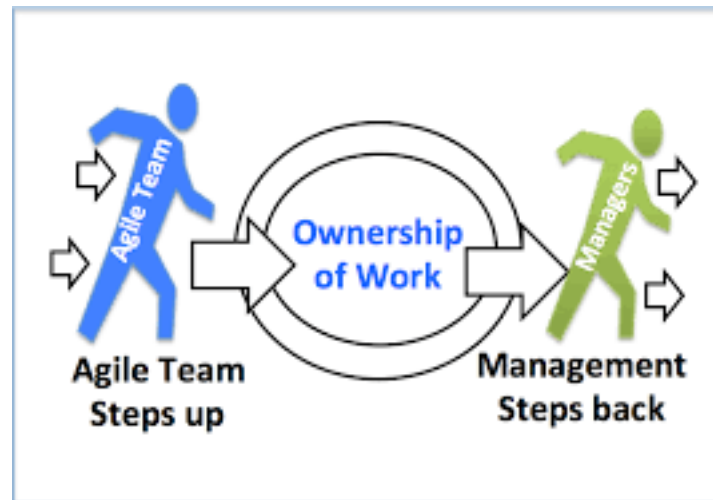


Building Ownership In Your Choral Program



My Choir Before the Spring of 2007

Please note that I had been
teaching for 33 years at that point.

TMEA 2002, 2005

SWACDA 2002

ACDA (Miami) 2007

Things were going pretty well, but...

I was getting buried in the minutiae job while singers watch me getting buried.



- Choral library
- Risers
- Setting up the room
- Taking attendance
- Publicity
- Recruiting



- Most importantly, the singers were so !@#\$\$% passive. They worked relatively hard and were relatively successful, but...
- They would wait to be told what to do musically.
- They did not take initiative in their music-making or in non-musical things.

They were typical teens

- They resisted pitching in.
- They rolled their eyes when asked to help.
- They seemed to exert a lot of energy avoiding helping.
- They seemed to have less respect for the choir and for me!

National ACDA was looming, the kids did not sound good, and I just gave up. I called in the section leaders:

Jenn, Seini, Micah, and John.



I asked them for help...



- Those four student leaders took ownership....
- And that inspired other students to take ownership



...and that changed **EVERYTHING**.



So, what is Ownership?



Ownership is feeling that you are responsible for and have at least some control over a group or a project.



Don't confuse
Identification
with
Ownership

You can identify with a a group without
feeling ownership.

I think most choral singers
identify with their choirs, but
I do not think they have a sense
of ownership.

So, how does one instill
Ownership
in a group?

It's hard in the beginning!

You have to give up
CONTROL

**SOMETIMES
NOT BEING IN
CONTROL IS
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL
THING IN THE
WORLD.**

First, identify the Peripheral Tasks

of the choir and begin assigning as many
of them as possible to others.



Note that you are not shirking.

This will take more time and energy from you in the beginning than to do it yourself.

What are peripheral tasks?

- Choral library
- Risers
- Setting up the room
- Taking attendance
- Collecting fund-raising money
- Collecting permission slips
- Publicity
- Recruiting

Almost any task that doesn't require a degree in music to complete can be assigned to someone else, and the benefits in terms of beginning to create ownership are **HUGE!**



Assigning peripheral tasks is a good place to start in terms of building ownership, but in order to attain a true sense of ownership, at some point you need to begin training your singers to handle
CORE
tasks.

Core Task

The core task of a choir is to make

MAKE MUSIC

It's hard to give up some of the music-making tasks because that's what we love the most.

START

small



- Warm-ups and vocalizing
- Leading sectionals
- Running tests
- Grading tests (Student-generated grading cannot count as “real” grades.)

Vibrato



Expanding Ownership

- Selecting Repertoire
- Running full rehearsals of small groups
- Running full rehearsals of the full choir

Obstacle #1

- Our own egos. Choral directors are notorious for liking to be in control.



