Vocal Jazz in the Choral Classroom: A Pedagogical Study

Lara Marie Moline

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

VOCAL JAZZ IN THE CHORAL CLASSROOM:
A PEDAGOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Arts

Lara Marie Moline

College of Visual and Performing Arts
School of Music

May 2019
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has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Arts in College of Visual and Performing Arts in School of Music, Program of Choral Conducting

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

_________________________________________________
Galen Darrough D.M.A., Chair

_________________________________________________
Jill Burgett D.A., Committee Member

_________________________________________________
Michael Oravitz Ph.D., Committee Member

_________________________________________________
Michael Welsh Ph.D., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense________________________________________

Accepted by the Graduate School

_________________________________________________
Linda L. Black, Ed.D.
Associate Provost and Dean
Graduate School and International Admissions
Research and Sponsored Projects
ABSTRACT


The history of the vocal jazz ensemble began with popular groups such as The Boswell Sisters, The Pied Pipers, and The Four Freshman during the late 1920 to 1940s. This new vocal style brought about a unique aspect of the jazz idiom in that it expanded upon the vocal jazz style by creating tight harmonies within a group of vocalists that were often only heard within an instrumental jazz big band. Fast-forward to current groups like The New York Voices, The Real Group, The Swingle Singers, and Manhattan Transfer, and the vocal jazz ensemble has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Vocal jazz arrangers and musicians such as Darmon Meader, Anders Edenroth, Kerry Marsh, Rosana Eckert, Kirby Shaw, the late Steve Zegree, and many others have taken the vocal jazz ensemble to a new level. Not only are these artists composing and arranging more contemporary styles of vocal jazz and revamping jazz standards, they are also the frontrunners of making the vocal jazz style accessible to choral conductors. Vocal jazz educators such as Steve Zegree, Paris Rutherford, and Kirby Shaw have all written resources for the choral director on the pedagogy of the vocal jazz style and ensemble in addition to providing vocal jazz workshops and camps. These jazz educators have also
frequently spent their time as clinicians or guest conductors in various parts of the world. Organizations such as the Jazz Educators Network (JEN) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) have also provided resources within their own publications, websites, and yearly conferences on vocal jazz ensemble pedagogy, vocal pedagogy, improvisation, building better listeners, and stylistic elements within the vocal jazz style. Despite the continued growth of these educational resources and organizations, the vocal jazz ensemble remains uncharted territory for most choral conductors. Perhaps this is due to the limited amount of vocal jazz repertoire and ensemble pedagogy resources available.

One reason for this lack of implementation may be related to the many misconceptions about the vocal jazz ensemble and the vocal technique required to perform such music. It has been often presumed that jazz singers are instructed to sing with an unsupported and non-resonant tone, a lack of breath support, and a straight-tone in all vocal jazz singing.\(^1\) Diana R. Spradling contests these claims, declaring that the vocal jazz style requires as much vocal technique in breath support and resonance as classical singing. She continues to explain how vibrato is not limited or taken away from the vocal jazz singer. It can be used within jazz singing and is more often applied as an ornament of expression.\(^2\) Another potential reason is that many choral conductors may be

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reluctant to familiarize themselves with the jazz idiom, perhaps feeling that they lack the experience to do so. As jazz and popular styles continue to be of interest to choral students, there is a need for more education and resources for the choral conductor.

The results of this study have led to a comparison of traditional choral and vocal jazz pedagogy styles, while also providing an instructional resource that addresses techniques for bridging the gap between the two. Each participating conductor used and implemented the curriculum in a variety of ways. This allowed for a large range of evidence to be gathered, which supported the information within the transition chapter. This experience not only helped in the understanding of jazz knowledge for each conductor, but it also increased the level of comfort and ability to teach the vocal jazz style.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express deep appreciation and thanks to Dr. Galen Darrough for the encouragement and belief in this topic and study, as well as the unwavering support throughout these three years of doctoral course work. Thank you to Kerry Marsh and Julia Dollison for their constant inspiration through their performance and education of the vocal jazz style. I have learned so much from you both and am thankful I had the opportunity to learn from you. Thank you to the rest of the committee members: Dr. Jill Burgett, Dr. Michael Oravitz, and Dr. Michael Welsh for their support for the study, editing, helpful feedback, and flexibility. It has been such an honor to get to know and work with such fine faculty members along this journey.

Thank you to the participating choral conductors of the curriculum study. I could have not done this particular study without their willingness and excitement to try something new. I have learned a great deal about choral education from them and I look forward to where this study will lead next.

A large thank you to all friends and family. Your constant encouragement did not go unnoticed and I am forever grateful and appreciative of all the love and support. Thank you most of all to Garth Moline. You have been my rock and my biggest cheerleader. I could not have done this degree without your belief in me and willingness to listen and help, regardless of how late it may have been. You’re an inspiration as a music educator, a friend, and human being. LMM
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Purpose and Justification of the Study

Choral music contains a vast range of musical styles and periods. From Renaissance motets to current pop song arrangements, the typical choral ensemble has the ability to take any audience on a musical journey. Traditional choral music such as motets, madrigals, anthems, cantatas, masterworks, partsongs, and spirituals have long been considered standard repertoire of any public school, collegiate, or professional choral ensemble. Other vocal music styles such as vocal jazz, a cappella pop/rock, or show choir ensembles and repertoire have become more popular within choral programs, particularly within the last few decades. In comparison to traditional choral repertoire and ensemble pedagogy, these other vocal styles lack resources that provide choral directors with helpful implementation tools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide current and future educators with an instructional resource that will show them how they can transfer their traditional choral knowledge to the vocal jazz style. While there are choral or vocal jazz resources that provide pedagogical information separately, this study

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3 Information is based upon when the appearance and discussion of these ensembles occurred in choral pedagogy books. According to the resources used in this dissertation, the earliest date is 1993 with Don. L Collins book, Teaching Choral Music.
specifically discusses both styles side by side. A comparison of vocal and ensemble pedagogy and how a possible transition can be made between the two styles are addressed.

Justification of the Study

In order to assess the amount of vocal jazz resources that are provided to a choral director, research was conducted on the prominence of vocal jazz education on a state, regional, and national level through ensembles or conventions. By means of a comparison of choirs provided within the United States, a list of choral honor ensembles currently provided in all fifty states is found in Table 1.1. At the secondary level, all fifty states have a traditional choral honor ensemble. In addition, fifteen states offer an additional honor jazz choir. While this research only encompasses states with honor ensembles, there is a likelihood that other states contain secondary programs with vocal jazz ensembles.
Table 1.1. Choral Honor Ensembles represented within all fifty states.\(^4\)

<table>
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\(^4\) Information was found through each state’s Music Educators Association website page.
Table 1.1, continued

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<th>State</th>
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When researching the amount of vocal jazz education on a regional level, the most prominent choral organization that provides encompassing director instruction is the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). This organization has hosted national and regional conventions since the early 1960s.\(^5\) Regional conferences are divided between seven sections across the country. Interest sessions, music reading sessions, roundtable discussions, and concerts are provided for attending directors as well as honor ensembles comprised of students from the surrounding states.\(^6\) The last four regional ACDA conferences (2012-2018) have included at least one or more of the honor


\(^6\) Most include the following honor ensembles: elementary, junior-high/middle school mixed voice, high school tenor-bass, high school treble, high school mixed voice, and collegiate mixed-voice choirs.
ensembles, with the Northwestern region the only one to add an honor vocal jazz ensemble in 2016 and 2018.\(^7\)

These recent conferences also have shown an increase in vocal jazz education within interest sessions, reading sessions, and concerts. There was an average of fifteen to twenty interest sessions, with a maximum of one session pertaining to vocal jazz.\(^8\) If a vocal jazz session was offered, items discussed were improvisation or style techniques. There were seven to ten music reading sessions, with at least one vocal jazz session included.\(^9\) Not all regions included roundtable discussions and in the few that did, jazz was not included.

