Choir a Check List," Educational Music Magazine, November-December, 1948, pp. 29 plus; Walter Buchanan, "Objective Tests of Performance," Educational Music Magazine, November, 1951, pp. 12-13 plus.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold E. Hoffmann, "Try This on Your Young Musicians," Educational Music Magazine, January-February, 1951, pp. 40-1 plus.

School, Tacoma, Washington, in the year 1955-1956, provision was made for a class in vocal techniques. The choir director was given two music laboratory periods for the purpose of organizing and teaching this class.

The class members include the students who can be scheduled into the study hall during which the course is offered. During the past year there were thirty-eight students who could be so scheduled, and those were enrolled. With five days a week, two periods a day, this gave a total of ten periods a week. Each student came from his study period one day a week for one lesson. There was an average of approximately four students per period, affording the opportunity for a great deal of individual help for each.

In the conclusions drawn at the end of this opus, a partial picture is given of the worth of this course and its application to practical use.

Importance of the study. There was and is a special need at Franklin Pierce for a program in vocal techniques and fundamentals for the following reason: Franklin Pierce is a new high school district, having been formed in 1952. It is a consolidation of several grade school districts in which music was one area of the curriculum that was neglected.

Therefore, this thirty-four week class in vocal

techniques was administered with the following objectives in mind: (1) to afford the student additional cultural and social opportunities; (2) to help the student develop a well rounded character and personality; and (3) to help give the choir and its personnel the training that must be had if the group is to be of sufficient worth to justify its existence.

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Rhythm Training. This training is effected by the learning of rhythmic notation or duration, meter patterns, time signatures, and tempi. Closely associated with rhythm is diction. In a lecture the summer of 1954, Professor Wayne S. Hertz of Central Washington College of Education said, in essence, that good diction cannot be achieved without precise rhythm.

Melodic Training. Melodic training includes knowledge of keys and key signatures, scales, chords, sight singing, and ear training. To become an effective choir member in the matter of good sight reading, a student must have an understanding of tonal relationships within a selected key.

Voice Production. The physical and mental awareness needed for the production of good tone are the two main



facets of effective voice production. Consideration of the larynx, diaphragm, throat, nasal passages and throat are the physical aspects to be considered. Development of the mental processes in voice production is, of course, of prime importance. Correct breathing, tone placement, and tone formation are the result of the interaction of the physical and mental.

Music Terminology. This particular area includes consideration of some terms in music referring specifically to tempi or speed, dynamics or loudness and softness, and style, which refers to the general feeling of the piece in terms of emotion or purpose.

Current Literature. By the term current literature is meant that music being currently performed in choir.

## CHAPTER II

### A PREVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURSE

The school year has a total of thirty-six weeks. The first and last weeks are usually filled with numerous activities that interrupt the regular class schedule. Because of this, the proposed course of study is set up on a thirty-four week basis. Thirty-seven of the periods are spent in actual study and drill in vocal techniques. Four of the periods are used for quarterly testing. Two periods are used for standardized testing, and one period is used for orientation to the program. The periods are fifty-five minutes in length, and the entire period is outlined for each day.

The lessons were written during the summer of 1955, used during the 1955-1956 school year, then evaluated and re-written. In this way the lessons were written, used, and improvement was attempted through practical experience.

### THE PRESENT STATUS OF CLASSES IN VOCAL TECHNIQUES

The course of study set up by the instructor is one in which students are taken in small groups for one period each week so that individual attention may be given. In the review of current literature, the investigator has

not found any comparable courses of study in vocal techniques. He found no course set up on a weekly basis specifying the five points that are stressed in this discourse.

There is a general picture presented concerning what should be taught in music classes, and how it should be taught. In respect to these general sources, it would be well to view what is generally considered as being important in the vocal music curriculum.

Proper breathing is probably the most important factor in voice production. Without proper breathing, an ensemble sounds bad in terms of intonation especially. Archie Jones says that "Breathing is the foundation of singing."<sup>3</sup>

There are three types of breathing: clavicular, diaphragmatic, and costal or rib breathing.<sup>4</sup> Correct breathing should be a combination of diaphragmatic and costal breathing.

Development of breath control can be a four step process: (1) breathe deeply; (2) control rate of speed of breath exhaled; (3) keep a reserve of air; and (4) keep

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<sup>3</sup>Archie N. Jones, Techniques in Choral Conducting (New York: Carl Fischer, Incorporated, 1948), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Eugene Casselman, "The Singer's Breath," Etude, 69:20-21, November, 1951.

a firm foundation in the lower abdomen.<sup>5</sup> Another way of developing breath control is given by Henry Eisenkramer. He states:

For strengthening the breath support, a good exercise is to have the entire group sing the alphabet on one tone and in one breath. First have them sing it rapidly, so that everyone can be sure to get in the entire alphabet on one breath; then, have them sing it more slowly each successive time.<sup>6</sup>

Virtually all persons who write books and for periodicals stress the importance of breath control and breath support.

Inherently connected with breath support is intonation. Intonation, blend, diction, and spontaneity are important aspects in good choral singing.<sup>7</sup>

The choir should do a great deal of performing for the public. This helps to keep the group alive and active. The director must be a promoter. There should be a public appearance early in the year. If possible there should be a system of two choirs, a beginning group, and an advanced group. There should be considerable work in public relations. Choristers in the group should be

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<sup>5</sup>Celestine Burns, "A Beginning Voice Class in the Senior High School," (Music Educators National Conference Year Book, 1937), pp. 272-273.

<sup>6</sup>Henry E. Eisenkramer, loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup>Melnar, loc. cit.

encouraged to participate in civic music. According to Lloyd F. Sunderman,<sup>8</sup> all these factors work toward the improvement of the choir and of the members within the choir. Sunderman also asserts that the director must produce living music, must be a creative artist, must be a musician, must have a colorful personality, must use good music, and must be detail minded. Eisenkramer asserts:

Fundamentally, the secret of blending voices in amateur choirs is a simple matter of exact pitch, with everyone singing the same vowel at the single, same time, softly or lightly, with clean attacks and releases. Of course we lose pitch because we fail to "think" pitch. We fail also because of poor posture, poor breath support, and not starting on pitch. . . . Another very important step in voice blending is to train your group to sing softly. Singing softly tends to make a natural blend, because all voices, when singing pianissimo, will sing at about the same volume, while no two amateur voices will sing fortissimo at the same volume.<sup>9</sup>

In a recent article entitled "Give Your Choir a Check List," Ivan Kortkamp gives a few examples of prime factors in good choral singing. He lists: (1) managing the mind in singing; (2) breath control tricks; (3) tone qualities; (4) diction; (5) intonation; and (6) how to read music.<sup>10</sup> Here again is an authority that is in

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<sup>8</sup>Lloyd F. Sunderman, Ph.D., "Characteristics of Successful Choral Conductors," Educational Music Magazine, September-October, 1949, pp. 16-17 plus.

<sup>9</sup>Eisenkramer, loc. cit.      <sup>10</sup>Kortkamp, loc. cit.

agreement with others as to the elements of primacy in good choral singing.

Mr. Kortkamp gives a few other suggestions in his article. He suggests that amateur singers have the habit of hitting and fading. He calls this "piano like singing." Other suggestions he makes are: always swell long notes, at least, do something to them; sharp the "3rd" of the chord; at the end of a song, or on long chords, take time to discover who has the third of the chord and let him actually make his voice go a little higher, even if it sounds "off" to him at first. He stressed analysis of chords, and production of tones unison in volume, pitch and tone or voice quality.<sup>11</sup>

In summary, it is well to note that there are primarily four basic considerations in the building of a good choir: rhythm and diction, melody or pitch, good voice production, and the understanding of musical terminology. The purpose of this work is to study these four considerations and to peruse the current literature that is to be performed by the choir.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### OUTLINE OF LESSONS

#### Lesson I

The initial class in this course of study is one of orientation. The orientation period includes: a time of becoming acquainted, a shaping of the right mental attitudes, and a preview of things to be studied in the course. Explanation of the terms to be used in the course divided into rhythm, melody, voice production, terminology in music, and current music or music being studied in the chorus itself is incorporated. Perhaps a short explanation to the students of each of these terms would go something like this. Rhythm is that part of music in which we find the pulsation or "beat." If music had no rhythm it would indeed be dull and uninteresting. A good choir always sings in rhythmic unison. One which does not, sings in a sloven manner and the lyrics usually become unintelligible.