Solution #1

- Acknowledge our human failing and vow to do better. 😊
- Believe that giving up control will, in the end, result in more joy and freedom for everyone.

Obstacle #2

- Singers don't do things "correctly."



Solution

- You have to teach them exactly how you want things to go.

(Remember the part about this taking more time and energy from you?)

Obstacle #3

- Our singers don't have the skills required to assist with the core task of music-making.

Solution

Give them these skills.

Ownership begins (and ends) with
singers' ability
to learn music independently.

BE HONEST

- Do your singers have the skills necessary to learn music without your help?
- Is sight singing a core component of every rehearsal?
- If no, why not?

Wouldn't we be charged with malpractice if we were classroom teachers who never took the time to teach our students how to read words?



Obstacle #4

The repertoire is too difficult for singers to learn independently.



Why don't we teach music literacy?
(sight singing)



BECAUSE IT'S HARD!



Think of sight singing as a puzzle.



Why do we like puzzles?



When do we dislike puzzles?



1. When they're too hard.
2. When they're too easy.
3. When we've spent too much time on them.

A musical score in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major (one flat). The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a simple, melodic style. The top staff begins with a quarter note G4, followed by an eighth note A4, a quarter note Bb4, and a quarter note C5. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note Bb4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note G4. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note G4, an eighth note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fourth measure contains a half note D4. The bottom staff begins with a dotted quarter note G3, an eighth note F3, and a quarter note E3. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note D3, an eighth note C3, and a quarter note B2. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note B2, an eighth note A2, and a quarter note G2. The fourth measure contains a half note F2. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Sight singing consists of a bunch of puzzles.

1. Ability to duplicate rhythms
(echo clapping)

2. Ability to read and perform rhythmic notation

3. Ability to understand rhythmic notation

Did you truly understand rhythmic notation as a result of some teacher
TALKING
about it?

- NO!



Don't say a word. Demonstrate. Let
students figure it out, but.....



Just do it!

A musical staff with a treble clef, divided into four measures. The notes and fingerings are as follows:

- Measure 1: Quarter notes G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4).
- Measure 2: Quarter notes G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4).
- Measure 3: Quarter note G4 (finger 1), quarter rest (finger 2), quarter note B4 (finger 3), quarter note C5 (finger 4).
- Measure 4: Quarter note G4 (finger 1), quarter rest (finger 2), quarter note B4 (finger 3), quarter note C5 (finger 4).

Learning to sight sing, continued...

4. Then we have pitches and intervals, which we have to figure out without the benefit of keys and valves to push.

Do lots of interval drills isolated from
rhythm.

(A good task to hand off to a singer,
BTW.)

1. S S M M S S M -
2. S M S M M S S -
3. S S M M M - M -
4. M - M - S S S -

1. S L S M S L S -
2. M L M L M L S -
3. L S L S M L S -
4. S M L S M L S -

1. D D M S S M D -

2. D S L S L L S -

3. D' D' L S M L D' -

4. D' L' S M M D D -

5. Then we put the pitches together with rhythm.

Then....the piece de resistance...

We add WORDS!!!!!!

JESUS CHRIST THE SON

PRAISE AND ADORATION

Come, Let Us Tune Our Loftiest Song 128

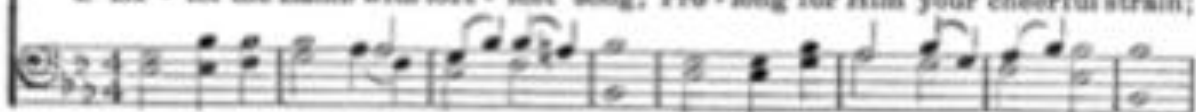
ROBERT A. WADE, 1859-1883

DUKE STREET. L. M.