Performances during the regional conferences consisted primarily of traditional youth, high school, or professional choral ensembles, and were featured as part of the formal conference programming. A vocal jazz night was offered at a few conferences that featured the performance of two or three vocal jazz groups (such as the honor jazz choir in the Northwestern region in 2016). The 2018 regional conferences continued to increase the amount of vocal jazz education. On the average of fifteen to twenty interest sessions, a minimum of two vocal jazz sessions were included. Topics offered information on rehearsal techniques, improvisation, style, and starting a vocal jazz ensemble. Vocal jazz

\(^7\) Information found on regional ACDA websites and conference programs.

\(^8\) Interest sessions at regional conferences fall under the following categories: recruiting, building vocal technique (men, women, adolescent voices, etc.), how to use technology within the classroom, rehearsal techniques, and conducting.

\(^9\) Music reading sessions provided packets of music from a variety of music publishers pertaining to specific genres including: men, treble, mixed-voice (soprano, alto, tenor, bass or SATB), multi-cultural, jazz, middle school, and church music.
was represented at every reading session and performances also included two more vocal jazz ensembles.

In relation to programmed concerts, there was a minimum of three vocal jazz ensembles. When compared to performances at the national conferences, an average of fifty choirs performed within the concert sessions. Youth, high school, professional, and international choirs appeared. Jazz choirs (three or four high school, collegiate, or professional choirs) were also accepted but typically performed on the selected jazz nights. The 2015 ACDA convention held two sessions during one night with a total of six performance groups. The 2017 meeting had one jazz night with three performing groups, and also added a night of contemporary and commercial a cappella ensembles.

Similar to the regional conferences, the national ACDA conferences provided comparable sessions and honor ensembles. The most recent conferences have increased the amount of choral interest sessions, music reading sessions, and concert performances. Previous vocal jazz interest sessions included topics on how to start a vocal jazz group, improvisation, collegiate vocal jazz, young vocal jazz repertoire, rehearsal techniques, vocal jazz concepts, and similarities to show choir. In comparison to other non-choral specific sessions that are offered (such as vocal pedagogy, rehearsal techniques, building voices, community building, and recruiting), vocal jazz is

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10 Information found on regional ACDA websites and program books.


well-represented. The choral reading sessions were comprised of vocal jazz, men’s, women’s, SATB, youth choirs, and world music. Twenty to twenty-five additional reading sessions sponsored by publishing companies were included as well. There is no list provided within the program booklets as to what each publisher offered in each reading packet, so there may or may not have been vocal jazz arrangements.

Round table discussions occurred during the conference and included a vocal jazz session with two or three of the leading vocal jazz educators in the nation. Topics that were often examined were choosing appropriate arrangements, creating sets that involve a theme, identifying jazz elements, teachable moments within pieces, national repertoire and standards, working with sound systems, and participant-led discussions.

Another organization that holds a national conference in support of jazz education is the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME). The conference occurs annually, providing sessions for attending directors, and contains four to five honor ensembles. The honor ensembles include concert band, orchestra, jazz band, and mixed-voiced choir. All students are chosen from high schools across the country. NAfME is all-encompassing for music education, holding interest sessions for band, orchestra, elementary music, jazz, and choir. During the 2017 conference there were nineteen choral sessions, and none were jazz-related. One vocal jazz session was offered within the jazz sessions, on the importance of listening to other vocal artists. All other jazz
sessions were instrumental. The choral concert hours featured traditional choral groups, either high school, collegiate, or professional, and there was a featured jazz night during the conference. A solo vocal jazz performer and a vocal jazz quartet performed. One reading session for choral music was provided; without its contents being listed, it is uncertain if vocal jazz was represented.\textsuperscript{13}

The 2018 national conference focused on aspects of the national standards as well as collaborative learning with other educators. Music educators were encouraged to participate in activities and selected a track to follow-learning, innovation, involvement, inspiration, or technology. There were no specific sessions for choral, band, orchestra, jazz, or elementary music. Student performances held throughout the day and evening included choirs, a guitar ensemble, a jazz combo, and a world music ensemble. Honor ensembles were still present at this convention and included a concert band, jazz band, orchestra, mixed-voice choir, and a guitar ensemble.\textsuperscript{14}

**Literature Review**

When learning how to build and shape a choral program, the first-year choral conductor or veteran conductor has the opportunity to choose from a variety of different resources. Vocal and choral pedagogy, gesture, and choral style and technique books all provide conductors with suggested tools to fashion


a successful program. Important to both choral and vocal jazz styles is the knowledge of how the voice works. Few traditional vocal pedagogy books discuss stylistic elements in singing, let alone vocal jazz. Elements of alignment, breath, phonation, resonance, registration, articulation, and expression are all common sections found in vocal pedagogy sources.

Perhaps the lack of information regarding the vocal jazz style has created some common misconceptions that jazz singing promotes unhealthy singing. In an article written in The Choral Journal, titled “Come On-A My House: An Invitation to Vocal Jazz for Classical Singers” by Noel Archambeault, the author opens her article by calling out the three biggest misconceptions of jazz singing: singers are instructed to sing with an unsupported and non-resonant tone, have a lack of breath support, and only use straight-tone when singing. Throughout the article, Archambeault shares insightful teaching moments with students and their experience with vocal jazz that discredits these common misconceptions and stresses the importance of having a good technical foundation.

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15 Discussed in chapter four, page 150 of What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body by Melissa Malde, Mary Jean Allen, and Kurt-Alexander Zeller, mention that vibrato is commonly used as a color choice in jazz singing. In reference to rubato singing, James Stark mentions in chapter six page 175 of Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy, that jazz singing often uses rubato to a much greater extent than other vocal styles most likely due to its conversational nature.

16 The Choral Journal is a magazine publication produced by the American Choral Directors Association since May 1959. The journal has focused on topics such as pedagogical issues, composers, conductors, repertoire, conducting gestures and pedagogy, conferences, and stylistic performance practices.