It must be further explained that the classes are to learn about notes, their names and durations, time signatures and their patterns for strong and weak beats, and finally tempo or speed. Melodic training includes learning some of the key signatures and why there are

keys, and some of the simple scales and chords. There is considerable provision for sight singing and ear training.

In voice production the class learns how to breathe correctly and to produce the kind of tone needed for good singing.

Also included in the course are sixty-five terms used in music. To interpret the music as the composer intended, the performer must have a good working knowledge of these terms and their definitions.

Some time is also provided for working out parts in music being performed in choir. This is valuable from the viewpoint of the student in learning and from the viewpoint of the teacher in evaluating the work of the student.

## Lesson II

Standardized testing is the object of this period. The test to be used is the Kwalwasser-Dykema Test of Music Ability. This test measures tonal memory, quality discrimination, intensity discrimination, tonal movement, time discrimination, rhythm discrimination, pitch discrimination, melodic taste, pitch imagery and rhythm imagery, giving an over-all picture of the capabilities and training of each student. The results of the test will give the director bases for scheduling of homogenous groups into each period. Students who have more natural ability are



thus enabled to work at a more rapid rate than the less gifted.

Students are assigned to their groups on the basis of performance on the standardized test. During these first two lessons, scheduling will have been on a chance basis, but now the students are among their peer group in regards to musical intellect.

### Lesson III

Rhythm, thirty minutes: The introduction to the study of rhythm encompasses a preliminary of note values from the whole note to the sixteenth note in a 4/4 time. Each number in the time signature is explained. For example: The top number gives the number of beats per measure. It might be asked, "What is a measure?" The distance between the vertical lines on the staff is a measure. Going on, the bottom number tells us there are four beats to a whole note or a quarter note gets one beat.

There is also a limited discussion of 6/8 time.

Assignment: Be able to explain the function of both the top and the bottom numbers in the time signatures. Write out ten measures in 4/4 and 6/8 time; each including at least one of each of the notes included in the day's lesson (whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth).

Melody, fifteen minutes: For the beginning of the study of melody, the first consideration is that of the grand staff, learning the names of lines and spaces in each clef. The student must be taught to always count lines and spaces from the bottom to the top to eliminate confusion.

Various methods of remembering the names of the lines and spaces can be given. For instance: Each line and space in the grand staff counting from the bottom are in alphabetical order. The spaces in the bass clef can be called, "All cows eat grass," A-C-E-G. The lines can be called, "Good boys do fine always," G-B-D-F-A. In the treble clef the spaces spell out the word "face," F-A-C-E, and the lines can read, "Every good boy does fine," E-G-B-D-F.

In the presentation of the grand staff, a point of interest would be a brief history of the evolution of the clefs. In the very early days of music the symbols were placed at approximate position on a piece of paper to indicate pitch. Naturally, this was not exact and was subsequently improved. Later, there were lines drawn, but not in the manner of the grand staff as we know it. Finally notation and the staff as we know it today evolved. This is a simplified version of the history, but it shows the class clefs have not always been in existence.

Assignment: Practice writing treble and bass clef signs. Write in chord form, that is, one note directly above the other, in the treble clef; G-B-D, F-A-C, and A-C-E. Write in the bass clef G-G-D, C-E-G, and A-C-E. Find in the treble clef two E's and two F's; and in the bass clef find two G's and two A's. It is imperative that neatness in the students' work be stressed at all times.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Explanation of mechanisms used in singing is the prelude for voice production. The larynx and its function, comparative sizes of larynxes between boys and girls, and the length of the vocal folds are basic facts to be discussed. A simile may be drawn to strings on the violin as compared to strings on a string bass to give the students an understanding of sound produced on varying length strings. Tension on the strings may well be discussed also. When a string is stretched a high tone is produced; when relaxed, a low tone. A rubber band is a good illustration.

The function of the oral region including the mouth, throat and sinuses should be discussed. The mouth and throat not only form the vowel and consonant sounds, but also help to determine pitch. The sinuses and upper throat region are held by some to be resonating factors which

should be exploited.<sup>12</sup>

Treatment of the different kinds of breathing are of prime importance. Chest breathing and its disadvantages, rib or costal, and diaphragmatic breathing and their advantages should be talked over. Chest breathing has two main disadvantages, the lack of flexibility in the sternum and upper ribs and the tightening of muscles in the throat caused from raising the chest. The costal or lower rib region and the diaphragmatic or abdomen area afford the most effective means for good breathing. The lower ribs and abdomen are much more flexible than the chest, allowing a greater intake. Use of muscles influencing the diaphragm helps to steady the out-flow of breath so that greater support is given the tone.

All this discussion of breathing should be illustrated by the teacher and imitated by the students, always keeping in mind the stressing of good posture to insure greatest effectiveness.

Assignment: Watch a tiny baby breathe. His breathing is correct. Lie flat on your back in bed, relax and breathe. When in this position, breathing in the correct manner is more easily effected.

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<sup>12</sup>William Vennard, Singing - The Mechanism and the Technique (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, Incorporated, 1950), p. 52.

## Lesson IV

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Check the assignment from the preceding week. Generally errors occur when the students become confused about the relationship of the notes to the different time signatures. Give a complete review of Lesson III.

Dotted whole, half, and quarter notes are given during this lesson. The method of explanation is left to the discretion of the teacher. However, a suggested method is the mathematical method of calling the dot half the value of the note it follows, and adding the two (the note and the dot) together. It sometimes helps to take large numbers, such as a note fifty beats long and have them add half of fifty to fifty. If need be, one may even consider a note one-hundred beats long with a dot after it. This is to show the student there is no set amount for the number of beats a dot gets. Many times they will try to make it a blanket number such as a "one" when they are first introduced to the dotted half note in 4/4 time. Care must be taken to show the students that such long notes are, of course, absurd and are never used.

Many different types of time signatures can now be begun. These include:  $3/4$ ,  $2/4$ ,  $2/2$  or cut time,  $4/2$ ,  $3/2$ ,  $12/8$ ,  $3/8$ , and  $9/8$  time. The next step is to show

where the natural accents fall in duple, triple, quadruple, and sextuple time.

Assignment: Write two measures each in  $3/4$ ,  $4/2$ , and  $6/8$  time using at least one dotted note in each measure.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Review and drill on the staff is the first step. For instance, the drill might be the asking of students the names of notes on various lines and spaces in the clefs always trying to build speed. Students can go to the board and write names of lines and spaces as the teacher observes each. In this way the teacher can find the students who are having difficulty learning quickly, and can give them additional drill.

A tune like "America" can be mimeographed or written on the board and the students can identify the names of notes that make up this tune.

Voice Production, ten minutes: First of all, there is a review of terms used in the discussion of mechanics of voice production. What is chest breathing? What is costal breathing? What is diaphragmatic breathing? Which is good and why? Which is bad and why? What are the functions of the mouth, throat and larynx?

The second step is to have the students practice breathing correctly. Use of panting exercises placing the hands on the shoulders or behind the back to aid in

keeping the chest stationary is suggested to help strengthen the action of the diaphragm.

Assignment: Practice breathing exercises at home making sure that the chest remains relatively still all the while. Again, a good method is to begin practicing lying in bed or standing in front of a mirror.

### Lesson V

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Check the assignment of the previous week. Review, using a question and answer period. Begin by asking the students if they have any questions concerning the time signatures and length of notes in those signatures. Example questions may be as follows: How many beats does a quarter note receive in four-four time? How many does it receive in six-eight time? How many beats in three-two time? This helps the student to see the relationship of one key signature to another. The note value is either cut in half or doubled from one meter reading to the next. With sufficient drill the student generally has little trouble.