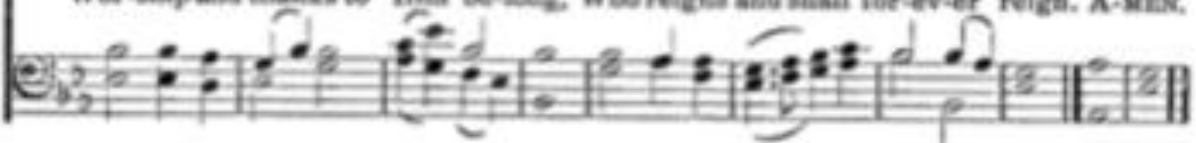
JOHN HAYDON, d. 1780



1. Come, let us tune our loft - est song And raise to Christ our joy - ful strain;
2. His sov'reign pow'r our bod - ies made; Our souls are His im - mor-tal breath;
3. Burn, ev-ery breast with Je - sus' love; Bound, every heart with rap-turous joy;
4. Ex - tol the Lamb with loft - iest song; Pro - long for Him your cheerful strain;



Wor-ship and thanks to Him be-long, Who reigns and shall for-ev-er reign.
And when His creatures sinn'd He bled To save us from e - ter-nal death.
And saints on earth, with saints above, Your voic-es in His praise em-ploy.
Wor-ship and thanks to Him be-long, Who reigns and shall for-ev-er reign. A-MEN.



MELODIA

A COMPREHENSIVE COURSE IN

SIGHT-SINGING (SOLFEGGIO)

THE EDUCATIONAL PLAN BY

SAMUEL W. COLE

THE EXERCISES WRITTEN AND SELECTED BY

LEO R. LEWIS

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OLIVER DITSON COMPANY

Theodore Presser Company, Sole Representative

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MAKE YOUR OWN MATERIALS

- Day 1 =
- Simple meters 2,3,4
- Quarter notes/Quarter rests
- Sol, Mi

Note that having singers write their own
sightsinging materials is an opportunity for
OWNERSHIP!

100000

ESSENTIAL SIGHT-SINGING

FOR
TREBLE
VOICES

FOURTH

EDITION



 **McGraw-Hill**

I know this is going to be
controversial, but...

If you rely on a pianist for choral
rehearsals you are sentencing your
singers to lifetimes of musical
dependency.

In this scenario, building ownership is
very, very unlikely.

Sight-singing

- Should be easy enough for singers to be successful.
- Singers should be able to lead these exercises, but should record and email them to you the night before or should come in before school to demonstrate mastery.
- Leaders must be taught sequential rehearsal techniques.
- Post steps on back wall.

HANDING OVER
MORE CORE TASKS
REHEARSAL

WARM-UPS

- Have a simple, never-varying routine.
 - Teach the students how to lead each step of the routine.

No piano needed

- Step #1 Stretches
- Step #2 Breathing exercises
- Step #3 Sol-fege exercises
- Step #4 Tall ooh's descending
- Step #5 Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha (trias ascending)

You **MUST** train the singers how to lead a choir.

- Silliness is not allowed.
- A grade can be involved.
- At first, there will be giggles
- Reward the serious leader.
- Over time, the culture will exist and will sustain itself (almost) effortlessly.

Sight-singing steps

1. Where is Do?
2. What is our first pitch?
3. Sing tonic triad.
4. Clap and count rhythm.
5. Sing tonic triad again.
6. Speak solfege in rhythm.
7. Sing tonic triad again.
8. Sing exercise.

Oxford Folksong Sightsinging Book 1

SECTION I. Nos. I-59

I

IA. Nos. I-33. Doh chord (with all its leaps) and scale passages.

