

“GREAT SOUND” - FURTHER CONVERSATIONS

WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

July 28-31, 2008

QUESTION and ANSWER

OTHER “GREAT SOUND” CONSIDERATIONS

- Repertoire selection
- The aging voice
- Seating/voice placement
- Podium Personality
- Listening during rehearsal

SCORE STUDY and REHEARSAL PLANNING

“The process of score study/score marking internalizes the piece in the conductor, enabling him/her to con- (with) –duct (lead) musicians along the path of artistry and understanding.” – Lee Kesselman

I. SCORE STUDY

1) Start by analyzing the form and structure of the music (Bar-line analysis)

- Number the measures and get a feel for the piece as a whole.
- Is there a refrain or any repeated material?
- Where do significant musical changes occur? (harmony, use of themes, key changes, transitions, etc.)
- Where are logical starting and stopping points for rehearsal?
- Which section of the piece is most challenging? Easiest?
- Form is an expressive musical element!

2) Find the musical elements in the score

- Sing ALL the voice parts!
- Notice challenging intervals and dissonances
- Play one voice part, sing another
- Play each voice part against another (Sop and Alto, Sop and Tenor...)
- Notice time signature, tempo, key signature, dynamics, vocal range, text (speak it out-loud to yourself), diction, entrances, cut-offs, etc.
- **Notice elements of GREAT SOUND:**
 - **Breath**
 - **Resonance**
 - **Vowels**
 - **Rhythmic Elements**
 - **Phrasing/Expression**
 - **Etc...**

(As you work, mark your personal score to reflect your observations and musical decisions. Develop a system of score marking that works for you!)

3) Add musical elements not in the score

- Add breath markings (assign cut-offs specific rhythmic values)
- Add interpretive dynamics and phrasing

4) Stylistic analysis

- Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic? How notes relate to one another in a linear fashion will depend on the stylistic period of the music.
- Do research and listen to recordings to help inform your decisions.

5) Historical Analysis

- Consider the composer's life, social context, first performance, etc.

II. CREATING A REHEARSAL PLAN (“WEBBING”)

“The understood score becomes the lesson plan.” - Lee Kesselman

“WEBBING” is a systematic process of turning the studied musical score into an interactive lesson plan for rehearsal. The Web lesson plan allows conductors to form a plan for rehearsal, but work flexibly within it, allowing for improvisational teaching.

STEP 1: Conductor decisions/interpretation

- The information you gathered during your Score Study process becomes the basis for your lesson plan.
- What musical elements in the score do you want to teach?

WEBBING EXAMPLE: Silent Night, CW #60

OUTLINING EXAMPLE:

STEP 2: Teaching strategies (3-5 strategies)

- Brainstorm 3-5 teaching strategies for each musical element you webbed.

WEBBING EXAMPLE: Silent Night, CW #60

OUTLINING EXAMPLE:

STEP 3: Balance verbal with non-verbal teaching strategies

- Challenge yourself to incorporate more non-verbal techniques, such as singing, chant-voice, or kinesthetic motions. Be creative and try new things!

STEP 4: Embedded assessments: how do you know they know?

- Brainstorm techniques for assessing your choir's progress and understanding (useful in an academic setting).

RESOURCES:

- Kesselman, Lee. "Score Study and Analysis for the Conductor/Teacher." (1994 Institute from Choral Teacher Education).
- Nesheim, Paul with Weston Noble. Building Beautiful Voices. Roger Dean Publishing, MCMXCV.
- Sataloff, Robert T. "Vocal Aging and Its Medical Implications: What Singing Teachers Should Know." *The Journal of Singing*, September/October 2000.
- Smith, Brenda and Sataloff, R. T. Choral Pedagogy. Plural Publishing, 2006.
- Snow, Sandra, "Webbing." (Lecture, Choral Music Symposium, Michigan State University, Summer 2003).
- Ware, Clifton. Basics of Vocal Pedagogy. McGraw-Hill, 1998.

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Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or comments.

PRACTICE LESSON PLAN: WERE YOU THERE (CW #119)

- I. Score Study: Notice elements of Great Sound in the score.

BREATH

-
-

RESONANCE

-
-

VOWELS

-
-

RHYTHM

-
-

PHRASING/EXPRESSION

-
-

- II. Lesson Planning: 1) Web or Outline the teaching objectives listed above
2) Brainstorm 3-5 teaching strategies for each objective