It is imperative that the student become familiar very soon with the conductors' beats. The first step is to beat out a rhythm, perhaps 4/4; then put the same beat pattern on the board. The same should follow for one, two, three, six, nine, and twelve beats. Show them that

three can be cut down to one, six to two, nine to three, and twelve beats to four. The students drill, counting with the director as he beats various rhythms. They should learn to recognize a beat pattern immediately.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Correct the assignment from the preceding week. Go on to show them that "America" does not always have to come on those notes. If it was given in the assignment in the key of F, the same tune can be illustrated very easily in the key of C.

Introduction of the keyboard is now in order. The reason for familiarizing the students with the piano keyboard is to give them something concrete to picture in their minds when reading the notes. First of all, it must be understood by all that the keys on the left are the low ones and the ones on the right are the high ones, and that the notes are divided into half steps through all eighty-eight keys. Half and whole steps introduce a rather serious problem for some students. They have difficulty discerning which is which by sound; therefore, some time must be spent in ear-training at this point. One of the biggest problems encountered is the half step from B to C and the one from E to F. This must be made clear to them by all means. Paper keyboards are easily found in the leading music stores and are quite inexpensive. By means



of these visual aids the students can learn the names of the notes on the keyboard and the whole and half-step relationships.

Sharps and flats are now begun. A sharp is the raising of a tone one-half step. A flat is the lowering of a tone one-half step. To sharp you must go to the right on the keyboard, and to flat you must go to the left. Some students have had sufficient training previously so this explanation is not necessary and because of the homogenous groupings, there is no great problem for the teacher. The students in each group theoretically have similar training to the others in their group.

Assignment: Memorize the keyboard, and find whole step scales beginning on all twelve steps from C to C.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Practice is carried on in proper breathing exercises. A good drill for the learning of preservation of breath is the singing of the alphabet fairly rapidly all the way through on one breath. Each succeeding time the alphabet is sung more slowly. This also helps to put good breathing on a competitive basis, a basis on which most students thrive.

Also in this lesson is the introduction of the pure vowel sounds--Ah, Aye, Ee, Oh, and Oo. Sing the vowels on one tone in the order given and reversed. The shape

of the mouth and lips is graduated from one sound to the next.

Assignment: Practice doing the alphabet and the vowel sounds. See how many times you can do the alphabet on one breath saying it as rapidly as possible. Most should be able to do it about six or seven times at the end of one week of practice.

## Lesson VI

Rhythm, thirty minutes: In Lesson VII there is a test scheduled; therefore, most of Lesson VI is a review for the coming test. Emphasis for the test should be given to notation values within given time signatures, the conductors' beats and the values of dotted notes.

During this period the foundations for rhythmic reading are begun. This is done first in the form of simple dictation. An attempt is made now to give a brief preview of the method used in this introduction. All rhythmic dictation in this study is conducted on a four step basis. The first step is one of listening on the part of the student. The teacher dictates a pattern of two measures in 4/4 time using only half and quarter notes to begin. The device used by the teacher in dictation is a monodic tone using "dah" to the rhythm. The "dah" is preferred to tapping or clapping because the duration of

the note can be held with the "dah" and not with a sharp, short sound of tapping or clapping. Example:



In the second step the student writes what he thinks he hears. The third step is one in which he checks his work. This means the teacher gives each exercise three times. Easier exercises can be given only twice and harder ones more if need be. The fourth and final step is student participation in the form of having him, with the rest of the group, repeat the two measures rhythmically in the manner first dictated.

Assignment: Study for the coming test.

Melody, fifteen minutes: The first step today is correction of the assignment. Some of the students may have had considerable difficulty making the whole steps. Probably some time will have to be spent illustrating the whole tone scales on the board showing on the keyboard just how the correct notes were found.

Drill is conducted on use of the keyboard using the staff. Notes can be dictated to the students by use of the staff on the board and they are to find the correct note on the keyboard.

Assignment: Study for the coming test with emphasis

on the keyboard, staff, sharps and flats, and ear-training in whole and half steps.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Review the singing of the pure vowels. Practice is begun in matching vowel sounds with the other members of the class. This matching is in the form of imitating quality, pitch, and volume. Best results for blend are usually attained through soft singing, bringing the volume up very slowly and steadily.

Assignment: Study for the coming test. Breathing and its mechanics and vowel sounds are primary considerations for study.

## Lesson VII

This period is devoted entirely to testing. This lesson occurs at the end of the quarter; hence the reason for testing. The test for each group is necessarily different because of differences of groups. Remember the students are grouped homogenously and will have progressed to different points even this early. The lessons need not be and should not be adhered to too strenuously. They are meant to be flexible and should be used as the groups can satisfactorily complete them. The tests, naturally, are made according to the achievements and abilities of each group.

However, a test for the mean or average group should include all the important details covered to this point. The average students should know the time signatures and their notation values, should know how to take simple rhythmic dictation, should be acquainted with the staff and keyboard, should know the conductors' beats and where the natural accents fall in different meters. The methods for correct breathing should be in the knowledge of all.

### Lesson VIII

Rhythm, thirty minutes: The beginning of this session is devoted to discussion of test papers giving a review of all materials in the test. Dictation drill takes up the remainder of the session in rhythm. Half and quarter note patterns are predominant with the inclusion of the eighth note. In teaching eighth notes, it must be pointed out to the students that it takes two eighth notes to make a quarter. Using the common "down-up" method, practical dictation of eighth notes follows. At this point, perhaps it would be well to explain "down-up." On the first half of the beat there is a "down" motion with the head, body, or hand, and on the last half of the beat there is an "up" motion. By application of this method, it becomes easier for the beginning rhythm student to feel the impulse and find the number of notes

to the impluse.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Now is the time for beginning to learn key signatures. The first step is the placing of the sharps on the staff, both bass and treble clef. It can be pointed out that, compared to the treble clef, everything in the bass clef is dropped one line or one space and the same names take hold. For learning the order of the sharps and flats (F-C-G-D-A-E-B or B-E-A-D-G-C-F) it can be pointed out that the order of flats spells the word "bead" and ends with the letters G-C-F, and that these letters are just reversed for the order of the sharps. The sharps and flats always occur in the same order and never change. F is always the first sharp. B is always the first flat.

Following this is the major scale and its construction in terms of intervals. In other words all major scales sound the same in that they are a consistent series of whole and half steps. All the steps are whole except between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth degrees of the scale. For instance: (1) C to D is a whole step; (2) D to E is a whole step; (3) E to F is a half step; (4) F to G is a whole step; (5) G to A is a whole step; (6) A to B is a whole step; and (7) B to C is a half step.

Assignment: Learn the order of the seven sharps

and be able to place them on the staff in both clefs. Be especially careful of F and G in the treble clef and A in the bass clef. Students sometimes misplace those by putting them an octave away from where they belong. Always stress moving to the right after each sharp for the next one. Do not place one sharp directly over or under another.

Figure out the major scales on the basis of the whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step basis starting on G, D, A, and E. Write the complete scale for one octave using accidentals instead of regular key signatures. Write them in both clefs.

Voice Production, ten minutes: The "mental ear" is of prime importance for good, in tune, choral singing. The singer must be able to think the correct pitch to produce the correct pitch. An excellent drill for exercising the mental ear is as follows: Play or sing the first two or three bars of a familiar melody. Have the students sing the same melody. Now, begin the piece mentally, that is, sing mentally, not physically. The director must direct to keep everyone together. Later mental singing may include rhythm, but one thing at a time. After a few bars have been sung mentally, the director cues the singers and they must begin singing immediately in pitch. In this

method, the students must think actual pitch, not a "just about" pitch. Many students admit this to be one of the few times of extreme concentration for them in any of their classes. In this way, in theory at least, music can help to develop the thinking process in students.

Assignment: The students must get together with one another and practice this technique. By constant and continuous practice, students can improve greatly in thinking pitch, resulting in better intonation in choir singing.

### Lesson IX

Melody, thirty minutes: Correct the preceding week's assignment and review the work. The scales, upon correction, can then have the key signatures added to show how it works. Also here, sound reason for learning the key signatures should be given the students. A familiar tune can be easily fitted into a key which is too high for the class to sing. By changing into a more comfortable key we can see why there are different keys. To sing intelligently, the student should learn the relationship of keys to range.

