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## The "Choral-Vocal Conflict": Explorations on an Established Problem with Offerings of New Means for Improvement

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EXPLORATIONS ON AN ESTABLISHED PROBLEM WITH  
OFFERINGS OF NEW MEANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Laura Anne Foster



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Columbus State University

**The “Choral-Vocal Conflict”:  
Explorations on an Established Problem with  
Offerings of New Means for Improvement**

by

Laura Anne Foster

A GRADUATE MUSIC PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC EDUCATION  
WITH AN EMPHASIS IN VOCAL PEDAGOGY

Schwob School of Music

Columbus, Georgia

May 2007

The undersigned, appointed by the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University, have examined the Graduate Music Project titled

THE "CHORAL-VOCAL CONFLICT":  
EXPLORATIONS ON AN ESTABLISHED PROBLEM WITH  
OFFERINGS OF NEW MEANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

presented by Laura Foster

a candidate for the degree of Master of Music in Music Education  
and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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**ABSTRACT**

## ABSTRACT

*Many students are exposed to both solo and ensemble vocal activities throughout their music education opportunities. For many years, there has been an unspoken conflict between vocal ensemble directors and private voice teachers as to the self-proclaimed, perceived importance of one practice over the other. This graduate music project will attempt to explore the ways this conflict materializes. It will outline the players in this conflict, the actions that fuel the conflict, as well as possible solutions to eliminate the "choral-vocal conflict".*

**PART I**

**THE "CHORAL-VOCAL CONFLICT" EXPLORED**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the world of vocal music there are soloists and there are choristers. While these two groups of musicians are both singers and use the same instrument, and theoretically should use their instruments the same way, there are still some professionals in the “classically trained” venue of vocal music who disagree with students being both solo singers and members of a choral ensemble. For years, there have been disagreements, debates, and antagonism between choral directors and private voice teachers due to the differing techniques of vocal production in the choral room versus the solo arena. These disagreements are what one may call a “choral-vocal conflict” in which the conflicting interests of the teachers, their opinions of technique, and their perceived importance of what they each do creates a gap between the choral classroom and the soloist’s studio. Louis H. Diercks, professor of choral and church music at Ohio State University in 1948, candidly substantiates that there is such a “conflict” saying, “Much has been written and spoken which would indicate a lack of seeing eye to eye between chorus directors and voice teachers” (Diercks, 1948, p. 5). Typically the conflict lies in the contrasting views of the choral conductor and the private voice teacher. Each has his or her own ideas of how to teach vocal concepts to their students, if they are taught at all in the choral classroom, and if the two do not share the same ideals for vocal technique or vocal tone then opposition may occur between the two professionals.

Many students are exposed to both solo and ensemble vocal activities throughout their music education opportunities. The so-called “choral-vocal conflict”

occurs at many levels of the educational system from middle school to collegiate choral ensembles. It is the goal of this author to explore some of the varying reasons for conflict in the vocal and choral fields of music education, and to offer some suggestions as to how future instructors may work to obliterate such conflicts in the vocal arts.

## Chapter 2: Where Is the Conflict Found?

As previously discussed, the “choral-vocal conflict” is a term used to describe the discrepancies which have been observed to occur between members of the two primary activities in the vocal field: choral activities and solo activities. Given that this topic is a broad one, which deals primarily with individual instances, it is hard for this author to discuss accurately each possible place in which conflict may arise. For ease of discussion and understanding, this author will mainly focus on the primary instigators of such conflicts: the choral director and the voice teacher.

There are several ways in which the choral director and voice teacher may invoke conflict in their teaching. The first, and most common way, is the technical conflict based on the differing ways each activity encourages singers to use their voices. The second way these two authority figures may create conflict is through personal differences that are made known either to one another, to mutual professionals, or even in some cases directly to the students.

Unfortunately, when there is a personal conflict between instructors, it does not always stay between the two leaders, but has a tendency to trickle down to the choral members and solo students of the teachers. In his article, *Voice Training for Solo Work vs. Choral Work*, Diercks actually alludes to private teachers telling their students not to participate in choral activities due to the problems the private teacher may have experienced with the choral director. Diercks continues to stay optimistic in his article saying he believes the basis for conflict is “on the wane,” however he goes on to say, “This optimism isn’t meant to gloss over some glaring cases of poor

or false vocal principles used by directors of choruses or vocal teachers” (Diercks, 1948, p. 5).

Finally, another possible area of conflict may be found within the students themselves. The label “choral-vocal conflict” could be used to describe the conflicting feelings of students who are exposed to the differences in vocal production required in the private voice studio versus the choral situation. It may be quite confusing for a student who is involved in both choral and solo activities to be receiving conflicting information from both sides of the fence. Therefore students who are both in private lessons and choral activities are not receiving the optimal benefits of their musical efforts.

While there are far too many instances in which students may feel conflicted due to the “choral-vocal conflict” to address in this modest project, there are several circumstances which may require brief discussion. One possibility is the students may become confused as to how and when to use their knowledge of proper vocal technique. In some cases, the students who experience conflict may be discouraged to sing properly by the choral director through words, gestures, or improper knowledge of the vocal mechanism, as will be discussed later in this project. There are some students who are active in private lessons, but feel like they stick out in their choral activities due to their training in contrast to the untrained peers with whom they sing. These students may experience the desire or the pressure to not sing as they have learned for fear of being set apart from the rest of the group by the choral director or the recognition of their talent. In this particular case, peer pressure may be blamed for the lack of proper vocal technique.

As discussed, many individual cases come into play when discussing this particular area of conflict. In order to discuss this issue briefly and accurately, I will focus my attention on that of the main conflict between teachers of singing and choral directors. While it stands to reason that there are sure to be cases of conflict between these teachers due to personal differences in opinion, the most universal cause for conflict, and the easiest one to discuss, is the difference in techniques of the private voice studio and the choral ensemble.



### **Chapter 3: Causes for Conflict**

In an effort to explore the technical causes of the “choral-vocal conflict,” one must first look at the differences between choral singing and solo singing. In theory, there should be no differences in the way a singer’s sound is produced. If properly trained, every singer, regardless of venue, should maintain the basis of healthy singing. All students should be taught the importance of alignment (proper singing posture), respiration (breath support), phonation (the creation of sound at the laryngeal level through the vibration of the vocal folds), resonance (creating the appropriate resonating chamber for optimal vocal production), and articulation (the perceived speech sounds formed by the lips, teeth, and tongue). All of these aspects of proper singing are vocal techniques that should be displayed in both choral and solo work. Diercks addressed the importance of utilizing these same vocal techniques saying, “While there is evidence that some voice teachers still ask their students to avoid all choral activity, there does not seem to be any basis for alarm...It would be far more difficult to point out instances of dissimilarity in training for these two types of singing, than it would to indicate similarities. Those basic needs – good posture, adequate breath supply and control, good diction with all it implies, a feeling for phrasing and other evidences of musicianship, good vocal balance and appreciation for vowel function – all of these are needed by both” (Diercks, 1948, p. 5). So as one may see, there are more similarities between singing in choral activities and solo activities than most people realize. If this is truly the case, then one may wonder why there is a conflict between the two vocal activities in the first place.

Most often the conflict is due to the lack of proper vocal instruction for singers in the choral setting. The choral room is a very fragile environment for singers, especially for inexperienced singers. There are many cases in which choral activities, whether in middle school, high school, college or church environments, are the only settings in which untrained singers will receive any indication of how to use their voices properly. John Harold Guthmiller discusses this unique position of the choral director when he says, "The burden of teaching good vocal habits must fall upon the choral director as heavily as it does upon the private voice teacher. This is especially true since choral directors as a group deal with so many young voices and because a great many people will never study voice outside the choral rehearsal" (Guthmiller, 1986, p. 13). In addition to addressing the importance of vocal experience for choral conductors, one author also went so far as to call the choral conductor a voice teacher as well. Unfortunately, there are also many cases in which these middle school, high school, collegiate or church choral groups do nothing to help the choristers gain insight into the proper use of their voice. This particular situation is possibly the number one cause for a "choral-vocal conflict."

The lack of proper voice instruction in a choral ensemble seems to be the common thread of all of the "choral-vocal conflict." It is important to point out that this scenario is rarely due to neglect on the conductor's part, but merely due to inexperience with the vocal mechanism. There are a number of musicians who have become choral conductors with a variety of backgrounds outside of a background in vocal pedagogy or other vocal arts. Instrumentalists, conducting students and general music educators may all at one time or another find themselves conducting a vocal

ensemble. However, for these musicians, there was probably a minimal amount of vocal instruction in their higher education. Because the voice is the one instrument every musician possesses, many inexperienced musicians take the voice for granted and think that they may conduct a choral ensemble regardless of their training, or lack thereof, in vocal studies or vocal pedagogy. Thus, these musicians take jobs in the choral field in which they have the experience and qualifications to make the music, but have minimal training in how to use the instruments presented to them by teaching the fundamentals of proper healthy singing.

Leon Thurman discusses the average education and qualifications of a choral conductor when he says,

“We choral conductors are least trained and least knowledgeable in voice use and care. Our typical training leads us to believe that 8-10 years of choir singing, 2-4 years for private voice lessons, one or two courses in choral conducting or methods, and possibly a semester of vocal pedagogy will give us all we need to know about voices...Choral conductor education is concerned predominately with rehearsal procedure and musicianship – choral pedagogy. Our rehearsals and performances, therefore, are concerned more with the musical result than with what gets us there – voices” (1983, p. 5).

This scenario is precisely the reason that many choral conductors lack the ability to teach vocal production properly in an ensemble setting.

This very occurrence has left many private voice teachers indignant. They feel it is almost unethical to expose their students to such experiences that have the potential to harm students' voices. Henry Veld wrote an article in the April 1948 National Association of Teachers of Singing Bulletin addressing the conductors that lack proper vocal education saying, “In a supposedly enlightened age of music education there are still thousands upon thousands of people singing in high school

and college choirs, church choirs and oratorio societies who are directed by trained conductors who may be good musicians, but who have had no vocal training whatsoever.” He goes on to explain that in many cases these conductors possess little information about tone production, and simply discover most of their knowledge through experimentation. To this he comments, “There is no justifiable reason why a singing group should be subjected to a conductor who acquires his vocal information through experimentation” (1948, p. 5). While this comment may be harsh, and possibly out-dated, there is no doubt there are still conductors who prepare for a choral rehearsal in this manner. The human voice, especially the young and developing human voice, is so fragile that this sort of approach is too risky for many private voice teachers to condone, thus creating yet another basis for conflict.

## **Chapter 4: The Choral Conductor and His or Her Role in the Conflict**

There are several mistakes inexperienced choral conductors make that may cause private voice teachers to disagree with their teaching. First of all, and perhaps the most common cause, is the choral conductors' tendency to invoke poor vocal habits, and possibly knowingly sacrifice good vocal habits in order to achieve a blended tone quality in their choirs. Secondly, some choral conductors place students in the wrong voice classification and therefore impose improper vocal use on these students. Finally, some choral conductors that work with adolescent voices are not aware of the proper ways to deal with changing voices, and thus may unknowingly adversely affect their students' vocal health.

### **The Choral Conductor and Choral Blend**

“The goal in choral singing is the blending of individual voices and intellectual components to achieve a choral sound” (Smith & Sataloff, 2006, p. 117). Achieving true choral blend is quite an intimidating task for an inexperienced choral director. Smith and Sataloff describe choral tone as: “a color, quality, and quantity of sound indicative of a particular set of choral forces – the singers and their conductor” (2006, p. 183).

A choral group can have anywhere from a handful to hundreds of members. The age, physical attributes, and musical background of all members vary greatly, yet it is the choral director's job to work with each of these individuals in order to make

them sound as one. The group members within the choir will all bring to the ensemble their instruments, which will provide the foundation of the group's tone color. It is then the conductor's job to safely and beautifully create choral blend within the basic tone color provided. One may ask, how exactly should this be done? James Jordan says of choral blend, "In order to arrive at that pedagogical approach to blend, three premises can assist the conductor to achieve a true blend. They are (1) personal vocal experience, (2) seating within a section, and (3) attention to the ingredients of blend" (1984, p. 26).

Just as Jordan believes that the first key to achieving proper choral blend is a "personal vocal experience," so does Tracy Leenman, journalist and music education coordinator. Leenman describes the best way to achieve choral blend similarly stating, "Proper vocal production is at the core of a workable choral sound concept. A free, properly produced sound will project farther and blend more easily. Correct, relaxed posture and good diaphragmatic breathing are essential in producing a sound that is natural – one that is not strained or artificial and is age-appropriate, energetic, and resonant" (Leenman, 1996, ¶ 2). For this reason, it is imperative that choral conductors understand the vocal mechanism and its proper function in order to produce a healthy tone.

