

What Was I Thinking?

C, CC, and CCC levels

- I. Know your choir
 - A. Ranges of all
 - B. Voices (where is strength?)
- II. Determine voicing to be used at contest
 - A. Strength of voices helps determine this. Don't do three or four part music when your choir members are not able to carry their parts.
 - B. Analyze where your strong singers are and distribute them throughout the choir.
- III. Assign students to the parts
 - A. Remember that the middle school voice has not settled into a specific soprano/alto classification and there is great flexibility allowing you to move voices to where they help the choir the most.
 - B. Don't allow all of your strongest singers to be on the same part.
 - C. Don't overload your soprano section.
 1. Remember the physical aspect of sound (higher sounds are louder naturally than lower sounds.)
 2. Think of a pyramid

	S1	S1	S1						S S S S S
	S2	S2	S2	S2	S2				A A A A A A A A A
A	A	A	A	A	A	A			

- D. The goal is to have your altos singing with a nice, light, but full sound without pushing with their chest voice so they can blend and tune with the soprano sound.

- IV. Choose the music
 - A. Don't select your favorite piece from college
 - B. Research the levels of music required for your choir classification.
 - 1. C – 2 gr. one songs, 1 song of choice (doesn't have to be on list) – one of these three songs must be acappella
 - 2. CC – 1 gr. one song, 1 gr. two song, 1 song of choice (doesn't have to be on list) – one of these three songs must be acappella
 - 3. CCC - 2 gr. two songs, 1 song of choice (doesn't have to be on list) – one of these three songs must be acappella
 - C. Balance your program
 - 1. Strive for variety in your music choices
 - a. Fast, slow, fast
 - b. Lyrical, rhythmic
 - 2. Start and end with your strongest pieces
 - D. Consider the abilities of your choir
 - 1. Can they sing unison in-tune?
 - a. If not, don't select two or three part music with complicated part singing.

- b. Select simple unison melodies with a narrow range and work on singing in-tune.
 - 2. Do they have difficulty holding parts?
 - a. If they do, don't select pieces with complicated harmonies
 - b. Select pieces that begin with a unison melody and gradually drift apart into simple harmonies.
 - 3. Do they have difficulty singing with nice tall vowels?
 - a. If so, steer away from songs with which they might be familiar.
 - b. Select at least one simple foreign language piece, preferably Latin or Italian, in which you can stress vowel formation. Begin with this piece and transfer vowel knowledge to other pieces.
 - 4. Do not feel like you have to impress anyone with the difficulty of a selection.
 - a. Choose music within your choir's capabilities.
 - b. Rather than work to be able to perform a difficult piece marginally, work toward performing a simpler piece with as much perfection as possible.
- V. Teach the music
- A. Stress accuracy from the beginning.
 - B. Determine the teaching system you will use in advance.
 - 1. Learn the music in solfege to help with accuracy of pitch when words are added.
 - 2. Study the counting: it carries over into needed skills in the sightreading room.
 - C. Create a timeline for "when you will teach what" and make yourself stick with it.
- VI. For what are judges listening?
- A. Tone
 - 1. Controlled vs. uncontrolled
 - 2. Vowel production - shape of vowels: spread vs. tall
 - 3. Vowel sounds
 - a. Unity of vowel sounds within choir
 - b. Consistency
 - 4. Breath control as demonstrated by phrase length and tonal control
 - B. Tuning
 - 1. Unison tuning as well as octaves, fifths and thirds of chords
 - a. Unify vowel sounds to improve tuning.
 - b. Teach students to listen to improve tuning.
 - 2. Balance of chords, especially the last chord in the piece
 - C. Musicality
 - 1. Strive for clear and accurate pronunciation and enunciation of words
 - 2. Focus on rhythmic accuracy
 - 3. Shape the phrases
 - 4. Dynamic variation (sometimes you have to create your own)
 - 5. Word and syllabic stress

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SUGGESTED PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNING CHOIRS – C, CC, CCC

