

FROM FIRST NOTE, TO LAST CONCERT:

Raising a Middle School Singer Through Repertoire

Eric Johnson

NCMEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 9TH, 2019

WHY DO YOU SELECT THE MUSIC YOU SELECT?

GLENN, MABELLE. "A NEW GOAL IN ENSEMBLE SINGING."
MUSIC SUPERVISOR'S JOURNAL, OCTOBER 1928, 67+69+71.

- Is this poem worthy of a place in song literature?
- Is there a well-defined point in the song where there is opportunity for significant climax?
- Does the song offer an opportunity for a wide range of dynamics?
- Is there a good swing? Where slow or fast is there a decided rhythmic pulse?
- Is there something of interest from beginning to the end?
- When the melody ceases to be the important element, is there something else to hold the interest of the listeners? (All too often one finds the great portions that could be omitted without any loss.)
- Is this selection well-proportioned from an emotional standpoint? For example, is a highly dramatic passage balanced by a quiet passage?
- Which word or words in each phrase are most important?
- Which words are most capable of bringing beauty to the tone?
- Which words have tone-cramping vowels and difficult consonants which need special attention?
- Do I have sufficient faith in the selection to give it meaningful interpretation?

WHERE DO WE GET OUR REPERTOIRE IDEAS?

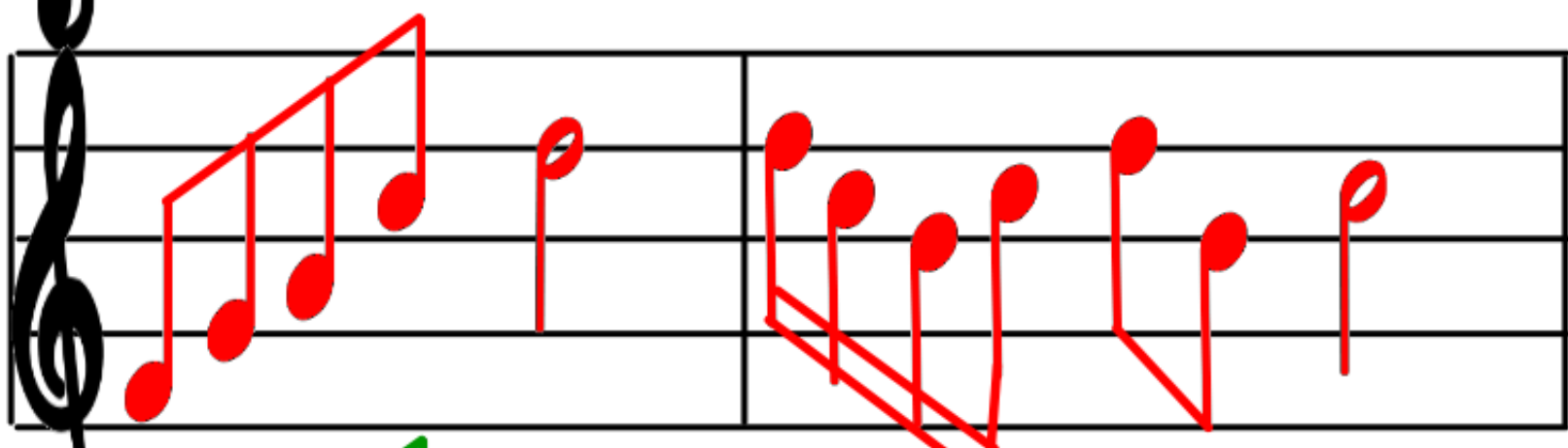
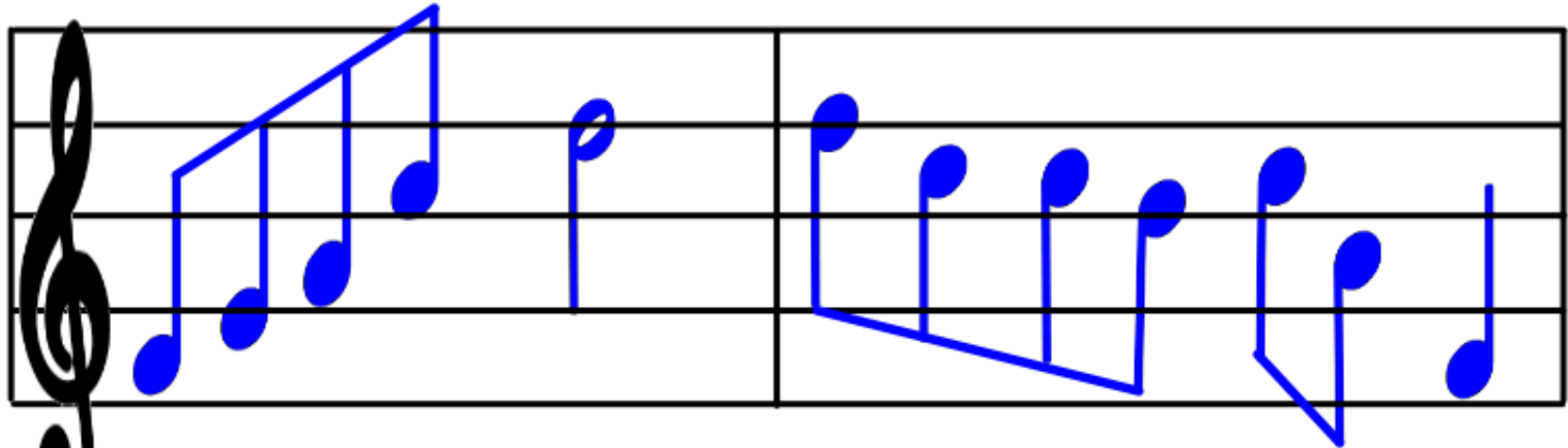
WHERE DO WE GET OUR REPERTOIRE IDEAS?

