American Choral Directors Association
Looking Forward: Inspiration for Revitalizing Your Middle School and High School Choir

June 8, 2021

The Adolescent Changing Voice: Physiology, Psychology, and Pedagogy “Post-COVID”

Vincent Oakes
Baylor School & Chattanooga Boys Choir
ACDA Southern Region Past-President
"We are trying to develop self-motivated young learners."

Warm-Ups for Changing Voices
Dan Andersen (25)

PHYSIOLOGY
BREATH SUPPORT
PHONATION ONSET → DURATION
RANGE EXPLORATION
TIMBRE and TONE
AURAL & THEORY CONSIDERATIONS
VOICE PART, REPERTOIRE CONSIDERATIONS

"The voice change is a long and complex process...There is no magic switch that is flipped as students progress from middle school to high school that suddenly enables the voice in all ways, eliminates breathiness, and abruptly allows for pristine precision in singing."

Thinking Outside the Voice Box
Bridget Sweet, 2020 (13)
PHYSIOLOGY

Be “Real”...
- vocal folds elongate and thicken
- surrounding muscular, cartilage, ligament also change
- supporting structures (breath, posture) grow as well

ONLY consistent thing = INCONSISTENCY

Pitfalls: tilted chins, extremes of exertion,
- timidity/withdrawal, negative self-worth

BREATH SUPPORT (inhalation)
BREATH SUPPORT (exhalation)

vs.

PHONATION ONSET → DURATION

Unpitched Exercises – owl, sirens, etc.

Approximated Pitched Exercises – storm trooper

Towards Pitched – pitch “landing”

Pitched exercises – 3-, 4-, and 5-note patterns
“Once is luck... establish a routine of excellence in the class.”

Embrace The Crack
Daniel Gutierrez and Erin Plisco
ACDA 2021 National Conference

"Nine Hundred Miles"
Philip E. Silvey
Santa Barbara Music Publishing
SBMP-545 (Three-Part Mixed Voicing)

1) m3 slides
2) m3 skips
3) P5 slides
4) P5 skips
5) sing as written
TIMBRE and TONE

Spoken vs. Sung – “Are you KIDDING me?”

Index finger-forehead (J. Palant)

Index Card – 50/50, 80/20

“Ng” with the tip of the tongue from the soft palate moving forward to the hard palate and behind the top teeth

TIMBRE and TONE

“Allow” vs. “Force” the sound...

“Free” vs. “Make” the voice...

“Float” vs. “Push” the tone...

Employ good vocal modeling and demonstration of not only pitches, but also of timbre; singers will copy everything
AURAL & THEORY CONSIDERATIONS

Avoid pitches at first? Consider “highest,” “lowest,” and “medium”

Inaccurate / pattern singer – MATCH THEM!

OCTAVE DISPLACEMENT!!!
Play the “Octave game”
Single pitches, short patterns - up 8va, down 8va
Assigning voice parts is a necessary task, but proper, healthy, confident voice-building should **NOT** take a back seat to repertoire demands.

Adjust the repertoire while equipping and enabling the singer.
"Stand with the Brave"
by Mark Patterson

Stand with the Brave
BriLee BLB014
SING DEM HERRN
Michael Praetorius
arr. Wallace DePue
Belwin/Alfred - SV8640

RANGE: sol – SOL
TESSITURA: DO-FA (72% of sung beats)

• As written (G Maj), TB singer would sing D3 – D4
• Move to B-flat for F3-F4?

“Teaching music to adolescents requires great intuition and patience.”
Teaching Kids to Sing
Kenneth H. Phillips (75)
FOR FURTHER READING


Chapter 11: The Changing Voice


Chapter 3: The Adolescent Years (C. Ballantyne and K. Brunssen)


Chapter 13: Changing Voices


Gutierrez, Daniel and Erin Plisco, “Embrace the Crack” Interest Session, ACDA National Conference, 2021


Chapter 7: The Boy’s Changing Expanding Voice


Chapter 7: Registration


Chapter 6: The Adolescent Male Voice: Categorization to Maturation


Chapter 14: The Young Singer (V. Oakes)


Chapter 7: Voice Classification and Life-Span Changes


Chapter 13: Teaching Singing / Life-Span Voice Teaching