

HELP! I'm teaching CHOIR?!

Personality differences / expectations between instrumental and vocal students

1. Choir kids are not used to the discipline present in instrumental ensembles, nor the hierarchy of section leaders and assistant conductors, etc. (Matthew Netto, Patriot High School)
2. Band kids know how to put up and shut up, choir kids need things explained & rationalized (Matthew Netto, Patriot High School, matthew_netto@jusd.k12.ca.us)
3. Many extroverts - know their names!
4. Relationship is important
5. Build them up....they will thrive!

Teaching Appropriate Vocal Tone Production / Breath support / Vowel Shape / Diction

1. Breath Support - fast, warm air! (Just like instrumentalists!)
2. Dropped jaw, tongue resting, lifted soft palette, space between molars
3. High note...shape adjustment
4. Breathly vs. full sound (practice crescendos)
5. The shy singer / volume trick (neighbor)
6. Align every vowel (specific practice, singing solfege',
7. Scales, triads, chromatic scale, intervals
8. Singlish
9. Diphthongs
10. Drop the tongue / jaw after singing a consonant
11. How to create a quality choral sound
12. Teach musicianship skills in every warm up
13. Phrasing and representing text

Teaching Part Singing

1. Solfege Scales / Patterns
2. Chromatic Scale
3. Ah Poor Bird
4. Rose, Rose, Rose
5. Any round

Teaching Sight Singing

1. Require...encourage....start where they are.
2. Choose your philosophy (One option: key of C to teach all rhythms & such, then move to G, F, and beyond)
3. Solfege is your friend
4. Drill rhythm separately from melody at first, choir kids need more rhythm attention than high school band kids
5. Teach common voice leading, like sol ti do for altos, and do fa sol do for basses, to the whole choir as part of the warm up.
6. Ensure the kids WRITE out the solfege at some point (helps "cement" content intellectually)
7. All Solfege warm ups, scales, arpeggios, chords, etc.
8. Sightsinging Programs: Sightsinging Factory, Sight Singing School, google "sight singing C major step" or whatever you are looking for...much is available online.

Building musicality

1. Focus during warm-ups
2. Work beyond the notes
3. Chromatic Chord Changes
4. Crescendos, Decrescendos, sfz,
5. Diction
6. Many similarities to band & orchestra

Rehearsal Tips & Tricks

1. Everyone sings everything
2. Stronger singers stand behind weaker singers
3. How to quickly designate who is stronger and who is weaker
4. Quick & easy standing order
5. Practice walking on & off!

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Festivals & adjudicated performances

1. Many similarities to band and orchestra
2. External motivator to move towards excellence
3. Regional / State

Tried and True Warm-ups

1. Hmmm's
2. Sigh-glides
3. Vowels
4. Consonants
5. Rounds / Canons
6. Chords
7. Solfeg
8. Plainchant

Tried and True Repertoire

1. Songs with Backtracks
2. Partner songs
3. Foreign language (to keep in mind)
 - a. Good idea to start with Latin
 - b. Italian / Spanish
 - c. German / French / other (Czech, Russian, African languages)
4. Composers to consider....not a complete list!
 - a. Roger Emerson
 - b. MaryLynn Lightfoot
 - c. Ruth Elaine Schram
 - d. Chorister's Guild
 - e. John Leavitt
 - f. Amy Bernon - poetry
 - g. Laura Farnell - poetry
 - h. Don Besig & Nancy Price - accessible middle school tunes
 - i. Ken Berg - teaching tunes
 - j. Greg Gilpin - creative, fun & sometimes crazy
 - k. Victor C. Johnson
 - l. Russell Robinson
 - m. Brad Ellinboe
 - n. Brad Printz
 - o. Earlene Rentz
 - p. Patrick M Liebergen (arranger of classical pieces)
 - q. Mary Donnelly & George L.O. Strid - Arranging folk songs
 - r. Contemporary arrangements: Roger Emerson, Mac Huff, Mark Brymer
 - s. Tried & True: Jay Althouse, Ruth Morris Gray, Ruth Elaine Schram, Emily Crocker

Tried and True programming ideas

1. Variety is important
2. Fast Slow Fast (Big closer if possible),
3. Change keys of the pieces
4. Only 1 foreign language at a time for beginning ensembles

