

# Memphis Chapter AOSA - February 25, 2017

## Part One - Singing To Learn

Brent Holl

### Description

Using canons and songs with movement, Orff instruments and recorders, we can learn the basics of singing in choir. This workshop highlights the basics of good choral singing: Posture, Breathing, Consonants, Vowels, and Rhythm. We'll discuss process, materials, and techniques and we'll sing and move and play!



This workshop is designed especially to foster reading skills using locomotor skills, singing and rhythmic activities. The activities are appropriate for elementary through middle school including special learners.

Focus: Orff process, active singing; instrument accompaniment for songs; movement with song: Grades 4 - 8

## Part Two - In the Mood for Modes

### Description

With our focus on the element of improvisation, we'll use the classic modes as a primary tool for improvisation to composition. Working with melody first, we'll experiment with each mode and prepare a group composition. Next we'll add a full orchestration with movement for a final piece.



Focus: improvisation, orchestration, melody, modes, history, Orff process.



# The Four Points of Breath:

- Breathe deeply with the diaphragm.
- Breathe on the vowel sound so no one can hear.
- Control the exhale to support the sound.
- Maintain a relaxed but alert facial and body posture.

## BREATHE

BRENT M. HOLL

1 2

Breathe in deep to sing this song, Sit up straight and sing out strong,

3 4

Take a breath no one can hear and sing a plea-sant song of cheer!

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Add the accompaniment!

SX

AX

Woodblock

Triangle

BX

# The Four Points of Vowels:

- Vowel formation is essential.
- Singing the Vowels colors the tone from dark to light.
- Vowels are sung "North and South."
- Singing vowels opens the voice and releases the head tone.

## HUSH LITTLE BABY

BRENT M. HOLL

1. 2.

1. Hush lit - tle ba - by, don't you cry.  
2. An - gels\_ guard\_ you while you sleep.

3. 4.

3. You'll be an an - gel by\_ and\_ by.  
Pray to the Lord your soul\_ to\_ keep.  
4. Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu.

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Add the accompaniment!

# The Four Points of Consonants:

- Consonants make it easy to understand words.
- Consonants highlight the rhythm.
- Consonants must be articulated "Al Dente."
- Consonants are fun to practice with Tongue Twisters!

## SOME LIKE IT!

BRENT M. HOLL

1. 2. 3. 4.

Some\_ like it cold and some like it hot! But

5 some\_ just don't like it wheth-er or not!

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Add the accompaniment:

SG/AG

AX

Cowbell

Guiro

Claves

Bass Drum

BX

# Singing to Learn, Integration!

- Here's a little song about the earth and the environment that puts our singing and playing all together.

## MY ROOTS GO DOWN

Sarah Pirtle

Musical score for the first system of the song "My Roots Go Down". The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment. The guitar part consists of a simple chord progression: G, G, G, G7. The lyrics for this system are: "My roots go down, down to the earth, my roots go".

Musical score for the second system of the song "My Roots Go Down". The score continues the vocal line and guitar accompaniment. The guitar part consists of a simple chord progression: C, G, G, G, D7. The lyrics for this system are: "down, down to the earth, my roots go down, down to the earth, my roots go down." The system is marked with a '5' at the beginning of each staff, indicating the fifth measure of the piece.

# My Roots Go Down

The musical score is written for a five-part ensemble: Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, and Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems, each starting at measure 10.

**System 1 (Measures 10-13):**

- Measures 10-11:** Chords G and G7. Lyrics: "My roots go down, down to the earth, my roots go down, down to the"
- Measure 12:** Chord C. Lyrics: "earth, my roots go down, down to the"
- Measure 13:** Chord C. Lyrics: "earth, my roots go down, down to the"

**System 2 (Measures 14-17):**

- Measures 14-15:** Chords G and G. Lyrics: "earth, my roots go down, down to the earth, my roots go down."
- Measures 16-17:** Chords G and D7. Lyrics: "earth, my roots go down, down to the earth, my roots go down."

The score includes detailed notation for each voice part, including rests and melodic lines. The bass line is marked with an 8, indicating an octave shift.

My trunk stands strong in the wind  
 My branches reach for the sky  
 My leaves they turn to the light  
 My fruits are gifts from my heart  
 My seeds they bring forth new life

The last verse includes all the verses from 1 - 5.

## In the Mood for Modes

### *Using the modes working from improvisation to composition.*

*You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind.*

*- Irish saying*

#### *The Modes*

***Ionian*** - the equivalent of the diatonic major scale, by far the most used and most comfortable to our modern ears.

***Dorian*** - Ritualistic, grave, pensive, mostly minor with a hopeful lilt. One of Plato's favorites, the notes of which, "fittingly imitate the utterances and accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare."