The second aspect Jordan identifies for achieving proper choral blend is seating arrangement. While there is not enough value in focusing any portion of this project on this particular contributor to choral blend, additional resources will be provided later in this volume so that the reader may become more familiar with this aspect of choral blend.

Thirdly, Jordan advises choral directors to pay attention to the “ingredients of blend” in order to produce a better choral tone. There are two basic ingredients to a well-produced tone quality in the choral setting: intonation and blend. Intonation helps blend because the first step to a unified sound is a choir who can sing in tune with one another and their accompanying instruments. Lynn Corbin says of choral intonation, “the art of singing in tune is the result of good vocal production and not an end in itself...singers do not sing out of tune on purpose. They prevent themselves from singing in tune as a result of a variety of deficiencies: breath, tension, and misformed vowels, among others” (Corbin, 1986, p. 7). Because I agree with Corbin, and firmly believe intonation problems within a group are based upon other factors such as breath, tension, vowels, fatigue, attitude, and many others, I will choose not to address this particular aspect of blend in order to better focus on the many misconceptions of choral directors (that will be discussed in depth later in this chapter). Therefore, the two main factors that affect blend that will be considered (aside from intonation) are: proper resonance and true vowel purity and unification.

## Achieving Choral Blend through Resonance

The best way to teach choral blend through resonance is to encourage students to bring their own solo voice to the choir and introduce group changes from there. Within the basic tone color of a choir that is built of individual forces in the ensemble, there are certain variances which the conductor can choose to make. Each choral director will desire different shades of the basic color in order to incorporate stylistic variances and performance practices of selected repertoire. Each choice a director makes to change the color of the choir's tone is really the director manipulating the forces' resonance. Most often, when conflict ensues, it is because the differences in resonances made are done so in an unhealthy manner. These differences will be further explored later in this project.

I believe differences can be, and should be made in a healthy and non-threatening manner. "Resonance for choral singing must be adjusted to avoid maximum acoustic properties of any one voice (i.e. the singer's formant) to be exposed, thus disrupting the choral fabric. Singers must be taught how to make these adjustments. If not, conflicts arise between the choral conductors and studio teachers" (Smith & Sataloff, 2006, p. 117). While conductors have the power to choose the tone of their choir by encouraging or discouraging "certain tendencies" of individuals, it is my goal that music educators become better informed in order to encourage the *correct* tendencies in their choir.

To that end, we will now visit the best ways to encourage changes in resonance without sacrificing vocal health. In his text on the choral warm-up, James



Jordan suggests that first of all, group warm-ups intended to produce the soloistic idea of resonance should be employed to help students who are not soloists to truly understand and accomplish proper vocal production and “forward resonance” before any choral changes should be made.

Jordan then suggests two ways choral directors can work with their singers in order to further modify the group’s resonance to fit the repertoire. The first is to ask the singers to *imagine* general vowel shapes, which will introduce overarching colors into the pre-established resonance of the choir. The different vowel generalizations he uses are either “tall/narrow vowel[s]” or “round vowel[s].” He states, “In the warm-up, you **must** make a choice. If you do not, the choir will usually default to the vowel shape that is most closely associated with their speaking dialect! By simply asking the choir to visualize the shape of the vowel, the appropriate resonances will be generated” (2005, p. 75).

The second way in which Jordan suggests choral directors can influence choral tone color is through the breathing preparation. He suggests, “For a ‘brighter’ vowel color, ask the choir to take a ‘cool breath.’ For a darker vowel color, ask the choir to take a ‘warm breath’”(2005, p. 75).

While either exercise may prove helpful in a choral rehearsal, it is important to emphasize that both of these exercises that are meant to *shade* vocal resonance are merely *thinking* exercises and do *not* directly manipulate the physiological components of singing. Encouraging students to manipulate physiological components of singing is a dangerous task for a choral director who is not familiar

with vocal techniques because if changes are made incorrectly, they may cause harm to the singing voice, and thus induce conflict within the profession.

### **Blending with Vowel Formation**

Vowel formation is another direct contributor to a well-blended ensemble tone. In fact, vowel formation could be the most important of all factors related to choral blend. According to Smith and Sataloff, “The common denominator of choral tone is the unified vowel sound” (2006, p. 182).

In solo singing, as is also true in group singing, articulators form vowels and consonants of singing to create different aspects of resonance within the instrument. The varying aspects of the resonance (created by the articulators) result in differing formants, which can be defined as “a resonance of the vocal tract” (McCoy, 2004, p. 40). “Formant frequencies are altered through changes in the shape of the vocal tract, including: altering the position of the tongue, opening or closing the jaw, rounding or spreading the lips, and raising or lowering the larynx” (McCoy, 2004, p. 41). Each of these changes to the vocal tract can be attributed to articulatory movement, and thus resonances of the formants are responsible for the audible vowel sound the listener discerns. In order to match the fundamental pitch and line up the formants for an entire choral group, the vowels should match as closely as possible, and thus will create a more unified choral tone. When vowels do not match, even if students are singing the same pitch, the passage of choral music will sound out of tune and not blended due to the discrepancies in the vowel formants. This phenomenon is

precisely the reason it is imperative for choral directors to focus on proper vowel formation and pronunciation in a choral setting.

## **Other Suggestions for Achieving Proper Choral Blend**

Some suggestions as to the proper ways to encourage choral blend outside of voice function include unison singing and seating arrangement. Choral pedagogues like Smith, Sataloff, and Jordan suggest choral directors working toward blend by starting with unison singing so that the group may better their work on more accurate and therefore blended pitch, vowel shape, and resonance. From there, choral directors may add diatonic deviations to the established unison singing in order to refine their choirs' skills toward blending.

Additionally, another way choral directors may be better able to produce a blended choral tone when working with more advanced choirs without harming individual voices is by allowing students to sing without discouraging certain aspects of their individual instrument and instead encouraging listening. If the students listen to one another carefully throughout the singing process, and the choral director does his part to encourage vowel unification and healthy resonance, then the blend should occur without harmful manipulation.

Finally, since blending a number of individuals together requires the formants and overtones of individual singers to be in tandem, many well known choral pedagogues such as Smith, Sataloff, and Jordan choose to incorporate a practice that induces better “blend” without having any origin in the way the members sing. They maintain that the seating arrangement of choir members has a direct correlation with the choral blend.

“Although not scientifically proven, experience has shown that the placement of certain voices based on the compatibility of vocal color, frequency, and formant affects tuning and choral blend. . . When voices are placed close to one another, a battle of frequencies ensues. This can work to the advantage or disadvantage of a choir” (Smith & Sataloff, 2006, p. 184).

This particular approach is very intricate in detail, but perhaps the healthiest way to induce choral blend in an ensemble because it does not sacrifice their solo singing principles, but may still better the musical impact of the group as a whole. Jordan says of the choir arrangements:

“Perhaps no single technique available to a conductor can produce as dramatic and far-reaching effects as adjusting the seating arrangement of a choral ensemble to maximize both the acoustic of the rehearsal room and the overtone series of the voices within the choir. Many pitch and ‘blend’ issues are the result of a lack of careful seating arrangements designed for the choir” (2005, p. 122).

In order to understand fully the logistics of this blending tactic, I would encourage the reader to refer to the Appendix A of this work to procure some of the known texts that can further explain this practice.

For many choral conductors, the tone of their ensemble is so important and time is so limited, they are forced to take quick measures to procure quick results.

Lloyd Pfautsch explained the conductor's viewpoint of the importance of choral blend by saying:

“The sounds of his chorus will be a commentary on his ability to transfer his knowledge, to enlarge and refine his pedagogical techniques, to arouse and maintain dedication to vocal and musical disciplines on the part of the singers, to shape the syllabic and melodic nuances, to expand the knowledge and technical proficiency of the chorus, and to lead the group to artistic performance” (Smith and Sataloff, 2006, p. 183).

Perhaps, when described in this way, one may better understand the gravity for a conductor to take quick measures if he feels the slow route is not heeding results in time for his group's performance. It is this particular attitude, or fear of failure, on the part of the choral conductor which forms the basis for “quick fixes” and therefore the birth of the false choral blend.

## **Chapter 5: The Choral Conductor and False Choral Blend**

Choral settings are unique to singing in that there is a certain amount of ambiguity desired from the individuals in order to obtain a well-blended “choral tone.” Unfortunately, there are many choral settings in which the conductor is not well-versed in vocal pedagogy or even in the basis of vocal sound. These conductors have a reputation of asking their singers to produce what they hear as a blended tone quality that may really be a group of poorly manipulated voices. Creating false choral blend is a large issue that occurs at many different levels of vocal ensemble training. James Jordan states that “Many choral conductors, either as an early part of the preparation of a work or the final stages before a performance, deal with blend” (1984, p. 25). As Jordan alludes, achieving a blended tone in the vocal ensemble is an integral part of most every choral rehearsal. Choral blend is a technique of ensemble singing that occurs when choral conductors try to blend the tone of all the singers in their ensemble regardless of experience and the innate voice qualities of each individual. Choral blend is important because it allows ensembles to form one large force of many voices rather than a group of individual voices. In an effort to achieve choral blend, many conductors may ask their singers to manipulate their voices in order to create what they think is a quality choral blend; however, in many circumstances, these vocal manipulations actually lead to what Jordan calls “false blend.” “Like it or not, false blend occurs in many of our ensembles at the expense of the vocal health of young singers” (Jordan, 1984, p. 26).

## **False Choral Blend through False Resonance**

As previously discussed, resonance is a foundation of proper vocal production in both solo singing and choral singing. James Jordan talks of resonance and the misnomers which frequently accompany wrongful adjectives that are often used to describe desired resonances in choral situations when he says:

“I have found that the terms “bright” and “dark” are somewhat dangerous to employ in a choral rehearsal because of the inconsistency of the meaning of those words when translated in singers’ minds... Overly bright sounds may translate into sounds produced with a high larynx or excessively high palate. Sounds that are too dark may be the result of a ‘vowel’ placement that is too far back, or from a tension-ridden tongue. Both extremes must be avoided” (2005, p. 74-75).

Unfortunately, many choral conductors are not aware of Jordan’s warnings against encouraging “bright” and “dark” sounds in their choir and have been found guilty of inducing false blend through encouraging false resonance. The danger in the misnomers “bright” and “dark” are not in the ideas of how it should sound per se, but lie in the young singers’ physical reactions to the instructions.

That is, when students are asked to sing “darker” without being given the proper tools to execute this technical adjustment correctly, they will more than likely achieve darkness by either pressing the muscles of the neck down to lower their larynx or harmfully stretching the muscles within the vocal tract to increase their pharyngeal space. While it is true these two occurrences are desired to some degree because the increased space in the vocal mechanism will induce lower overtones in the sound and thus create a fuller tone quality, it is, rather, the way singers go about introducing increased resonance which is to cause concern.



A larynx which is forced down abnormally or a pharynx which is abnormally widened in an effort to feel a greater amount of space are manipulations, and therefore are undesirable. If the space is wrongfully manipulated, it is most likely done in a way that will merely invoke tension in the student and the voice. This type of tension will create sounds that are not as resonant as they should be, nor as free as they should be, and that have great potential to harm the young voice. In essence, a choir director who wishes for darker tone qualities and encourages wrongful manipulation in order to achieve his or her goal will be stunting the growth of his or her students. In the end, this will create a choir of voices that are ridden with tension and less resonant, rather than producing the free and resonant singing that *should* be achieved. The choral director should become better informed about placement and resonance of voices in order to eliminate false choral blend through false resonance. As discussed previously, the words “tall,” “round,” or “full” are better to use in a choral situation than “dark.” These adjectives will help the singer to strengthen his or her visual image of the desired tone quality without risking a poorly manipulated vocal tract.

## False Choral Blend through Straight-Tone Singing

The false blending techniques conductors use to achieve the desired tone quality quickly are most likely to the detriment of young singers' voices. There are a number of "quick fix" techniques conductors utilize in order to achieve a blended tone quality. One such technique is by encouraging the choir members to sing with a straight tone. Some choral directors prefer a straight tone either in order to achieve a blend, or because they wish to follow the tradition of early Renaissance singing groups, or perhaps to follow the newer British choral traditions. Regardless of the intentions of these choral directors, their actions can be quite detrimental to the singers in their choirs. Pedagogically speaking, a straight tone indicates excessive tension at the laryngeal level, which in turn can produce a number of other vocal faults. Vocal pedagogy expert and author, Clinton Ware, describes the choral director's treatment of straight-tone singing in his book *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy: The Foundations and Process of Singing* saying, "Many choral directors are convinced that the only way to achieve a desirable choral sound is to require straight-tone singing technique 100 percent of the time. But because excessive straight-tone singing can retard the vocal development of young singers, studio voice teachers are often in conflict with choral directors over this practice" (1998, p. 182). He continues by warning students and teachers alike against participating in the straight-tone singing of any ensemble for long periods of time. "Students should be cautioned against manipulating vibrato patterns to satisfy personal tastes.