At this point the flat keys are introduced. First of all the correct order of the flats is reviewed and written on the staff to show correct position. Drawing a line under E, D, and C parallel to a line under B, A, G,



and F shows the student and helps him remember the relative position of the flats on the staff. As in the case of sharps, the students must be cautioned to always keep moving to the right each time a flat is added.

Assignment: Write scales, descending, starting on F, B flat, E flat, and A flat writing in the accidentals and figuring how many flats are in each key. The reason for using a descending, rather than an ascending method is fairly simple. If the student starts at the bottom of the scale in the key of F, for example, when he reaches the fourth tone which must be B flat, he finds that he goes up to B and has to come back down to B flat. This tends to confound the students when making them go in reverse, that is, back when they were going forward. Experience has proved to the investigator that the former method is preferable.

Voice Production, ten minutes: During this period there is emphasis on breathing practice and work with the mental ear. It is merely a drill period to further the learning and experience in using correct procedures in breathing and thinking. At this time the student may be asked to produce a given pitch and see how close he can come to it. Within a step and a half or two steps is good on the first few tries.

Assignment: Practice breathing and using the mental ear. This assignment necessarily should be done with at least one other member of the class. Practice producing a given tone--for instance, sing an F.

Terminology, five minutes: Here begins the introduction of some of the more important terms we find in music. A recent survey by the investigator of seventy-five pieces of music shows that certain terms in music occur with much greater frequency than do other terms. Throughout the remainder of the year, terms presented to the students are in descending order of occurrence in the music that was surveyed. Seventy-five pieces offer a fairly good cross-section from which to choose. The first three lessons are exceptions to this rule, however, because there are certain symbols used that were not counted in the survey, but that occur with great frequency. These are the first to be presented. For the first day there is an orientation period of Italian vowel sounds found in the terms. The question might be raised, "Why not put the terms in English?" This is easily answered by saying that Italian has been universally accepted as the international language for musical terms. Who are we to argue with everyone who has written music?

The sounds to be considered are as follows. The

pronunciation given each is the usual sound we find upon encountering these vowels. They are: "a" sounds "ah," "e" sounds "aye" or "eh," "o" sounds "oh," and "i" sounds "ee." This is the general rule for these vowels.

Current Music, ten minutes: This period of time is always to be devoted to the working out of particularly difficult spots in the music that the choir is singing. A lot of the work is in parts, soprano, alto, tenor, or bass. This gives more time in rehearsal for the finished product of the piece. By learning their part well in these special rehearsal times the students can help the others in the choir with their parts. It certainly is a great asset.

## Lesson X

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Review and dictation of quarter, half and eighth notes begin the period. The instructor must be careful to heed the progress of the class and go on as the members of the class are ready. One must be sure that the students are making good scores on the simpler exercises before going on.

The rhythm patterns of a dotted half and a quarter, and a dotted quarter and an eighth are introduced at this time through dictation. These two combinations are

frequently confusing to students, and considerable time has to be spent to secure complete clarity for the majority. It might be noted at this point that the method of "dahing" the rhythms, with the four step process previously outlined, is still in use. Patterns should become increasingly difficult throughout the period. The first exercise could consist entirely of eight quarter notes. Next may be a series of four half notes which exactly doubles the value of each note. A mixture of half and quarter notes would follow going on to the more difficult problem of the dotted half and quarter, and the dotted quarter and eighth.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Correct the assignment of the preceding week and review the work. Here again, there may be errors in the work done by the class. The keys and their signatures present an extremely difficult problem of comprehension on the part of some. With some of the slower groups, one may have to provide additional drill. Once more, the homogenous groupings should help to lessen the magnitude of this problem of individual differences.

So far, the class has covered nine keys, the first four sharps, the first four flats, and the key of C. The rest of the keys are shown to the students, but not particularly stressed for learning because of infrequency with which they occur.

At this point, ear training in listening to major and minor chords is begun. Explanation in the difference between major and minor chords is included. The easiest way the investigator has found is to write the C major chord on the board and play the chord. Next, flat the E and play that. Ask the students what the difference is between major and minor. How can they tell the difference when hearing them? Is the major chord brighter? Is the minor chord more mysterious sounding? These are some of the questions that could be raised. Other major chords and their minor counter-parts should then be illustrated and sounded.

Assignment: Memorize the key signature of the keys up to four sharps and flats. Be able to find "do" on the staff in both clefs.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Discussion of tone placement and the methods involved is of primacy during this period. Possibly one of the more important facets of tone is to have the students make as natural a tone as possible at first trying to keep the throat free at all times. Natural vibrato is to be encouraged. Tremolo is to be carefully avoided.<sup>13</sup> It is a sure sign of improper

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 117, 141.

breath support. Make sure the diaphragmatic region is putting constant pressure on the breath giving the tone constant, steady support. In some of the more advanced learners a head tone, which is one of clear, concise quality, should be motivated.

"R" and "L" sounds following vowels tend to give some a great deal of difficulty. It causes many to have a nasal quality which is not pleasing to the ear. It tends to make an r-r-r-r or l-l-l-l sound which certainly is not to be desired in any music beyond the cowboy and hillbilly performances we hear today. The "r" and "l" sound must be an almost instantaneous sound at the end of the syllable.

Beyond these unfortunate tones are found other combinations of sounds called diphthongs which can be briefly touched by the class. For instance, an "aye" is not really a pure, one vowel sound. It sounds, almost without exception, as "aye- $\overline{ee}$ ," but the "ee" must necessarily be rather short lest distortion become a factor. Similarly " $\overline{i}$ " is not a pure vowel sound. It, too, has an "ee" sound at the end. Careful scrutinization of such problems and their solutions can help tremendously in the final outcome of words in a song.

## Lesson XI

Melody, thirty minutes: Drill on key signatures is the prelude for the day. Students should be able to name the nine required major keys in rapid succession. If they cannot, the instructor must take time to go over and over them until everyone in the class has familiarized himself thoroughly with them. To go on without learning them would mean confusion in working with the keys later.

Additional drill in listening to and discerning between major and minor chords, as well as the introduction of intervals within the major scales, is now undertaken. This is strictly an ear training period. The intervals are taken in an approximate ascending order as to difficulty: (1) perfect prime, (2) major second, (3) major seventh, (4) perfect octave, (5) major third, (6) perfect fifth, (7) major sixth, and (8) perfect fourth. It is true that some intervals will come easier to some students and other students will find still other intervals more difficult. The ascending difficulty set up here is merely a chance selection on the part of the investigator. The students should not only begin to identify intervals by sound but should also begin to know them by sight on the staff.

Assignment: Be able to identify by name, on sight,

intervals in the nine major keys with which we are familiar. Be certain that the primes, octaves, fourths and fifths are properly named perfect, and that the seconds, thirds, sixths and sevenths are named major when working with these major keys. Count the intervals up from the key center.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Practice making "r" and "l" endings sound pleasing. Make sure they are short and yet clearly discernible. End consonants that are explosive such as b, d, k, p, and t are treated at this time. Show the students that there is rather a grunting sound made at the completion of each of these if they occur at the end of the word. Because of the great variety of sounds of vowels, they can and should be treated as they arise in the music in rehearsal. There are many, many combinations of vowel sounds plus the fact that the consonants preceding or following the vowel may tend to color or alter the sound. Therefore, these cannot be isolated and practiced as pure sounds.

Terminology, five minutes: Some of the most prominent symbols should at this time be brought to the fore. Common symbols are those for crescendo, diminuendo, accent, fermata, staccato, sforzando, repeat, and pause. A full glossary of all the terms and symbols is found beginning on page 70. The markings should be taught from the



beginning by giving both the Italian and English word for which they stand. Some of the other terms to be learned are usually in abbreviated form. The entire word is listed in this discourse with the abbreviation following it.

