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A Guide for the Teaching of Vocal Technique in the High School Chorus

David A. Quam

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A GUIDE FOR THE TEACHING OF
VOCAL TECHNIQUE
IN THE
HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS

by

David A. Quam

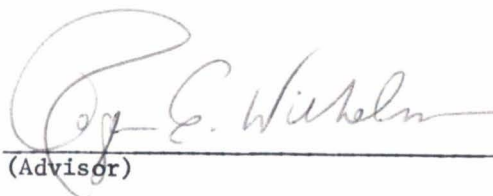
B.S. in Music, Moorhead State College, 1964

An Independent Study
Submitted to the Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Education

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This Independent Study submitted by David A. Quam in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done.



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ABSTRACT

In general, high school choruses do not reach their potential as far as choral tone is concerned. The tone is generally characterized by either a completely undisciplined and labored sound or a pseudo "mature" sound imposed upon the students by a director seeking to emulate his college choir.

When high school choruses sing freely and naturally, they do so because they are taught and inspired to do so by their director. Therefore, the director must understand the concepts of correct singing and must have in his possession practical techniques that will develop a program of correct singing in the high school chorus.

The literature pertaining to the concepts of vocal technique and their application in the chorus rehearsal will be reviewed.

A guide that can be used by the directors in teaching vocal technique in the high school chorus rehearsal will be prepared.

CHAPTER I

THE PHYSICAL PROCESS OF SINGING

Introduction

It is difficult to get musicians to agree on a correct way of doing anything and in the case of singing, consensus seems impossible. Of the entire field of applied music, vocal teaching has the reputation of being the least exact. The problem of this lack of exactness stems from the difficulty of describing in words the vocal sounds produced by the singing voice. Endless disagreements between teachers and students of singing center around particular terminology and specific imagery concerning singing. The problems of exactness are never more prevalent than when writing about singing. Richard Rosewell states the problem well in his Handbook For Singing.

Words have an exasperating way of slipping from their intended meanings when set upon the broad expanse of the printed page, particularly when they deal with a subject as intangible as the vocal art.¹

And yet, as more and more scientific investigations are being conducted and more and more books on singing are being published the facts about singing are becoming clearer and more exact. Much of what used to be opinion or theory has now been proven scientifically.

This chapter will limit itself to the generally accepted "facts"

¹Richard B. Rosewell, Handbook For Singing (Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birchard, 1961), p. vii.

concerning the physical process or act of singing.

The Human Instrument

All musical instruments are a combination of three common acoustical elements: a motor, a vibrator, and a resonator. In the human instrument the motor is the breath pressure, the vibrator is the combined action of the vocal folds (cords) in the larynx, and the resonator is the combined use of the pharyngeal, mouth and head cavities. The human instrument is unique in that it has a fourth element, an articulator (tongue, lips etc.). The combined effort of these four elements into a unit is what is referred to as the human voice.

Singing and Speaking

The vocal mechanism and its actions are generally the same in both speaking and singing. Singing, however, is more sustained, more artistic, and more concerned with emotional expression than is ordinary speaking. "Singing is the interpretation of text by means of musical tones produced by the human voice."² Speaking is generally more concerned with "what" is being said, while singing is more concerned with "how" it is said. Thus singing necessitates a greater control over the human instrument than does speaking.

Two Approaches to Singing

D. A. Clippinger stated that, "Training a singer is developing

²Ibid., p. 4.

concepts, not muscles"³, while Kenneth Westerman states that:

The study of (singing) skills is not primarily the study of tone, but the study of the effect upon tone of the muscle movements of posture, respiration, phonation, resonance and articulation as the tone emerges from the human body.⁴

At first these two views seem opposed to one another and yet both views can and should be combined into one single effort of learning to sing. The student must first have a mental image of correct tone and then must go about coordinating his bodily muscles in attaining this goal. Charles A. Hoffer states the following pertaining to these two approaches:

The teaching of proper singing should divide itself into two approaches that are used simultaneously. One is the development of physical actions that result in proper singing. The other approach is that of "mind over matter", the use of aural concepts and psychological attitudes to obtain good singing. Both these approaches are essential and should be used together.⁵

The study of the physical process of singing will be presented in the progressive order of posture, respiration, phonation, registration, resonance and articulation.

Posture

"Before trying to play any instrument one should learn how to

³D. A. Clippinger, The Clippinger Class-Method of Voice Culture (Bryn Mawr, Penn.: Oliver Ditson Company, 1932), p. II.

⁴Kenneth N. Westerman, Emergent Voice (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1947), p. 3.

⁵Charles R. Hoffer, Teaching Music In the Secondary School (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1964), p. 253.

hold it. Vocally this means posture."⁶ The process of singing must progress from the large skeletal muscles to the smaller and more intricate muscles (minimal motors). All athletic skills are learned in this manner. Certainly no competent piano instructor would begin a student's first lesson without showing him how posture assists the arm and wrist position and then how the arm and wrist position frees the use of the fingers.

A well-poised, balanced posture is the first technique in the process of learning to sing. It is generally accepted that good posture for singing should be characteristic of the following:

1. The chest should be comfortably raised so that it "will create a firm tonic condition in the muscular actions of the ribs and abdominal wall."⁷
2. The feet should be slightly apart with one foot slightly ahead of the other. The body weight should be on the balls of the feet. The legs should be slightly bent and not locked back rigidly at the knees.
3. The back, spine and the neck should be stretched up into a straight line.
4. The head should be held comfortably balanced on the spinal axis.

A set military posture should never be attempted or encouraged as it creates rigidity and tension. The posture used by the singer should be for the purpose of creating physical poise for freeing the muscle actions for the job ahead.

⁶William Vennard, Singing: The Mechanism and The Technique (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1965), p. 23.

⁷Van A. Christy, Foundations in Singing (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1965), p. 23.

Respiration

Plate I

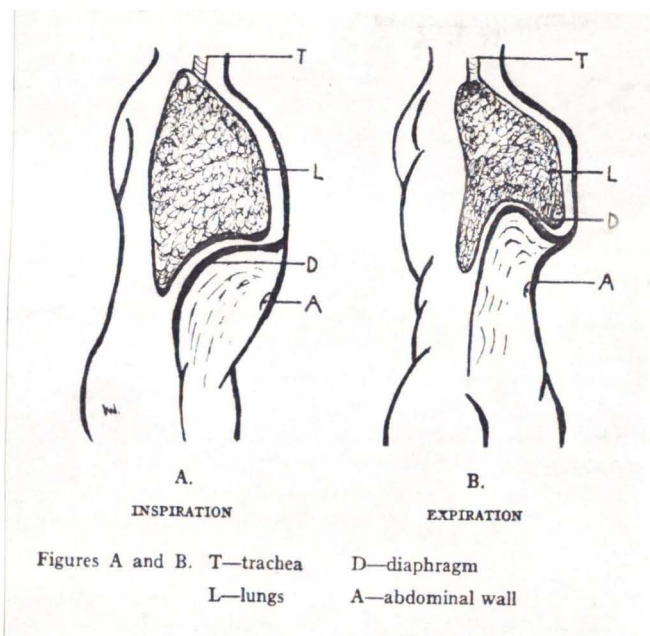


Illustration A is marked inspiration. It shows the body expanded around the waistline as it is when the bottom of the lungs have filled through diaphragm descent. Illustration B is marked expiration. It shows the body at the end of expiration, after the abdominal lift, vocal lips and diaphragm resistance have used up all available breath for singing or speech.⁸

"Good posture is the foundation of controlled respiration, and controlled respiration is the foundation upon which all of singing depends."⁹ Without controlled respiration (breath support) correct singing is impossible. An old Italian axiom states that, "The art of singing is the art of breathing".

Breathing is accomplished by expanding the thorax, the large bony cage which protects the lungs and heart. Three types of breathing

⁸Westerman, op. cit., p. 14.

⁹Ibid., p. 15.

are possible, although they all overlap to a certain degree in their processes. Clavicular breathing, the rapid raising and lowering of the chest, is used when exhausted or angry. Here the air rushes into the top of the lungs. Intercostal breathing is accomplished by lifting the ribs so that the air rushes into the sides of the lungs. Diaphragmatic breathing is accomplished by contracting and lowering the diaphragm so that the air rushes into the bottom of the lungs.

Correct breathing for controlled singing must utilize the combined effort of the latter two types of breathing mentioned--intercostal breathing and diaphragmatic breathing (abdominal breathing). Clavicular breathing, so named because of the muscles used being attached to the clavical, should never be used for singing. Its controls are directed away from the singing mechanism instead of being directed toward it. Clavicular breathing (chest breathing) creates tension in and around the vocal tract. Diaphragmatic-intercostal breathing, on the other hand, direct their actions toward the singing mechanism and its actions help free the voice.