According to principles of efficient vocal production, the natural vibrato pattern occurs only when the right conditions result in a well coordinated singing voice” (1998, p. 182). In addition to Ware’s cautions of declined development of the voice for young singers, another pedagogical expert, Dr. James McKinney, substantiates that not only will a straight-tone harm an inexperienced singer’s voice, but it will also rob the voice of free vocal production and pure tone quality. He also qualifies that “there have been various movements, especially within the choral field, that have decried the use of vibrato in any form and have advocated the straight tone.” He goes on to point out, “fortunately, the almost universal presence of vibrato in all types of musical performance has been verified time after time by research; it has been classified not only as necessary for beauty of tone but also for physiological reasons” (1994, p. 197).

Physiologically, it has been theorized that the presence of vibrato in vocal tone is not only an indicator of free tone production, but “the vibrato is the modulation of frequency and amplitude resulting from the pendulum-like movements of the intrinsic laryngeal musculature. These movements are said to prevent fatigue at the laryngeal level; in other words, the musculature is alternately working and resting in vibrato. In production of straight tone the musculature is constantly working” (McKinney, 1994, p. 197). If this theory is true, then there would be reason to believe that singers who have natural vibrato in their vocal production actually have healthier voice habits than those without vibrato. Then why should a choral conductor impose anything on his or her students other than a healthy vocal tone with natural vibrato?

Once again, the underlying reason behind the choral conductor's desire for straight-tone singing is, assuming it is not for expressive reasons or personal tastes, merely because the conductor is not familiar with the vocal mechanism. There is also a high possibility that the conductor is intimidated by trying to blend a group of forty or more singers with varying vibrato speeds. Yet, it should be said, choral directors who encourage naturally healthy, free vibrato singing from their choir members may be better able to blend their choirs. Smith and Sataloff say, "[vibrato] is a vital element in tone and tuning, a major consideration in blend" (2006, p. 184). Therefore, a choral director who discourages vibrato out of fear or misinformation is not fully informed about proper vocal technique *or* choral technique. For this same conductor, bringing a number of students together and trying to work for a blended tone quality may prove even more difficult because the choral director is missing a key element to a blended choral tone. Therefore, I would encourage conductors to seek information and assistance in order to fully serve their students and blend their choir the correct way with vibrato, rather than *in spite* of vibrato.

## **False Choral Blend through Vowel Modification**

Another approach many inexperienced choral conductors use to create choral blend is to ask the singers to produce overly modified vowels. “The role played by the vowel in achieving a desirable choral tone is clear. A correctly pronounced and uniformly executed vowel – so-called “vowel purity” – contributes immeasurably not only to the understandability of the language but also to the quality of the sound” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 5).

While it is true that to some extent choir members should modify vowels in order to shade their individual dialect towards pure vowels, overly modifying vowels could not only compound achieving choral blend, but also possibly lead to poor vocal technique for the experienced and inexperienced singer alike. There is a definite difference between modifying a dialectal vowel sound in order to achieve vowel purity versus modifying one vowel to sound more like another in order to achieve a certain sound. Jordan addresses vowel modification in the choral setting saying, “The choral conductor/voice teacher should realize that vowel prescriptions may cause a great deal of vocal damage to even the most experienced singer. At best, they are a short-term cure for a long-term problem” (1984, p. 26). What Jordan refers to as “vowel prescriptions” are the modifications directors ask students to make that are “quick fixes” which seem to create a better tone quality throughout the ensemble. He further explains, “Vowel prescriptions are usually suggested to help blend, intonation, or ensemble sound. Those prescriptions however, are only as meaningful as the degree of vocal technique that each singer brings into rehearsal” (1984, p. 26).

In this same article, Jordan provides an anecdote which helps the reader understand what “quick fixes” an inexperienced choral conductor might suggest for his or her pupils. In this anecdote, the choral director asks the students to “mix ‘ee’ in that vowel, put ‘ah in that vowel, brighter ‘ee,’ darker ‘ee,’ focus your ‘eh,’ the ‘eh’ is too bright, the ‘i’ is too bright” (1984, p. 25). While this little story is merely a parody of what sort of directions some singers may experience in a choral setting in which a director uses vowel modification to produce a more “blended tone,” when a director requests such alterations, he or she may also be inducing undue strain on the singers’ voices.

Vowel formation is primarily achieved through manipulations of the vocal tract, the primary resonators, and articulators. If one is asked to form a vowel differently, it results in different configurations of resonators and articulators and thus introduces new types of muscle tension in the pharynx and the mouth. The newly induced muscle tension may cause the singer to raise his or her larynx or tighten the vocal tract which will result in excess tension in the voice. These types of articulatory changes also present problems to singers who are doubling as soloists or taking private lessons. In most cases, students involved with school choral activities will be exposed to the teachings of their choral director a minimum of four hours each week, excluding any after school rehearsals that may ensue. These same students will only see their studio voice teacher thirty minutes to an hour each week. The manipulations of articulation that are imposed upon solo singers for these prolonged periods of time by the choral director will manipulate the muscle memory and thus the formants of the solo singer’s voice.

Hence, the students who crossover into solo singing may lose their “singer’s formant,” or “ping” by having to practice the bad choral habits more so than their solo habits.

In short, “quick fixes” such as vowel modification and straight-tone singing are merely more pieces of the choral ensemble puzzle that should be addressed by a conductor who is experienced with the proper vocal functions required of solo singers. If the conductor is truly versed in the vocal mechanism, he or she may better approach choral blend and eliminate the “quick fixes” uninformed conductors utilize that could eventually harm their students’ voices after long periods of time.

## **Chapter 6: The Choral Conductor and Voice Classification**

Another cause of the “choral-vocal conflict” lies in the misclassification of voices. In many choral ensembles, there is a need for each individual to be assigned a specific voice part to sing for the entire length of the concert-preparation time, or even for the lifetime of the singers’ dedication to that particular ensemble. In this instance, directors run into one of the most controversial problems of choral music, which is classifying voices. In the solo realm, it is said by several pedagogues that classifying voices before the voice is fully developed and mature could lead to serious vocal problems. McKinney says, “misclassification can rob a voice of tonal beauty and freedom of production, can cause endless frustration and disappointment, can shorten a singing career, and can cause vocal damage of varying degrees of permanence” (1994, p. 107). This depth of seriousness lies in the fact that the vocal mechanism is extremely fragile, and if not instructed correctly and carefully, a number of debilitating problems may ensue. One of the main responsibilities that is required of any choral director is to help his or her students sing to the best of their ability. However, when choral directors misclassify students, they are not helping their students achieve their best, most healthy singing technique. If the director classifies students arbitrarily, or after hearing only one “audition,” the risk of misclassification is quite high. Asking a student, particularly a young student, to sing consistently outside of his or her comfortable tessitura may put undue strain on the voice. “An occasional, gentle venture out of one’s range is not necessarily harmful to a skilled singer. A long departure (such as a season) from the normal classification,



however, can be very detrimental to the choral singer” (Smith & Sataloff, 2003, p. 237). Furthermore, extended periods of strain may lead to the vocal damage to which McKinney refers.

In Smith and Sataloff’s text *Choral Pedagogy*, they explain the vast number of considerations that must be addressed in order to classify a voice properly. They say, “A singer’s range will have a bearing on the solo or choral repertoire appropriate for the singer. It is, however, only one of the determining factors in voice classification...when classifying voices for choral singing, choral conductors must consider the following factors: range, timbre, musicianship, and personal stability” (2006, p. 172, 178). However, one should be warned, if a conductor focuses too much on any one aspect of classification without attention to all aspects, the choral director may be doing an injustice to the students. Following are examples of the dangers of classifying voices on only one aspect of the whole process.

## Voice Classification based on Range

There are a number of ways in which choral directors classify voices. While some of these practices may be sensible, others are quite discouraging. The traditional way in which many choral conductors classify their singers is by the individual's vocal range. In most situations, choral directors can assume that a singer who can sing in a higher pitch range would be the soprano or tenor groups, and those who sing in a lower pitch range would be classified as altos or basses. Thurman demonstrates this mode of thinking in his article "Voice Health and Choral Singing: When Voice Classifications Limit Singing Ability" by mimicking the thoughts of inexperienced voice classifiers who think "Higher singing pitch range ability indicates soprano and tenor; lower pitch range ability indicates alto and bass" (1988, p. 25). However, while range may be reliable in classifying adult singers, the range of young undeveloped voices of middle school or high school singers is not finite. In young voices, there are a number of changes taking place all of the time, sometimes even daily for pre-pubescent and pubescent males. Therefore, classifying voices merely on the range is ignoring a large piece of the puzzle.

The ramifications of classifying a student's voice based only on range may not be instantaneously apparent to the choral director. For instance, if a female student experiences registrational issues beginning at C<sub>5</sub>, the untrained choral director may mistakenly classify her as an alto because he or she thinks the student cannot sing higher than C<sub>5</sub>. In reality, this particular student needs to be a soprano because she should be exercising her upper range in order to blend the two registers and eliminate

the break. However, many times once a choral director classifies a voice, that classification remains the same for a long time to come. “Once a singer’s voice is ‘classified,’ the singer ‘becomes’ one of those labels, often for life” (Thurman, 1988, p. 25). The choral director who does not know how to properly classify a singer’s voice could be delaying the vocal development of that student for years to come. As Thurman indicates, “Pitch range limitations often are placed on people because of their voice classifications” (1988, p. 25). That is to say that if tagged an “alto,” the student may never think she can sing higher pitches or switch to a soprano classification because she has always been asked to sing alto. In the end, this student may experience problems later in her singing career, like a decayed upper range, due to the inexperience of her choral conductor.

The best way to address voice classification when considering range is to consider also the *tessitura* of each singer. A “soprano” may be able to sing a high B-flat in an audition process or upon the conductor’s first assessment of the voice, but may not be trained to consistently sing those high notes. The same may be said for any other voice classification with low range “basses” or “tenors.” The bottom line is, when classifying voices, range is not the finite determinant of voice classification. There are many other pieces of the puzzle to consider when classifying a chorister’s voice properly and healthily.

## Voice Classification based on Speaking Pitch

Thurman also lists other possible ways in which some choral conductors choose to classify the voices in their choirs. “Some conductors use speaking pitch range as an indicator for voice classification” (1988, p. 25). The choral directors who use speech as their primary voice classification system are likely familiar with the theory that suggests singers’ normal speech level is a perfect fourth above their lowest sounded pitch. This particular theory says that choral conductors should listen to the singer speak and then determine the pitch that is most frequent in the speech patterns of the singer. Once they have determined this, followers of this method theorize that this singer will not sound any notes more than a perfect fourth below what was sounded in the speaking voice, and thus they classified the voice accordingly.

McKinney combats the use of this theory to classify voices when he discusses the vast amount of Americans who misuse their speaking voice on a regular basis. McKinney has theorized that there is an “optimal pitch level” for speaking that should be used to maintain healthy voice use in speaking. This “optimal pitch level” creates a speaking environment in which the speaker is using the best and most efficient qualities of the voice for speaking. However, it has been found that it is more common for the average person to speak higher or lower than his or her optimal level in everyday speaking for various and sundry reasons.

McKinney states that “less than one in four of [young adults studied] was using the optimal pitch level, almost two out of three were using too high a pitch level, and less than one in ten was using too low a pitch level” (1994, p. 173). Regardless of the underlying reasons and psychological implications that are present when discussing the vast amount of singers that do not speak at their optimal speech level, it is more important to realize that if this is truly the case, then those choral conductors who rely merely on speech level to determine voice classification are classifying voices incorrectly and could therefore cause vocal damage for some of their students.

## Voice Classification based on Timbre

Another possible way choral directors may classify their students' voices is through the quality of the voice. Thurman says that some conductors believe that "deeper, darker, richer qualities indicate alto and bass; lighter, brighter, 'flutier' qualities indicate soprano or tenor" (1988, p. 25). However in reality, each voice, regardless of range, has its own qualities of light and dark that are inherent to that particular instrument. There are many examples in the solo field of sopranos who have darker and warmer voices that are not necessarily classified as mezzo sopranos. Likewise, the same argument may be made for any voice classification. The fact of the matter is tone quality is not the finite determinant of voice classification. Thurman also discounts this theory by saying, "All voices produce a 'palette' of healthy, expressive 'tonal colors'" (1988, p. 25).

