

Choir 911: Voice for Band Directors who have been Assigned a Choir
Dr. Bradley Almquist, presenter
Murray State University

- I. Putting Your Horn Together (Posture)
 - a. Feet about hip-width apart
 - b. Torso long and wide (rib cage gently lifted and wide)
 - c. Neck free and long
 - d. Head slightly back and aligned with spine (no jutting forward)
 - e. Jaw parallel to the floor (chin slightly down)
 - f. No “kinks” in the tubing

- II. Making Sound
 - a. Breath Support/Management
 - i. Where are your lungs?
 - ii. Inhalation should be free and low
 - iii. Expansion below the ribcage but not necessarily in the belly
 - iv. Exhalation should be consistent and even
 - 1. Abs will work in tandem with intercostal muscles
 - 2. No closure/tension in the throat (Glottal)
 - 3. Will be muscular antagonism
 - 4. Use “F,” “Th,” “Sh,” “S,” or voiced “V,” “Z”
 - b. Mouth piece and embouchure
 - i. What vibrates? Where?
 - ii. Where do you sense/feel it?
 - c. Shape of the horn
 - i. Resonating chambers
 - 1. Pharynx (throat/back of the mouth cavity)
 - 2. Lifted soft palate (inhalation and exhalation)
 - a. NG Diction
 - 3. Slightly relaxed larynx (slightly lowered back of the tongue)
 - 4. Tip of the tongue on the back of the lower front teeth
 - ii. Should you just “drop your jaw?”
 - iii. Placement (“e” space balanced by “o” space)
 - iv. Vowels carry tone

- III. Warming up on your instrument
 - a. Begin in the middle of your range and work down and then up.
 - b. Do not over-sing (get too loud too soon).
 - c. Work from efficient to inefficient vowel production
 - i. What is the vowel you most easily can produce correctly?
 - 1. Reference other vowels to it.
 - d. Flexibility
 - e. Range development

- f. Growing the voice
 - i. Age appropriate vocal development

IV. Issues

- a. Characteristic Sound
- b. Register Shifts
 - i. Head voice vs. Chest voice/Light vs. Heavy Singing
 - ii. What no “register” key?
- c. Age and developmentally appropriate sound
 - i. Children should not sound like adults
 - ii. Adults should not sound like children
 - iii. Changing voice
- d. Appropriate Modeling
- e. Do not reinforce the break (passagio)

Session II: Teaching Musicianship in the Choral Rehearsal
Dr. Bradley Almquist, presenter
Murray State University

- V. Literacy in Music
 - a. Teaching students to read music
 - i. Pitch: Solfege (moveable Do/la based minor)
 - ii. Rhythm: Counting system
 - iii. Teaching patterns first – then moving to notation (Gordon)

- VI. Musical Independence
 - a. Stay on a non-melody part
 - i. Partner Songs
 - ii. Ostinato (I-V-I/beginning of functional bass lines)
 - iii. Harmony/Homophony (Consonance/Dissonance/Clusters)
 - iv. Polyphony
 - 1. Imitative/non-imitative
 - 2. Canon

- VII. Vocal Function vs. Vocal Technique
 - a. Sound Management vs. Expressive Singing
 - i. How do I make articulations happen?
 - 1. Marcato and legato: a behavioral approach
 - a. Consonants
 - b. Breath
 - ii. How do I crescendo and decrescendo without changing the timbre/tone/tuning?
 - 1. Breath flow
 - 2. Feeling the sensation of release in the throat

 - iii. What about these words?
 - 1. Pronunciation
 - a. Sing the sounds of the words in rhythm
 - b. Pure vowels
 - i. Diphthongs
 - 1. Now, Cloud, Town (ah + oo)
 - 2. My, Fly, High (ah + ih)
 - 3. You (ih + oo)
 - 4. Yonder (ih + ah)
 - 5. Flow, Blow, No (oh + oo)
 - c. Short and clear rhythmic consonants

2. Syllable Stress

a. Individual words

- i. Beau-ti-ful
- ii. Yon-der
- iii. Hal-le-lu-jah
- iv. Hal-le-lu-jah
- v. Hal-le-lu-jah
- vi. Hal-le-lu-jah

b. Does the music (melody, rhythm, harmony) match the word stress pattern?

1. How?

- a. Anacrusis, hemiola
- b. Word painting
- c. Stressed syllable on long note, strong beat, decorated with melisma, dissonance, dynamics

2. If not which are you going to follow? Why?

3. Poetic Reading vs. Musical Form

- a. Does the phrase structure of the music match the phrase structure of the text?
- b. If not, which are you going to follow? Why?