Many beginning voice students have been told to sing from their diaphragm but never had the slightest idea what this meant. Technically the diaphragm is a very thin muscular partition which is located at the bottom of the thorax with the lungs and heart above, and the digestive organs below. The diaphragm is connected to the sternum in front and is connected to the lower ribs around and anchored to the second and third lumbar vertebrae at the small of the back.

The diaphragm is lowered when taking a breath while the contraction

of the intercostal muscles lifts or raises the ribs. This action allows air to enter and fill the lungs. The abdominal wall moves out somewhat to make room for this action. The descent of the diaphragm forces the liver into the soft triangle between the floating ribs which in turn distends the abdominal wall. When the breath is released the diaphragm moves up and the abdominal wall moves back in. "As this action continues the abdomen is 'tucked up' under the ribs as the lift builds the breath."¹⁰ "Meanwhile, the intercostal muscles maintain enough tension to prevent bulging of the intercostal spaces."¹¹

It is the action of the great abdominal muscles that bring about full breath support. It is the "crude" action of these abdominal muscles that supplies the power that the diaphragm "refines". "The diaphragm's contribution to breath control lies in its marvelous ability of adjusting resistance to the supporting action of the great abdominal muscles."¹² When a student is told to sing with his diaphragm the teacher probably means for him to utilize the combined effort of his intercostal muscles, his diaphragm and his abdominal muscles. The combined effort of these three creates full breath support or controlled respiration.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹Robert L. Garretson, Conducting Choral Music (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965), p. 76.

¹²Westerman, op. cit., p. 18.

Phonation

Plate II



The larynx as observed through a laryngoscope--illustrating differences in the size of the glottis (area between the folds) (a) while taking a deep breath, (b) during quiet or normal breathing, and (c) during phonation.¹³

The actual sound of the voice originates in a valve located at the top of the trachea called the larynx. This valve contains two "true cords" which are better termed "vocal folds". These "folds" are the vibrating edge of the thyro-arytenoid muscles, the posterior ends of which are attached to the thyroid cartilage. Sound is produced when breath pressure from below forces these folds to open in an explosive puff. This causes a vibration in the air column above and below the folds. After the folds return to the closed position they quickly spring open again by the pressure from below. This action, 440 puffs per second on a', makes the larynx the vibrator of the human voice.

The puffs produced by the vocal folds travel at about 1300 feet per second. If the folds are completely closed when the puffs are produced the resultant sound is clean and clear. If the folds are slightly separated and more breath escapes than is necessary a breathy

¹³Garretson, op. cit., p. 78.

sound is produced.

By slight adjustment the vocal folds regulate pitch. The pitch is determined by the tension in the vocal folds plus the pressure of the breath against them. This tension in the vocal folds is accomplished by the intricate action of the muscular action of the larynx which causes the folds to stretch, contract, lengthen, etc. The vocal folds have no conscious feeling of muscle action and are controlled semi-voluntarily.

The human voice is basically a wind instrument with sound produced by air passing through the larynx. Therefore any tension around the area of the throat is detrimental to free vibration of the folds. The larynx must be thought of as simply a passageway through which one sings and not with which one sings.

Registration

One of the greatest problems that plagues singers is that of the passaggio or voice break. Much controversy has centered around the passaggio, its causes and its cures. The cause of the passaggio is rooted in the problem of registers or registration. Vennard defines these two words as such:

Register: Adjustment of the larynx which produces tones of a particular quality for particular demands of range, dynamics, etc.¹⁴

Registration: Control of the laryngeal mechanism in the production of different qualities of tone.¹⁵

¹⁴Vennard, op. cit., p. 248.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 248.

Passaggio is caused by uneven register changes in the voice. There are two registers in the singing voice--light and heavy--that are controlled by two sets of muscles, the arytenoid and the cricothyroid. The light register is controlled by the arytenoids and the heavy register by the cricothyroids. This problem of an uneven register stems from the fact that one of these registers is invariably weaker than the other. The strongest register is primarily the one in which a person speaks. The other register, the weaker of the two, is called the "unused" register. In the male the lower register is strongest whereas in the female the upper register is strongest. (It should be made clear that upper and lower do not necessarily refer to range but rather to quality.)

The process of singing involves one set of muscles pulling or stringing against the other set. If one set is weaker than the other there is a lack of balance of tone. Therefore the solution to this problem is in strengthening the weaker register until both registers are even and are blended together as one.

Resonation

Plate III

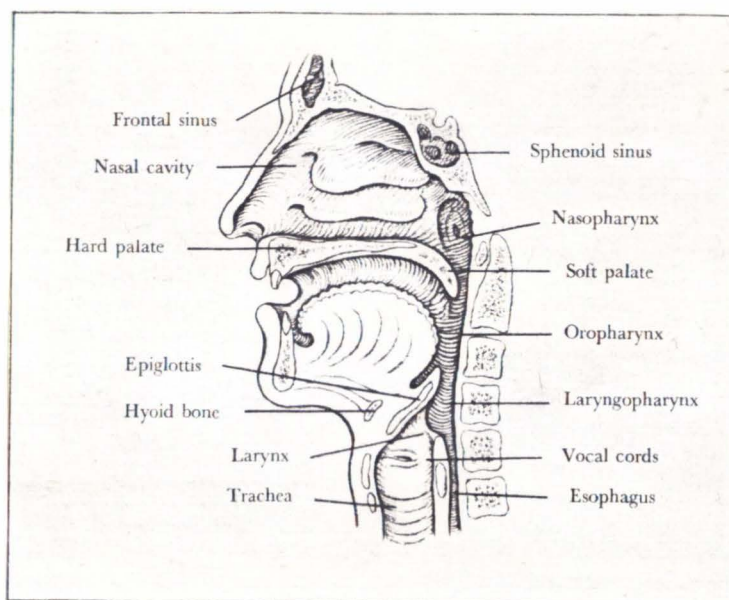


Plate III--Relative locations of the larynx, the resonating cavities (pharynx, mouth, nasal cavity, and the sinuses), and the articulating organs (tongue, lips, teeth, palate, and the lower jaw).¹⁶

Resonance is defined in the dictionary as:

An increase, reinforcement, and enrichment of sound, due to the sympathetic vibration of some body capable of synchronous movement with the initial pulsations of the vibrator generating the sound.¹⁷

When the sound is produced in the larynx, pitch frequencies are issued into the resonators, which in turn reinforce and increase the sound. Resonation permits a great increase of sound to develop from a

¹⁶Garretson, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁷The Unabridged Merriam-Webster Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1961), p. 1933.

relatively weak source while at the same time relieving strain and effort from the larynx.

Plate IV

- B Brain Cavity
- F Frontal Sinus
- T Turbinate
- H Hard Palate
- U Uvula
- E Epiglott
- V Vocal Cords
- L Larynx
- Tr Trachea

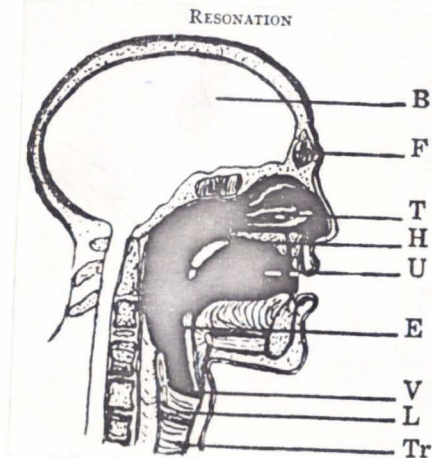


Plate IV--Illustration of a medium section through the head showing the cavities and bony structures in which and through which the tone vibrations are resonated and transmitted until the complete cavity and bony structure reverberates with phenomenon known as resonance.¹⁸

The resonating cavities can be divided into two kinds--fixed resonating cavities and adjustable resonating cavities. The sinus and nasal cavities are fixed while the pharynx and mouth cavities are adjustable. The nasal pharynx (the area above the roof of the mouth), the nasal cavity and the sinuses are utilized as resonating cavities when the soft palate (velum) is raised. Any alteration or negation in the area of the mouth and pharynx, the adjustable resonators, causes a great change in the resonating sound.

¹⁸Westerman, op. cit., p. 36.

The resonating cavities not only reinforce fundamental tones and vowel forms but also transmit tone vibrations to the entire bony structure of the head and upper body. Pasquel Mario Marafioti states, "I like to think of the singing body as a single large larynx. The throat gives out the sound, but the entire body sings".¹⁹

Much of the confusion of singing has centered around the topic of resonance. The confusion is usually voiced in the following questions: (1) Where does the voice resonate the most? (2) Where does the voice resonate the best? (3) What are the best ways of achieving vocal resonance? These questions, especially the latter will be expanded and elaborated on in the next two chapters.