Diana R. Spradling has been a dedicated advocate for healthy vocal jazz singing since the 1980s, with numerous articles and contributions published in *The Choral Journal*,¹⁸ and a pedagogy book titled, *Jazz Singing: Developing Artistry and Authenticity*. Spradling devotes one out of three sections in her book to vocal jazz pedagogy for the solo singer, discussing the importance of resonance, vowel production and treatment of text, vibrato, posture, breath management, and how to care and protect the voice. Information found within this section of her book is firmly rooted and strongly adheres to vocal technique found in many vocal pedagogy books, the largest difference being the jazz style emphasis. She also uses information from the VoceVista¹⁹ program to confirm her technical findings of healthy vocal jazz singing.

In comparison to other vocal jazz resources,²⁰ where the focus is on the stylistic elements of jazz and ensemble sound, Spradling approaches the vocal jazz ensemble by stating, “As an ensemble leader you will find your way to authentic jazz singing if you take more of a jazz solo voice approach than a choral approach…”²¹ For the already established vocal jazz director this statement offers advice on how to take a vocal jazz ensemble one step further

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¹⁸ Articles found within *The Choral Journal* include: “Pedagogy and Vocal Jazz,” “A Definition of the Vocal Jazz Group: An Ensemble of Solo Singers, One-on-a-Mic,” and “Pedagogy for the Jazz Singer,” written with Justin Binek.

¹⁹ A digital imagery program that analyzes the sounds and degrees of technical facility of a singer. Scott McCoy references this program within his vocal pedagogy book, *Your Voice: and Inside View*.


towards authenticity. The choral director with little to no experience may need more information on how to address balance, blend, intonation, vowel shapes, text, and other common fundamentals of ensemble singing in the jazz style.

Choral pedagogy sources provide a strong foundation on the history of the choral ensemble, philosophy, recruiting, working with adolescent voices, selecting repertoire, classroom management, rehearsal technique, and organizing performances. A section commonly found in these sources is establishing and building the choral tone. This portion is an extension of vocal pedagogy by applying the solo technique to ensemble singing. In addition to breath, posture, resonance, and tone production, authors often include diction, expression (dynamics and articulation), and stylistic choices for common choral styles within the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Post-tonal periods of music. Excluded in most choral pedagogy books (with the exception of newer editions) written before 2000 are popular music styles and ensembles such as musicals, swing choirs, show choirs, and vocal jazz ensembles. With the exception of a few choral pedagogy books written between the years of 1995 and 2006, resources written after 2000 commonly include a popular music section.

The amount of information within these sections varies by author to author. In John B. Hylton's book, *Comprehensive Choral Music Education*, he

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22 Modern music typically refers to 20th-century styles such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Neo-classicism, Neo-Romantic, Avant-garde, and folk or popular music.

discussed vocal jazz in a short paragraph. Vocal jazz ensembles require strong musicians, said by Hylton, and if a conductor has a jazz background, they should pursue an ensemble to build musicianship skills. If there is a lack of experience, one should contact a director of a successful vocal jazz program to observe and learn from. Hylton also encouraged listening to popular vocal jazz groups like Take 6, Rare Silk, and Manhattan Transfer, along with stating that a quality sound system and rhythm section are also needed.24

Kenneth H. Phillips begins his vocal jazz section by affirming the lack of the vocal jazz ensemble and education not only on the secondary level, but also within the post-secondary level. He claims that the main characteristic of vocal jazz singing is improvisation and ends with a short paragraph on the jazz tone. Improvisation contributes a great deal to the jazz style. When learning concepts of jazz singing such as tone, articulation, balance, blend, singing on a microphone, etc., it is unlikely that a teacher with limited experience in jazz would introduce the style to students through improvisation. The transition would be more successful through vocal technique and ensemble pedagogy. Phillips continues to add a brief resource section that includes organizations such as the International Association for Jazz Education25 and the American Choral Directors Association. He suggests The Choral Journal and Vocal Jazz Resource and SmartMusic for repertoire and accompaniment help.26


25 The International Association for Jazz Education disbanded in the Spring of 2008.

Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman writes a brief history of the vocal jazz ensemble, sources for quality repertoire, a list of vocal jazz arrangers, and popular SATB vocal jazz arrangements. She devotes space to standard performance practice such as a discussion of swing, improvisation and scat-singing, accompaniment options, and the sound of the vocal jazz ensemble. This last component is directed more towards the size of the group, a small mention of tone quality (minimal vibrato, bright tone quality created by an inner smile and raised soft palate), and singing on microphones.\textsuperscript{27}

One final choral pedagogy resource with a section on vocal jazz is Robert L. Garretson’s \textit{Conducting Choral Music}, 8\textsuperscript{th} edition. Similar to the Ward-Steinman book, Garretson opens with a brief history of the vocal jazz idiom along with advocacy of the vocal jazz style. Other sections examine common jazz rhythms and their performance, tempo, and tone quality. A unique section is common articulations and inflections of vocal jazz writing.\textsuperscript{28} While the resources discussed above share valuable information about the vocal jazz style, they largely summarize important key factors without providing many transitional elements. If the choral director wished to start a vocal jazz ensemble, one would research vocal jazz resources on their own.

The list of vocal jazz sources may not be quite as large as choral. These books are written by jazz musicians, arrangers, composers, or jazz educators.

\textsuperscript{27} Ward-Steinman, \textit{Becoming a Choral Music Teacher}, 146-54.

with successful programs. Addressed in most all of these resources is a history of vocal jazz, a discussion of styles (ballad, swing, and Latin style), vocal tone, working with a rhythm section, recruitment, improvisation, repertoire lists, and the sound system. Also studied are rehearsing techniques, staging and choreography, programming, festivals and trips, and listening suggestions. All provide foundational information for the inexperienced choral director on how to start a program, the stylistic aspects of the vocal jazz style, working with a rhythm section, improvisational tools, and operation of a sound system.

An important part of educating the choral conductor on the vocal jazz ensemble is tone. The “vocal jazz tone” is discussed at various lengths in each resource. While some sources use pedagogical language, others use stylistic nuances. Paris Rutherford describes the vocal jazz sound as idiomatic; rhythms and lyrics sound natural and there is a level of expression included. The vocal jazz sound he describes is pleasing to the ear, with an aspect of warmth and expressivity. Rutherford explores more of the controversies surrounding jazz singing such as straight tone, strain on the voice by not singing in the Bel Canto technique, or overuse of one’s voice. Rutherford also encourages listening to other ensembles and participating in workshops.

