



YOUR CHOIR CAN SING, BUT HOW WELL DO THEY HEAR? AUDIATION EXERCISES FOR CHOIRS

Ryan A. Olsen, Baker University
www.RyanAOlsen.com



FIVE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD AUDIATION

Principle 1: Develop harmonic/tonal vocabulary

Principle 2: Understand tonal context

Principle 3: Sing and tune with harmonic support

Principle 4: Audiate individually and in groups

Principle 5: Understand tendency of pitches

within melodies and chords

PRINCIPLE 1: DEVELOP HARMONIC/TONAL VOCABULARY

- Kodály - "Sound before sight" parallels language acquisition
- Listen → imitate/speak/improvise → fluency
 - simple writing → read/audiate
 - Call and response patterns
 - Scales/modes
 - Melodic patterns
 - Tonicization
 - Intervals & arpeggios
 - Rounds
 - Harmonic cadences

PRINCIPLE 2: UNDERSTAND TONAL CONTEXT

- Sing in various scales, modes, and keys
- Tonicize in each piece (I-IV-V-I)
 - Melodically and harmonically!
- Practice and teach chords and intervals built on each pitch within the scale (advanced - include sevenths and more!)
- Identify the scale degree, chord tone, and pitch tendency (Curwen hand signs provide a big hint!)
- Recognize, identify, and understand progressions within a piece
- Recognize and understand key relationships within pieces/sections and when they change

PRINCIPLE 3: SING AND TUNE WITH HARMONIC SUPPORT

- It is easier to sing in tune with a drone as support
 - Tonic in octaves will help men and women
 - Add the Dominant for more context!
- Acoustic instruments are much easier to tune to
- Singers can also provide drone!
- Eventually remove the drones and have singers audiate

PRINCIPLE 4: ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL AUDIATION!

- Singers tend to go on "auto-pilot" or demonstrate "group amnesia" in ensembles
- Name that tune using solfege syllables as board work
 - SDMDMRDLSSDMDMRSS
- Alternate singing & audiating measures or phrases
- Audiate large sections and sing cadences, final chords, or transitions
 - Deliberate Practice technique that creates "struggle," which pushes students into the learning zone and causes glial cells to add myelin to neural circuits!

PRINCIPLE 5: UNDERSTAND PITCH TENDENCY AND FUNCTION

- Melodic Intonation
- Hand signs show tendency of pitches within scale
- Harmonic Intonation
 - Rounds
 - Cadences
 - Seventh and other jazz chords
- Equal Temperament vs. Just Intonation
- Find pitch and tune off tuning forks!

REVIEWING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Develop harmonic/tonal vocabulary

Principle 2: Understand tonal context

Principle 3: Sing and tune with harmonic support

Principle 4: Audiate individually and in groups

Principle 5: Understand tendency of pitches

within melodies and chords

WWW.RYANAOLSEN.COM