Articulation

Probably the most complicated of the singing facets is that of articulation. There is considerable confusion centered around the words "articulation" as well as the words "diction", "enunciation" and "pronunciation". The following is the definition of these words by the "American Academy of Teachers of Singing":

1. Pronunciation is the utterance of words with regard to sound and accent.
2. Enunciation is the manner of utterance as regards fullness and clearness.
3. Articulation is the action of the speech organs in the formation of consonants, vowels, syllables and words.
4. Diction constitutes all of the above.²⁰

¹⁹Pasquel Mario Marafioti, Caruso's Method of Voice Production (Austin, Texas: Cadica Enterprises, 1958), p. 102.

²⁰Van A. Christy, Expressive Singing, Vol. I (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1961), p. 86.

The reason that articulation is dealt with specifically is because articulation is concerned with vocal movements. Free articulation is a distinct problem of the student as a producer of sound. Articulation does not refer to letters or even sounds but rather to muscular actions which produce those sounds.

The main problem that a singer encounters is getting uniformity of vowel sounds in his voice. In addition, the vowel and consonantal sounds in the text tend to separate the notes and destroy the free flow of the song.

The articulating organs are the tongue, teeth, lower jaw, palate and lips. These all must be free from any tension that may destroy the vocal line and the text.

Summary

Although the singing process can be broken down into several parts it should generally be treated as one single act. It is true that the different parts must be dealt with separately, especially when writing about singing. However the teacher and singer should both make every attempt to approach singing as a single unit so that they do not get "hung up" on any one of its parts. Emphasis on any conscious direct control of any muscles or set of muscles in singing is incorrect.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is the purpose of this chapter to review the literature pertaining to the subjects of vocal technique and vocal philosophy. Books on choral techniques, vocal pedagogy and voice science are included in this review.

This chapter will be similar in structure to the preceding one in that it will be broken up into six parts. Concepts and techniques pertaining to students attaining correct posture, respiration, phonation, registration, resonance and articulation will be discussed. The techniques will generally be for group singing although most of them will be applicable to both private and group instruction.

Posture

There is little if any disagreement among vocal authorities regarding the fundamental value of proper posture as a prerequisite for singing. The consideration of posture comes first among fundamentals of training the voice.

Van A. Christy believes that an attitude of confidence and pleasure in singing supercedes posture although he agrees that posture is the first technical consideration in singing. Christy suggests an exercise, the purpose of which is to "induce a feeling for diaphragmatic-costal breath action and maintenance of a high, quiet chest to the end of the

breath supply."²¹ The exercise consists of keeping the chest high before inhalation and not raising it at all during the intake of breath. A slow, deep inhalation is followed by exhaling on a hissing "sss" to a slow count of four. The exercise can be varied by increasing inhalation and exhalation to eight counts and substituting the hissing sound with that of "oh" or "ah".

Harry Robert Wilson, in his book, Artistic Choral Singing, elaborates on eight points concerning posture that originate with Paul Peterson.²² The first six concern posture for standing and the last two concern posture for sitting. Correct posture should be characterized by:

STANDING

1. A straight spine--Do not stand humped over or sway-back.
2. An erect head--Chin should not be raised, lowered or tilted.
3. A comfortable high chest--Position should not be strained.
4. A slight expansion of the lower ribs--Too much expansion will cause tension.
5. Feet slightly apart with one ahead of the other--Body weight should be on the balls of the feet.
6. A balance of the body weight slightly forward--Do not lean too far forward.

SITTING

1. Both feet should be flat on the floor--No crossing of legs, ankles, or knees.

²¹Christy, op. cit., p. 45.

²²Paul W. Peterson, Natural Singing and Expressive Conducting (Winston-Salem, Mass.: John F. Blair, 1955), p. 10.

2. Body should be tilted forward away from the back of the chair--No slouching.²³

Richard Rosewell states some helpful ideas concerning posture in his book, Handbook For Singing. Mr. Rosewell uses the word "stance" rather than the word "posture" which he says has connotations of rigidity to most people. He suggests an exercise which he feels will help the student attain a high chest position. The exercise consists of rotating the shoulders loosely at the sides as though the shoulders were describing a circle. The circling motion of the arms is then stopped, with the shoulders in a down and back position. The chest should then be in a raised position that is conducive to singing. He suggests that a singer's position be one of equalization between the backward and forward tendencies of the shoulders and feet positions respectively.

Although the students sit most of the time during rehearsals the majority of the literature reviewed on posture concerned that of posture for standing. Wilhelm Ehmann's book, Choral Conducting, gives some of the most helpful hints on posture for both sitting and standing and also gives some good hints on relieving tension in the body during the rehearsal. Ehmann says that, "The body of the singer is not just a container of his tone-generating larynx, but it is the instrument itself".²⁴

Many directors suggest calisthenics at the beginning of the chorus hour as a means of both warming up the body and relaxing it. Many

²³Harry Robert Wilson, Artistic Choral Conducting (New York, N.Y.: G. Schirmer, 1959), pp. 168-169.

²⁴Wilhelm Ehmann, Choral Conducting (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), p. 33.

directors also suggest neck rubbing etc. to relax the body and also as a means of attaining physical contact among the singers.

Respiration

A singer has no real idea what correct breathing is until he experiences it himself. No matter how long he is lectured about breath support or how much he reads about it the singer will not completely understand breath support until he actually has a full realization of it. Thus there is a desperate need for simple and effective techniques that will enable the singer to realize his own supporting potential.

Wilhelm Ehmann believes that "laughter promotes good diaphragmatic activity".²⁵ He suggests that the singer laugh with his hands held on the solar plexus where the diaphragm actions can be most noticeably felt. He also has an interesting canon that is intended to rid the singers of breathy sounds.

Plate V

Three-part canon Cherubini

1. 2. 3.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Hear the

ech - o hear the ech - o as we sing. Let us

joy - ful, joy - ful be, for joy - en - dures but for a day.

²⁵Ibid., p. 19.

Ehmann says that the canon must be sung in a cheerful frame that should be indicative of the whole rehearsal.²⁶

Robert L. Garretson suggests that the singer be continually reminded to "breathe deeply, expand around the entire mid-section-- in the back and around the sides, as well as in the front".²⁷ He also suggests the following procedure:

A suggested procedure is to have the choir members bend over from a standing position, until the upper part of the body is parallel to the floor. In this position clavicular breathing is difficult and somewhat unnatural. By pressing the hands against the waist, with the thumbs to the back, one gets the "feel" of correct breathing from this position. Try it.²⁸

Another procedure suggested by Mr. Garretson can be used in a crowded rehearsal room. The group is to lean forward in their chairs and place one elbow on the knee. Proper breath action can then be checked by pressing the other hand against the waist. He concludes by saying that breath control will only improve if the director consistently emphasizes it.

Warner Lawson, in Choral Directors' Guide, believes that "When the word is enunciated, articulated, and pronounced properly, the whole singing apparatus is automatically prepared for proper projection, placement and tonal resonance."²⁹ He continues by saying that "If the

²⁶Ibid., p. 19.

²⁷Ibid., p. 81.

²⁸Ibid., p. 81.

²⁹Warner Lawson, "Practical Rehearsal Techniques," Chapter II, from Kenneth L. Neidig and John W. Jennings, Choral Director's Guide (West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), p. 245.

word is pronounced correctly and enunciated properly, resonance, focus, projection, and position will be proper..."³⁰

Mr. Lawson's approach seems to be backwards compared to most good books on singing. He starts with the sound and moves backwards to the production of it; from effect to cause. It is interesting to note that none of his "proven techniques" deal with posture or respiration.

Lawson's approach is contrasted with that of Kenneth Westerman's Emergent Voice. Westerman states that working from effect (the vowel) to cause (the basic controls), instead of from cause to effect is diametrically opposed to the natural sequence of the bodily action of singing. Concerning respiration he states that it is the foundation upon which the whole voice depends and that starting with articulation and moving backwards is getting the cart before the horse.

Charles R. Hoffer says that the words of the teacher should suggest a balance between effortlessness and tremendous tension. He illustrates this by comparing singing to walking, both of which should be a combination of tension and relaxation. He suggests another analogy that can be given to the students:

Pretend that you're going to blow the seeds of a dandelion, but stop just before blowing out any air. The amount of tension in your abdominal wall is the amount you should have when you sing.³¹

Royal Stanton in his book, Steps To Singing For Voice Classes, believes "that real breath control is a reflex-response to the singer's

³⁰Ibid., p. 245.