Doug Anderson presents two different types of vocal tone in both of his resources; the vocal tone and the instrumental tone. The vocal tone stems from

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the foundation of the choral sound with pure vowels and space within the vocal tract. The instrumental tone is the concept of color within the voice. He uses this description to describe the different colors of timbre that are used in vocal jazz singing. He classifies both types of tones and their place in specific jazz styles by stating that the vocal tone is better used in ballads and lyric solo lines, while the instrumental tone is used in up-tempo swing tunes.\(^{31}\) Though the information is useful to describe jazz tone to students, Anderson doesn’t accurately describe how to effectively create either of these types of tones within the choral ensemble and how to transition them. Lastly, in Steve Zegree’s book *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz: Including Pop and Other Show Styles*, the explanation of the jazz tone is also limited. He describes the vocal jazz tone as flexible depending on the style. He encourages listening to many vocal jazz groups to help determine the right sound for your ensemble.\(^{32}\)

Though there are written resources of both choral and vocal jazz pedagogy, none provide an in-depth look as to how to transition a traditional choral ensemble to vocal jazz. When comparing historical and pedagogical literature of traditional choral to vocal jazz, the number of resources is unequal. With the history of the traditional choral ensemble dating back to the Romantic period, and repertoire spanning centuries and multiple genres, it is of no surprise


that choral directors are more experienced and educated with this type of vocal style. This is likely due to the amount of historical information provided on each style, or that university degree programs do not always require knowledge or experience in vocal jazz or pop ensembles to complete choral education degrees. Vocal music education majors are typically not exposed to establishing and teaching a vocal jazz/pop music ensemble within their post-secondary education. These students will often miss out on such performance experiences as well. With the growing popularity of jazz, pop, and show choir ensembles, unless there is past experience or knowledge, creating this type of ensemble within a choral program can appear overwhelming to a veteran choral conductor or a first-year teacher.

What is also often overlooked is the purpose of the vocal jazz ensemble within the choral program. To summarize what Steve Zegree in his book *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz: Including Pop and Other Show Styles*, the American jazz art form is historically, rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically challenging. It requires the development of good listening skills, induces creativity with improvisation, and builds sight-reading skills. It can also serve as a recruiting tool and as an ambassador to the community. What makes vocal jazz more distinctive and more accessible to the choral director than any other pop or show ensemble is that its foundation stems from the traditional

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33 Degree requirements for vocal education majors concentrate on traditional choral techniques in method courses, as well as group performance requirements. Elective courses allow for vocal jazz or pop ensembles, along with musical theatre and opera productions.
choral ensemble.\textsuperscript{34} The vocal jazz ensemble should be an extension of what has already been established within the choral ensemble. Kirby Shaw mentions in \textit{Vocal Jazz Style} that although there are stylistic differences, the jazz choir bases its tone production, blend, and balance on the same Western-European choral foundation.\textsuperscript{35}

**Methodology**

In order to develop and find transitional elements between traditional choral and vocal jazz styles, an eight-week curriculum study took place amongst three choral directors with minimal jazz experience, lacking a vocal jazz or contemporary music ensemble within their program.\textsuperscript{36} Throughout the eight weeks of curriculum work and concert, the choral conductors demonstrated their previous choral knowledge of ensemble pedagogy and used it as a tool to shift to the vocal jazz style. Information included in the curriculum can be found in Table 1.2.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{34} Zegree, \textit{The Complete Guide}, 2-3.

\textsuperscript{35} Kirby Shaw, \textit{Vocal Jazz Style} (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1987), 3.

\textsuperscript{36} Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval can be found in Appendix A, page 112.
\end{flushleft}
Table 1.2. Sections and Information in the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Information Included</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vocal Pedagogy: breath, alignment, resonance, tone, and articulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Choral Pedagogy: blend, balance, intonation, and diction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vocal Jazz Pedagogy: differences and similarities of the two styles, blend, balance, tone, jazz styles (Swing, Bossa Nova, Ballad), working with a rhythm section, and conducting gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improvisation: techniques and exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Weekly goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Listening list and sample questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vocal exercises and jazz lead sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Additional written resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All choral directors were given *The Vocal Jazz Style* by Kirby Shaw in addition to the curriculum.

Each choral director and ensemble prepared four pieces for their concert program. Three of the works were chosen by the author of the study to assist in the transition from traditional choral to vocal jazz. The selection included a modern choral piece (elements of the choral and vocal jazz style—“The Water is Wide” arranged by Darmon Meader), and two vocal jazz pieces (“The Girl from Ipanema” arranged by Paris Rutherford and “We’ve Got a World that Swings” arranged by Kerry Marsh). The bossa nova tune (“The Girl from Ipanema”) was selected as a seamless transition from the ballad (“The Water is Wide”) due to the straight-eighth note feel. The bossa nova piece also presents elements of
syncopation, vocal jazz tone, and stylistic ornaments that can be used to transition to the final swing piece (“We’ve Got a World that Swings”). Each choral director chose the traditional choral tune based upon the following guidelines:

- The piece is written by a well-established composer
- The text is either timeless or relevant
- The piece consists of strong idiomatic vocal writing
- The piece includes craftsmanship (i.e. creative and imaginative musical ideas, establishes musical goals, etc.)
- There is aesthetic attraction to the piece
- There are plenty of teachable/challenging opportunities within the piece

The weekly goals provided in the curriculum assisted the choral conductor as to when to introduce new pieces and styles, when to add in stylistic ornaments, how to use the vocal improvisation information, and how to incorporate the listening lists and sight-reading. Each conductor had permission to adapt the provided material within the weekly goals based upon the learning ability of their ensembles, but the resources and amount of time did not change.

The bi-weekly observations observed the progression of the weekly goals in rehearsals leading up to the concert and the application of the pedagogical process of each choral conductor.

A few anticipated challenges of the study were the choices of lead sheets, the vocal improvisation section, working with the rhythm section, and the overall preparation of the choral conductor. The lead sheets provided represented the swing, ballad, and bossa nova jazz styles. However, some of the melodies appeared more difficult than others and the keys may not have been ideal to all male and female singers. Even though these were just used for warm-up/sight-
reading purposes, it is possible that there could have been some problems with harder melodies in minor keys and melodic range challenges for all singers.

Improvisation is a skill that requires a fair amount of time to teach and to practice. Without knowing the ability level of each ensemble, the author was uncertain of how much time the choral directors would need to work on vocal improvisation with the students. If the repertoire was more challenging and required more of the rehearsal time than was available, the author suggested to the conductors to try the improvisation section after the curriculum study was finished or to adapt and use elements that would help with rehearsal or stylistic knowledge.

When planning the curriculum with the conductors, not all of them had planned for a full rhythm section for their concert, so it was anticipated that there might be a problem with how the lack of a rhythm section would affect the vocal ensemble and overall style element. Suggestions made to the conductors were to limit the number of players in the rhythm section to just the pianist, use the rhythm track provided for one of the pieces, or create a rhythm track of their own of each piece.

The success of this study was largely dependent on the outside preparation of the conductor. Each choral director was given the same information and time to complete and understand the purpose of the study. The choral conductors not only had to create excitement for themselves, but they also had to build enthusiasm among their students. It was emphasized throughout the
curriculum that each conductor takes the time to listen to jazz performers and gain an appreciation and sense of style to share with their students. Without this research and personal connection, it may have been difficult for the conductors to accomplish the goal of a successful transition.

An integral part of this research was to be able to collaborate with a conductor in their own classroom with their own students. Working with experienced choral conductors meant that there was an established and successful choral pedagogy already in place. This provided an indication of the amount of knowledge that the students possessed as well as what information needed to be included within the curriculum for it to be a successful learning experience for all. Though all three conductors came from different educational institutions and had different years of experience, it developed into an opportunity for the author to create a study that could be used by any conductor regardless of past knowledge or experience.