- Past Experiences
- Existing Choral Library
- Other Directors
- Reading Sessions
- Publisher Catalogues
- Festival Music: All-State, Honors Chorus, Etc.
- Composer Reputations
- Conference Performances
- Facebook

BEGINNING VOCAL MUSIC I

P.4.BVMI.1

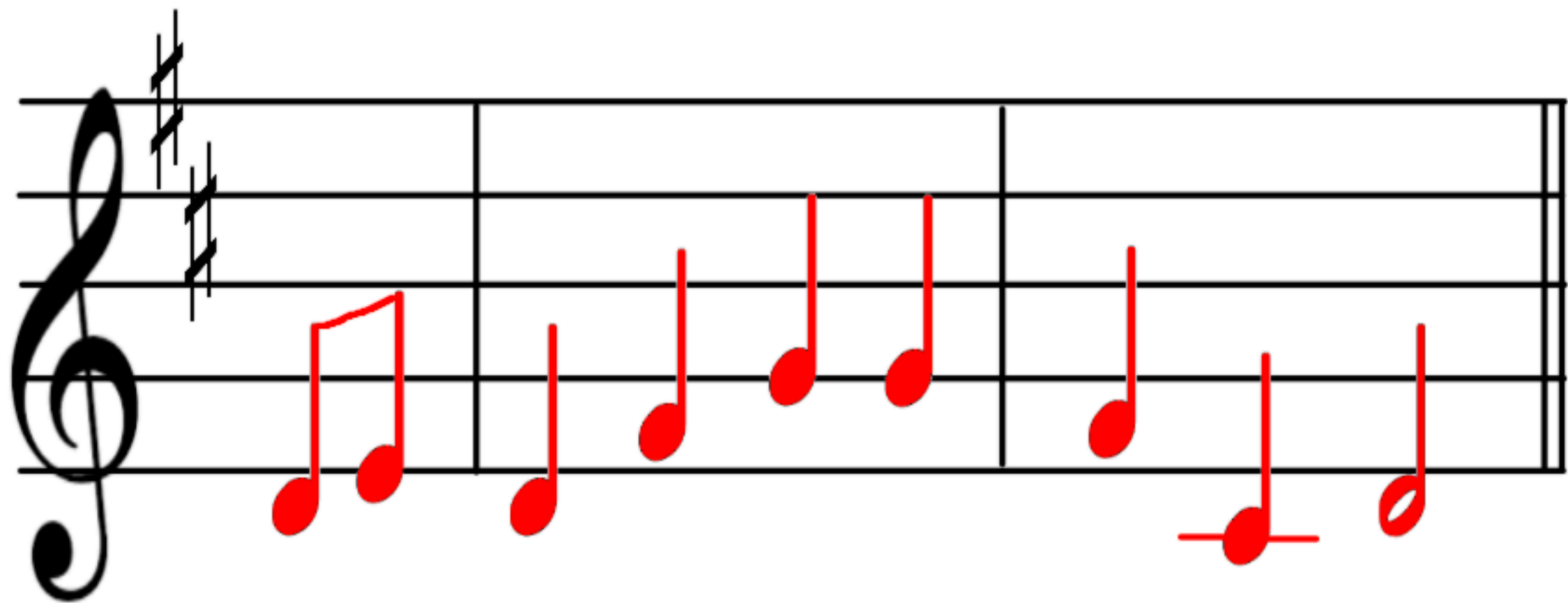
Sing a variety of vocal repertoire in unison at an appropriate level of difficulty