Additional terms for the day include forte (f), fortissimo (ff), piano (p), pianissimo (pp), mezzo piano (mp), and mezzo forte (mf). These and their relationships to one another could probably be best illustrated by putting them on the chalk board in descending order; that is, beginning with fortissimo followed by forte, mezzo forte, mezzo piano, piano, and pianissimo.

Current Music, ten minutes: Christmas music is probably of prime interest at this particular time of the year. Parts may be worked out. Even some solo work can be done at this time if the need calls for it.

## Lesson XII

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Review all material covered up to this point, and give needed drill on all past material. Make sure the students know the values of the notes in any time signature. Use rhythmic dictation extensively. Allow the students to make exercises and then give them to the rest of the group. It not only helps them secure the correct number of beats per measure,

but also gives them practice reading and performing rhythmic exercises. They must be able to dictate what they have written. Try to get them to make it as difficult as possible so they can "trip" the others. This method makes them compete with one another to see who can read his exercise in the most competent manner. Learning to read is the prime function of rhythmic dictation. It is of little concern as to whether or not the students can write the dictation, though the two necessarily go somewhat hand in hand.

Rests are encountered by the student when sight reading; therefore, they should be included in the curriculum of this course. Introduction to quarter, half, whole, and eighth rests is easily made by making the rests correspond to their tonal counterpoints. Do a few exercises of rhythmic dictation utilizing the rests discussed. Keep them easy.

Assignment: Practice writing notes and the four different kinds of rests introduced today in ten measures each of 4/4 and 6/8 time making sure there is at least one rest in each measure. Make all the measures different from one another.

Melody, fifteen minutes: The first step for the day is to check to make sure the students can properly name

the intervals assigned. It is highly likely that many of them, in spite of the admonition about perfect and major intervals and their differences, have mixed the names, major and perfect. It could well be explained that perfect intervals, when inverted, remain perfect; that major intervals, when inverted, become minor. Following, there is a singing drill of intervals as well as practice identifying them by listening.

An additional tool or technique in the execution of this drill is to analyze familiar music first, naming and singing the intervals; and then analyze unfamiliar music, naming and singing the intervals. Naturally, not all the intervals in such an exercise are major or perfect, so minor, diminished, and augmented intervals are definite considerations. It takes considerable explanation to show the students how intervals change. A major interval made smaller one half step becomes minor. A minor interval made smaller by one half step becomes diminished. A perfect interval made smaller by one half step becomes diminished. A major or perfect interval made larger by one half step becomes augmented. One must always be careful to give the number of the interval first and then find if it is major, minor, or whatever. An augmented fifth and minor sixth sound exactly alike, but perform different functions and are printed differently on the staff.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Primary work for the day includes practicing pleasing ways to sing the "r" and "l" sounds that occur in the middle or on the end of words. Too much stress cannot be put on this particular point. Sounds of r-r-r and l-l-l can ruin the entire ensemble.

Soft consonants including c (s), f, m, n, v, and z are on the agenda for the period. The c, f, v, and z must be exaggerated to be heard. The choir members should make these sounds louder than they think they should be. The effect, then, is usually a good one. The letters m and n must be sung through to some degree. However, if they are held too long, a tiresome, exaggerated sound results which, according to many music educators, is not desirable.

If all these letters are not exaggerated sufficiently so they may be heard by the audience, the whole performance becomes one of inaudibility and lack of proper enunciation.

### Lesson XIII

Melody, thirty minutes: The drill introduced in last week's lesson in which the students analyzed and sang intervals in both familiar and unfamiliar music is continued for the day. It takes considerable practice to build speed in interval reading. Quite naturally, it will go slowly at first, but the tempo should be quickened as soon as

possible. When it comes time to sight read a new piece, no one has time to stop and analyze each interval, especially if the song is fast. It should be kept in mind by the teacher that not all the students are going to be able to sing some of the intervals even if they can identify them. Strive for the greatest perfection, but do not go beyond the capabilities of the students.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Additional practice of "r" and "l" sounds is needed to cement the idea into the minds of the pupils that this is a prime factor in good choral singing.

Additional work on the consonants and beginning work on endings such as "ing," "th," "sh," and "ts" are in the lesson for the day. These letter combinations at the ends of words must be stressed or exaggerated to be heard. The word "giveth" may become "giveh" if too little attention is paid to the ending.

Assignment: Practice making these sounds correctly and distinctly. If possible practice in groups or in front of someone who can criticize your enunciation.

Terminology, five minutes: This particular period is used for a quiz involving the symbols and terms given last week. Chances are, many have not studied them. Be sure to impress upon the minds of the class members that

ignorance of these symbols means ignorant singing. Go through several pieces of music and find all the instances where these terms the class studied occur. In this way it gives the terms meaning and becomes a useful learning situation, rather than the mere parroting of words and definitions.

Current Music, ten minutes: It should be mentioned here that during these rehearsals, working with current music, correlation and integration of techniques and information in the areas of rhythm, melody, terminology and voice production is stressed. Learning facts for their own sake is a useless thing. The entire program must at all times have meaning to the pupil. He must always see the "why" of what he is studying. Without this, he will learn little.

#### Lesson XIV

Rhythm, thirty minutes: The initial step for the day is a quick review of much of the material covered, depending upon the strengths and weaknesses of the students in particular areas. The remainder of the thirty minutes is spent in the rhythmic sight reading of simple, unfamiliar music using the "dah" system. Up to this time, the only dotted notes that have been discussed are the dotted half

and quarter notes, but at this time the dotted eighth connected to the sixteenth is interjected. Probably considerable review is necessary to keep from confusion on these series. They are all three basically similar, but one must be careful to count carefully the number of beats in each note.

Special emphasis is also now put upon rhythmic patterns involving eighth notes. This generally seems to be a real stumbling block.

Melody, fifteen minutes: When the students arrive in the room today, there is a "mystery melody" written on the board. This is a familiar melody and the students are to try to find out what the melody is, merely by looking at it. Have the students remain perfectly quiet while trying to figure out what the tune is. This will again aid in mental pitch. The teacher can give the beginning pitch for the piece, but this is, of course, left to the discretion of each instructor.

Another suggested method of melodic dictation drill is to have one of the students sing the melodic line. The rest of the class may write as he dictates. The melody is provided by the teacher, so it gives the person doing the dictation a good experience at sight singing. It should be kept simple rhythmically, but should include most of

the rhythm patterns studied by the class. Generally, it is the better or more talented students who will do the melodic dictating. Confidence on the part of the student is an important factor for accurate dictation.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Here, we review and drill the use of the mental ear. One will recall this is the singing of the melody of a song "silently" or "mentally" and at any given point, when signalled, beginning to sing audibly.

All the while this exercise is being given, proper tone production and breath support should be stressed. Some students find it very difficult to adapt to a new style of breathing. Most of them are and have been chest breathers. This is a new concept and they forget. The best opportunity for practice of proper breathing is in the actual rehearsal. The students in choir should all have some background in breathing and should be reminded as often as is needed to keep thinking correctly.

#### Lesson XV

Melody, thirty minutes: This period is devoted almost entirely for review for the quarter-semester examination in the session the following week. The review should include the key signatures, and sight singing



both rhythmically and melodically. An excellent piece of companion material is the Oxford Sight Singing Series. This series is constructed on a graduated basis as far as difficulty is concerned. It also has a complete system given for the learning of the sol fa method if the instructor wishes to utilize it. The review should also include identification of major and minor chords, at least major and perfect intervals, and the clefs, both treble and bass.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Again this part of the period is for the review of the test coming up next week. Review for the examination should include the types of breathing and which are good and which are not preferable, vowels, consonants, and diphthongs, and finally choral enunciation in general. This last part is fairly nebulous for testing purposes, but it should constantly be kept before the classes to keep them performing correctly.

Terminology, five minutes: This consists of a short review of the terms and symbols given to this point, utilizing music being sung currently in the choir. In addition, seven new terms can be now given. They are: rallentando, tempo, molto, poco a poco, sforzando, maestoso, and mosso.

Current Music, ten minutes: Usually about this time of year there is a mid-winter concert coming in February. Part work and general preparation for this concert would take the remaining time if there are not too many questions in the review.