The study and material presented to each conductor was meant to create interest and provide a basis for future learning. Eight weeks is not enough time to become an expert in the jazz style or how to teach it. It does offer an introductory foundation in which conductors and singers are encouraged to learn more. Though the implementation of the material was meant to be exact, the results of the conductor's experience will allow for the curriculum to become more flexible and adaptable for future use.
Lastly, working within a classroom allowed for hands-on and real-life applications for the conductor. These conductors not only had to learn and become knowledgeable about a new style, but they also received feedback on whether or not what they were teaching was being received and understood. It provided two types of opportunities for the conductors regarding the use of old and new knowledge. First, it allowed them to use their past knowledge in order to help with the implementation of new materials. Secondly, it allowed for each conductor to discover how much information could be used or shared and to help in further developing methods towards teaching both styles successfully.
CHAPTER II

THE VOCAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE

History of the Vocal Jazz Ensemble

American vocal groups can be traced back to the singing schools organized by William Billings during the mid- to late eighteenth-century, where singers learned how to sing and to read music. By the nineteenth-century, performing groups such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers, barbershop quartets, and vaudeville performers toured across America generating interest for traveling vocal groups. With the creation of recording devices and radio broadcasting, developed around the 1920s, the general public was introduced to America’s new art form, jazz.

Three major musical practices helped shape the development of the vocal jazz ensemble: group harmony singing influenced by African and European American music, the creation of the vocal jazz singer from blues, folk, and other popular music, and the growth of swing bands and instrumental combos. An early vocal jazz group was the Boswell Sisters. These three women from the

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39 Ibid., 6.

same family grew up in New Orleans learning a variety of classical instruments. During the 1920s, they performed original arrangements for voice and instruments. A few early recordings of their music allowed them to gain some success, and the sisters moved to New York and began touring and appearing on the radio shows during the 1930s. Much of their style was influenced by the swing era and often sounded improvised. One of the most distinctive qualities associated with their sound is the three-part voicing sung together in close harmony.

Another source of close vocal harmony came from African-American churches and work songs. During the late nineteenth-century, work songs and spirituals foreshadowed the creation of vocal jazz. These songs evolved into African-American spirituals, performed by many traditional choirs today as well as the creation of the blues. During the 1930s popular African-American gospel groups like the Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet and the Dixie Hummingbirds carried the spiritual to the concert hall. This also allowed them to perform secular music and reach a wider audience.

The 1940s launched the popularity of the big bands, which often featured a vocal group or a vocal soloist. Vocal trios, quartets, and quintets performed

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42 Stephanie Austin Letson, “The Vocal Jazz Ensemble: Systemic Integration in the Creation of Three University Programs” (DEd diss., Columbia University, 2010), 38.


with swing bands such as the Glen Miller and Tommy Dorsey bands. The Modernaires, The Andrew Sisters, The Pied Pipers, and the Delta Rhythm Boys were some of the leading vocal jazz groups at the time. As the vocal group continued to develop, jazz singers like Mel Torme and his group the Mel-Tones brought about a new and interesting feature to the vocal jazz repertoire. Their harmonies and arrangements were complex, using color tones such as flat ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths, and frequently included unique embellishments such as scoops, slides, and shakes. These vocal arrangements inspired open harmonic writing, diverse chord inversions, and substitutions of color tones with other chord members now substituting for chordal roots. This innovation was taken up by the likes of the Four Freshman and the Hi-Lo’s during the 1950s.

By the late 1940’s a new element of vocal jazz, scat singing, became popular with Dave Lambert and his bop vocal chorus, The Dave Lambert Singers. Arrangements by Lambert involved writing vocal adaptations using nonsense syllables that represented instrumental lines written for big bands. One of his most notable creations was with Hendricks and Ross, where they released the album *Sing a Song of Basie*, that involved of a note-for-note vocal adaptation of Count Basie arrangements. Solo singers such as King Pleasure and Eddie Zegree, *The Complete Guide*, 6.

Letson, *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble*, 38.

Perea, “Vocal Jazz Ensemble.”

Ibid.
Jefferson also used vocaleses\textsuperscript{49} by writing original lyrics and singing them to previously recorded instrumental solos. These recreations included matching all pitches, inflections, and style of the instrumental soloists.\textsuperscript{50}

This new vocal jazz feature reached a worldwide audience, and the French group Les Double Six de Paris began arranging and performing vocal jazz music in a similar fashion. The art of taking instrumental music and recreating it to fit the voice piqued the interest of one of the members, Ward Swingle. In the 1960s, Swingle created a vocal group in Paris, France called The Swingle Singers who specialized in jazz vocalese arrangements of J. S. Bach. The group later expanded their repertoire to include choral music of all eras, including Avant Garde and vocal jazz.\textsuperscript{51}

In the 1960s, Oscar Peterson promoted a Chicago-based studio group called the Singers Unlimited. The group consisted of four studio (jingle) musicians that showcased a fuller, richer ensemble sound (more than four parts) that was achieved using overdubbing technology.\textsuperscript{52} The group was not able to perform live because of this factor. However, the arrangements made by principal vocal arranger and former member of the Hi-Lo's, Gene Puerling, have made an impact on the vocal jazz style and performance of many collegiate vocal jazz groups today.

\textsuperscript{49} A vocalese is the process of adding words to a previously created instrumental improvised solo or melodic line.

\textsuperscript{50} Zegree, \textit{The Complete Guide}, 6-7.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{52} Perea, “Vocal Jazz Ensemble.”
Another influential vocal group, Manhattan Transfer, first appeared in the 1970s. They have had the largest success and impact on the spread of vocal jazz literature to choral music educators worldwide. Recordings and published arrangements such as “Operator,” “Ray’s Rockhouse,” “Birdland,” and “Java Jive” have been sold throughout the world and are considered standards in vocal jazz literature. Other recent groups such as Take 6, New York Voices, and The Real Group have also expanded upon the vocal jazz tradition, while sharing their arrangements with choral educators.

The academic roots of the vocal jazz ensemble are primarily credited to three Pacific Northwest teachers during the late 1960’s: Waldo King, Hal Malcom, and John Moawad. However, jazz education began much earlier. As early as the 1930s, jazz musicians were formalizing their education and creating instructional materials on orchestration, arranging, improvisation, and composition. Resources included Norbert Bleihoof’s Modern Arranging and Orchestration, Joseph Schillinger’s The Schillinger System of Musical Composition, George Russel’s improvisation book The Lydian Chromatic Concept, and DownBeat magazine’s published transcribed solos and pedagogical articles. After WWII, traveling big bands and combos became the

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54 Ibid., 7.