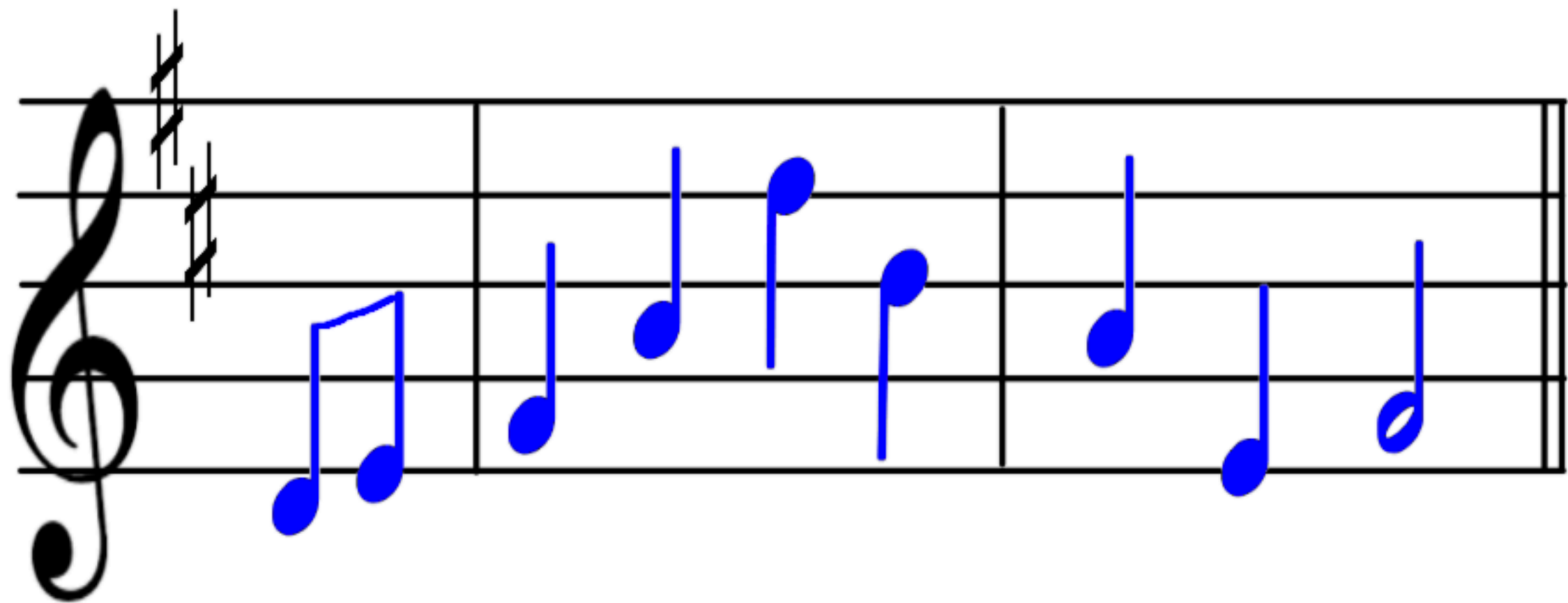


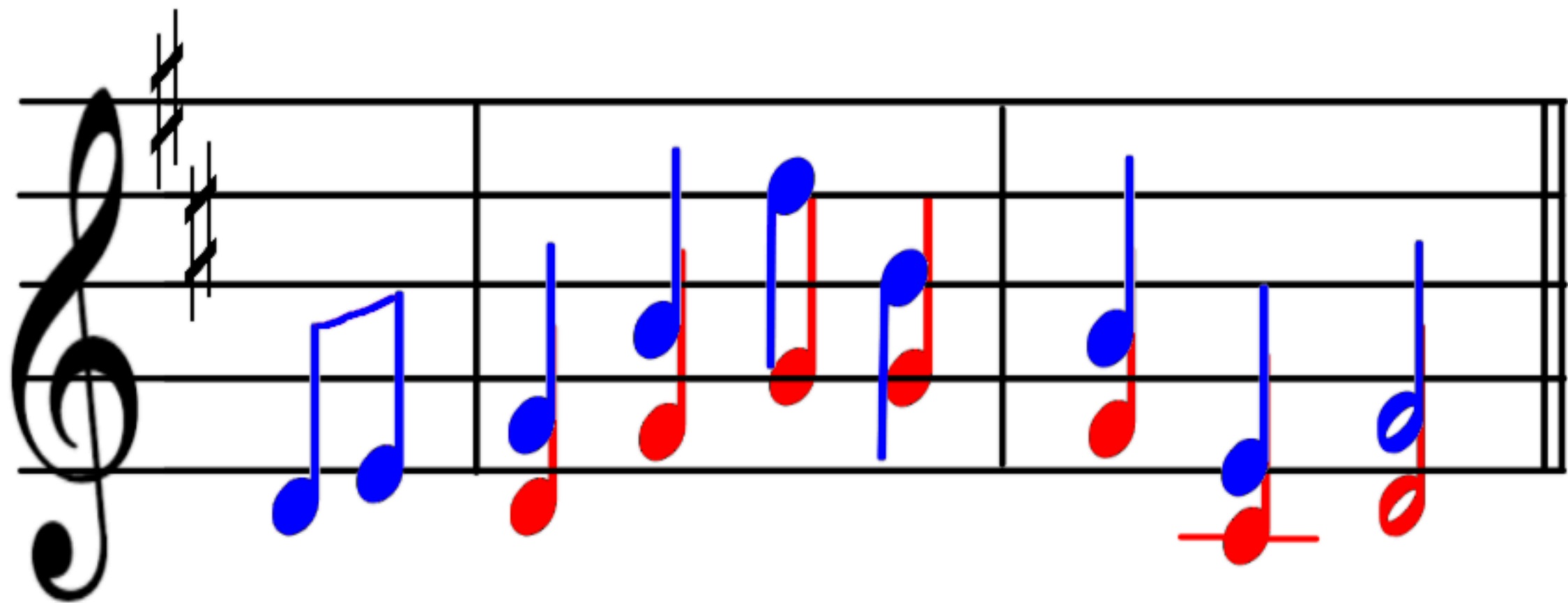
BEGINNING VOCAL MUSIC II

P.4.BVMII.I

Explore a variety of vocal repertoire in two-part harmony at an appropriate level of difficulty







BEGINNING VOCAL MUSIC III - IV

P.4.BVMIII.I

Refine a variety of vocal repertoire in two-part harmony at an appropriate level of difficulty

P.4.BVMIV.I

Explore a variety of vocal repertoire in three-part harmony at an appropriate level of difficulty

HARMONY IN SEQUENCE BY RUTH DWYER

1. Unison
2. Ostinato
3. Descant
4. Suspended Pitches
5. Canons/Rounds
6. Canonic Entrances
7. Partner Songs
8. Homophonic Harmony

HARMONY IN SEQUENCE BY RUTH DWYER

1. Unison

- Should occur throughout the lifetime (not just for beginners)
- Allows the singer to focus on vocal technique
- At first, choose repertoire utilizing step-wise motion that leads the voice from head voice gently into the lower range.

2. Ostinato

- Rhythmic: repetitive pattern used to create accompaniment and/or harmony. Prepares them for the more difficult task of participating in a melodic ostinato. (Ex. Zum Gali Gali)
- Melodic: repetitive melodic pattern that creates harmony with a melody. Most often lead to descants.

HARMONY IN SEQUENCE BY RUTH DWYER

3. Descant

- One of the richest and most important sources for successful harmonic singing by the inexperienced singer.
- Defined as the highest part in polyphonic music (or instrumental family) or an obbligato part above the melody

4. Suspended Pitches

- Visually, the sustaining voice has no text while the melodic line usually continues and utilizes text.

Below is an example of an easily accessible suspension based on the folk song Hot Cross Buns:

Part 1: m – r – d, m – r – d, d d d d, r r r r, m – r – d,

Part 2: m----- m----- m---- r---- m-----
 Hot! *Hot!* *One* *two* *hot!*

HARMONY IN SEQUENCE BY RUTH DWYER

5. Canon/Round

- The goal of a round or canon is to use a melodic line to create beautiful harmony.
- Rounds can be done by students starting in first grade as long as they are melodies that are simple and move mostly in steps or 3rds. (Ex. Are You Sleeping, Hot Cross Buns).
- Helps to develop the ear by listening and balancing in harmony with others. If they feel a need to sing loudly to "hold the part" they are not ready for polyphony.