Class C – Treble - SA

Good Night – Rao – gr. 1 – w/opt. Orff
The Cuckoo (Firsts and Seconds) – Appleby/Fowler – gr. 1 (acappella)
Dear Father, Lord and King – Newton – gr. 1

Something Told the Wild Geese – Porterfield – gr. 1
Non nobis, Domine – Byrd/Wagner – gr. 1 (acappella)
Give Thanks and Praise – Handel/Kihlken – gr. 1

Class CC – Treble - SA

Jesu, Joy of Man Desiring – Bach/Liebergen – gr. 1
When Sappho Sing and Plays from Two Songs – Shearer (acappella)
Will You Walk A Little Faster – Carroll/Carter – gr. 2

Who Can Sail – Julseth – gr. 1
Zum Gali Gali – Terri - Rounds for Everyone from Everywhere – gr. 1 – (acappella)
Two Roses from Two Thoughts for Children's Chorus – Bartok – gr. 1

Class CCC – Treble - SSA

When I Am Silent – Varner
Kikkehihi (German) – Schein – gr. 2 (acappella)
Coffee Grows on White Oak Trees – Fischer – gr. 2

What Sweeter Music – Butler – gr. 2
I Never Saw a Moor from Three Choral Settings – Boberg – gr. 2 (acappella)
Pick a Bale of Cotton – Bertaux - gr. 2

Class C – Tenor/Bass - TB

She Wore A Yellow Ribbon/Bk. 2 – Follett – gr. 1
Red River Valley – Crocker – gr. 1 (acappella)
Babylon's Falling (Library of Song for Male Voices, Bk. 1) – Follett – gr. 1

Aura Lee (Songs for Tenor Bass Chorus) – Crocker – gr. 1
Sons of Art (Songs for Tenor Bass Chorus) – Crocker – gr. 1 (acappella)
That's Where My Money Goes – Leininger/Williams-Wimberly – gr. 1

Class CC – Tenor Bass

This Train – Moore – gr. 1
Crusader's Hymn (Library of Song for Male Voices, Book 2) – Follett – gr. 1 – (acappella)
Vive l'amour – Siltman – gr. 2 – (acappella)

I've Been Working on the Railroad (Library of Song for Male Voices, Bk. 1) – Follett – gr. 1
I Walk By the Sea (TB) – DeWitt – gr. 1
Hello, My Baby (TB) – arr. Follett – gr. 2

Class CCC – Tenor/Bass

Captain Fate (Three Pirate Songs) – Schickele – gr. 2
Leave Her Johnny from A Cappella Songs for Tenor Bass Chorus – Crocker – gr. 2 (acappella)
This Train – Siltman – gr. 2

Piping Tim of Galway – Swanson – gr. 2
Will You Come to the Bower – Shearer – gr. 2
Viva Tutti – Hunter – gr. 2

Class C – Mixed

All Through the Night – Eilers – gr. 1
See Them Dance from Library of Song for Male Voices, Book 2– Crocker – gr. 1 (acappella)
Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel – Emerson – gr. 1

Appalachian Lament – McCray – gr. 1
In These Delightful Pleasant Groves – gr. 1 (acappella)
Psalm 150 – Harper – gr. 1 (acappella)

Class CC – Mixed

Adoramus Te – McPheeters – gr. 1
Time Gone – Emerson (acappella)
Sing Praise, Alleluia – Crocker – gr. 2

My Johnny is Comin' For Me – Oliver – gr. 2
An Irish Blessing – DeWitt – gr. 1 (acappella)
Come With Jubilant Song – Lightfoot – gr. 1

Class CCC - Mixed

Kyrie – Porterfield – gr. 2
Keep Your Lamps – Thomas (acappella)
Je Le Vous Dirai! – Certon – gr. 2 (acappella)

Benedictus (3-part mixed) (SAB) – gr. 2
See Them Dance – Crocker – gr. 1
Psalm 150 – Schutz – gr. 2 - SA/TB

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