The human voice is capable of a number of different tonal colors due to the human body's ability to manipulate the instrument's resonators in various ways. In one aspect, this is a miraculous event that makes the human voice an exciting and unique instrument. On the other hand, the likelihood of a young, inexperienced singer over-manipulating his instrument to please the inexperienced choral director who lacks understanding of the voice and how it is best used is quite high, and therefore puts the singers at risk for harming their instruments.

One explanation as to why the human voice is capable of many sounds and timbres is because of the “source-filter” theory. This theory states that the voice utilizes the same components of any instrument: the actuator, vibrator, and resonator, in a way to create sound. For the singing voice, the actuator is the breath, the vibrators are the vocal folds which come together to make the sound (the thyro-arytenoid muscles), and the resonator is the vocal tract (all areas of the anatomy lying between the top of the larynx and the lips). The source-filter theory further states that the actuator (the breath) enacts upon the vibrator (the thyro-arytenoids) and in its raw form sounds like a pitched buzz that is similar to the trumpeter’s buzzing embouchure. When this raw sound is filtered through the resonators of the vocal tract, the reflection of sound waves within the resonators create the resulting sound the outside world hears.

Resonators in the human body may be manipulated in order to achieve a variety of tone qualities. A lowered larynx or puckered lips will lengthen the vocal tract and thus darken the overall tone quality of a singer. If this is done in a relaxed way, then it may be healthy; however, if the larynx is forced down through harmful manipulation, the student may suffer greatly from the tension and harmful singing that will incur. Likewise, if the larynx is raised or lips spread, the vocal tract will be shortened and encourage higher overtones and thus create a brighter, more strident tone quality. “What is the sound of a high larynx? Pressure, tension, a lack of spaciousness in sound, dull or thin vocal resonance, and ‘hardness’ in the sound are some of the aural danger signs. Overall there is a lack of freedom in the vocal tone” (Jordan, 2005, p. 18). In addition to the tone sounding tense and not being freely

produced, there is a certain danger in this sort of manipulation. A raised larynx induces harmful tension and the student will, in turn, suffer the numerous consequences of unhealthy singing.

By knowing how the vocal mechanism works within the scheme of the “source-filter” theory, one may be able to better understand why all singers sound have distinctly different timbres from one another. That is, the knowledge of this theory may help an amateur choral director understand that the darker tone qualities that are misinterpreted as lower-sounding instruments may merely be the singer’s physiologically-based inherent resonance. Also, by knowing how the voice works in this matter, conductors who classify voices would realize that in some cases, singers may manipulate their resonators in order to produce a darker tone quality or lighter tone quality outside of what may be natural for their voice. For this reason, it is important to realize that the resonators can be manipulated to produce a number of tone qualities in each voice. So, classifying a voice based simply on the inherent tone quality without considering the range, tessitura, and overall experience of the singer, could lead to possible misclassification of the singer’s voice, which again may be detrimental to the student’s vocal health.



## Voice Classification based on Choral Needs

Finally, one of the most common ways in which some choral conductors classify their students' voices is according to their forces needed and the musical experience of the singers with whom they are presented. That is, a female singer that has a background in piano and is a fairly independent musician may be placed in the alto section regardless of her range, voice quality, or technique merely because she can hold her own part as a harmonic force in the majority of the choral pieces presented. The opposite may also be true for a less experienced singer. Some singers who do not come into the choral ensemble with much experience, and who are not strong harmonic forces for the ensemble, may be placed outside of a comfortable range and into a voice part that is highly accustomed to singing the melody, like the soprano part.

This portion of the "choral-vocal conflict" again lies in the fact that if a choral director misclassifies a singer, he or she may be adversely affecting any progress being made in the solo field for that singer. That same choral director may, perhaps harm the voices of inexperienced singers by forcing them to sing outside of their comfortable tessitura for prolonged periods of time.

## **Chapter 7: Working with Adolescent Voices in a Choral Setting**

Another aspect of the choral setting in which conductors may be lacking proper information in order to provide a safe singing environment for their students is in addressing their concept of choral tone within an adolescent singing environment. Working with adolescent voices is a thrilling and challenging experience mainly due to the intricacies involved in working with voice changes. The voice change, or “vocal mutation,” occurs in both girls and boys between the ages of eleven and thirteen when their bodies are going through physical and hormonal changes due to puberty. During this time, girls may experience the lengthening of their vocal folds while boys will experience a more pronounced change as their “larynx grows both in length and in the antero-posterior direction...resulting in the appearance of the “Adam’s apple.” Their vocal cords lengthen by one centimeter and become much thicker than the female’s, allowing for a lower, fuller sound” (Brinson, 1996, p. 211).

There are a number of theories which have evolved over the years as to how to work with the changing adolescent voice. Regardless of which theory one chooses to follow in his or her own choral environment, it is important to understand the core physiological changes of an adolescent voice in order to create a positive and healthy singing experience for these young singers. In addition to understanding the physiological changes, there are several other key responsibilities each choral conductor should keep in mind when working with adolescent voices. As writers Christopher D. White and Dona K. White stated in their article on the changing male voice, “despite the nature of the change, the young male [or female] is still capable of

free, natural singing throughout puberty provide he receives encouragement, good training, and the opportunity to sing appropriate literature” (2001, ¶ 8). Of these four components of adolescent singing White and White offered, I believe the main responsibilities choral conductors should employ in order to cultivate “free, natural singing” and “good training” in the adolescent choir are continually being encouraging and informative for their students to achieve success throughout the changing process.

There are several reasons that it is important for the choral conductor to keep encouraging the students to sing throughout the voice change process. First of all, researchers have shown that boys who sing through the vocal change usually do not experience much of a change. Also, if the choral director encourages young voices to stop singing during the change, they are stifling a talent and perhaps a joy for those children. I personally believe no-one has the right to do such a thing. For girls, since the change is more in the timbre of their voice rather than the range, continued singing is not only encouraged, but highly feasible. Brinson says of the female change, “for all females, regardless of voice classification, vocalization throughout their entire range should continue” (1996, p. 213).

As for the second responsibility to adolescent voices, choral conductors should not only be informed of the proper ways to handle changing voices, but should also inform their students about the changes taking place in their bodies and how these changes effect their instruments as they go through puberty. In Barbara Brinson’s book on choral methods, she highlights the knowledge of published writer, researcher, and changing voices expert, John Cooksey saying, “He believes that the

boys should be fully informed about these changes so that their voice change can become an adventure rather than a nightmare for them” (1996, p. 218). Cooksey’s work was also cited in the *Journal of Research in Music Education* saying he found in his research that “adolescents should be taught to develop an awareness of their own vocal abilities; they must be guided by enlightened teachers who understand the process of vocal maturation and know how to deal with it on a practical level” (Cooksey & Welch, 1998 as cited in Kennedy, 2004, ¶ 23).

Working with changing voices not only requires a choral conductor to be informed about the physiological changes of the voice, but also what sounds to expect from this age group in a choral setting. Sometimes, especially in cases with younger choirs, the conductor encourages the singers to sing with a more mature tone than they should be producing at their age. The manipulation of adolescent voices into abnormally dark or more mature tone qualities elicits the same problems as does the discussion earlier in this project on false blend through manipulated resonance. That is, students who are instructed to create darker, more mature sounds must either press the muscles of the neck down to lower their larynx or harmfully stretch the muscles within the vocal tract in order to increase their pharyngeal space. Again, while it is true these two occurrences are desired to some degree because the increased space in the vocal mechanism will induce lower overtones in the sound and thus create a fuller tone quality, it is, rather, the way singers go about introducing increased resonance which may cause concern. “Some singers are taught...to enlarge the throat (pharynx) by over-tensing muscles at the base of the tongue. In addition to influencing the larynx to work harder, the resonance effect of this maneuver on the sound is to

reinforce the lower overtones and absorb higher overtones... depending on the extent of the maneuver, we may label the vocal sound as 'rich,' 'thick,' 'dark,' or 'throaty'" (Thurman, 1988, p. 27). Instead, teachers should encourage relaxation of the larynx and pharynx in order to, gradually over time, achieve a healthy increase in resonance without harmful over-manipulation.

In addition to the dangers of encouraging a more mature tone, there are many other problems inexperienced choral conductors can generate in adolescent singers if they are not properly prepared to work with changing voices. Since these problems and solutions are far too vast to cover in this small project, I would encourage choral directors who will be working with adolescents to refer to the references listed in Appendix A of this document.

During adolescence, every child will experience changes, physically, mentally, and vocally. It is important that the choral director know how to deal with these changes. It is also important for choral directors to remember that their top priority to changing voices is to keep them singing healthily. Above all, the students are the experts when it comes to their own bodies. If one has a student who feels uncomfortable or complains that something hurts when singing, the choral director should heed these warnings and react accordingly. If choral directors are not careful, they may damage the voices quite easily through overuse, misclassification, or any other problems related to working with changing voices.

## **Chapter 8: The Private Voice Teacher**

As one can see, there are a number of ways in which inexperienced or unknowledgeable choral directors can harm their singers through their efforts to produce a cohesive choral sound. However, in the conflict between the choral director and the private voice teacher, one would be remiss merely to blame the inexperienced choral director for such a large and far-stretching conflict in the vocal arts. That being said, it is important to also address some of the ways in which private voice teachers may contribute to the “choral-vocal conflict.”

### **Untrained Private Voice Teachers**

First, there are cases of private voice teachers running a studio without being knowledgeable about the vocal mechanism. These people have little to no background in teaching singing, but due to their experience as performing singers decide to run a private studio as a side job. Since these singers have not studied how to teach voice students, or even the anatomy of singing, they are not efficiently equipped to instruct students in a way that may prove helpful for the voice. Instead, these teachers teach the way in which they have been taught, without fully understanding the intricacies of vocal pedagogy with which every private voice teacher should be familiar. This situation is a definite source for conflict between voice teachers and choral directors due to the lack of responsibility this type of voice teacher is showing for his or her students' vocal health.

### **Private Voice Teachers who recognize Weaknesses in the Choral Director's Vocal Experience**

Another way private voice teachers may create conflict, and perhaps the most popular, is the way in which the private teacher handles the situation of an untrained choral director negatively affecting his or her private voice students' progress. The majority of reports over a "choral-vocal conflict" seem to be those that transpired due to a voice teacher's recognition of a choral director who was less than helpful to students vocally. Instead of working with the students affected or advising the director to encourage proper vocal techniques, the voice teacher either requests his or her private voice students to cease participating in the ensemble, or criticize and complain to the students about the choral conductor's shortcomings.

### **The Private Teacher who wants to Eliminate Ensemble Participation**

In the case of the private teacher who requests that his or her students stop participating in choral opportunities, the voice teacher is making a grave mistake. He or she is robbing his or her students of a valuable musical experience. Just as the time a choral conductor spends with his constituents can negatively affect the singing voice, so can that time positively affect the musicality of the students. It is my personal belief that no voice teacher can be so arrogant that they would make a request of this sort merely out of spite toward the choral director. It is my belief that a request of this sort would only be made as a private voice teacher's desire and effort

to protect his or her student's vocal development. However, this sort of attitude and apparent solution does nothing to alleviate the foundation of the problem: an ignorant choral director. Later, I will address ways in which voice teachers who would prefer their students not sing in a choral setting could allow their students continued exposure to ensembles without completely cutting out a portion of their musical learning.

### **The Private Voice Teacher who Openly Criticizes**

The third case where a private voice teacher has potential to create conflict is when he or she takes the opportunity to air personal or professional differences candidly to the student or even to other professionals in front of the student. While this is not a perfect world, and there will always be matters of disagreement among colleagues, I do not believe the students of the two colleagues should be exposed to possible flaws of one mentor or the other.

Criticisms and complaints about choral directors to students should not be tolerated in this field. I believe the private voice teacher's attitude about the choral director should be one of respect and advocacy for his or her efforts. If private voice teachers see a problem with the techniques employed by a choral director in their community, they should work to help that conductor alleviate his or her inexperience with the vocal mechanism. If the voice teacher is merely complaining to students due to personal differences, then that individual should reevaluate his or her professional identity.



The main role of the voice teacher in the choral-vocal relationship should be one of helpfulness and support. All too often in a conflicting situation, teachers are more willing to warn against negative teaching occurring in choral classrooms rather than address ways in which students can adapt the so-called negative teachings into positive experiences. If voice teachers could approach the “conflict” in this way, perhaps the problems between vocal ensembles and private studios could be eliminated all together, and then perhaps the true benefits of students being involved in both areas of vocal music could be realized.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

It is the optimistic view of this writer that each teacher wants nothing more than the best for his or her students. While a choral conductor may want the best for his or her students through producing a blended sound for beauty and musicality, he or she may be doing it in a way that is harmful rather than helpful. In the same vein, a private teacher may request his or her students to veer away from choral opportunities in order to protect the work they are doing in their individual voice study. While this request seems harsh and unwarranted, I firmly believe that teachers want nothing more than to provide their students with opportunities for success. That is why the request to stay away from potentially harmful choral activities may seem nothing but noble to a private teacher. These requests and actions are merely the individual teachers' only way in which they feel they can provide students with optimal learning environments. However, there are far too many positive reasons that students should be involved in both types of vocal activities for their own musical growth, it is hard to justify the "conflict" that occurs between two individuals in the vocal community.