At all times during the review, the class should be encouraged to ask questions. They know best what is vague in their own minds, so they are best qualified to ask questions. The teacher, sometimes, may submit leading questions, or, even may make statements contrary to fact and see if the class reacts and members are sure enough of themselves to challenge such statements.

#### Lesson XVI

This period is devoted entirely to testing. The tests are to be constructed on the bases of the progress made by each of the ten groups. No set test can be given to all the groups because some of the groups will be ahead of the lesson plan at this point and some will not be this far. As far as possible each set of tests should be geared so that the differences of individuals within each group may be tested fairly. Even in these homogenous groupings there are great differences by this time. The reason for that is that some with much ability may have scored low on the standardized test for reasons of health,

room conditions, home conditions, or lack of training. Others with less ability could get a fairly good score by having had a great deal of previous training, but at this point have not progressed to any measurable degree.

### Lesson XVII

Lesson XVII begins a new semester of work. Few new things are introduced and stress is laid upon drill of material given during the first semester. However, there is some new material presented. It would be mere repetition of words to try to re-state the methods used during the first semester, so mention of method is brief in the following lessons.

Rhythm, thirty minutes: The entire session in rhythm for the day is drill reading primarily unfamiliar music using several methods. These methods are as follows: reading the notes together as a class is essentially a monotone using "dah" for each new note; reading the notes and clapping each one; tapping the fingers to the rhythm; and finally, saying the words in rhythm. Saying the words to the rhythm is the last method used; because, when reading in this way, the student must follow two lines, the music and the words. Earlier in the course, tapping and clapping of rhythm was not allowed, but by this time the classes

should have a sufficient understanding of duration of notes and the variance of the types of drill tends to relieve whatever monotony might develop.

Melody, fifteen minutes: This session is used largely to evaluate the test papers of last week. Any time spent in this fashion can be used to tremendous advantage. Most persons learn by their mistakes, and by going over the papers carefully and showing the students just where their errors came and why they made them, the instructor may help them to help themselves.

Voice Production, ten minutes: A portion of this time is consumed in the review of the section of the test involving voice production. General choral enunciation is best achieved by a combination of giving the proper stress to the proper sounds in exact, precise rhythm. Have the students try to each set their own rhythm, chanting a group of words being careful to enunciate. They will easily see that the result is unintelligible because they are not together. These processes of rhythm, melody, and voice production must be carefully correlated and integrated to achieve the maximum benefit.

Re-emphasis on breathing takes the surplus time. Use the panting exercises to help strengthen the diaphragmatic muscles and their action.

## Lesson XVIII

Melody, thirty minutes: Drill stressing sight singing, keys, intervals, chords, and scales is the essence of the remaining periods in melody. In these areas of concentration, it is a "must" to have integration of rhythm with voice production, and dynamics. By this time the students may have forgotten a little about the keys and the key signatures. An assignment of transposition would be in order. For instance, "America" could be written for them in the key of C and they could move everything up a perfect fourth and put it in the key of F. Similar drills can be set in motion using some of the other common keys and other melodies.

Voice Production, ten minutes: This short period is used for a general review of breathing and mechanics of producing good sound. This includes the panting and "alphabet" exercises mentioned previously. Practice keeping the tone natural and free away from the throat and in the resonating area of the pharynx and mouth.

Terminology, five minutes: The new terms to be discussed are: allargando, moto, accelerando, ad libitum, and marcato.

Current Music, ten minutes: The usual spring operetta is just beginning to get underway now, and some of the choral parts can be worked out during this period.

### Lesson XIX

Rhythm, thirty minutes: The entire session is used for drill in rhythmic notation, time signatures and diction. The Oxford Series can be drawn from to offer valuable aid in learning rhythmic notation. A short review of the conductors' beats can be effected by having the class count aloud while the director leads. A real way to keep the class on its toes is to keep changing the meters. If the students are observant they will see that the second beat is a real clue as to what the meter will be. If the beat goes to the left he can be fairly sure it will be at least four and possibly more. It is an effective tool and is fun for the group.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Continued drill again is the forte for the period. A little more transposition can be manipulated to further show the value of knowing keys and how they can be worked to advantage.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Discussion and explanation of enunciation as given by Fred Waring on most

of his music is the topic for the day. Experimentation along this line can show the students the importance of exaggeration in enunciation. Waring softens many of the harsh sounds at the ends of words which are actually noise. Most of the extreme changes occur with the "s" sound. He constantly softens it into a "z" sound.

#### Lesson XX

Melody, thirty minutes: Once again there is drill emphasizing sight singing using the Oxford Series.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Mental ear drill is the theme for the period with a brief review of the Waring pronunciation techniques. Some sight singing and breathing drills can be easily integrated here, perhaps by singing long phrases on a single breath.

Terminology, five minutes: Terms for the day include tutti, fine, legato, tempo I and sempre. Finding the terms in the music that is currently being prepared for concert is the most effective and meaningful way of presenting the lesson.

Current Music, ten minutes: Little more can be said in regards to the study of current music at this particular time. The coming operetta, spring festival and graduation music all have to be prepared.

## Lesson XXI

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Rhythm was last taught two weeks previously. At that time we sight sang and studied the conductors' beats. These may again be the forte for the day. Practice using numbers or exercises that have partial measures at the beginning of pieces, so the students may become better equipped to handle the problem of attack in a more efficient manner.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Also, here is a time for continued drill in ear training and sight singing. Practice identifying and singing intervals, major, minor, perfect, diminished and augmented.

Voice Production, ten minutes: This session is devoted to placement of tone and matching of tone with other members of the group. The tone matching process should begin with soft singing so that it (the tone) can be more easily matched. Start by using the voice with the best quality or the type of quality preferred for some particular reason. Have another sing with that person imitating, then add another and another until all are singing the same quality of tone in unison.

## Lesson XXII

Melody, thirty minutes: More drill is the subject



of the period. The ear must be properly trained to discern between slight differences in pitch. The instructor can play a pitch on the piano and then sing slightly sharp or flat. The students should try to evaluate the match and see if the instructor is in pitch, sharp, or flat.

Sight singing is always a valuable aid in learning to sight read effectively. Continue using the series previously mentioned or take an unfamiliar piece of choral music and have them try to pick out their parts a capella.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Exercise in the use of the mental ear correlated with correct breathing and tone placement is the keynote for this lesson.

Terminology, five minutes: A quick review of all the terms or most of them is about due. Of course, constant practice using these terms in choir aids a great deal in the learning of terms, but a little additional drill on the more unfamiliar terms is essential.

New terms for the day are andante, lento, piu, segno, and espressivo.

Current Music, ten minutes: About this time of year the contest may be scheduled. To iron out any particular little difficulties is especially advantageous to the group. By working out these problems in the small groups,

these people can go back to choir and aid the body of members unable to take the special class.

### Lesson XXIII

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Review the methods of attacking notes beginning on a partial beat. Have the students make up exercises and dictate them to the rest of the class. Make sure that each student dictates correctly by having him make an extra copy of the exercise for the instructor. A student should be censured more severely for not being able to dictate his own exercise than for not being able to write correctly another person's dictation.

Melody, fifteen minutes: More emphasis is given here on sight singing and ear training involving chords and intervals. Play chords on the piano and ask the class to sing the root. Play them in all inversions as well as root position.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Exercises in good breathing using the panting method is today's lesson. By this time the class should be able to use the correct methods of breathing. Continual reminders during these sessions and choir will be building the habits desired.

## Lesson XXIV

Melody, thirty minutes: An entire review of all material covered so far is given in preparation for the coming examination next week. For review purposes, this melody period can be combined into a melody-rhythm correlation putting time and key signatures together. Both melody and rhythm can now be taken as one. Melodic dictation, with a few problems in rhythm, can easily be found and executed.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Here, too, the time is used in review for the coming examination. Each person, for purposes of the test, may be required to hold a tone a required length of time or must be able to go through the alphabet several times, though the latter is a less valid test because some students can say the alphabet faster than others.

Terminology, five minutes: A brief review of terms given in the past plus the addition of meno, allegro, coda, D.S., and lunga is the lesson for the day.