55 Perea, “Vocal Jazz Ensemble.”

primary source of jazz education for local schools and colleges, expanding jazz and the growth of the jazz band throughout the country.\textsuperscript{57}

In search of a vocal equivalent to the jazz band, King, Malcom, and Moawad worked together to create the vocal jazz ensemble.\textsuperscript{58} Malcom established the first college-supported vocal jazz group at Mount Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon in 1967.\textsuperscript{59} It was not until 1981 that the University of Miami established the first well-known vocal jazz program.\textsuperscript{60} This momentum continued through the 1980s, leading to the development of vocal jazz workshops, clinics, festivals, and arrangements that became accessible to all choral and jazz educators.\textsuperscript{61} An emergence of “How To” vocal jazz style books\textsuperscript{62} and pedagogical articles written in \textit{The Choral Journal} provided choral directors with information on vocal jazz.\textsuperscript{63} These books and articles supplied information on improvisation, jazz genres, vocal production, stylistic elements, working with a rhythm section, auditioning a jazz ensemble, operating a sound system, and repertoire lists. Today conferences hosted by Jazz Educators Network and the American Choral Directors Association continue to support the

\textsuperscript{57} Worthy, “Jazz Education.”

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} Perea, “Vocal Jazz Ensemble.”

\textsuperscript{60} Worthy, “Jazz Education.”

\textsuperscript{61} Perea, “Vocal Jazz Ensemble.”

\textsuperscript{62} Doug Anderson, \textit{The Jazz and Show Choir Handbook II}; Kirby Shaw, \textit{The Vocal Jazz Style}; Carl Strommen, \textit{The Contemporary Chorus: A Director’s Guide for the Jazz Rock Choir}.

\textsuperscript{63} Dan Schwartz, “Standardization of Vocal Jazz Articulations and Inflections”; Diana R. Spradling, “Pedagogy and Vocal Jazz”; Kirk Marcy, “Recharging Your Vocal Jazz Battery”. 
growth of the vocal jazz movement by providing educational workshops and inviting public schools and both collegiate and professional vocal jazz groups to perform.

**Vocal Pedagogy for the Jazz Ensemble**

When considering the vocal pedagogy of the vocal jazz style many fundamentals are shared with choral singing. Posture and breath support will not be discussed within this section as singers should be reminded that regardless of style, these are the foundation of all good singing. Tone, resonance, and vibrato will be discussed in more depth for this specific style. Before discussing these items, a few misconceptions on the technique of vocal jazz singing should be addressed.

Three common misunderstandings about singing in the vocal jazz style include singing without proper resonance, singing with a lack of breath support, and all vocal jazz singing is performed with straight-tone or lack of vibrato. Though there are jazz singers who sing with a breathy tone (Astrud Gilberto, Blossom Dearie, or Doris Day), this does not mean that there is a lack of breath support or that all jazz singers must sing this way. Often labeled as un-energized or lazy, a breathy tone is more a decision of style and not a reflection of technique. In ensemble singing the breathy tone is a stylistic choice, but one that is not used as often as the bright, forward tone that is frequently associated with

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64 For further reading on vocal pedagogy, the author suggests Melissa Malde, Mary Jean Allen, and Kurt Alexander’s *What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body*, Scott McCoy’s *Your Voice: An Inside View*, Margaret Olson’s *The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting: A Handbook for Achieving Vocal Health*, and Clifton Ware’s *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy: The Foundations and Process of Singing*. 
vocal jazz singing. Often times the voice is portraying an instrument of the jazz big band and that requires a full and resonant sound from the singer. The ability to produce round and pure tones in jazz requires the breath to be engaged and full of energy.

Similar to a breathy tone, resonance in vocal jazz singing can be used as a stylistic element. If a singer were performing a bebop or swing tune, more resonance in the singing voice often portrays the timbre of an instrument. A singer who uses less resonance may be portraying a specific jazz style or is using a different timbre to emphasize text or the melodic line (this will be addressed in more detail later on). Concerning intonation, balance, and blend within the ensemble, the same considerations of vocal technique in a traditional choir can be made within the vocal jazz group. Finally, vibrato is a widely discussed topic in the vocal jazz community. Vocal jazz is a style that does use minimal vibrato, but it is also a style that uses vibrato for ornamental or tone color purposes. Regardless, a healthy and unforced vibrato is used frequently within solo jazz singing as well as the vocal jazz ensemble.

Tone

The vocal jazz tone in an ensemble setting is largely dependent upon the timbre one is trying to achieve within a particular jazz piece. For example, a swing piece is going to require a different tone color and resonance than that of a ballad. Regardless of vowel shape or resonance, the general tone color typically performed by jazz singers is brighter than the blended mix of dark and bright
found in the traditional choral tone. The central element in the creation of the vocal jazz tone is the shape of the vocal tract. While choral singing requires length and space (created by a lowered larynx, raised soft palate, and vertical space created amongst the lips, buccinators, and jaw), the vocal jazz singer manipulates the length and space depending on the jazz style they are singing. For swing, blues, bebop-influenced, or other up-tempo tunes, this may require shortening and pulling the sound forward through a slightly raised larynx, lowered soft palate, and a horizontal-like space created by the lips and buccinators. The jaw is released of all tension and rests in a more shallow or conversational placement. This allows for more conversational diction as well as a bright, very resonant timbre. For ballads, bossa nova, or samba style, the jazz singer would create more space by lifting the soft palate, allowing for more breath to be heard within the tone. This also creates space for a warmer timbre, as opposed to the forward bright tone. The jaw is still resting within a shallower position and the diction is conversational.

An important item to address is that the difference of space created within the vocal tract has largely to do with the type of projection that is required of each style. Due to the nature and history of the choral style, the space, resonance, and precise diction created in choral singing is necessary for amplification within large halls or cathedrals. In vocal jazz singing, elements such as space, resonance, and diction are amplified through a sound system, therefore allowing for conversational diction and varying degrees of space and resonance. In a
situation where the vocal jazz ensemble is more like a jazz choir with twenty-five to fifty or more members, amplification is not needed individually but rather through area microphones.

Resonance

Resonance created within the vocal tract for jazz singing is no different than that of choral. The articulators used to create resonance are the same; however, the shape and length may differentiate based upon the style of piece. These varying degrees of resonance create different timbres that can be used for ballads, bossa nova, samba, blues, or swing tunes. When a jazz singer adds resonance to their sound, their tone is projected with ease and there is a sense of flexibility that allows the singer to shape their sound. A few ways to change the resonance within the vocal tract are adjusting the larynx by either raising or lowering it, adjusting tongue position, adjusting jaw position for vowel shapes, raising or lowering the soft palate, breath-to-tone ratios, volume, and degree of brightness. All considerations will allow for the singer to add or subtract the amount of resonance needed for singing.

Vibrato

In choral music, the use of vibrato is often considered an important stylistic element. Used regularly throughout Classical, Romantic, and most modern or

65 Spradling, Jazz Singing, 21.

66 The breath-to-tone ratio is a technique used by Diana Spradling that she recommends for lyric and stylistic purposes. It is best described to singers as the amount of air that is heard when phonating. For example, a breathier tone will have more breath in the ratio, while a forward, bright resonant sound used in swing tunes will have a higher tone ratio.

67 Ibid., 22.
contemporary music styles, vibrato is welcomed as a specific tone color. In Renaissance or Baroque music, the use of vibrato was commonly for ornamental purposes, but was often minimal.\(^{68}\) Regardless of the style, vibrato and minimal vibrato are frequently discussed within the choral ensemble in relation to good performance practice.