The authors of the AATS decree on the "choral-vocal conflict" best stated the role of each member of the "choral-vocal conflict" when they wrote, "It is essential to the well being of all concerned that choral conductors, voice teachers, and singers work together in a spirit of openness and mutual cooperation...The highest professional behavior and respect must accompany each of these relationships" (2005, p. 8). After all, we should remember that the purpose of all vocal activities is

to further the musicianship and musical enjoyment of the *student*. While all teachers of singing, whether solo or choral singing, would hope for the best opportunities for each and every singer, the best possible solution to any conflict between the soloists and the choristers is dissipating it with knowledge of the problem, understanding of the solutions, and a helpful nature between musicians to achieve harmony between the two contexts of vocal music.

**PART II**

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR RESOLVING**

**THE “CHORAL-VOCAL CONFLICT”**

## Chapter 10: Resolving the Conflict

After reviewing what the “choral-vocal conflict” is and how it may adversely affect music students, it is imperative that professionals now take the opportunity to work towards eliminating this conflict for future generations. I believe that in the music field not even the *word* “conflict” should enter the vocabulary of professionals, much less the *act* of conflict be introduced into the vocal world. As musicians and music educators, we are already forced to advocate for our role in education that any sort of conflict within our own ranks will only cause further problems within the music education field, and possibly deprive students of opportunities which are already few and far between.

Being aware of the key actions which have lead to the “choral-vocal conflict,” and acting as a future professional in the field of vocal arts, I feel that I can be a beneficial activist to help alleviate this conflict among vocalists. In order to build cooperative roles in the vocal arts, it may first of all prove helpful for all members of the vocal music profession to understand the benefits of both choral singing and solo voice lessons for young musicians.

## The Benefits of Choral Activities

The benefits of a choral music education are far too extensive to cover in this one project; however, I will attempt to highlight the main reasons choral activities are important for students. In an effort to advocate for resolved conflict in the vocal arts, the American Academy of Teachers of Singing (AATS) published an article in the *NATS Journal of Singing* entitled “Choral Singing: Responsibilities in the Relationship between the Conductor, Voice Teacher, and Singer.” In this article, the AATS advocates the importance of choral singing by stating many reasons choral activities are beneficial to young singers. Among these, they say, “The choral conductor is often the first musical model encountered by a young singer.” For that reason, “choral singing is one of the most effective means of musicianship training...young singers usually can perform music of much more sophistication in a choral group than they could as soloists and thereby can begin to learn the elements of a style that otherwise might not be available to them” (AATS, 2005, p. 7). Choral directors, therefore, have a unique opportunity to reach singers early in their practice and provide them with musicianship, singing skills, ear training, performance practices, music literacy, musical camaraderie, and many other skills beyond compare.

## **The Benefits of Private Voice Lessons**

Just as the benefits of choral ensemble activities are countless, so are the benefits of a solo vocal education. Many of the same elements of choral education may be taught in a private voice lesson such as theory, ear training, performance practices, and musical literacy; however, private lessons offer one additional benefit: individual attention. The attention received in a private voice lesson can be a valuable asset to a blossoming musician. They are better able to understand their own instrument and therefore better able to add strength and expertise to an ensemble.

### **Why both Solo and Ensemble Activities are Important**

Together, choral singing and solo singing have the power to create stunning musicians if the professionals of both divisions can see the possibilities and work towards common ground rather than allowing conflict to prevail. Imagine for a moment the possibilities of musical experiences that choral conductors and voice teachers could offer their students if they learn to value both of their practices equally. Imagine the musicians that would emerge from such programs that have choral directors and voice teachers who collaborate in order to accentuate the best practices of both activities. As stated earlier, choral ensemble activities provide extended benefits and experiences that can help elevate the musical understanding, musicianship, and musicality of students in large groups above what a single student could do alone. Private voice lessons aid in students' ability to understand their own

instrument and better perform in both solo and choral situations. As Diercks said, “The ideal is to experience both” (1948, p. 6). Both experiences are valuable as separate entities, but once joined can create outstanding results in the lives and careers of singers.

I believe strongly in the potential for both sides of this conflict to work together, because as I said in the beginning, we all use the same instrument, and should all not only use it the same way, but also know how to teach singers to use their voices correctly. Far too many times, choral conductors get caught in the notion that it is not their job to educate their students on vocal use because they are building a choir, not soloists. However, I believe all voice professionals have a responsibility to their students to educate them to the best of their ability in order to produce better singers and musicians. “No matter what our title, we function as educators and thus have the responsibility to educate singers about what they should know and be able to do” (Corbin, 1986, p. 6).

I not only feel that both sides of the conflict should work together, but I also believe in the power and importance of *both* voice lessons and choral activities. I hold a unique position in the vocal arts since I am both a voice teacher and a chorus teacher. This is why I feel so passionately about resolving these issues in our field. In my roles on both sides of what has historically been conflicting positions, I personally hope to help bridge the gap between choral activities and solo vocal activities. I shall take this opportunity to look at some actions that may be taken in both the choral classroom and the private voice studio that will hopefully help augment what both professions have to offer rather than stunt the vocal progress of



students vocally due to personal or professional issues between choral and solo voice instructors and/or activities.

## **Chapter 11: Recommended Solutions for the Choral Director**

It is important for choral directors to know and understand their power to influence students either positively or negatively. As the AATS stated, “choral conductors are first of all committed to the musical and vocal success of their choral ensembles, but must acknowledge their power and importance in the musical and vocal development of the individual singers in it” (2005, p.8). With this statement, the AATS provides merely another aspect of why it is important for choral directors to become more aware of pedagogical foundations of the singing voice. Since one of the major causes of the “choral-vocal conflict” lies in the ignorance of some choral directors as to how the voice functions, the majority of the solutions for the “choral-vocal conflict” that will be discussed are those dealing with ways in which directors can become better informed of proper vocal technique. In her article on vocal pedagogy in the choral ensemble, Lynn Corbin states the main ways in which choral directors may better their understanding of the singing voice. “If you feel uncomfortable or uninformed about vocal techniques, a variety of sources are available. Books, workshops, and course work are obvious sources of information, but do not forget the local voice teachers, and your colleagues within the area” (1986, p. 8-9). As Corbin suggested, the two main outlets for further information are continued learning experiences or help from a knowledgeable voice teacher. There are several suggestions I can offer to choir directors in order for them to expand their knowledge of the voice that fall under these two categories.

## Continuing Education

First of all, we shall explore the options available to choral directors who choose to become better informed through continued learning. The number one way I would suggest to anyone to improve their knowledge is through proper research of what resources they have available to them. There are many learning opportunities that may be available through community colleges or universities, local arts programs, or even community centers in their area.

If there are universities or colleges in the area, perhaps the best way to gain information would be to enroll in courses such as vocal pedagogy, voice lessons, or choral conducting. Any of these classes may help better the choral director's understanding of the voice and how to direct a group of students properly so as to foster healthy singing.

In addition to attending classes, the choral director could perhaps contact members of the voice faculty at the local college or university in order to bring those individuals into the classroom for workshops or master classes. This not only will allow all of those involved to learn together in an environment of curiosity, but also will help the students better understand what to expect if they choose to further their music education at the college level.

Choral directors could check with community centers or local arts programs in order to be informed of any special performances, master classes, or guest artists who may offer lectures or question and answer sessions in addition to their musical performances. Many times, master classes and lecture classes are free to the public

and offer a great deal of information for the amateur vocalist. If the director is near a well-known performance venue that draws established solo artists, many times mere exposure to the art and listening to the proper way to sing can begin to establish some basic concepts for the amateur singer.

Finally, if monetary or time restraints prevent a choral director from attending classes or lectures, I would encourage him or her to improve his or her knowledge through self-directed learning. There are a number of accessible pedagogical texts available in today's market for any musician to study, and thus glean a better understanding of vocal function. For a list of such texts for further study, please refer to Appendix A.

### **Private Lessons**

The second path a choral conductor could take in order to improve upon his or her knowledge of the voice, and thus help alleviate any conflict is through the help of a private voice teacher. This help could be achieved in several ways: in the teacher-student capacity, in the mentor capacity, or in the guest speaker capacity.

The first suggestion is perhaps the most beneficial for all parties involved, and that is to acquire the help of a private voice teacher in a teacher-student relationship. That is, the choral director should seek out time for his or her own voice lessons with a private voice teacher. Through the growth and understanding of how his or her own voice works, as well as how voice lessons are conducted, the choral director may gain a better understanding of how to help his or her students in the choral classroom.

This situation would be ideal to help the choral director not only with his or her own talent, but it is also a learning experience for how voice teachers interact with students in order to achieve proper singing techniques. Through these observations the choral director has an added chance of imparting proper technique to each of his or her students. This situation may lay numerous foundations for better singing for all parties involved, including the choral director and his or her students.

### **Collaborative Support**

Another way choral directors can improve their knowledge of the singing voice is to set up times to take part in scholarly meetings with a knowledgeable private voice teacher in order to better the choral director's understanding of vocal pedagogy. This strategy is highly dependent upon a working relationship between the choral director and the voice teacher; however, if the two have a foundation of friendship or a professional relationship, then it should be feasible. It is the optimism of this author that such meetings could be accomplished without monetary compensation since they are held in an effort to help one another succeed in furthering their mutual students' learning. However, since time is quite a commodity in the music profession, compensation may be needed. In this event, I would encourage a creative verbal agreement between voice teacher and choral director in order to compensate the voice teacher for his or her time. This could be done through traded resources or students or time. Regardless of the compensation, be it the educational value, a trade agreement, or a small financial commitment, it is most

important that the process be approached with an attitude of fellowship. It is important in our field to be willing to help others. By doing so, we can better establish camaraderie, peer help, and professional equality.

### **Create Learning Opportunities within the Ensemble Rehearsal Time**

Yet another way to help students sing correctly is by arranging for a local community or collegiate voice teacher to come into the classroom as a guest speaker or a master class instructor to help the students learn the fundamentals of singing from a professional. Along this same idea, if the choral ensemble is near a university, the choral director could contact the university and arrange for upper-class college voice students to volunteer their time as guest voice teachers or guest speakers. This type of agreement is a great benefit for all involved. It allows the students in the choral ensemble to receive free, reliable voice lessons and is a valuable learning experience along with a résumé booster for the college students involved.

This suggestion leads us to the fifth possible way choral directors may help build healthy singing in their choirs. I propose that they can help students become aware of the possibilities available to them, which could be done in several ways. First of all, the choral director could merely inform students that there are activities such as private voice lessons. Secondly, he or she could inform his or her students of the value of voice lessons as a component of their musical growth, as well as be encouraging to students who may be interested in private voice lessons. The choral director should consider having contact information of all the voice teachers in the

area on hand so that he or she may provide it to any of the students who may be interested. The choral director could also take this opportunity a step further by inviting private voice teachers into his or her classroom so that they may introduce themselves to the students and provide students with their personal philosophies, teaching techniques, cost of lessons, and contact information. This not only allows students the opportunity to know who is available to them, but it also allows the private teachers an opportunity to market themselves and possibly build their own studio. Any of these possibilities are great ways to advertise for the business of a colleague, as well as to improve upon the sound and musicianship of one's entire chorus.

## **In-School Voice Lessons**

Finally, the director may incorporate group voice lessons or private voice lessons within the regular schedule of the school day for his or her students. This type of activity would be a valuable asset to improving the musicianship of each individual, as well as improving the overall sound of the group as a whole. There are several ways in which a choral director may incorporate voices lessons within his or her school day. I would propose three main levels of in-school voice lessons that may be integrated into the regular school day.

The first level, and the one that is most optimal for all involved, is commonly referred to as a “pull-out program.” There are many examples of this type of program being successful in band settings, and now there are also some examples of these types of situations being successful for choral programs in the up-state New York area. However, it seems very little is known about this type of voice program in the schools around Muscogee County. This type of program is extremely exciting and could definitely create a vast outgrowth of popularity for the choral program in both the school and the community. This type of program produces well-educated, healthy singers, who will then produce a better choral program through the knowledge of proper voice techniques.