6. Canonic Entrances

- Leads to chord building and great way to introduce homophony
- Look for pieces that use melodic imitative entrances followed by suspensions or repetitive pitches to layer and build blocked chords.

HARMONY IN SEQUENCE BY RUTH DWYER

7. Partner Songs and Countermelodies

- Using two clearly defined, well know melodies that have the same underlying harmonic structure.
- Thus when sung together, harmony emerges through the entwined melodies.
- Countermelody: composer/arranger creates a second melody using some or most of the same text or structural content as the original melody.

8. Homophonic Harmony

- The bread and butter of choral music.

6TH GRADE: FALL

- **Pie Jesu by Tom Shelton**

- Unison
- ABA
- Latin (pure vowels)
- Octavo introduction

- **My World by Ruth Elaine Schram**

- Unison
- ABA
- Limited range
- Text emphasis

- **Winter Fantasy by Jill Gallina**

- Two-Part
- Partner song
- Familiar melody

- **Light The Menorah by Douglas Wagner**

- Two-Part
- Descant
- Not a traditional Christmas piece

6TH GRADE: SPRING

- **Non Nobis, Domine by Douglas Wagner**
 - Two-Part
 - Latin text
 - Canonic entrances
 - Counter melody
- **Seize the Day by Roger Emerson**
 - Two-Part
 - Call and response singing
 - The harmonies I used were very stepwise.
- **The Jumblies by Jill Friedersdorf and Melissa Malvar-Keylock**
 - Unison/opt. Two-Part
 - Descant
 - 6/8 time
 - Good ranges

7TH GRADE: FALL

- **Yonder Come Day by Michael Burkhardt**
 - Three Part Treble (any voicing)
 - Countermelody and Descant
 - Limited ranges for developing tenors
- **Freedom Is Coming by Henry Leck**
 - Three Part Treble
 - Easy to solfege
 - Ostinato chordal patterns
- **The Shepherd's Spiritual by Donald Moore**
 - TB
 - Solo gives call and response
 - Limited harmonies
- **Good Tidings We Sing by Carl Nygard**
 - Two-Part
 - Carol layering
 - Familiarity
 - Simple harmonies

7TH GRADE: FALL

- [Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah](#) by Cristi Cary Miller
 - Three-Part Mixed
 - Two different styles
 - Layered parts
 - Different text amongst voices

7TH GRADE: SPRING

- **Trouble Fly** by Patricia Runkle

- Two-Part
- Limited range
- Alternating text
- Fun and short

- **Whaler's Rhyme** by Louis Erickson

- TB
- Call and Response
- Limited ranges for developing tenors
- Fun and sort

- **Windy Nights** by Cynthia Gray

- Three-Part Mixed
- Good guy text
- Alternating text
- Chordal harmony
- Canonic entrances

8TH GRADE: FALL

- **I Will Rejoice By Dave and Jean Perry**

- Three-Part any combination
- German Round
- Great for intervals
- Language other than Latin

- **Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree by Andy Beck**

- TB(B)
- Good ranges for all singers
- Descant
- Alternation of Text and Melody

- **Little Tree by James Gossler**

- Two-Part
- Chordal Harmony
- Stylistic Changes

- **The Bells of Christmas Medley by Greg Gilpin**

- SAB
- Different text amongst voices
- Good harmonic ranges
- Familiarity with Carols

8TH GRADE: SPRING

- Cantate Domino by Laura Farnell
 - SSA
 - Latin Text
 - Canonic entrances
 - Good harmonic ranges and melodies
- Cangia, Cangia Tue Voglie by Tom Shelton
 - TTB
 - Good ranges for for developing tenors
 - Italian Text
 - Alternation of Text and Melody
- Closer To The Flame by David Lantz
 - SAB
 - Paired Voices
 - Chordal Harmony
 - Repeated Sections
- **Cover Me With The Night** by Andrea Ramey
 - SATB
 - Paired Voices
 - Canonic Entrances
 - Ostinato lines
 - Repeated Sections

THANK YOU FOR STOPPING BY

Eric G. Johnson

*Conductor, Educator,
and Musician*

University of Mississippi

PhD Student

ericjohnsonmusic@gmail.com



**THE UNIVERSITY *of*
MISSISSIPPI**

www.ericgrayjohnson.com