Vibrato is a widely discussed topic among studio voice teachers and choral directors. It has been a well-known argument that vibrato is created through the complete relaxation and freedom of the larynx, and that when no vibrato is present the sound produced is full of tension and is unhealthy. Another argument is that a healthy sound is one that produces vibrato. Though a large amount of research has been conducted on the subject, there is no exact explanation for the source of vibrato.

Malde defines vibrato as the alteration of frequency, amplitude, and timbre produced in a musical tone.\(^{69}\) She continues to explain that the source or rate of the vibrato could be created by the body’s natural tremor rate. The tremor rate occurs when the muscles are extended. Due to the muscles in the larynx being much smaller than those of the rest of the body, it would not take much extended force to produce a tremor rate with the larynx.\(^{70}\) Another option mentioned is the co-contraction of the intrinsic muscles and the subglottic pressure, that when engaged could in response create vibrato. Lastly, the cricothyroid is active in all

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\(^{68}\) Malde, Allen, and Zellar, *What Every Singer*, 149.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 150.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 150.
singing except for the glottal fry. Malde explains that it would be reasonable to assume that this activity might also contribute to vibrato as well.\textsuperscript{71} Despite the arguments listed above, Malde’s argument is that no sound can be produced if there is absolutely no muscular engagement. In order for the larynx to produce sound, muscle contraction has to occur.

In regard to the use of minimal vibrato in singing, there is evidence that there is no such vocal tone that is created without oscillation.\textsuperscript{72} While the ear may hear no vibrato within the tone, vibrations are still being produced within the vocal cords. John Nix states the when a singer is using minimal vibrato, they are reducing the extent of the vibrato, not the rate. He goes on to say that minimal vibrato is created through airflow rates and glottal adduction. While vibrato requires more air pressure and less glottal adduction, minimal vibrato requires the opposite.\textsuperscript{73}

In vocal jazz, the term vibrato is specifically related to style, color, and ornamental choices. Diana Spradling lists nine different uses of the vibrato in her book \textit{Jazz Singing: Developing Artistry and Authenticity}. Most of the examples she provides are for ornamental purposes, but there are a few that pertain to tone color and stylistic choices. When using vibrato within the vocal jazz ensemble there are a few options that typically work better due to the number of

\textsuperscript{71} Malde, Allen, and Zellar, \textit{What Every Singer}, 150.

\textsuperscript{72} Lisanne Elizabeth Lyons, “Strategies for Developing a Jazz and Contemporary Vocal Ensemble Sound for the Traditional Chamber Choir” (DMA diss., University of Miami, 2009), 21.

singers. The first is having the singers sustain a pitch on one syllable using minimal vibrato, and then engaging the vibrato after a few seconds. Another ornamental use is on any ascending or descending slide to start with minimal vibrato and within a few second engage with vibrato. A singer could also engage vibrato on voiced consonants such as m, n, or ng. Solo sections within ensemble pieces can also employ vibrato for stylistic and tone-color purposes.

The need to implement minimal vibrato in vocal jazz is directly related to the harmonic, tuning, blend and balance issues that are inherent in directing an ensemble. Vocal jazz music incorporates a variety of complex harmonies that do not always include the root of the chord, but almost always include the inner parts singing intervals of seconds or tritones. Issues that might occur with intonation, balance, and blend are better served when there is minimal vibrato in tight chords. Minimal vibrato can also be used as a form of stylistic choice in the tension and release of musical phrases.

The Ensemble Sound

The fundamentals of a vocal jazz ensemble such as balance, blend, and intonation can all be approached and exercised in a similar manner as choral ensemble pedagogy. In addition to this prior knowledge, it is relevant to add that due to the nature of most vocal jazz pieces typically resting within the speaking or lower ranges of the voice, especially for the sopranos and altos, it is often easier to work towards a unified treble sound to increase blend as well as intonation. When blending tenors and basses, it is much easier for the basses or

74 Spradling, *Jazz Singing*, 35-36.
baritones to match the timbre of the tenors due to the size of vocal ranges and, at times, maturity of the voices (adolescent or college-aged singers). Although the most significant disparities found with these elements are vocal jazz tone and diction within the ensemble. When shaping the vocal jazz tone within sections of the ensemble, the conductor should identify and shape the type of sound they want. Vocal jazz tone is subjective, as some educators may build a tone that sounds more like an instrumental big band. While the singers can imitate the stylistic qualities of the instrumentalists, it is important that they do not try and imitate the exact tone quality for vocal health purposes. Other conductors may focus on creating a unified sound or timbre within each section.

It is the author’s suggestion that if one were to work with this approach, listening to vocal groups such as the Real Group, New York Voices, Manhattan Transfer, Groove for Thought, or Singers Unlimited would help with this process. For example, if the ensemble were singing a swing tune, matching the timbre of the New York Voices or Manhattan Transfer would aid in the understanding and creation of a bright, forward resonant tone. If the ensemble were to sing a ballad or slower bossa nova tune, Groove for Thought or Singers Unlimited are great examples of a light, warm tone that is not as resonant.

The text and vowel treatment performed by a vocal jazz ensemble is a crucial indicator of stylistic authenticity and can affect the blend, balance, and intonation of the ensemble. The traditional choral ensemble uses pure vowels

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75 Spradling, *Jazz Singing*, 58.

76 Manhattan Transfer’s earlier recordings often display stylistic qualities of instrumentalist or use instrumental-like sounds for vocalese-like passages.
and crisp consonants for acoustic projection and in creation of a unified ensemble sound. It is also used to demonstrate a particular choral style or genre. Jazz singing, similar to the technique of a traditional choir, also employs pure vowels for blend, balance, and intonation purposes.\(^{77}\) As previously mentioned, with the help of amplification, crisp consonants are no longer needed, and the pronunciation becomes more conversational. This is largely important for precision and mobility in vocalese sections or scat shout sections where there are many words or scat syllables to sing.

There are a few ways to sing consonants in the vocal jazz style. The consonants at the start of a word will be crisp while ending consonants will be imploded or deemphasized. This is due to the feedback (popping noise) you would get from singing on a microphone and the nature of the conversational text.\(^{78}\) Consonants within words or phrases are also deemphasized. For example, in the phrase “we’ve got a world that swings,” the “t” would be softened by using a “d.” The phrase would then change to “we’ve gahda world that swings.” Another point to highlight is that the shadow vowels often used in between and at the ends of words in traditional choral singing are not used in jazz singing. In “that swings” the “t” and “s” are elided, one would typically stay away from “that-uh-swings.” In the case of a vocal jazz choir, where amplification is done through area microphones, there can be a slight increase of consonant

\(^{77}\) “Pure” in this sense is more related to the tone quality or shape of the vowel.

\(^{78}\) Spradling, *Jazz Singing*, 57.
use so that the words are heard acoustically. A suggestion would be to emphasize final consonants of words and all voiced consonants.