There are two ways to produce this first tier of private lesson programs in schools. These methods are (1) the “pull-out program” for the choral director who is also trained in vocal pedagogy and (2) the “pull-out program” for the choral director who is not trained in vocal pedagogy. Although the vocal pedagogy-savvy teacher



would be better able to produce such a program, this particular plan may be included in a choral program by the choral director who has little or even no background in vocal pedagogy. For the pedagogically uninformed teacher, he or she would merely act as director and liaison of the program. While understandably this teacher could not *teach* the private lessons, he or she would perform such tasks as facilitate the time and space required for in-school voice lessons and contract with voice teachers in the area to come in and teach group or private voice lessons. Barbara Brinson actually describes such a program in her book on choral music. She discusses the program and benefits thereof saying:

“In some school districts, private vocal instruction is offered for interested and talented students during the school day. Voice teachers work with choral students on an individual basis to teach and refine good vocal technique as well as to sing quality literature for the solo voice. This fortunate situation can provide a good support system for the choral program by enhancing the overall achievement level of singers. In addition, because students have been introduced to basic vocal technique in their voice lessons, a simple reminder from the choir director during rehearsal to breathe correctly or to use more head voice or to drop the jaw will suffice. This can save valuable rehearsal time” (1996, p. 177).

As one can see, there are numerous benefits for a choral program that enhances solo singing through integrated voice lessons. The exciting part is, for the teacher such as myself who is well-informed and practiced in vocal pedagogy, he or she could teach her own private voice lessons within the school day. If it is possible for choral directors to include the “pull-out program” in their choral curriculum, the benefits would be paramount.

Whether a choral director decides to run this program as the voice teacher or as the manager, it is important to discuss the logistics such a program would entail. The “pull-out program” requires a great deal of cooperation from the administration and fellow teachers. The idea is to divide students into instruction groups (either small pods or individuals) and arrange for them to come to their voice lessons in thirty-minute blocks throughout the school day. For the choral directors who are teaching the students’ voice lessons themselves, these thirty minute blocks would run throughout the day when there are no chorus classes. The pods or individuals will be assigned different times each week in order to rotate their time out of class and keep them from missing the same classes continuously.

The basic concept of such a program is similar to the basic concept of car insurance. The definition of insurance is that each person who desires coverage for their car pays a comparatively small sum of money each month that is affordable so that in the event they are in an accident, they do not have to be responsible for the larger amount of money which one either cannot afford or does not wish to afford. This is accomplished by a large group of people pooling their money together within one insurance company so that when there is a loss, one individual has the support of all the other consumers who have chosen to carry insurance on their possessions. The insurance company can afford to pay to repair damage because each consumer within an insurance company has pooled their money together for the common good of one another.

The similarity to a “pull-out program” of private voice lessons is that a small expenditure is paid in the form of time out of other classes in order for individuals to

reap the greater benefits of vocal instruction, which in turn affects the common good of the entire choral organization. The “pull-out program” will only take small, affordable amounts of time for students to come out of other classes in exchange for valuable music instruction. The best way to execute this program is to involve enough students in the “pull-out” voice lessons that the premium time out of other classes is distributed so thinly that no other subject suffers for the benefit of the choral program. This mode of thinking again can correlate to the insurance business in that when more consumers join a particular company, premiums decrease. Likewise, the private voice lessons reap benefits when more students are involved. Also, the more students involved, the more likely the teachers and administration will support this program. Let us face it: teachers do not like their students to miss class; however, if it is one small portion of class every two to three weeks rather than one whole class every week, then the other teachers in the school may be more likely to cooperate.

For the choral director who receives opposition to the “pull-out” system due to students missing their core classes, he or she may choose to provide the general idea of the “pull-out program” to their students, but rather than have students pulled from their core classes, employ a private teacher to come into the school and have students pulled out of their own chorus classes. Financial support for this particular modification to the “pull-out program” could come from the choral booster funds, or even from the students who participate in the program. Once again, as in the insurance business, the more students who participate in this modified pull-out program, the lesser the financial obligation of each individual in order to compensate

the private voice teacher who provides his or her services for this particular program. For more information on pull-out programs, please refer to Appendix B.

The second level of in-school private voice lessons is to offer a group vocal technique class. This class would be scheduled in the regular school day like any other choral class. The choral teacher who is familiar with vocal pedagogy could teach this class, or for the choral director who is not as knowledgeable about vocal pedagogy, he or she could hire a private voice teacher to come in and teach this class – as if it were a small group voice lesson. If funds from the school are limited to pay an outside teacher, the students could pool their money together in order to pay the private voice teacher that will come in to teach this class.

The structure of this type of class, can remain quite flexible in order to reach each student on his or her level. If individual attention is needed, the teacher could have small one-on-one lessons while the rest of the students in the class help one another in a variety of ways that remain within the scope of learning to sing correctly. Some examples of these activities may include: active listening to professional performances via CD's or DVD's, peer help with solo repertoire, small group projects on a variety of music studies, or even study hall. The creative choral director could introduce a number of valuable experiences to these students within the breadth of a group vocal technique class.

The third tier of in-school voice lessons that would be valuable to all parties involved is for those choral directors who have the desire to teach their students proper vocal technique, but may not be able to provide a separate class or “pull-out program” due to monetary or time constraints. The third option is for choral directors

to devote a portion of each class to teaching proper vocal techniques to the entire chorus. Brinson addresses the importance of providing students with this particular option in her choral methods book.

“For most students, however, the choral director will be their voice teacher, and the only vocal instruction they will receive will occur during the choral rehearsal itself. In addition to the preparation of music performance, therefore, choral directors...need to provide regular and systematic opportunities within the context of daily rehearsal for young singers to develop their emerging voices. Sufficient time must be devoted to teach them basic tools of correct vocal production – even if it means a less strenuous performance schedule for the year.”

She goes on to say, “Occasionally, entire rehearsals may be needed to introduce new concepts or to secure a particularly troublesome technique, especially for beginning or intermediate level choirs...The most effective approach may be to blend the teaching of vocal technique with the act of music-making” (1996, p. 178).

## Conclusion

As one may see, there are several areas in which the choral director could focus his or her attention in order to work toward the common good of his or her students and abate any future encounters with the “choral-vocal conflict.”

Incorporating private or even group voice lessons into a regular school day can be challenging and time consuming on the part of the choral director; however, if executed correctly, it can make an incredible difference in the lives and musical instruction of the students. As stated several times before, private voice lessons are a valuable resource to give students, which not only improves upon their understanding of the human voice, but also improves the overall sound of the choir. I would propose that every choral director try one of these proposed programs for at least one semester to see the positive changes that will ensue in the sound of the choir and the development of the students.

I would encourage directors who know they need help to be creative when seeking out opportunities to improve upon what they already know. They should work to expand their knowledge of how the voice works so that they may be able to produce well-informed singers who can work to make beautifully healthy music and grow a choral program of which all of those involved, students and teachers alike can be supportive and proud.

## **Chapter 12: Recommended Solutions for the Private Voice Teacher**

Now that we have fully explored the ways in which the choral director can help alleviate further conflict in the field of vocal music, we should see what the private voice teacher can contribute in order to establish a friendlier, more supportive environment for vocal music students. First and foremost, the private voice teacher should be encouraging and supportive of his or her students' ensemble activities.

### **The Role of the Private Voice Teacher in the Choral Setting**

I believe private teachers have a unique position of authority to inspire positive growth in their students. Private voice teachers should recognize the value of ensemble experiences and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects mutual respect for the art. Contrary to many beliefs on both sides of the conflict, the voice teacher could and should play a role in the choral class.

“Ideally, every singing teacher would be affiliated with a choral organization, acting as a consultant on vocal matters whenever possible. In order to advise students, singing teachers should be acquainted personally with the choral conductors within their immediate area. Solo singing and choral singing are compatible but different vocal activities. Teachers of singing and choral conductors must work together to ensure the vocal health of all singers”  
(Smith and Sataloff, 2006, p. 130).

If the private teacher truly believes the choral director does not have the technical foundations to teach voices properly, then she should confront that director. If the private teacher were to approach this matter delicately and professionally, it

would not be out of line in some cases for the private voice teacher to seek the choir director out confidentially and discuss the ensuing problems in a helpful manner.

Private voice teachers who are aware of vocal problems occurring due to an inexperienced choral director should work with the mutual students rather than talking to the student about the problems that have occurred. The private teacher should help his or her students so that they may become aware of ways in which the technique will differ, as well as how the students should overcome the differences. It should be said that this helpful advice should be given in a prudent manner that does not go against the choral director's teachings, nor undermine his or her authority, but at the same time will help reduce harm to the singers' voices. The American Academy of Teachers of Singing created a decree that delegated the voice teacher's role in alleviating the "choral-vocal conflict." In their decree, they stated,

"It is, of course, the primary job of voice teachers to develop the solo voices of their students. They should, however, be supportive of their students' choral experience, reminding them of the musical and personal benefits of their participation in a fine choir...they should help their students solve vocal problems they may be having in their choral singing. They should teach strategies for getting through rehearsal situations that are particularly challenging, either musically or vocally. Voice teachers should be open and respectful of the musical and tonal requests of choral conductors. If they feel there are significant problems in a choral experience, they should consult with the conductor about the issue of concern" (2005, p. 8).



### **Continued Learning Experiences**

There are several actions the private voice teacher should take in order to assume his or her proper role in the non-conflicting world of vocal music. Just as the choral director should better understand solo singing, the voice teacher should better understand choral singing. If the voice teacher is uninformed in this area, again he or she could follow the continuing educational route and consult college courses, articles, books, or choral directors for help in understanding choral singing and the common practices which occur in a choral setting.

### **Involvement in a Choral Ensemble**

Additionally, the voice teacher could join a chorus. This would provide him or her with first-hand experience in the choral setting and allow him or her to understand fully how to help their students cope with the differences between the two situations. Just as the suggestions provided for choral directors reaped benefits for all parties involved, so can voice teachers who decide to become a part of a choral environment provide benefits for themselves and their students. Voice teachers who become involved with a choral ensemble may benefit their students with their new-found knowledge of choral activities, but may also gain new pupils for their private voice teaching by attending ensemble activities and becoming acquainted with other members.

## **Provide Students with Proper Tools for Choral Singing**

Assuming the voice teacher has been exposed to choral activities and does not need to continue his or her education, there are several core elements he or she needs to include in his or her teaching in order to cultivate community between the choral and solo activities of his or her students. Private voice teachers should work with their students that are in choral activities to help them understand ways in which they may be able to use their voices without causing harm. They should have candid interaction with their students about the activities experienced in the choral setting in an effort to make sure the students are not harming their voices. AATS suggests possible solutions for the voice teacher saying:

“They should teach strategies for getting through rehearsal situations that are particularly challenging, either musically or vocally. Voice teachers should be open and respectful of the musical and tonal requests of choral conductors. If they feel there are significant problems in a student’s choral experience, they should consult with the conductor about the issue of concern” (2005, p. 8).

Under no circumstances should private teachers take it upon themselves to discredit the choral director to the student or to any other professional that may interact with that director or student. This is a drastic part of the conflict that addresses personal issues one professional may have with another. The best way to handle this situation is for the private teacher to give students the tools they need to help alleviate any misuse that may be advised in the choral setting.

If the private teacher is in a position in which he or she is truly concerned about vocal damage that may ensue due to an uninformed choral conductor, then it is

up to that individual to determine the most professional and most helpful way in which to address the situation, however she should never involve a common student or any other student in the matter.

### **Create Collaborative Activities**

Private teachers may also offer their services to the choral director either as a referral service or during the school day in order to advocate for better vocal development and use in the choral setting. If the private teacher is in a community in which musical theater is prominent, he or she could offer his or her services during after school rehearsals in order to help the production of the musical. Perhaps a professional trade may be obtained in which the services are offered in exchange for recognition or ad space in the production's program.

### **Conclusion**

There are a number of ways both the choral director and the private voice teacher may overcome the "conflict" so widespread among the vocal arts professions. However, through understanding, communication, creativity in working together and coming up with helpful solutions, the new face of the "choral-vocal" world may be changed from conflict to community.

### Chapter 13: Solutions in the Face of Conflict

There is no perfect world of musicians in which all members will be optimistic, enthusiastic, starry-eyed supporters of one another. Regardless of suggestions and certain musicians' attempt to become educated and supportive of one another, there will still be some who disagree with the ideas presented in this project. For this reason, I offer a couple of suggestions to those who wish to avoid and reduce conflict, but may be faced with a colleague who does not share the same wishes.