Current Music, ten minutes: The clearing up of particular difficulties in regard to concert and contest material takes the entire ten minutes allotted.

## Lesson XXV

Examination at this time can be very comprehensive, not necessarily being specific about facts, but having them analyze a piece of music for a few moments and then performing it for the rest of the group.

## Lesson XXVI

Voice Production, ten minutes: This period is used to give actual singing experience to the students in regards to dynamics, tone placement, breath, and enunciation. One method is to have the pupils each bring some suitable solo to class and perform. The rest of the group, with the guidance of the teacher, may evaluate in terms of the criteria mentioned above.

Terminology, twenty minutes: Since there is quite a lot of time for terminology within the next few weeks, much of the time is spent on drill of all terms learned in the past, actually going through music and interpreting the markings.

New terms for this particular day include: *morendo*, *subito*, *non*, *allegretto*, and *d.c.*

Current Music, twenty-five minutes: It is probably close to contest time, so much time is devoted here to the

materials to be used there. If the contest also includes sight reading, some of the work may be done in this area.

### Lesson XXVII

Melody, thirty minutes: Melodic dictation, sight reading, and ear training through chords and intervals should be the subject for intensive drill.

Voice Production, ten minutes: More drill is devoted to actual singing of songs making use of dynamics, tone placement, breath control, and enunciation.

Terminology, five minutes: Decrescendo, larghezza, largamente, largo, and marcia are the terms for the day. At all times these terms can be found in music, music that is being currently rehearsed, if possible.

Current Music, ten minutes: The spring music festival is very likely drawing close at hand. Difficult detail work can be handled during this period.

### Lesson XXVIII

Rhythm, thirty minutes: Drill in dictation should be resumed. It has been several weeks since a rhythm lesson has been given. Therefore, a short review is necessary to bring the problems freshly to mind. The series involving dotted notes must be carefully reviewed.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Additional ear training,

working with intonation, can be manipulated by having the instructor sing pitches slightly sharp or flat and having the students identify the sounds.

Voice Production, ten minutes: Precision of rhythm embodied with enunciation is the main topic. Probably this can best be done by taking a difficult set of words and saying them together rhythmically with the conductor directing. The rhyme "Peter Piper" may be used.

#### Lesson XXIX

Voice Production, ten minutes: A repetition of the work of last week is the essence of the lesson. This correlation between rhythm and enunciation is so close that it can hardly be isolated into two different facets.

Terminology, twenty minutes: There is quite a lot of time, so exercise in use of markings is utilized. Additional terms are: marziale, parlando, primo, recitative, dolce, rubato, and solo.

Current Music, twenty-five minutes: Concert time is quite near; much work probably needs to be done in parts. The numbers for graduation must be very well done because of the solemnity of the occasion. Therefore, the emphasis on perfecting the voice parts.

## Lesson XXX

Melody, thirty minutes: Drill is given in sight singing and ear training both melodically and rhythmically.

Terminology, ten minutes: The final terms given to the students are: staccato, troppo, valse, waltz, adagio, attacca, andantino, and cantabile. These words occurred less frequently in the music examined for the purpose of this study. Therefore, they are the last words listed.

Current Music, fifteen minutes: A continuation of the work done last week in the numbers for graduation is eventuated.

## Lesson XXXI

Rhythm, thirty minutes: This is the final period used in working on rhythm and its problems, so a brief review of all elements covered is the prospect for the day. This includes notation, rhythmic patterns, time signatures, tempi and durations of notes.

Melody, fifteen minutes: Sight singing, intervals, keys, scales, and chords are the elements for study.

Terminology, ten minutes: A complete review and drill using all words given during the year is the lesson.

### Lesson XXXII

This entire period is used for a complete review for the final examination the following week. The work in rhythm should include notation, rhythm patterns, diction, time signatures, tempi and duration.

The work in melody should have ear training, keys, scales, chords, sight singing, and the staff and clefs.

Voice production takes into account breathing, tone placement, mental ear, and pronunciation and enunciation.

### Lesson XXXIII

The final examination is given during this period. In all probability, the differences in groups at this point are very great, and no two groups are at exactly the same point of progress. Therefore, ten different sets of examinations must be constructed.

### Lesson XXXIV

This last period is used for repeating the standardized test by Kwalwasser and Dykema which gives some indication of the progress of the students in the special class.



## CHAPTER IV

### AN EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

Several basic considerations must be kept in mind throughout this course of study. Although the lessons for each day are carefully divided, there is a continuous thought and use of integration and correlation among the five elements of the course. No one element is kept isolated from the others.

It should also be kept in mind that there are individual differences between groups. At the beginning of the course, the students are required to take a standardized test so they may be grouped homogenously. As a result of this grouping there are few differences within one particular group, at least at the beginning. The groups who have much more ability are going to be able to cover the fundamentals of the course in much less time than those who are slow. The fast are not kept back, but are allowed to continue at their own rate. Conversely, the slow group is not to be pushed to keep up with the others. Recognition of these individual differences of groups is imperative.

Methods given in this study are merely suggestions and need not be followed rigidly. Each teacher using this course may use other methods which perhaps work best for him, but the investigator, through his own experience, has

found the suggested methods to work best for him.

One final consideration is that of student projects; that is, the assignments and work the students are given during the year as special undertakings. The students are all required to keep a notebook containing all notes and information given. This is a requirement which the student must satisfy as part of his regular choir credit, and one which gives him something concrete with which to work.

One should be mindful that this study is one of weekly, not daily, lessons. From week to week the student forgets a great deal of the material presented because of lack of continuous association with the material. The instructor has tried to remedy this somewhat through the use of extensive drill during the second semester.

There is also the problem of those students who drop out at semester time. They cannot complete the course but are given credit for work that has been done. Similarly, there are those who enter the course at semester time and have not had the first semester's work. They must be grouped separately and started at the beginning. Since there are, as a rule, few who enroll at the semester, the grouping of new students is much more heterogeneous than those enrolled in the beginning. More consideration has to be given to individual differences within the group.

This course of study has seemed to have benefited

the majority of those enrolled. Statistics from results of the Kwalwasser-Dykema examination have been compiled and are presented in Table I on page 63.

As is shown for group number three on the table, sixty-five of the choir members were tested by the Kwalwasser-Dykema test at the beginning of the school year. The results showed that the group average fell into the percentile rank of 70.69. At the end of the year, eighty-three students were tested, and the percentile rating was 77.69. This gave an increase of exactly seven percentiles. Eighteen more students were tested at the end of the year for various reasons. In the fall, some of the students were absent during the test period; some enrolled late. There was a considerable increase of enrollment at the semester giving a larger possible number to be tested in the spring. There were some who were not tested in the spring also because of early withdrawals and absenteeism.

The group that had the benefit of the course outlined here began at the mean percentile rank of 76.05 and ended at the mean percentile rank of 88.18, as is indicated by group I in Table I. These thirty-eight students had an average increase of 12.13 percentiles.

Only a small group of those who were in the choir who did not have the course all year were tested both at the beginning and the end of the year, eleven of them.

TABLE I  
COMPARISON OF TEST PERFORMANCE OF CLASS MEMBERS AND  
NON-MEMBERS ON THE KWALWASSER-DYKEMA TEST

Percentile Ranks	I Special Class		II Not in Special Class		III Entire Choir	
	Beginning	End	Beginning	End	Beginning	End
90 - 99	15	23	0	6	18	37
80 - 89	7	5	2	1	9	11
70 - 79	2	5	5	1	8	9
60 - 69	3	3	2	0	7	12
50 - 59	8	2	0	0	10	4
40 - 49	1	0	1	1	6	1
30 - 39	2	0	1	1	4	3
20 - 29	0	0	0	1	2	4
10 - 19	0	0	0	0	0	2
0 - 9	0	0	0	0	1	0
Number	38	38	11	11	65*	83*
Mean Percentile Rank	76.05	88.18	70.91	75.18	70.69	77.69
Gain in Percen- tile Rank	12.13		4.27		7.00	

\*Includes additional choir members with irregular attendance or new members.