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different folk tradition. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The first staff is labeled 'Allegretto' and 'British', featuring a scale passage starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a decrescendo (*dim.*) and ending with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff is labeled 'Moderato' and 'Dutch', also starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a decrescendo (*dim.*). The third staff is labeled 'Andante' and 'Eastern Europe (Liturgical)', starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, and ending with a ritardando (*rit.*) marking. Each staff contains a series of notes connected by slurs, representing scale passages.

pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease
pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease
pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease
pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease
pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease

TEACHING SIGHT SINGING

FIGHT PASSIVITY IN THE CHORAL REHEARSAL THROUGH BUILDING OWNERSHIP



The beauty of a simple Index Card

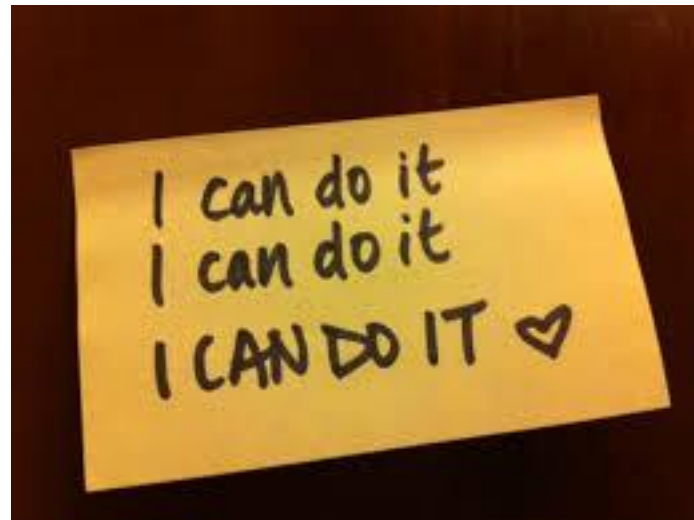


Index cards can be used for...

- Musical notes
- Interpretive ideas
- Questions
- Expressing the meaning of texts
- Complaints

(Authors must sign the cards.)

The beauty of Daily Testing



- Develop a testing routine
- Assign passages designed for success
- Consider the benefit of privacy
- Avoid quartet testing (There isn't enough accountability)
- Peer-to-Peer email testing (with evaluations, but without grades)

The beauty of group work

- Sectionals (of course)
- Car-wash
- Rotating group work

Creating Groups

Shelby	A1
Janine	A2
Mary	A3
Monica	A4
Hope	A5
Marissa	A6
Megan	A7
Emily Z.	A8
David	B1
Brian	B2
Jared	B3
Gregory	B4
Lewis	B5
Peyton	B6
Scott	B7
Jonathan	B8
Rebecca	S1
Emily H.	S2
Kirstie	S3
Jade	S4
Krista	S5
Andrea	S6
Katy	S7
Madison	S8
Carlos	T1
Kolton	T2
Ryan	T3
Daniel	T4
Ricky	T5
Phillip	T6
Juan	T7
Jake	T8

Rehearsal Schedule

	White 160	Levente 145	Paulus 108	Antognini 118
1:00	1, 2	3, 4	5, 6	7, 8
1:15	1, 8	3, 2	5, 4	7, 6
1:35	8, 3	2, 5	4, 7	6, 1
1:55	3, 6	5, 8	7, 2	1, 4

To make Carwash work you need...

- Four rooms
- To circulate and observe, but maintain silence
- Pitch pipe, tuning fork, I-phone pitch generator, etc.
- Clear goals or simply “Push the music forward in whatever way you think is best.”

You do not need...

- A piano
- A pianist
- An assigned leader. In fact, it's far better and more interesting to see how the groups work, whether with or without a leader. Over time, you may want to speak gently to the Alpha male/females.
- A teacher

The Beauty of a Facebook Group

- Easy to access
- Post assignments
- Post jokes
- Post interpretations of Texas
- Require students to post

Encourage independent groups

- Divide an ensemble into smaller choirs.
- Assign each “choir” a piece. Let them rehearse it completely independently and perform on a concert.
- Hand “gigs” over to these small groups. You may have something like Men of Moores evolve.

Small Groups at UH

- Floreat (mixed, serious, cannot be in top choir)
- Men of Moores (male, pop, any choir)
- Acabellas (female, pop, any choir)
- Ardore (mixed, serious, in top choir)
- Rhapsody (mixed, pop, any choir)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=repxef8pcL0>