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Support

1. Facebook Groups
 - a. Facebook groups: CCDA - California ACDA, ACDA Western Division, National ACDA, I'm a Choir Director, Choir Buzz, Chorus of America, Voice Science Works, Show Choir Connect, CAMEC, Chorus America, Choral Stream, Ryan Guth, SCVA,
2. Twitter Accounts
3. Instagram Accounts
4. Podcasts
5. YouTube - publisher videos; part videos
6. Online resources
7. Free repertoire
8. www.thesightreadingproject.com
9. www.sightreadingfactory.com

Tried & True octavos that have worked for SCVA board members:

1. African Noel, Victor C. Johnston, Heritage Music Press, 3- part Mixed
2. African Processional, D.B. Montoya & Carah Reed, Pavane Publishing, SATB
3. A Dream Within a Dream, Jeffrey Cobb, Santa Barbara music Press, SATB, SBMP 1292
4. Bee, I'm Expecting You, Unison by Emma Lou Diemer
5. Betelehemu, Wendell Whalum, Arr. Barrington Brooks, Alfred Publishing, SATB
6. Bonse Aba, Victor C. Johnson, Heritage Music Press, 3-part Mixed
7. Canto de Pilon, Trad. Venezualan, Arr. Cristian Grase, Pavane Publishing #08301912, two-part
8. Carolare, Mark Hayes, Fred Bock Music Co., #0873840, 2- Part
9. Chariot's Comin'! (Swing Low, Sweet Chariot), Don Besig & Nancy Price, Alfred Music
10. Dulaman, Michael McGlynn, <http://www.michaelmcglynn.com>, SATB
11. Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun, SAB by Eugene Butler
12. Gloria Alleluia, Emily Crocker, Hal Leonard Inc., 3-pt mixed, 42307040
13. God Rest You Merry Gentlemen, TB arr. Philip Kern
14. In My Heart, Jim Papoulis, Boosey & Hawkes, 2-Part
15. Lightning!, Greg Gilpin
16. May Night, The (Die Meinacht), SATB Brahms/Frackenpohl
17. No Mark, Cecil Effinger, SATB, G. Schirmer, 972497
18. Old Joe Clark
19. Peace, Peace, Sylvia Powell & Rick Powell, Arr. Fred Bock, #HL 08738350, 3 Part
20. Sahayta, Ben Allaway, Shawnee Press #35018791, SSA
21. Same Train, Stacey Gibbs, SATB, unpublished
22. Shake the Papaya Down, Arr. Ruth Dwyer & Judith Waller, Colla Voce (Henry Leck series)
23. Shoshone Love Song, Traditional Native American Lyric, Arr. Roger Emerson
24. Sing A Song of Sixpence, Sherri Porterfield, Alfred Publishing, 2-part
25. Solfeg Suite, Ken Berg

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26. Something Told The Wild Geese, Sherri Porterfield, Alfred Publishing, SSA
27. Spinning Wheel, SSA by Ruth Morris Gray
28. Star Spangled Banner - Russell Robinson; Tim Sharp
29. Something Told the Wild Geese, Mary Lynn Lightfoot
30. Steps To the Future, Nancy Telfer, Neil A. Kjos Music Co., 2-part
31. There Is Peace, Jim Papoulis, Boosey & Hawkes, #48023007, Two-Part/SATB
32. Today We Shall Be Merry, Vecchi, arr. Porterfield, Heritage Music Press, 3 pt mixed, 15/1420H-3
33. Tonight, Brandon Ulrich, Musacatus Press, SATB, MP 1532
34. True Lover's Farewell, arr. Reginald Unterscher, Walton Music, SA(T)B, WW1445
35. Two Renaissance Chorals, SAB arr. Russell Robinson
36. Viva La Compagnie - TTB
37. Viva La Musica, David Brunner, Boosey & Hawkes, SATB, 48022619
38. Viva Tutti - TTB
39. Wayfarin' Stranger, 2 pt. By Donald Moore
40. Welcome, Sweet Pleasure, Thomas Weelkes, arr. Thoburn, Alfred Publishing, SSA(T)B, OCT02561
41. Wide Open Spaces, Sarah Quartel, Oxford University Press, SATB, 10479646
42. Yo Le Canto Todo del Dia, SATB, David Brunner

Helpful Links:

1. <https://imslp.org>
2. <http://cpdl.org/wiki/>
3. <http://www.mutopiaproject.org>
4. http://www.moreofit.com/similar-to/imslp.org/Top_10_Sites_Like_Imslp/
5. <https://www.sheetmusicplus.com>
6. <http://www.music-scores.com/index.html>
7. <http://www.scvachoral.org/music.php>
8. Editors Choice on JWPepper
9. <https://acda.org/files/3-26-10%20Publishers%20for%20website.pdf>