This is group II on the table. They began at a percentile rank of 70.91 and ended at a rank of 75.18, an increase of only 4.27 percentiles. These people were excluded from the special course because of scheduling difficulty.

There are some limiting factors as to the validity of the scores because of various factors. There were some variations in the statistics involving the very large group because of drop-outs, absenteeism while testing, and the new students who had enrolled at semester time. The latter point is illustrated by the larger number tested at the end of the year than at the beginning.

The group that took the course improved nearly three times as many percentile ranks as the group which was in choir all year who did not have the special attention. However, one serious question must be answered. The persons who had the course met six periods a week. The others met only five days a week. How much influence would this extra meeting have had if it had merely been an additional choir period? How much would the group have improved? Some of the percentiles gained by the special group undoubtedly was a result of the extra meeting. Just how much, this treatise cannot answer.

However, the instructor feels the course achieved its purpose and knows that it did the choir some good. Whether the better results were achieved through the course

itself or merely by the extra meeting day cannot be answered. In the final analysis, the purpose of the course was accomplished; the choir did improve.

## CHAPTER V

### RECAPITULATION: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The reason for choosing this particular project in preference to others is the need for a course in fundamentals for the children in the Franklin Pierce School District. Until 1952 the district was not consolidated. There were four grade school districts that sent their students to Lincoln of Tacoma, Clover Park, or Puyallup High School. None of the four schools had a properly administrated and organized program. Music was usually taught by the classroom teacher, not a specialist. Therefore, the essential fundamentals were sometimes ignored. Students coming into the high school, by and large, have very little training. The community people are not generally in the higher income brackets, so few students have had private music instruction. This course begins with the very first fundamentals of choir singing and continues into more complicated, varied aspects of music performance.

Administration and scheduling of the course was the most serious problem that was encountered, evidenced by the fact that only thirty-eight students were enrolled in the course. During the summer of 1955 the instructor arranged with the principal to have as many choir members as possible scheduled into third and fourth period study periods so they

could have the advantage of the course. The obvious fact is that less than half of the students could be so scheduled because of various conflicts. Suggestions for improvement of administration are offered later in this chapter.

The actual period was very informal because of the smallness of each group. Thirty-eight students divided by ten gives just under four students per period. At the end of the year, the instructor combined two of the groups to afford him an opportunity to have a period to work on the production of the spring operetta. A great deal of individual attention was given to each student, which, of course, was very advantageous for a good learning situation. Specific problems each student had could be solved without wasting the time of many others.

The only documented evidences of improvement, because of this course, that the instructor can offer are the higher scores achieved by the special group on the standardized test. However, it is the feeling of the instructor that confidence through knowledge was an important factor attained by most of the students in the class. Concerning the test scores, there is one large, limiting factor as to the validity of the gains in percentile ranks. The group that had the class met six periods a week. The others in the choir met only five times. Whether or not this extra period was the main factor in this gain cannot be proved



here. It is difficult for the instructor to conceive that the special group would improve nearly three times as many percentile ranks as the others if they merely had an additional choir period. However, this is only conjecture.

Several recommendations are offered for the administration and teaching of this course. If it is impossible to schedule all the choir members into the special class by means of the study hall, other means may be employed. The remaining students could meet before and after school, but this is impossible in many districts because of transportation difficulties. Another possibility for scheduling is to merely have the class once a week in the regular choir period. This has the limitation of cutting one badly needed rehearsal, but the course may be worth the lost rehearsal. Probably one of the biggest limiting factors for having the course during the regular choir period is the fact that little individual attention could be given to each student. Still another very important possibility would be the inauguration of the course in the second choir or glee club. Students who are good enough to make the concert choir without serving a year apprenticeship in the second choir are usually grounded in the fundamentals already. The second choir is usually smaller than the concert choir and would afford more opportunity for individual help. The instructor plans to follow this procedure in the year 1956-1957.

Most of the methods and procedures of instruction are given in the outline of lessons. Little needs to be said about technique. There are a few points which may be covered. (1) Be sure the students always understand what they are to do. Do not go ahead without making certain they do comprehend. (2) Give the students a good reason for each phase of work undertaken. If no adequate reason can be given, there is probably little value in the work. (3) Be sure to review the preceding week's lesson before going on. Many facts are forgotten in the course of seven days. (4) Try to correlate the different areas of concentration, namely, rhythm, melody, voice production, terminology, and current literature. (5) Keep the objectives of music education in mind at all times. Make an effort to afford the students additional cultural and social opportunities; help the students develop a well rounded character and personality; and help give them the opportunity for constructive self-expression.

## GLOSSARY

## GLOSSARY

Following is a list of terms given throughout the study. Following the word is a number in parentheses giving the number of times the word was found in a survey of seventy-five pieces of choral music.

- accelerando (7) - accelerating the time; gradually increasing the velocity of the movement.
- adagio (1) - slow, but quicker than largo and slower than andante.
- ad libitum (7) - at will; at pleasure.
- allargando (8) - growing broader; louder and slower.
- allegretto (2) - rather light and cheerful but not as quick as allegro.
- allegro (3) - quick, lively.
- andante (5) - a movement in moderate time but flowing easily, gracefully.
- andantino (1) - a little slower than andante is the literal meaning, but it has become a doubtful term, and is generally used as meaning quicker than andante.
- attacca (1) - go on, begin the next.
- cantabile (1) - singing or playing in a melodious and graceful style, full of expression.
- coda (3) - the tail or end; a few measures added to the end of the piece of music to make a more effective termination.
- crescendo (69) - a word denoting an increasing power of tone.
- Da Capo (2) - from the beginning; an expression placed at the end of a movement to indicate that the performance must return to the first strain.

- Dal Segno (3) - from the sign; a mark directing a repetition from the sign.
- deciso (1) - in a bold and decided manner.
- decrescendo (2) - gradually diminishing in power of tone.
- diminuendo (19) - diminishing gradually the intensity or power of the tone.
- fine (6) - the end; finish.
- gavotte (1) - a graceful elegant dance of even rhythm, generally quadruple.
- giusto (1) - a term signifying that the movement indicated is to be performed in an equal, steady, and exact time.
- grandioso (1) - grand, noble.
- grave (1) - a slow and solemn movement ; also a deep, low pitch in the scale of sounds. The slowest tempo in music.
- largamente (2) - broadly, fully.
- larghezza (2) - in the style of largo; slow.
- largo (2) - a slow and solemn degree of movement.
- legato (6) - in a close, smooth, graceful manner.
- lento (5) - slow.
- lunga (3) - long.
- maestoso (11) - majestic, stately, dignified.
- marcato (7) - marked; accented; well pronounced.
- marcia (2) - march.
- marziale (2) - martial; in the style of a march.
- meno (4) - less.
- morendo (3) - dying away; gradually diminishing the tone and the time.

moderato (20) - moderately; in moderate time.

molto (14) - much.

mosso (10) - moved, movement, motion.

moto (8) - motion, movement.

non (3) - not, no.

parlando (2) - accented; in a declamatory style.

piu (5) - more.

poco (23) - little.

poco a poco (14) - little by little.

portamento (1) - indicates a carrying or gliding of the tone from one note to the next, but so rapidly that the intermediate notes are not defined.

presto (1) - quickly, rapidly.

primo (2) - principal; first.

quasi (1) - in the manner of; in the style of.

rallentando (18) - the time gradually slower.

recitativo (2) - a species of musical declamation.

ritard (69) - slackening the time.

rubato (2) - taking a portion of the duration from one note and giving it to another.

segno (4) - a sign.

sempre (5) - always, evermore, continually.

sforzando (13) - one particular chord or note is to be played with force or emphasis.

solo (2) - a composition of passage for a single voice or instrument.

sostenuto (1) - sustaining the tone.

staccato (2) - detached; distinct; separated from each other.

subito (3) - suddenly; immediately; at once.

tempo (15) - the speed of the rhythm.

tempo I (6) - first or original tempo.

tranquille (1) - tranquillity, calmness, quietness.

troppo (2) - too much.

tutti (7) - all; the whole.

valse (2) - a waltz.

waltz (2) - originally a round dance in three-four time.

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