***Phrygian*** - Also a favorite of Plato suitable "for a man engaged in works of peace."

***Lydian*** - a diatonic scale with the raised fourth, more major than major. It becomes impish, weird, eccentric and as Plato warned, "prone to sloth and drunkenness."

***Mixolydian*** - a major scale with a flat tire (lowered seventh degree), this mode is happy, humorous, fun, and energetic. Old Time tunes and songs often use this mode.

***Aeolian*** - a powerful, melancholic, poetic mode familiar to us as the natural minor scale.

***Locrian*** - this unstable mode is rarely used... discussion may ensue.

### **The Basics... Question/Answer improvisation.**

This basic creative tool is very effective with students of all ages as a composition tool. This session will take us from improvisation to composition using rhythm and melody, specifically the diatonic modes.

### **Introduce the Modes**

- Find each mode on the Orff instruments or simply demonstrate each one from the piano.
- Discuss each mode, what it sounds like, what its distinct characteristics are.
- Let the class pick one.



## Listen to the mode.

- Find the chosen mode on the instruments.
- Play one half note on each note, ascending.
- Play one half note on each note, descending.
- Change to quarter notes, then eighth notes.

## Review Question/Answer.

Aim - Build confidence with rhythmic and melodic improvisation using the Question/Answer format.

- Give the class a question using body percussion; all answer.
  - » Make sure everyone ends at the strong beat of the last measure. "Final Point."
  - » Make sure the answers are not an exact imitation of the question.
  - » Make sure the answers are related to the question.
- Ask who wants to give the teacher a question?
- All get a partner, question answer with each other.
- Discover:
  - » The cadence point (The Final Point) on the last strong beat of the answer.
  - » The absence of a cadence point (Final Point) in the question (think CHA, CHA, CHA).
  - » The commonality or shared ideas between the question and answer. The answer should have common elements with the question.
  - » The question and answer phrases are the same length.
- Give the class a question using an Orff instrument (or the piano);
  - » Make sure everyone ends at the strong beat of the last measure *on THE TONIC*.
  - » Make sure the melodic answers are not an exact imitation of the question.
  - » Make sure the melodic answers are related to the question.
- All get a partner, question answer with each other.
- Discover:
  - » The cadence point (The Final Point) on the last strong beat of the answer on the Tonic note.
  - » The absence of a cadence point (Final Point) in the question. Discover the "tenor" note or "dominant," a great place to end the question (but not a requirement).
  - » The commonality or shared ideas between the question and answer. The answer should have common elements with the question.
  - » The question and answer phrases are the same length.

## Compose!

- Establish 4/4 meter and phrase length. A good place to start is two measures of 4/4, a total of eight beats for the question (antecedent) phrase and the answer (consequent) phrase.
- Class gets to improvise the phrase length. Don't worry too much about endings, only phrase length.
- Ask students to share. Pick one phrase as the question. Fix and adjust it (aha! Composition!)
- Class gets to improvise the answer phrase. (Everyone plays the question in unison, then answers. Yep, it's pretty noisy.... Go as long as you can stand it. Make 'em play quietly or! Do this whole exercise with fingers only! Or the question with mallets, the answer with fingers.)
- Ask students to share.
- Pick one answer phrase that works.
- Play the new melody!

## Extensions

- Orchestrate the new melody for the students. (Use those great new skills you learned in Level 2 Orff Basic!)
- Ask students to experiment with bordun accompaniments and various ostinatos, both rhythmic and melodic to create an accompaniment.
- Here's an example from a Stewart Middle School 6th grade class:

### CYNDI'S SONG

IONIAN

CYNDI

ARR. BRENT HOLL

Musical score for Soprano Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Alto Xylophone, and Bass Xylophone. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The Soprano Xylophone part features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The Glockenspiel part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The Alto Xylophone part features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The Bass Xylophone part features a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes, including triplet markings.

Musical score for SX, GLK, AX, and BX. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The SX part features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The GLK part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The AX part features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The BX part features a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes, including triplet markings.

# Advantages to Composition

Students OWN this. They become an integral part of their own learning process. This activity was often the ONE thing they remembered about music class first, when asked.

I often recorded the final effort and passed out a copy on a 5-minute cassette tape as a souvenir. We would also talk about publishing, recording, copyrights, sharing, and whatever else came up in the group discussion.

## Note to workshop participants:

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