³¹Hoffer, op. cit., pp. 256, 257.

mental concept."³² One rarely runs out of breath while talking, not because of concentration on breath control but rather because of concentration on meaning and content of what is being said. Mr. Stanton states that singing is an expansion of this concept that the singer's "system must learn to adjust to the added demands of singing."³³

Jussi Bjoerling, one of the greatest tenors that ever lived, had a similar concept. Bjoerling stated that "a singer becomes short-winded the moment he begins to think of breath function while singing."³⁴ Many other writers subscribe to this view; that becoming overly conscious of the mechanics of breathing destroys controlled respiration.

William Finn, in the Art of the Choral Director, believes that it is a "simple matter" to eliminate faulty breathing. He states that faulty breathing is characterized by the following: 1) raising the shoulders while inhaling, 2) permitting breath to be exhaled too suddenly and 3) not filling the lungs to capacity (which is directly related to number 1). Finn's corrective measures are the following: 1) keep the shoulders down and breathe as deeply as possible and 2) insist that the lungs be emptied slowly while the choirmaster counts to a given number. He believes that if these two simple practices "are made the first step at each rehearsal it will guarantee a breath control adequate to any singer's legitimate needs".³⁵

³²Royal Stanton, Steps To Singing For Voice Classes (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Company, Inc., 1971), p. 39.

³³Ibid., p. 39.

³⁴Jussi Bjoerling, "Good Singing Is Natural," Etude Magazine, Vol. 55, 1937, 603.

³⁵William J. Finn, The Art of the Choral Conductor (Evanston, Ill.: Summy-Birchard Publishing Company, 1939), p. 25.

Phonation

Phonation is a semi-voluntary act. The singer should not make any conscious effort to phonate or control his singing from the throat. Techniques that attempt to teach a clear tone should emphasize the fact that the throat is the area through which one sings and not with which one sings.

Some very fine ideas about freedom in the vocal tract are brought out by Richard Rosewell in Handbook For Singing. He states that many singers base their singing technique on breath plus something else. He says that this "something else" invariably becomes a source of tension and restriction. This tightness in the area of the throat he labels "vocal tension" or "local effort". He suggests that the production of the voice must completely depend on the breath. Any attempt to manipulate the voice from the area of the throat, voluntary or otherwise, according to Rosewell will inhibit the tone and **cause** tension.

Kenneth Westerman suggests that in order to get the students to produce a clear tone they should be asked to say a closed-lip affirmative "m-hum" and then transfer the resultant clear sound into singing exercises. He also states that under no circumstances should the student attempt to bring in a vibrato into his voice. Westerman states that if the student's vibrato is all right the teacher needn't mention it. If the vibrato is incorrect, attention should still be directed away from the vibrato itself and indirect corrective measures should be taken to correct it.

Edmund J. Myer states that the worse means of freeing the closed and contracted condition of the throat is through local throat gymnastics "which, instead of helping the matter, are sure to make it worse, in fact it often results in serious throat troubles..."³⁶ He continues by stating that local effort ruins many fine voices and yet it is resorted to day after day by so many singers. He suggests relaxation of the strong muscles of the throat and free and natural action of the whole vocal apparatus.

Many directors encourage a "straight tone" that they believe is conducive to choral blend. However, to produce a straight tone the student must manipulate his phonation thus causing "local effort" which is incorrect. The Chicago Singing Teachers' Guild states that the straight tone is unnecessary for choral blend.

Therefore, the Chicago Singing Teachers' Guild hereby expresses its firm disapproval of the use of said "straight tone" and states its conviction that said "straight tone" is not, as claimed by its proponents, necessary to secure a perfect blend of unison voices, since that blend may be achieved through the use of uniformly pure vowel-tone and without repressing the natural vibratory pulsations of the voices.³⁷

Registration

Problems of registration have confronted singers and teachers since the very dawn of the art. The early writings on this subject attempted to describe these changes in quality of the voice and also give advice on what to do with them. Recent writings have been more

³⁶Edmund J. Myer, Vocal Reinforcement (Boston, Mass.: Boston Music Company), p. 89.

³⁷Rosewell, op. cit., p. 109.

scientific in nature attempting to relate what happens scientifically in the larynx in regard to registration.

Both early and late writings are very closely related in that the old advice by many of the early teachers and singers turned out to be "scientifically" correct.

In 1723, Tosi states, "Render that portion strong which is by nature weak."³⁸ He was, of course, speaking of the two registers. Mancini, Manuel Garcia, Giovanni Battista Lamperti and others dealt with this concept of the two registers in a similar manner.

Stanley, in his books, The Science of Voice, Voice, Its Production and Reproduction, and Applied Science of Vocal Art referred to lower register or chest and upper register or falsetto. He encouraged coordination of the two, whereby the lower would taper into the upper in ascending the scale, and the upper would taper into the lower in descending.

John Wilcox in The Living Voice, referred to the two voices as the heavy mechanism and the light mechanism. Weer, in My Views on Voice Production, uses the terms lower process and upper process. Clippinger, in The Clippinger Class-Method of Voice Culture, spoke of the chest and falsetto in the man's voice, with the head as the desirable intermediate adjustments.

Lisa Roma, in The Science and Art of Singing, says that it is often psychologically disastrous to think of three registers in the

³⁸Weldon Whitlock "The Problem of the Passaggio," NATS Journal, (February, 1968) 24:3, p. 13.

voice and Richard Graves states that:

Nowadays it is generally agreed that the vocal line should be uninterrupted from the bottom to the top and that head resonance should be blended with chest resonance in the lower and middle ranges, while chest support should never be abandoned in the higher register.³⁹

William Vennard, in Singing: The Mechanism and Technique, calls the weaker register the "unused voice" and the blending of the two registers the "full voice". He says that there should never be any question as to which register to use. Both registers should be used in a coordinate action. He suggests a dynamic blending of the two.

Otto Iro states one of the finest analogies of the problem of registration:

Imagine a test tube having earth in the bottom and water in the top. These are the two elements of the voice, chest and falsetto. In some voices they are separate, with only a scum of mud between them. In others the water has penetrated the earth forming clay. The ideal is complete homogenization, with smooth clay all the way, a little thinner at the top and a little thicker at the bottom. Many voices have "stated" earth at the bottom; many have pure water at the top; but it is the clay mixture that is useful for artistic purposes.⁴⁰

Resonation

Techniques and exercises that attempt to build resonance into the voice are varied and many. Because resonance is the life of the tone many writers elaborate at great length on the subject.

Harry Wilson believes that full singing resonance is dependent on expansion of the adjustable resonators, the lower and upper throats,

³⁹Richard M Graves, Singing for Amateurs (Fairlawn, N.J.: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 54.

⁴⁰Vennard, op. cit., p. 42.

and that expansion of the upper throat is achieved by arching the upper throat. He says that this adds ring to the resonance. He warns against giving direct instructions to shape the throat in any manner. He suggests what he calls a "snoring exercise" that has the students singing "haw" or "huh" on a descending scale.⁴¹

Gordon H. Lamb, in Choral Directors' Guide, suggests placing two fingers in the mouth and vocalizing on a Bach Choral as a technique in building resonance.⁴² Dallas Drapper, choral director at Louisiana State University suggests vocalizing on "ming", singing through the "m" and continuing directly to the "ng". This can be used in both unison and chordal exercises. He states that this exercise helps develop forward resonance.⁴³

P. Mario Marafiotti says that to attain a big and pleasing voice the singer must rely on resonance rather than on force.⁴⁴ Enrico Caruso said that he spent his whole career trying to get a maximum of resonance from a minimum of breath.⁴⁵

Garretson believes that of particular concern to the director is the development of high forward resonance in the voice. He says that this means, "the maximum utilization of the resonating cavities or

⁴¹Wilson, op. cit., p. 174.

⁴²Neidig and Jennings, op. cit., p. 260.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 260, 261.

⁴⁴Marafiotti, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴⁵Westerman, op. cit., p. 30.

chambers above the oropharynx and the mouth, specifically the nasopharynx, the nasal cavity and the sinuses".⁴⁶ To do this, he continues, use an open nasal port (the area between the oropharynx and the nasopharynx). He suggests a descending exercise that is sung with two fingers in the mouth, singing with a yawning sensation.

Several directors use yawning as a technique in singing. However, many see a danger in doing this. The biggest danger is that when a student is told to yawn and sing he has a tendency to raise the back of the tongue too much. William Earl Brown in Vocal Wisdom, based on the teachings of Giovanni Battista Lamperti, gives the following advice concerning yawning and singing:

"Do not sing unless you'd die if you didn't." This was Lamperti's way of saying "Singing is like yawning," though he never intended one to yawn while singing.

Many have misunderstood and tried to do both at the same time, hoping thereby to superinduce the feeling of an "open throat".