I would suggest handling everything with careful consideration and diplomacy. I implore all music educators to remember that everything we do in this profession should be done with a genuine interest for the students. At all costs, try to allow for an optimal musical experience for the *students*. Maintaining respect for other professionals will go much further than harboring any ill-feelings towards other professionals. In addition, if there are ill-feelings that are made known to mutual students, it will do nothing to further the musical experience for the students. For that reason, I encourage all music teachers to feel what they may towards another, but allow those opinions to remain confidential and allow students to reap the benefits of a full musical experience by allowing them to cultivate their musical skills through private lessons and ensemble activities free from worry about what animosity may occur between the teachers.

## **Chapter 14: How Teachers-in-Training may contribute to Conflict Resolution**

In addition to current choral directors and voice teachers, one last player in this particular conflict comes in the form of those people who are studying to become the next generation of teachers of singing. One rather common thread that seems to run through the sources of conflict seems to be lack of proper knowledge in either vocal pedagogy or choral pedagogy. For this reason, I choose to look at the role teachers-in-training may play in conflict resolution.

I think it is important for students who wish to enter the vocal field of music education to understand the importance of taking command of one's own education. Students should explore their career goals early on in their college training and become highly educated in the correct training in order to become truly successful as vocal music professionals. As discussed previously, many times in an average undergraduate music education degree, students with a number of different backgrounds can be employed as choral directors, regardless of their primary instrument. Due to the vast amount of education courses required of students to complete a music education degree, the requirements for certain important classes for choral educators are overlooked in lieu of other curricula. Until undergraduate and graduate degree programs are evaluated and changed to reflect the proper training needed to produce highly qualified choral educators, it is the students' responsibility to know what their weaknesses are for their desired field and fill in the necessary elective classes in order to make up for those limitations.

## **Chapter 15: Planned Solutions to be Implemented in my own Teaching Career**

I believe that the two constants in alleviating the “choral-vocal conflict” are knowledge and communication. As AATS states, it is “essential that choral conductors, voice teachers, and singers communicate with each other and be aware of the responsibilities each has for the success of the singers and the choral ensemble in which they sing” (2005, p. 8). As a music education student with a concentration in vocal pedagogy, I pride myself in the ability to overcome the conflict as one person. I have the knowledge and the tools to introduce to my future choirs the proper way in which one should sing to produce a healthy, beautiful tone that is not only going to keep them singing longer, but will enable them to be proud of the sound they make as an ensemble.

In addition to the knowledge I already possess, I will strive to incorporate as many of the above mentioned solutions as I deem fit in order to continue to improve myself, my knowledge of musical practices, and my teaching. I believe in continuing education, and therefore will take every opportunity I can to attend meetings of professional organizations, arts programs in the community, master classes, lectures, and performances in order to further my knowledge and understanding of the singing voice. I will encourage my students to do the same through informing them of opportunities and offering them extra credit or bonuses for attending worth-while events. I will strive to be a part of a community or church choral ensemble in order to continue to cultivate my talents and choral procedures.

Above all, I hope to be able to offer my students private voice lessons within the school day in a program like the one mentioned previously. I plan to create a schedule similar to the one found in Appendix B, and help strengthen my ensemble by improving one voice at a time. However, if I am presented with a situation in which I could not develop such a program, I hope to offer voice lessons to students after school. I also hope that if I can not help them, I can find another private voice teacher that is right for them and their individual situation.

As experienced by many, communication is a key component of any resolution. In order to foster community among music professionals in my future career and help eliminate conflict, I hope to befriend my vocal arts colleagues at other schools, churches, and, of course, the private teachers in the community. I want to establish a support system within the community so that we, as musicians in the same area, may better be able to work together for the common good of our students and the entire community. I want to establish an annual time for these community music teachers to meet and discuss our programs with one another. I want to establish open communication in order for all teachers to know and understand what the others are doing well, and possibly help each other through certain challenges by sharing new ideas with one another. I hope through these meetings we can work together to find new ways to offer our services to our community and students. We can work together to help the private teachers receive more patrons, as well as the students in our care, to receive more attention. I feel if we work together for the greater good of the singers both in the community and our own care, then hopefully we will better fulfill our purpose as music educators and work to alleviate the “choral-vocal conflict.”

## Chapter 16: Final Thoughts

In conclusion, the “choral-vocal conflict” is a detriment to the vocal music field that should be stifled as soon as possible. The main keys to stopping this problem are knowledge, communication, and fellowship.

“True, there continue to be some teachers of note who privately maintain that they do not need to associate with other teachers of singing, and who profess to possess information not available to the rest of us, or who remain outside this community of artists and scholars because they secretly fear a loss of their own importance. They refuse to readjust their knowledge to include the expanding gamut of information offered through this professional organization [NATS]. Those persons continue to operate in small – at times even large – closets, shut off from contact with the developing thought of their colleagues” (Miller, 1996, p. 88).

I beseech my colleagues to refrain from being the one in the closet. For it seems the ones in the closets have the most to learn about our profession. In the end, it is the *students* who will either thrive or suffer from the skills and teachings of their music mentors. I encourage each music educator to hold one another accountable for their knowledge and practices. I propose each music educator continually learn and continually help one another to improve his or her teaching through support and communication. Let us join together to improve music making as a whole and together create an extraordinary future of well-rounded, fully-educated, healthy-singing musicians.



## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**

## Appendix A: Additional Resources

### The Changing Voice

#### Articles

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## **Vocal Pedagogy**

### **Books**

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- McCoy, S. (2004). *Your voice: An inside view*. Princeton: Inside View Press.
- McKinney, J. (1994). *The diagnosis and correction of vocal faults: A manual for teachers of singing and for choir directors*. Nashville: Genovox Music Group.
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- Titze, Ingo. *Principles of Voice Production*.
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**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE "PULL-OUT PROGRAM" FOR**  
**VOICE LESSONS**

## **Appendix B: Sample “Pull-Out Program” for Voice Lessons**

This particular example of an in-school private lesson curriculum was graciously provided by Nicholas Williams, choral director and voice teacher at Hilton High School in Hilton, New York. Because in Mr. Williams’ community “pull-out programs” for band have been a standard within the music curriculum for quite some time, he did not have any difficulties convincing administration and other teachers within the school to support his program for singers. For choral directors who wish to provide this type of program in a community who is not familiar with the band model for the “pull-out programs,” I would advise them to first research current programs (some additional resources for pull-out programs may be found in Appendix C), talk with teachers who have produced these programs successfully, and develop an informative presentation filled with statistics as to why such a program can benefit their students and their school. Upon conclusion of research and gathered information, the choral director needs to present his or her proposal along with examples of successful programs to the administration of the school. Once the school administration has approved the “pull-out program” for chorus, the choral director would need to recruit students to join the program.

Requirements for participation may vary from choral program to program. Some choral directors may require all students enrolled in a chorus class to also participate in the pull-out program, or merely allow students to participate on a volunteer basis. Regardless of the requirements for participation, the choral director should receive written permission from the parents or legal guardians of the

participants before starting the program. It may also serve the choral director well to have the students and their other teachers sign a contract saying they agree with the rules and requirements expected of them in order to continue participation in the “pull-out program” (See appendix D for sample contracts).

When permission from all parties has been granted, the choral director should attain the class schedules of each of the students involved. The choral director can then divide participants into groups that will serve to meet the needs of each student involved and fit in with their class schedule. As one may see from Mr. Williams’ example of group divisions (found in Appendix E), participants are divided based on their level of study, as well as activities in which they are involved. It must be noted that while Mr. Williams’ example indicates students are receiving lessons for All State Chorus and other solo/ensemble tutoring, I would propose that the goal of private lessons within a “pull-out program” be to teach proper technique rather than to improve specific solo repertoire, because in order to establish these lessons and justify that they fit into the choral curriculum, choral directors should plan for these lessons to outline improvement in choral singing through solo training, rather than be to improve the solo singer.

Once the participants have been assigned to their particular group, the choral director should name each group so that students can look at the weekly schedule and know when they are to meet. Mr. Williams uses letters to name groups, but one could use shapes, colors, mascots, or any other method of naming groups as long as they can remain easily differentiated for scheduling purposes.



The choral director should then devise a set schedule within his or her school day as to when he or she would like to offer the group lessons. In Appendix F, one may find the example schedule taken from Mr. Williams' class website where, ideally, he updates the schedule weekly for all to see. The times for each group lesson remain the same each week, however the student groups rotate within that schedule so that students will not miss the same portion of other classes but only once in about five or six weeks. The rotation should be fairly easy to accomplish as long as the schedule remains consistent. If the group names are alphabetical, then the choral director can merely make the master rotation list by listing all groups alphabetically. The first week of implementing the "pull-out program," the alphabetical groups are plugged into the master lesson schedule in order of grouping. For each week thereafter, simply move the starting point down the list (week 2 begins with group B, week 3 begins with group C, etc.). See Appendix G for further details.

**APPENDIX C**  
**RESOURCES FOR "PULL-OUT PROGRAMS"**

**Appendix C:  
Resources for “Pull-Out Programs”**

**Examples of programs:**

- This site is the site for Hilton High School’s chorus, my main source for choral pull-out programs.  
[http://schoolcenter.hilton.k12.ny.us/education/staff/staff.php?sectiondetailid=11870&sc\\_id=1175265987](http://schoolcenter.hilton.k12.ny.us/education/staff/staff.php?sectiondetailid=11870&sc_id=1175265987)
- Ideas for choral pull-out programs can be borrowed from this site about an instrumental pull-out program for the instrumental programs in Manteno School District, Manteno, Illinois.  
<http://www.manteno5.org/finearts/advocacy/sectionals.html>

**Journal Articles advocating Pull-out programs in schools**

- Cathy, K. (31 January, 1992). “Music performance group membership and academic success.” Paper presented at Colorado Music Educators Association.
- Kvet, E. (June, 1995). “Excusing elementary school students from regular classroom activities for the study of instrumental music: The effect on sixth grade reading, language, and mathematics achievement.” *Journal of Research in Music Education*.

- Wallick, M. (1998). "A comparison study of the Ohio Proficiency Test results between fourth-grade string pullout students and those of matched ability." *Journal of Music Education*, 46(2), p. 239-247.

#### **Websites designated to advocating Pull-out programs in schools**

- (13 October, 2006). "Specialized Music Instruction." MENC Position Statement, retrieved April 20, 2007 from <http://www.menc.org/connect/surveys/position/draft.html>
- This site supports pull-out programs through research initiatives that have proven pull-out programs are successful in producing musical growth. [researcherhttp://www.ncusd203.org/!curriculum/music/pullout.html](http://www.ncusd203.org/!curriculum/music/pullout.html)

**APPENDIX D**

**SAMPLE CONTRACTS FOR “PULL-OUT”**

**VOICE LESSONS**

**Appendix D-1:**  
**Sample Contracts for “Pull-Out” Voice Lessons**

**Wayside High School**  
**Choral and Vocal Arts Department**  
**555 Wayside Road**  
**North Wayside, GA 01235**

Ms. Laura Foster, Choral Director and Private Voice Instructor  
Phone: 706-555-5111 ext. 1234  
e-mail: [foster.la@waysidehigh.edu](mailto:foster.la@waysidehigh.edu)

Dear Choral Parents/Guardians and Students:

I am writing to you in regards to a Private Music Lesson Program which we are now offering through the Wayside High School choral program. I am so excited to offer this new program to our students as a way to further their knowledge of their instrument by studying voice privately. These private voice lessons will be offered as a part of the regular school day to any student who wishes to participate. This new program is based on a highly successful program for private music lessons around the United States commonly called a “pull-out program.” Once a week, students are pulled from their classes to come participate in a private or group voice lesson. As you may already know, we at Wayside High School are on a “modified block” system where we have six out of eight classes a day and each class meets for one hour. Our group lessons are one half hour. Students will only miss one half of one class per week. We will rotate the schedule weekly so that students will not miss the same classes but once every five to six weeks. Participation in this program is highly selective and requires a great deal of work on the part of the student in order to be successful; however, for those who are interested, and willing to take on the additional responsibilities, participation is highly effective in creating wonderful young musicians and improving the success of our students as well as our entire chorus.

Once again, I am extremely excited to offer this opportunity for our students. On the following pages you will find more information regarding this program. Please read the following information carefully. If you would like for your student to participate in this new and exciting program, please fill out the permission form and return to me by August 10, 2007.

