Citation
Chapter 1: Becoming a Choral Music Director *Directing the Choral Music Program*
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2004

Summary:
I. The Professional Choral Music Educator
   a) A profession: a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive
      academic preparation.
   b) To be treated as a profession, public perception must be that the members act like
      professionals.
   c) Teaching requires life-long learning.
   d) A professional- the willingness to spend the time and resources to remain up to date in
      his or her area.
   e) Belong to professional organizations and to attend the meetings and conferences
      scheduled by those organizations. (NAFME, ACDA)

II. Qualifications for the Choral Conductor
   a) Knowledge of music, is only the beginning of a choral director’s preparation.
   b) 10 qualifications on being a choral conductor:
      1) Know the score thoroughly
      2) Acquire the skill to speak precisely and inspirationally
      3) Develop the ability to hear
      4) Be a thoroughly trained musician
      5) Acquire skill on an instrument
      6) Develop a trained mind.
      7) Attain good physical coordination
      8) Contain a musical imagination
      9) Recognize the composer’s rights
     10) Be open minded to new ideas.
   c) Conductor must be able:
      a) Communicate and inspire
      b) Understand musical style
      c) Keen insight of interpersonal relationships
      d) Have a vital personality
      e) High-feeling function; strong intellectual background.
      f) Facilitate and study the score
      g) Be assertive, but not hostile
      h) Use good eye contact
      i) Have a love of music.

III. Historical Perspectives
   A. Ancient Times
      a) Ancient Greece: music and gymnastics = foundation of education.
      b) Plato and Aristotle valued the central place of music.
c) Music contests and festivals were prevalent.

d) Singing in biblical times is well documented in Old Testament (Book of Psalms, Hebrews)

e) Banning of instruments from Jewish / Christian worship → A cappella movement

B. Medieval Era (500 to 1450 C.E.)
   a) Gregorian Chant
   b) Orphanages for boys → singing and general education
   c) Boethius and Ravenna and Guido D’Arezzo → writings and theories for scientific and mathematical knowledge
   d) Music performance centered in church in Middle Ages.

C. The Renaissance (1450 – 1600)
   a) Music Education was either private instruction or for nobility
   b) Known as Golden Age of Polyphony
   c) Singing was done mostly in church choirs.

D. The Baroque Era (1600-1750)
   a) Solo singing and opera
   b) Instrumental accompaniment
   c) Choirs mainly male. Females had some role in operas
   d) Choral conductor often directed from harpsichord or organ.
   e) Conductors mainly interested in tempo and rhythm.

E. Classical Era (1750- 1825)
   a) Era of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven → Instrumental music has dominant role
   b) Music performance now moved to concert hall and opera house.
   c) Participation of large numbers.
   d) Beat patterns well established.

F. The Romantic Era (1826-1900)
   a) Use of conducting baton → introduced by Mosel in Germany in 1812
   b) Mendelssohn, Wagner, Liszt
   c) Choral composition was generally 3 types:
      1) part-songs or short choral pieces,
      2) sacred music with liturgical texts,
      3) music on a grand scale for chorus and orchestra

G. The American Scene (1600 – 1900)
   a) Imitate line by rote. Little concern given to music reading or singing instruction. No public schools.
   b) Lowell Mason
      a) Boston Academy of Music.
      b) Believed all people had a degree of musical talent
      c) Singing was a skill to be developed.
      e) First public school music teacher in the city of Boston → in the U.S.
   c) A cappella choir sound

H. Twentieth-Century America (1900-2000)
   a) Dean Peter Lutkin
1) Introduced the a cappella sound in 1906 at Northwestern University
b) St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota
   1) Most famous a cappella singing. Model for fine choral singing.
   2) Characteristics included:
      - a spiritual emphasis found in church-related schools
      - wearing of robes
      - long, tedious try-out procedures
      - flawless memorization of repertoire
      - hidden starting pitch
      - limited repertoire of about twenty selections
      - repertoire taken generally from 19th century German and Russian schools and Christiansen’s own arrangements
      - cultivation of the straight tone
c) John Finley Williamson
   1) Founded of the famous Westminster Choir College of Princeton, NJ
   2) Shifted to a style that emphasized the solo quality of the mature voice.
      (Each voice singing as a soloist with rich and deep-throated tone).
d) Father William J. Finn
   1) Sound was based on the blending and classifying of voices as instrumental timbres) Sound resembled symphonic orchestra)
e) Fred Waring
   1) Sung speech approach. Word sung as naturally as spoken words.
f) Douglas Stanley, John C. Wilcox, and Joseph J. Klein
   1) First to study singing from scientific perspective. Individual voice in choral setting
g) Robert Shaw
   1) Father of modern choral conductors
   2) Presented masterworks to communities that had rarely heard such great music.
   3) 16 Grammy Awards, 1991 recipient of Kennedy Center Honors, 1993 Conductors’ Guild Theodore Thomas Award
   4) Choral tone: rich, mature. Professionally trained singers. Lots of energy and rhythmic precision that created a vibrant sound, exciting and full of life. Exacting intonation.
   5) Rhythmic diction: each word maintain its individual rhythmic integrity.

Discussion:
Question 7: What may be the greatest qualification needed by someone who wants to become a music educator and conductor?

   Based on the text, “perhaps the greatest qualification needed to be a music teacher is a love of music” (page 4). I have always heard the expression, “Whatever you are doing during your free time should be the career that you go into later in life.” Whenever we truly love something and are passionate about it, we put our entire beings into the matter. We will be more attentive to every single detail involved, and therefore, we will put forth our greatest level of work. According to the text, “There are days when the only thing that keeps a choral director
going is his or her love of music. To those who have a passion for music, welcome to the world of choral leadership!” If a person truly loves music, they will find themselves giving it all of their spare time. I love music and do something with teaching or performing music every single day. It has become a part of my innate being. When we live and breathe music, analyzing scores and teaching music to others comes easier to us. We appreciate music and the work that the composers have brought forth to the table. Therefore, we try to emulate or put into our minds as to what this composer was trying to get across in the piece and share with others. Teaching music to others is an incredible honor. Looking at all of the history of how music education and conducting have evolved over the ages, we have truly come a long way as a society. We can take these techniques of previous prominent figures in music education history and let it deepen the passion within our own hearts to become the best music educators that we can be.