Any arbitrary use of the throat, other than procuring a tone's pitch or a word's color, is detrimental to control of the voice. Do not yawn.⁴⁷

Several books on singing suggest humming as a means of helping the student to "build" or "feel" resonance, depending on their viewpoint on it. Kenneth Westerman's whole "method" is based on the hum. He states that:

The teacher or student that doesn't use humming as a basic technique for voice development, is throwing away the simplicity of the God-given approach to speech and singing used by the entire human race in infancy.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Garretson, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴⁷William Earl Brown, Vocal Wisdom (New York City, N.Y.: Hudson Offset Company, Inc., 1931), pp. 111,112.

⁴⁸Westerman, op. cit., p. 79.

Articulation

As has been stated previously, articulation comes under the heading of diction and is concerned primarily with vocal movements. A great amount of space is given to diction in the books and articles on singing. Some believe that it is the key that unlocks good choral singing and a great amount of emphasis should be placed upon it. Others believe that good diction is the natural end product of the conscientious student who is singing correctly.

Paul E. Peterson states that "The standard of speech must be raised before the standard of vocal tone can be improved"⁴⁹ and indicates that correct vowel formation produces correct tone.

Ehmann believes that the vowels and consonants should be formed in the front part of the mouth while Garretson and Wilson suggest a deep-set vowel. Wilson adds that the correct singing of the vowel unlocks the vocal mechanism and makes for a correct resonant sound.

As has been previously stated Warner Lawson believes that if the word is enunciated, articulated and pronounced properly the whole voice will be correct. Lawson's teacher, Dr. Archibald T. Davidson, states that "pronunciation is the key to impressive choral singing, the root from which all choral virtues spring".⁵⁰

Probably the most realistic, practible and useful views on diction are brought about by Richard Rosewell. Mr. Rosewell believes that "Diction is of secondary importance in relation to tone". He also

⁴⁹Peterson, op. cit., p. 100.

⁵⁰Neidig and Jennings, op. cit., p. 245.

says:

Exceptional pressures and propulsions in the articulators which are used in the name of good diction do not encourage the projection of the text, because those very techniques introduce tensions and rigidity which fight against the basic freedom of the tone. Whenever the projection or carrying power of the tone itself is thwarted, the text has no vehicle upon which to ride. It must then rely solely on the force of the initial thrust to send it on to a listener's ear. This "spit and sputter" technique of lip and tongue pressure cannot project text efficiently, whereas even mediocre diction riding on good tone projects well...

The common denominator which relates them (vowels) is, of course, freedom of tone quality. The uniformity of tone through the gamut of pronounceable sounds is called vowel line. This is attainable not through particularized mouth and tongue positions for each sound, but through the maintenance of free tone.⁵¹

⁵¹Rosewell, op. cit., p. 54, 55.

CHAPTER III

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING

VOCAL TECHNIQUE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS

Most teenagers have only a vague notion of the correct methods of singing. Most of them are not even aware that there are correct methods or that correct methods make any difference in the musical result obtained. When the students sign up for chorus it is usually because they wish to be with a certain friend that hour, because mother and dad said to do so, or simply because they wish to have fun. They certainly do not sign up for chorus because they have always wanted to sing correctly, with good breath support and clear diction, and that they hope their new instructor will have effective techniques that will help them obtain all that correct singing can provide.

It is the choral director's primary job to inspire the students to sing correctly. The students already have an inherent inspiration or inclination to sing. But they must be inspired and convinced that there is a better way of singing than just opening their mouths and letting come out what may.

It is the purpose of this chapter to deal directly with the problem of teaching the high school student to sing correctly. The approach to this seemingly astronomical and yet very possible task must be on an individual basis. Improving choral tone, balance, intonation etc. will not be directly considered. Rather, the teaching of the basic

element of the chorus, the individual student, how to sing correctly will be dealt with in depth. The chapter will be divided into three parts: 1) The Choral Director, 2) The Student, and 3) Practical Procedures In Teaching Correct Singing In The High School.

The Choral Director

Personal Characteristics

A few years ago an adjudicator at a district band contest was giving a small school band a "rave review." He ended his comments by saying, "This proves that there is no such thing as a Class I, II or III school, only a Class I, II or III director."

The entire vocal music department is a direct reflection of the choral director. No matter what the scheduling problems are, how bad the facilities, how tight the budget or how much the athletic department is stressed the vocal music department is as good as its director.

A choral director must be a unique individual because he has a unique job to do--that of inspiring young people to sing individually and collectively in an enthusiastic, vocally correct and artistic manner. To do this the director must possess a great amount of patience, imagination and emotional composure plus an insatiable amount of mental and physical energy. He must be open minded, always fair and both inspiring and inspired. In many ways he must be a better teacher than his colleagues because he has a much more difficult job to perform; a job, the atmosphere of which exists somewhere between the boisterous gym class and the serene and scholarly chemistry lab;

a job that is continuously keyed at the emotional level.

First and foremost, however, the choral director must be a musician; a musician who continues to study and learn throughout his career. The four years of study in a college or university should be treated as only a beginning in the learning of the vast amount of musical knowledge that exists. The high school student must have a respect for his director's musicianship before he will become a growing musician himself.

The most effective vocal pedagogue is the one who can himself demonstrate good vocal technique. He does not have to be an outstanding artist to do so. However, he should sing and speak using correct vocal production. The student's emulation of the instructor's production can be a far reaching and most effective teaching technique. Wilhelm Ehmann states it well when he says:

The voice production and speech habits which the choir director exemplifies are of far-reaching significance. The lay singer tends to acquire most of his singing habits by direct imitation. All of the choir director's instructions, well meant and pertinent as they may be, are superfluous if he constantly speaks and sings incorrectly.⁵²

High school students are in constant search of someone to emulate. If a director begins to awaken their expressiveness in music and they become "turned on" musically, the students will, in all probability, begin to emulate the director, vocally, musically and otherwise. A high school choral director must be a complete person because of his influential position. What he is has a far more reaching

⁵²Ehmann, op. cit., p. 33.

effect than what he says.

Developing a Vocal Philosophy

Although almost anything the vocal instructor tells his students could be disputed by some specialist, he cannot stand helplessly by while his students flounder through the music. By applying the very basic fundamentals of singing along with some common sense the choral director can usually help every student sing better. An awareness of good vocal technique should permeate the student's entire high school vocal music experience. There are several reasons given why this does not happen in most cases. Some of the reasons given by directors are: "They're too young", "I'm too busy", or "It doesn't seem to help". The actual reason, however, is usually apathy. Either the instructor fails to realize that correct vocal technique is a key to the success of his endeavors or else he realizes it but fails to do anything about it because he feels inadequate to teach it. Those who maintain that teaching vocal technique in the high school is a waste of time are usually those who know very little about it and are usually non-vocalists.

What a director must do is develop a vocal philosophy; a philosophy that he can base his teaching technique upon. Some of the ways that this can be done are the following:

1. Reading--A director should exhaust all the available books and articles on vocal technique. The best thing for a director to do is to prepare a guide for teaching vocal technique.
2. Attending vocal clinics--This can be beneficial to any director.

3. Continued development of one's own voice--By doing this, vocal technique becomes more closely related to the director. Studying privately can become a little hectic at times but it is worthwhile because it keeps the director's voice in good shape and it helps the director maintain a better perspective as a teacher because of his role as a student.

Every vocal instructor has a unique method of teaching voice which is usually made up of a combination of ways in which he himself was taught. If he has been well instructed and good vocal technique is a part of his training he possesses an important prerequisite for teaching others to sing. If he has had little or no training it would be well for him to study more private voice until he feels he at least has acquired the basics of good singing.

There are two different approaches to teaching voice. One is physiological and the other psychological-aesthetic. The physiological approach is scientific or mechanistic and maintains that vocal control should be conscious, direct, and based upon the detailed scientific findings of physiologists. The psychological-aesthetic approach is empirical and maintains that vocal control should be indirect, largely unconscious, automatic, or reflex and based on tonal imagery. Some teachers have a complete devotion to one approach and a complete rejection of the other. Most of the good teachers use a combination of both approaches.

Certainly both approaches are useful. However, the success in learning to sing is not to be found in a method but rather in a teacher. If the student learns to sing correctly the method is usually correct.

Probably the best vocal instructor is the one who can teach either scientifically or empirically depending on the circumstances,

particularly the student's background. The period of vocal instruction, however, should be spent only in coordinating the vocal mechanism and not lecturing, etc. Concerning this Vennard states the following:

The one thing that all must achieve is coordination. This is what every teacher works for in his studio. His analytical knowledge of the mechanism is like the sub-basements of a skyscraper; there may never be occasion for it to be displayed, but it is necessary foundation. Studio time should not be spent in academic discussion unless it leads to practical results. The student can learn as much as he likes from books, and can check his knowledge by questioning the teacher, but the main purpose of the lesson time is to practice the coordination of the vocal tract.⁵³

It would be well for every person who works with young voices to continue to seek out better empirical methods and also to keep up on all scientific findings concerning singing. This is very important in keeping oneself replenished and inspired for the teaching of voice. And it is also the secret of a continued development of one's vocal philosophy.