I look forward to another outstanding year for the Wayside High School Singers! Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Laura Foster  
Choral Director and Private Voice Teacher  
Wayside High School

**Appendix D-2:  
Sample Contracts for “Pull-Out” Voice Lessons**

**Wayside High School  
Choral and Vocal Arts Department  
555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235**

- Coordinator: Laura Foster  
555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235  
Foster.la@waysidehigh.edu  
706-555-5111 ext. 1234
- Location: Wayside High School
- Offerings: Private Voice Lessons will be offered to all students enrolled in any choral class at Wayside High School. Students will be able to take weekly thirty-minute lessons that are either private or in groups.
- Calendar: Lessons begin the second week of school, Monday, August 13, 2007 and will continue until December 14, 2007. Lessons will be held according to the school calendar. No lessons will be held on school vacations, holidays or cancellations.
- Tuition: These lessons are offered free of charge.
- Rules of Participation:
- 1) Students will be responsible for their lesson time as posted weekly in the rotating lesson schedule.
  - 2) Students must first report to their classroom teacher for attendance and to turn in/receive assignments. If a pop-quiz or test is scheduled, students must take the test before coming to sectionals. In the event of a planned test that may conflict with a student's voice lesson, students are to plan accordingly and arrange for a different lesson time for that week.
  - 3) Students are responsible for any homework, notes, or activities that are assigned in the class that they are missing. Private Voice Lessons may never be used as an excuse for late homework.
  - 4) Students should find a study partner who will take notes for them during the class times they miss.
  - 5) Students must maintain an academic average of 3.0 or above in order to retain participation in this program.
  - 6) Students receiving the grade of D or F in related classes will not attend lessons until further notified by classroom teachers that academic achievement has improved.
  - 7) Classroom teachers will contact the choral teacher about problems or concerns if the need arises.

**Appendix D-3:**  
**Sample Contracts for “Pull-Out” Voice Lessons**

Schedule:	Once all interested students have turned in their signed contracts, parental consent forms, and class schedules, Ms. Foster will create the schedule of possible lesson times which will run through-out the school day. Students will be scheduled for their lesson EACH WEEK on a rotating basis. It is the student's responsibility to check the weekly schedule in order to attend lessons. If there is a conflict, the student must notify Ms. Foster no later than 24 hours in advance to reschedule, or to schedule a make-up lesson.
Attendance Policy:	It is the understanding of all parties involved (teachers, students, and parents) that the students' first priority is to their academic studies. Therefore, students are expected to attend classes for all quizzes, tests, special projects, field trips, or other extenuating circumstances that are required for academic success in those regularly scheduled classes. Outside of requirements for other classes, students are expected to be present and prepared for each of their scheduled lessons. Students are allowed three excused absences. An excused absence is for reasons of illness or emergency only.
Make-Up Policy:	Excused absences will be made up during the make-up week at the end of each semester, or at the convenience of the instructor. Make-up lessons for students who missed their scheduled lesson due to unexcused absences are left up to the discretion and time available for the private teacher.
Recitals:	Each student involved in private and group voice lessons will be afforded the opportunity to perform solo/ensemble pieces on the fall and winter concerts. These performances are strongly encouraged in order to show family and friends the progress being made in the private lessons; however, they are optional and left to the preference of each individual student.
Registration Process:	If you are interested in signing your child up for lessons, please fill out and return the following forms to Ms. Foster by August 10, 2007. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Lesson Program Registration Form</li><li>2) Parental Consent Form</li><li>3) Student Contract with class schedule and teachers' acknowledgement of participation.</li></ol>



**Appendix D-4:  
Sample Contracts for "Pull-Out" Voice Lessons**

**Wayside High School  
Choral and Vocal Arts Department  
555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235**

LESSON PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM  
2007 - 2008

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Current grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIVATE MUSIC LESSON PROGRAM

Sponsored by the Wayside High School Chorus

This is an OPTIONAL program for students who would like to study voice privately within the school day. Private lessons are NOT REQUIRED to participate in the Wayside High School Choral Program, but are highly recommended to further musical growth.

Please return this form to:

Ms. Foster, RE: Private Music Lesson Program  
Wayside High School, 555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235

**Appendix D-5:  
Sample Contracts for "Pull-Out" Voice Lessons**

**Wayside High School  
Choral and Vocal Arts Department  
555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235**

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM  
2007-2008

Dear Ms. Foster,

I, (parent/guardian) \_\_\_\_\_  
hereby give my permission for my student, \_\_\_\_\_  
to participate in the "pull-out program" for private voice lessons at Wayside  
High School. I have read all of the information and am fully aware of the  
policies required for participation in this program. I understand that he/she  
will be responsible for all work missed in the classes from which he/she will  
be pulled. I also understand that my student must maintain an average of  
3.0 in order to be allowed to continue this experience. Finally, I understand  
it is the responsibility of myself or my student to notify you in the event that  
there is an absence due to illness or death in the family.

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Ms. Foster, RE: Private Music Lesson Program  
Wayside High School, 555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235

**Appendix D-6:**  
**Sample Contracts for "Pull-Out" Voice Lessons**

**Wayside High School**  
**Choral and Vocal Arts Department**  
**555 Wayside Road**  
**North Wayside, GA 01235**

STUDENT CONTRACT  
2007-2008

Dear Ms. Foster,  
I, (your name) \_\_\_\_\_, would like to be involved in the "pull-out program" for private voice lessons at Wayside High School. I hereby promise that I have read the provided information, rules of participation, and have asked my teachers' permission to be involved. I also promise to participate to my full ability in the private voice lessons provided, and to practice outside of my lesson in order to fully experience the benefits you are providing to me.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Students: In the blanks below, please provide your class schedule and have each teacher sign that she acknowledges you are a participant in the "pull-out program" for private voice instruction.**

**\*Teachers: please sign that you have acknowledged, the above-signed student will be participating in our new "pull-out program" for private voice lessons.**

**Class Schedule:**

Block 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 5: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 6: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 7: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Block 8: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Ms. Foster, RE: Private Music Lesson Program  
Wayside High School, 555 Wayside Road  
North Wayside, GA 01235

**APPENDIX E**

**SAMPLE GROUP DIVISION SHEET FOR**

**“PULL-OUT” VOICE LESSONS**

**Appendix E:**  
**Sample Group Division Sheet for**  
**“Pull-Out Program” Voice Lessons**

<u>Senior Recital</u>	<u>Regular Lessons</u>	<u>All State</u>
<u>Group A:</u> Jennifer Campbell Dayvid Jablonski Amy Mincer Cody Pyles Mandy Stahlecker	<u>Group F:</u> Jessica Arnold Brianna Byrne Amanda Cooper Jessica Di Troia Stephanie Palermo	<u>Group L:</u> Ted Alexander
		<u>Group M:</u> Cathie Ayers Krystyna Buckhout
<u>Group B:</u> Sara Emmert Mandi Green Erin Hyde Asya Kyler Theresa Thomas	<u>Group G:</u> Brian Jacek Jesse Phillips Jake Reber Mark Ramzy	<u>Group N:</u> Lauren Billotti Rachel Kodweis
		<u>Group O:</u> Adam Lake Caitlin Maeder
<u>Group C:</u> Paul Eichas Tim Kaestner Pete Pellett Brad Sawyer	<u>Group H:</u> Amelia Arrington Lauren Giardina Lisa Hardie Cassie Larnder	<u>Group P:</u> Allison Lynch Brittany O'Reilly
		<u>Group Q:</u> Kasey Murray Ben Wallace
<u>Group D:</u> Erin Hyde Katie Stanton Kayla Sucey Olivia Viterna Caitlin Weber	<u>Group I:</u> Alex Barbone Becca Bartl Sam Curran Jackie Rath Jessica Stiles Alex Vasile	<b><u>Solo Fest:</u></b>
		<u>Group R:</u> Becca Copek Liz Steenhoff
<u>Group E:</u> Jennifer Adams Rachel Jesien Rianne Steenhoff Chris Stenson Jason Wille	<u>Group J:</u> Kayla Crumlish Amber Koch Carolanne Peck Pam Rapp Jackie Swanson	<u>Group S:</u> Cassie Kernan Alex Kraft Kristyn Swanger
	<u>Group K:</u> Laura Dahl Jackie Davis Linda DeMetsenaere Erin Greif Diana Hunte Becca Likens Sarah Noble	<u>Group T:</u> Amanda Peter Ashley Stanton-Follett
		<u>Group U:</u> Jamie Schmidt Gina Ventura

(Williams, 2007)

**APPENDIX F**  
**SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR “PULL-OUT”**  
**VOICE LESSONS**

**Appendix F:  
Sample Schedule for  
“Pull-Out Program” Voice Lessons**

<b>Williams Lesson Schedule: Week of Feb. 6-10</b>				
<b>Monday Feb. 6 E Day</b>	<b>Tuesday Feb. 7 F Day</b>	<b>Wednesday Feb. 8 G Day</b>	<b>Thursday Feb. 9 H Day</b>	<b>Friday Feb. 10 J Day</b>
Set 1 7:25-8:28 IB/Music History	Set 1 7:25-8:26 IB/Music History	Set 1 7:25-8:26 IB/Music History	Set 1 7:25-8:26 Chorale	Set 1 7:25-8:09 Music History
Set 2 8:31-9:29 Chorale	Set 2 8:31-9:29 Chorale	Set 3 8:31-9:29 Women’s Chorus	Set 3 8:31-9:29 Women’s Chorus	Set 2 8:14-8:55 Chorale
Set 3 9:34-10:32 Women’s Chorus	Set 4 9:34-10:03  10:03-10:32 <b>Group E</b>	Set 4 9:34-10:03  10:03-10:32 <b>Group Q</b>	Set 4 9:34-10:03  10:03-10:32 <b>Group J</b>	Set 3 9:00-9:41 Women’s Chorus
Set 5 10:36-11:05  11:05-11:34 <b>Group A</b>  11:34-12:10	Set 5 10:36-11:05 <b>Group L</b>  11:05-11:34 <b>Group M</b>  11:34-12:10	Set 5 10:36-11:05 <b>Group R</b>  11:05-11:34 Rianne Steenhoff  11:34-12:10	Set 6 10:36-11:05  11:05-11:34  11:34-12:10	10:30-11:00 <b>Group K</b>  Set 5: 11:00-11:30 <b>Group S</b>  Set 5: 11:30-11:59
Set 6 12:14-12:43 <b>Group B</b>  12:43-1:12 <b>Group C</b>	Set 6 12:14-12:43 <b>Group N</b>  12:43-1:12 <b>Group O</b>	Set 7 12:14-12:43  12:43-1:12 <b>Group T</b>	Set 7 12:14-12:43 <b>Group I</b>  12:43-1:12 <b>Group H</b>	Set 6 12:02-12:43 Department  Set 7 12:48-1:29 <b>Group D</b>
Set 7 1:17-1:46  1:46-2:15	Set 8 1:17-1:46 <b>Group P</b>  1:46-2:15	Set 8 1:17-1:46 <b>Group U</b>  1:46-2:15	Set 8 1:17-1:46 <b>Group G</b>  1:46-2:15 <b>Group F</b>	Set 8 1:34-2:15

(Williams, 2007)


**APPENDIX G**  
**SAMPLE GROUP LESSON**  
**ROTATION SCHEME**



## Appendix G: Sample Group Lesson Rotation Scheme


As one can see in Appendix F, Mr. Williams has devised a schedule that utilizes a number of different times in which he could conduct private or group lessons. If one were to devise a rotation scheme for the set schedule, he or she may like to number or name each individual time slot in order to plug in groups correctly when rotating schedules. For instance, the private lesson time on Monday at 10:36-11:05 would be lesson #1, Monday at 11:05-11:34 would be lesson #2, so forth and so on. Using this particular naming scheme for times, and alphabetically naming for groups, a proper rotation scheme may be achieved. An example of an abbreviated private lesson rotation scheme can be found below.

Week 1	
Lesson #1	Group A
Lesson #2	Group B
Lesson #3	Group C
Lesson #4	Group D
Lesson #5	Group E
Lesson #6	Group F




Week 5	
Lesson #1	Group C
Lesson #2	Group D
Lesson #3	Group E
Lesson #4	Group F
Lesson #5	Group A
Lesson #6	Group B

Week 2	
Lesson #1	Group F
Lesson #2	Group A
Lesson #3	Group B
Lesson #4	Group C
Lesson #5	Group D
Lesson #6	Group E




Week 6	
Lesson #1	Group B
Lesson #2	Group C
Lesson #3	Group D
Lesson #4	Group E
Lesson #5	Group F
Lesson #6	Group A

Week 3	
Lesson #1	Group E
Lesson #2	Group F
Lesson #3	Group A
Lesson #4	Group B
Lesson #5	Group C
Lesson #6	Group D



Week 7	
Lesson #1	Group A
Lesson #2	Group B
Lesson #3	Group C
Lesson #4	Group D
Lesson #5	Group E
Lesson #6	Group F

Week 4	
Lesson #1	Group D
Lesson #2	Group E
Lesson #3	Group F
Lesson #4	Group A
Lesson #5	Group B
Lesson #6	Group C



Week 8	
Lesson #1	Group F
Lesson #2	Group A
Lesson #3	Group B
Lesson #4	Group C
Lesson #5	Group D
Lesson #6	Group E

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