The Student

The basic element of the high school, the student himself, has never changed. He is still the growing and developing unfinished product that he has always been. He is in the midst of his own unique physical, mental, social and emotional development. And through all of this change he is looking for someplace to release his pent-up energy, something to believe in and something to give himself to. A good inspiring vocal music department can become a partial answer to his quest.

⁵³Vennard, op. cit., p. 191.

The high school student must be treated as a unique individual. He is like anyone else in that he likes it when someone encourages him, compliments him with personal attention and calls him by his first name. High school students are generally very much alike and yet are all very unique. A study into the general characteristics of teenagers by those who work with them is important and the treatment of each teenager as a unique individual is imperative.

Characteristics of the Teenage Voice

Anyone working with the young voice must respect its immaturity. Much harm has been done by high school directors who treated their singers like college or professional singers. This does not mean that the teenager must always sing carefully and daintily so as not to hurt anything. But he must be guided by a person who understands his capabilities and limitations.

The Girl's Voice

Most of the attention (by vocal authorities) concerning young voices pertains to that of the boy's voice, because of the radical change that occurs to the young man at puberty. However, to know the vocal characteristics of the girl's voice is important as well.

The voice quality of the girl in the senior high school is usually breathy, thin or flutey. As a general rule there are no real altos in high school, just sopranos. There may be some girls who will eventually develop into mezzo-sopranos or (rarely) true contraltos.

The following is the usual predicament in the girls' section in

the high school chorus:

1. The soprano section consists of the better voices and the girls who "can only sing the melody".
2. The alto section consists of those who read notes well, those who are afraid of the upper register, and those who were dubbed altos by the elementary-school or junior-high director and really believed it.

The results are usually the following:

1. The sopranos sing only in the upper register and consequently usually develop permanent vocal tension as well as never really learning to read music.
2. The "altos" (sopranos singing the alto part for several years) never develop their upper register, develop a near permanent "break" in the voice by pushing the chest voice and are deprived of ever enjoying a lyric melody.

The only answer to this dilemma is that each girl should have a chance to develop her entire range. This can be done through the use of good vocal technique and by letting each section switch parts frequently (i.e. altos singing the soprano part and the sopranos singing the alto part). The results of doing this are usually the following:

1. A more interested and better vocally developed girls' section.
2. A better choral sound.
3. A happier and more fulfilling life for the college private voice instructor who must work to overcome the nearly permanent vocal habits developed in the high school chorus by his student.

The Boy's Voice

At puberty, testosterone, the male hormone is released into the blood of the young male. Among the many changes brought about by this release is an increase in the mass of the larynx. The result is a

gradual lowering of the speaking voice as well as the singing voice. Many controversies have arisen around the change in the boy's voice. These controversies pertain to the range of the "cambiate", his potential and limitations, and whether or not he should sing during his voice change. One of the best books on this subject is Irvin Cooper's Teaching Music in the Junior High School.

If the high school director allows freshman boys to sing in the senior chorus he will doubtless encounter some voice changes. Sometimes sophomores and occasionally juniors and seniors may still be changing also. Every director that teaches strictly senior high chorus should be as acquainted with the "cambiate" as is the junior high director.

In many ways the predicament that exists with the girls, as previously mentioned, also exists with the boys. The usual question is, "Where are the tenors?" The answer is, "They are singing bass." Usually there are plenty of boys singing bass in chorus and few that sing tenor, because it is relatively easier to get students to sing bass in high school than tenor. The following are three reasons why this is true:

1. The bass part's tessitura is lower whereas the tenor's tessitura lies in and around the upper part of the lower adjustment. The tenor voice more than any other voice (including the girl's) must pass back and forth over the passaggio (especially in ensemble singing). Thus the bass part, according to the teenagers, involves "less work" to sing.
2. The bass part is usually easier to read than the inside-voiced tenor part.
3. There is a definite manliness connected with singing bass that does not exist with singing tenor.

The answer to this problem is the same as the answer to the girl's problem--that of helping each boy develop his entire range. The tenors and basses can switch parts many times throughout the year as well. The only problem is finding songs with a medium range bass part because of the tenors inability to sing low. The basses singing tenor is no problem if they have a command of their light registration. Also, carefully chosen SAB music can be used for this purpose.

Practical Procedures in Teaching Correct Singing in the High School

The Beginning School Year

It is imperative that a choral director be well organized. A high school choral director is an organizer, a teacher and a director in that order. If a choral director wishes to have an effective and progressive year of artistic singing he must be on top of the situation from the very beginning of the school year. This, many times, means the sacrifice of some good fishing days in August in order to begin the motivating process for the coming year. The more planning that can be done before the school year begins the better.

Unless he is highly skilled and experienced, a director cannot "play it by ear" in the vocal training of a large group. A "hit and miss" attempt results in a negative attitude on the part of the students. It is best that a yearly vocal guide or plan be assimilated by the director before the year begins.

Most generally the high school vocal director of an average-sized school has both the junior high and the senior high vocal music.

This teaching set-up is very conducive to establishing a vocal program of permanent value because it is in the junior high school that the senior chorus is really developed. The choral director can instill correct singing habits in the junior high that will carry throughout the student's life. If a choral director teaches in a senior high school, where the area junior high school students learn only about composer's lives and build instruments out of toothpicks instead of singing, he is in trouble.

Because of the normal teaching load, the actual time that a director spends teaching correct vocal technique is limited. Therefore he must set up a schedule outside of school hours before the year begins for those activities not included in the regular daily schedule. This outside schedule could include ensemble, solo and glee club rehearsals and, most important, a voice class that would augment the entire vocal program. However, the director should strive to have as many of these activities included in his regular daily schedule as possible, especially the voice class. Great care must be taken in the area of outside scheduling of classes so as not to offend the administration, faculty members or parents. Students usually enjoy "coming in" during free periods, noon hours, after school and evenings if there is something worthwhile motivating them to do so. Most of the real "esprit de corps" in a chorus is born in working outside of school. A chorus is like any other group in that it pulls together as a unit through working hard toward a desired goal. Any director who hesitates putting in extra time with the students because he doesn't

get paid extra probably will not be the sort of person that will give of himself to the students anyway.

The Tryout

It is during the initial tryout that a director can help the student become aware that there is a better and easier way to sing. The tryout is generally held for the express purpose of choosing the personnel for the performing groups. The usual procedure is to have each student come in by himself to the director and "tryout" for chorus. The tryout usually consists of singing a song, singing vocal exercises, and some testing of the students' ear training and music reading ability. A list of those who "made chorus" is then posted on the bulletin board.

The mistake that many directors make during tryouts is failing to realize that the students are also trying the director out. Many directors go about the tryout in a cold, calculated and impersonal manner seeking only what they wish to find regarding choral balance, blend etc. It is true that they should be seeking potential assets to their musical groups. However, they should make every effort to approach the tryout in a personal, fair and inspiring manner that will leave a positive first impression on those trying out.

Probably the most important aspect of the tryout is the time element. It takes time to do a thorough job of trying out a student. The main quality that a director is seeking is potential. He should be concerned with not only how the student sounds presently but also how he will sound after two or three months of vocal training. A

student's attitude is of primary importance as well. All these things take time to find out.

Idealistically the tryouts should be held in the Spring of the year before the students register for the coming academic year. This is done to avoid scheduling conflicts on the part of the students. These tryouts should include interested junior chorus members as well as non-chorus members in the senior high. Tryouts in the Fall would then include transfer students, students who failed to tryout in the Spring, and students that the director wishes to hear again, especially the younger boys.

However the director that is new to the school is forced to hold auditions in the Fall. In this case, the first thing that he must do is gather together as much information as possible from all available sources concerning the vocal program that has been existing. These sources include programs, recordings, student records, the administration, the faculty and the former director.

Secondly, the director should set up auditions, many of which should and can take place before school begins. Holding auditions before school begins serves a dual purpose. First of all it gives more time to hear each student and secondly, much can be learned about the existing vocal program indirectly from the students themselves. Those not able to attend an early tryout could be heard after school, during study periods, etc. during the first few days of school. However, it is best that tryouts all be completed before the first or second day of school so that a full chorus rehearsal can begin immediately.

A Suggested Tryout

The following is a suggested tryout procedure that could be used in the high school. The length of each tryout should be up to ten minutes. (A director should remember to hold auditions over several days if there is a large number of students trying out. Several solid hours of tryouts in a day results in having them "all sound alike".) This sample tryout includes only that which will reveal vocal potential. A director should also check the students' music reading ability and ear training potential plus some means of testing the students' expressive or creative ability (pantomime, etc.)

1. The director should, with a filled out information card in his possession, chat with the student. This serves three important purposes:
 - a. Talking helps to calm the student down. (Tryouts are usually a traumatic experience for all people, especially teenagers).
 - b. By talking the student reveals his personality and character. (The director should ask several questions that require the students to think and express themselves such as: "What does your schedule include for this year?", "How do you think you'll be able to stop Central's rushing attack?", or "What was included in your daily schedule at Music Camp?")
 - c. By talking the student reveals any accent he may possess, his diction and his speaking pitch. These should be jotted down on the student's information card, i.e. "Jerald has a distinct Scandinavian accent, possesses a cosmetic lisp and speaks in an unexpressive monotone."
2. Sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" in different keys beginning in a medium key. This song is suggested because it is familiar and has a limited range. If the student sings it very meekly he should be told to shout an energized "hey". Then beginning on the pitch he shouted on he should sing the song again with as much energy as he used when shouting. The director should listen carefully for the student's potential tessitura among other things.

3. For girls--Each girl should utter $\bar{o}\bar{o}$ in as high a head voice as possible. This utterance should be one of exclamation or surprise. (The director should always demonstrate new vocal exercises.) Then using that top note for a starting pitch she should sing $\bar{o}\bar{o}$ down an octave in a glissando effect as if she were trying to hit each note in between. The exercise should then ascend by half steps. Each girl should attempt to "utter" the sound and not think "sing", on the top note of the exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to expose the head voice. Girls are impressed to learn that they "got up so high" without any real effort.

For boys--Starting on their speaking pitch each boy should sing scalewise up a fifth and back on "ming" making sure that he puts a good "ing" on each note. The exercise should proceed upwards by half steps. This exercise does not involve the tongue which many times interferes with the sound of the beginning singer. The potential tenor is often exposed in this exercise no matter how much he tries to sound like a bass.

The following is good for checking the boys' lower register:

Exercise I

(pp) legato

Oh - No - No

4. Each student should sing the following with the tip of the tongue against the lower teeth and with the middle of the tongue being raised out and forward for each "yah". The exercise should begin in the middle of the range and descend by half-steps. This exercise is excellent for the director to hear a neutral sound (color and weight).

Exercise II

(p) Very slow and legato

Ma-h-Yah-Yah-Yah Yah

The following are some additional suggestions that will help facilitate the tryout:

1. Each tryout exercise should be printed on a large card so that each student can see it as well as hear it.
2. The student information sheet should be filled out by the student before the tryout.
3. A tape recorder can easily be used for later reference to each voice.
4. Students that are hoarse, have a cold or are overly nervous should be re-heard.
5. The director should have a spot marked out where the students are to stand so that he need not answer the question "Where should I stand?" each time.
6. Each person should be treated as if they were doing the director a favor for trying out.
7. A simple Bach Chorale should be used to check the student's music reading ability. The student should choose one part to sing (not the melody) while the director plays the other three parts.
8. Ear testing should be kept quite simple with the tone-matching of possibly three successive intervals being sufficient. If the student exemplifies a great deal of ability in hearing pitches he should be tested for the possibility of being a section leader.

Someone has said that no student should be "cut" from the chorus unless there is another chorus that he can sing in. There is much wisdom here. Every effort should be made to have someplace where the students who really wish to participate can do so.

Vocal Techniques

It takes the patience of Job to really teach high school students to sing. A director who wishes to teach a large group to sing using correct vocal techniques must be willing to do

the following:

1. Constantly seek out more and better techniques for large group vocal training.
2. Keep each day's vocal training fresh and inspiring by being mentally and vocally "up" and by using as much variety as possible from day to day.
3. Be willing to spend much individual time with the students.

It is during the first few days of the school year that the students will either accept or reject the director's concepts of vocal training. Whether they accept or reject them is completely dependent on the techniques used and how these techniques are administered.

First and foremost in the introduction of correct singing to the high school student is that of getting each student to sing easier immediately. Vocal philosophy, anatomy, etc., can wait. The following is a suggested procedure that can be used during the first day of full rehearsal in the Fall:

1. The students should sing some familiar song in unison at a relatively slow tempo, sitting and using music.
2. Next they should stand and sing the same song, this time in a quick tempo using the breath marks that should be written in the music. They should be asked to repeat the song again re-emphasizing the fact that they are to breathe only where the breath marks are written in.
3. A short discussion on why it was easier to sing the second and third time should ensue (faster tempo, better posture and controlled breathing) a psychological-aesthetic approach manifesting itself in a physiological change. It should be emphasized that this is what correct singing is all about.
4. Next an inexperienced singer who has been previously chosen should be asked to come up in front of the room and sing the song. He should be asked to breathe as

deeply as possible while singing. The director or a correct singing student should follow this by singing the song as nearly correct as possible. A very short discussion should follow on the differences in breathing and posture of the two singers.

5. The whole chorus should stand, bending at the waist while keeping the back straight, with the feet spread apart. (The biggest problem in early training is tension which includes tension in the abdominal area. This position relaxes the abdominal muscles. Also the girls are not yet convinced that it is ladylike to let the "tummy" come out.) The student's hands should be pressed against the waist with thumbs to the back.
6. In this position the students should be asked to shout a short phrase over and over in strict time taking as deep and quick a breath between each phrase as possible.
7. This should be followed quickly by the familiar 1-3-5-3-1 "Yuh-huh-huh" exercise. Again, (still in the bent over position) each student should take as quick and deep a breath as possible between each phrase.
8. The director should then explain the physiological occurrences he knows happened to each singer during the preceding exercise.
9. After explaining what a good hum is (tongue laying flat in the mouth in a vowel position) the students should be asked to stand once more. They should be told to pretend that they are going to blow the candles out on a cake and then suddenly stop right before they blow. (The tension felt in the abdominal area is the correct tension for singing.)
10. The students should then hum an exercise with the feeling of lightly blowing into the cake. They should blow hard enough to make the candles flicker, but not hard enough to put them out.

The preceding should take about 15 minutes and should immediately be followed by some other activity such as announcements, passing out music, etc. It is important that the director have full command of the entire situation. If the students feel that they are progressing in their vocal technique and are challenged during the

entire chorus hour they will come along very nicely. It is better for the director to be a near tyrant at the beginning of the year and ease off later rather than the other way around. When complete control is maintained in a positive manner by the director the students are more comfortable and cooperative.

The following are some other techniques that can be used in the first few days of school to help each student acquire a realization of his own voice.

1. In the bent over position mentioned earlier the students should pretend that they are sucking malts from the floor using a long straw. They should attempt to suck up the whole malt in a series of short inhalations through the puckered lips. The abdominal wall will move out for this.
2. Using good posture (some exercises should be used to help the students attain this) each student should pretend that there are costly china cups balancing on each shoulder. They should then be told to breathe as deeply as possible without raising the shoulders.
3. The students should be reminded that they laugh until their sides ache and activate their whole body when they sneeze. With this in mind a good laughing exercise should be sung. (Also a good joke or anecdote would work fine here.)
4. Many techniques that help the student put the "body under the tone" should be used. Some of these are the following:
 - a. Holding books out in front of the body with the palms down. This helps the students to keep from raising the chest during inhalation.
 - b. Placing the hands behind the neck with the elbows straight out to the sides. This helps raise the chest and stretches the thorax.
 - c. Stand with knees bent in a near sitting position with the back straight while singing a staccato exercise. This can only be done a few seconds but is excellent in helping each student to get "under the tone" with his body.

5. Everytime the bells ring in school, which is usually about fifteen times a day, each student should cough or clear his throat and feel the natural supporting action of abdominal muscles with one of his hands. This helps bring the singing controls to a conscious level.

There are many other techniques that can be used as well. The main purpose of each one should be to focus attention away from the throat and to give attention to the supporting action of the body.

Basic Exercises for Vocal Development

Every vocal instructor needs a set of good vocal exercises that will help him teach correct singing. Only a few carefully chosen vocal exercises are really necessary to develop good vocal technique. It is not the exercise itself that is of prime consideration but rather how the exercise is sung. The exercise should not be an abstract drill the meaning of which escapes the student. Every vocal exercise must have an expressed purpose or purposes which the student fully understands.

Singing is the same as athletic work in that it involves muscular control of the body. The freedom, power, delicate nuances, automatic spontaneity, flexibility, speed and beauty of the voice lies in the freedom, power, delicate nuances, automatic spontaneity, flexibility, speed and beauty of each of these muscular controls. The purpose of vocal exercises is to help build these controls into the body. "Once patterned and conditioned into automatic use, the human body is a marvelous instrument of expression."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Westerman, op. cit., p. 82.

The mind cannot control the body efficiently until the body has built efficient controls into the brain, the cycle from the body to brain to body must be patterned and conditioned into automatic use before it becomes an efficient tool of the mind.⁵⁵

Vocal exercises generally consist of four basic types. They are the following:

1. Scale exercise
2. Sustained tone exercise
3. The arpeggio
4. Any combination of the preceding three

There are literally thousands of vocal exercises most of which are conducive to good vocal development when executed correctly. The following are some suggested vocal concepts and exercises that can be used by the beginning singer.

One of the best techniques in learning to sing correctly is through humming. The following are some advantages of working with humming in early vocal training:

1. Correct humming helps coordinate the entire singing process into a single unit. Only the complicated act of articulation is left out. Humming helps isolate the fundamental sound where it can be directly dealt with by the student and instructor together.
2. Correct humming teaches and trains the natural arching and lowering of the soft palate which is the key to uniform resonance throughout the range.
3. Correct humming helps the student feel the vocal sound, especially the sensation of sound above the roof of the mouth.
4. Correct humming is one of the finest techniques in helping the student "mix" registers.

⁵⁵ibid., p. 82.

As a general rule the "m" hum is by far the best for early training. The "ng" hum closes off the entire mouth where 99 percent of articulation takes place and the "n" hum shuts off an area where 85 percent of articulation takes place. Also, constant use of the "ng" sound usually results in a pharyngeal squeeze and a nasal twang. The best way of realizing a correct hum is to speak the colloquial "m-hum" as if answering to the affirmative.

When humming is used as a technique in learning to sing both the student and teacher should be aware of the following:

1. It is best to begin humming exercises using a small range to help keep the sound "on one level."
2. Humming should always be done softly, with vitality, and without any constriction. A singer should never use more breath support than is needed. This is especially true when humming.
3. When ascending on a humming exercise the singer will eventually feel a change (the *passaggio*). If the singer is humming softly with maintained vitality the change will not be too abrupt. If loud constricted humming is taking place, the singer will feel a real "change of gears". Regardless, the change will take place. This change will occur in altos at about b^1 or c^2 , with basses, b^1 or c^1 , with mezzos, $c^2\#$ or d^2 , with baritones, $c^1\#$ or d^1 , with sopranos, e^{2b} , e^2 or f^2 and with tenors, e^{1b} , e^1 or f^1 . The "trick" is to "let it go" when the singer approaches this change and not to "fight it".

The following are two related exercises that each student should master. The first exercise should begin in a medium range and proceed successively by half-steps, upwards. The second exercise is to begin on the bottom note of the last run sung in exercise one. It should proceed downwards by half-steps using less and less of all muscle actions.

Exercise III 56

The following two exercises can be performed in the same way as the preceding two with the "m" sound feeding the "ah" vowels. In order to keep from singing "Mu" the student should be sure to drop the jaw for each "mah".

Exercise IV 57

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 80.

The following three exercises can start in a medium low key and proceed upwards. Again the "m" sound should feed the vowel. In number 3 the "m" sound should move directly to the "l" sound with no abrupt change. The staccato notes should always be very short.

Exercise V 58

The musical score for Exercise V 58 consists of three staves of music in 2/4 time. The first staff is marked 'p' and contains a melody with lyrics 'm ha ha ha ha ha ha ha'. The second staff is marked 'a' and contains a melody with lyrics 'm a a a a la'. The third staff is marked '3' and contains a melody with lyrics 'm la a a a la'. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The music features various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs.

Maintaining good diction in early vocal training can be very difficult for the high school student. First and foremost the student must become aware of the need of using good diction. Secondly, and more difficult, is that of keeping the proper throat and mouth position while forming words. This requires freedom from tension in the lips, jaw, and tongue while maintaining correct singing methods. All this can be done if the approach is kept simple and not complex.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 100.

Charles R. Hoffer states the following concerning this:

In some cases, good intentions have led teachers into long and complex discussions of palate position, nasalization, and diacritical marks, accompanied by tedious sessions on how to sing the thirty-plus vowel sounds of the English language in conjunction with a labial, aspirate, or lingua-palatal consonant. This approach bewilders the students because for years they have been saying words without being conscious of shaping the palate or moving the uvula. Also, such manipulative efforts sidetrack their attention into areas that are somewhat removed from the qualities of the music itself.⁵⁹

Using a sound in a familiar word as a model helps this dilemma. The usual practice is to use the five Italian vowels as models. However, Italian is not English and what is more the Italian vowels consist of about 12 percent of the sounds on the written page of English.

The following is a list of fifteen vowel sounds which Kenneth Westerman says represents more than 90 percent of the sounds and 95 percent of the muscular movements involved in singing English.⁶⁰ A chart such as the following can be placed in the chorus room and referred to when a word in a song is not being sung consistently.

Plate V

vē	as in <i>veal</i>
si	as in <i>sit</i>
tā	as in <i>take</i>
thē	as in <i>them</i>
shā	as in <i>shall</i>
lā	as in <i>large</i>
gō	as in <i>gone</i>
dū	as in <i>dust</i>
nō	as in <i>note</i>
pū	as in <i>push</i>
rōō	as in <i>room</i>
mī	as in <i>might</i>
bou	as in <i>bounce</i>
few	as in <i>few</i>
coi	as in <i>coin</i>

⁵⁹Hoffer, op. cit., p. 263.

⁶⁰Westerman, op. cit., p. 61.

The following two exercises make use of the preceding list of sounds. Exercise one should be sung using series a-d. Exercise two should be sung quickly and lightly with the "m" hum preceding each series. A smooth legato line should be maintained throughout both exercises. The purpose of these are to help the students maintain a uniform resonant sound while articulating. A-d becomes progressively more difficult in maintaining uniform resonance. Exercise two progresses by half-steps after each phrase. Exercise one is sung through only once with no progression.

Exercise VI 61

a. m-la-ni-no-go m-la-mi-no-go
 b. m-la-the-ta-du m-la-sha-bou-si
 c. m-la-sha-bou-si m-pu-go-ve-roo
 d. m-pu-go-ve-roo

a. m-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-mi-no-go

- b. m-la-la-la-la-la-the-ta-du
 c. m-la-la-la-la-la-sha-bou-si
 d. m-pu-pu-pu-pu-pu-go-ve-roo

The problem of the passaggio will not disappear by itself. It must be carefully dealt with. The best technique for this problem is to use vocal exercises that carry the light registration down through the heavy. Weldon Whitlock in the NATS Journal gives the following technique in dealing with the passaggio:

⁶¹Ibid., p. 100.

Now start on the G natural above the staff, well within the true "falsetto" or upper register, and sing downwards, with as full a falsetto as possible; as the singer comes down, the falsetto becomes thinner and difficult to maintain; no matter; persevere. Come down the major scale, singing the syllable NOO on each note of the scale. Then take the same procedure, using the syllable HEE, and come down the scale once more. Constantly watch that the jaw stays down and loose. Raise this scale by half-steps...Take each scale slowly and try to match, first intensities, then qualities.⁶²

The preceding technique used by the bel canto singers, is best accomplished in a private studio, although it is a good large group technique as well. It should be followed by some full voiced exercise.

Many other things can be done to help each singer realize his vocal potential and also to create more interest in singing in general. Some of these are listed below:

1. Solos and ensembles--Every year there is the usual solo and ensemble day in the school district. Normally there is a mad rush one month preceding the event to get some groups together. However, the best time to organize solos and ensembles is in the Fall. This should be done not necessarily to get a head start on everyone else but rather to give the solos and ensembles chances to perform throughout the year. Also, it is an excellent means of getting to each singer individually, for vocal technique. A student will "come in" for an ensemble class rather than for a "lesson".
2. Bringing in a guest clinician--An expert is "a person from out of town" and a guest clinician can do much good. It is best that the director be familiar with the clinician, however.
3. Movies--Visual aids, recordings and pictures of great artists, guest appearances of choral groups, etc., all help to build and maintain interest in singing.
4. Recitals--Two or three recitals during the year featuring several different solos and ensembles also help maintain interest and motivation.

⁶²Weldon Whitlock, "The Problem of the Passaggio", NATS Journal, Volume 24 (Feb. 1968), p. 10.

In Philosophy of Singing, Clara Rogers maintains that singing is man's greatest expression. She states that music is the most expressive of the arts and that singing is the most expressive form of music. It is generally accepted by theologians, philosophers, and psychologists alike that helping and giving oneself to others is the key to real happiness, and according to the experts there is nothing as fresh, exciting and challenging as today's youth.

If all of the above are true then teaching young people how to sing helps to make a choral director's life one of happiness and fulfillment.

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