Vowel production within the vocal jazz ensemble also follows the conversational vernacular. The brighter timbre will require a brighter vowel. This suggests singing most vowels through an “ee” as opposed to an “ah.” This author recommends that the choral conductor continue to follow the guidelines of authentic pronunciation through IPA. In vocal jazz the production of all vowels will be more relaxed and typically wider to help with a forward, brighter sound. If there are issues of balance and blend within a ballad, the author suggests bringing in the corners of the mouth and lowering the jaw ever so slightly. This small adjustment improves intonation on held notes.

Common practice for the choral director when approaching diphthongs in traditional choral music is to sustain the pitch on the first vowel and then close to the second vowel before moving on to the next note. This practice is commonly done for balance and blend purposes. In vocal jazz, the treatment of the diphthong is much different and is based upon the conversational treatment of the text. According to Spradling, there are at least five different ways to approach the diphthong in the vocal jazz ensemble.

The first is a deliberate glide from one vowel to the next. This is often performed mostly by transitioning from the first to the second vowel using equal length of audibility. For example, if the word “right” was sung on a quarter note, the diphthong would change the word rhythm to two eighth notes. The second is complete pronunciation of the first vowel, but the second vowel is suppressed
and substituted by a weak consonant. For example, the word “ride” would go straight from the initial vowel to the consonant (d). The third is often performed with an ascending smear and the second vowel lands on the note with vibrato. The fourth option is the first vowel completes the word while the second vowel is performed on the breath release or fall. The final option is when the onset of the diphthong contains an ascending smear and both vowels contain vibrato.\(^79\) Not all of these may be successful within a group setting, as some may work better in solo situations. It is recommended make decisions regarding the treatment of diphthongs prior to rehearsing the text with singers.

Another diction component to highlight is the use of the schwa vowel. In vocal jazz singing this vowel is used frequently instead of a pure “ah” vowel. This often pertains to words that start phrases like “the,” middle of phrases like the word “of,” and words that start with an open “ah” such as “above.” Typically, any text that starts on a pick-up beat is de-emphasized, and therefore the vowel is de-emphasized or more conversational.

\(^{79}\) Spradling, *Jazz Singing*, 31-32.
CHAPTER III

TRANSITION

Vocal Pedagogy Transition Elements

Provided within the following sections will be useful tools and repertoire information on how a choral director can transition their traditional choral ensemble to vocal jazz. The material presented will also include exercises that will help with building warm-up routines and rehearsal tactics that will increase the understanding of stylistic differences of traditional choral and jazz.

The last chapter discussed the history and the vocal and ensemble pedagogy that is typically used when directing the vocal jazz ensemble. While the information provided calls attention to significant differences from the traditional choral ensemble, there are also similarities that help maintain good vocal technique regardless of the singing style. The introduction of the vocal jazz style is best done in stages and can be more effectively facilitated by regular references to the similarities it has with traditional choral singing as well as its differences.

Before continuing on to transitional information and exercises for vocal pedagogy, it is important to reestablish the similarities found within the two styles. These shared techniques will provide singers with a foundational understanding of their own kinesthetic awareness and how to problem solve any unwanted tension within their vocal mechanism. One of the first and most important
similarities is alignment. Both choral and vocal jazz use the same balanced skeletal and muscular alignment that is needed for effective breathing and phonation. While the vocal jazz style may require some movement based upon the song choice, all body movement should be made with the intention of keeping proper alignment. An additional factor with alignment is that neither type of singing should engage any tension. If any tension is occurring, there is a strong likelihood that alignment is not balanced. Another important similarity is breath. Identical to traditional choral singing, the singer not only needs to decide the amount of air that is needed for each musical phrase, but also needs to engage the same breathing structures in order to create phonation and resonance.

Both choral and vocal jazz styles require the use of the entire vocal tract. While vocal jazz may manipulate the shape and length for different styles, the entire tract is still engaged during phonation. They also use the modal\(^\text{80}\) and falsetto vocal ranges in most all sung repertoire. This use of the entire modal range is more present within vocal jazz music as the treble parts lie mostly within the speaking range. Vocal jazz also uses the mixed range to produce different timbres, and the head voice is naturally engaged in higher vocal passages.

For diction related items, glottal, aspirate, and balanced onsets\(^\text{81}\) are used in choral and vocal jazz styles. Depending on the style of work, vocal jazz will

\(^{80}\) According to Melissa Malde in *What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body*, this modal range includes the chest voice, mixed voice, and head voice, found on page 142.

\(^{81}\) The start of phonation.
often use more glottal and aspirate onsets. As previously established, consonants and vowels are different in production as well as purpose. While the choral ensemble uses taller and more prominent diction for amplification purposes, the vocal jazz ensemble uses wider, more conversational diction for microphone purposes; however, both styles require the use of pure vowels. The foundation of knowing the individual shape of each standard vowel is important for both styles. Also, both styles implement some vowel modifications that are typically used for blending or range purposes. For example, if the range of the melody is too high to sing on a brighter vowel (ee or oo), one might tell a singer to sing the vowel through more of an “ah” vowel to create space for the sound to resonate freely. For blending purposes, it is common for conductors to ask all singers to open up their vowel shapes more to provide a more unified sound. Lastly, in regard to musical phrasing, both styles will shape a musical phrase based upon the contour of the melody, text, and dynamics.

The number of differences between the two styles outnumber the similarities. This is predominantly due to stylistic requirements of each. Table 3.1 is a side-by-side comparison of the two styles that includes vocal and ensemble pedagogy differences, and a few specific stylistic differences. It is important to note that this comparison is an overview made from the traditional choral repertoire and not contemporary choral or 20th-century choral music styles, as these genres are somewhat influenced by jazz and other popular music styles.

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82 Ah, eh, ee, oh, and oo.
Table 3.1. Choral vs. Vocal Jazz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Choral</th>
<th>Vocal Jazz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic- no amplification</td>
<td>Microphone amplification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment includes: piano, orchestra, percussion (World music)</td>
<td>Accompaniment includes: piano, bass, drums, guitar, vocal percussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical choral ensemble ranges from 20-60 singers</td>
<td>Typical jazz ensembles ranges from 6-16 singers, jazz choirs are 26-50+, small jazz ensembles 4-8 singers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal tract expanded (i.e. larynx low, soft palate high, lips and buccinators lowered, etc.)</td>
<td>Vocal tract shifts in length and expansion depending on style (larynx is typically higher, lowered soft palate, wider vowels as opposed to taller vowels, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone is a balance of bright and dark</td>
<td>Tone is brighter; more reminiscent of instruments (especially in swing tunes) and is created by a shallower vocal tract and wider vowels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full resonance; limited timbres</td>
<td>Varying degrees of resonance dependent on style: many timbres (i.e. breathy to resonant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATB ranges are generally within a specific tessitura associated with the voice part</td>
<td>Tenor and bass parts (except for a walking bass line) do not consist of a wide range through many registers. Soprano and alto ranges typically sit in the mid to low registers. These lower registers for the soprano and alto parts require strength and flexibility in chest and mixed voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal diction</td>
<td>Conversational/vernacular diction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall articulation is conservative</td>
<td>Overall articulation is more varied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broader use of dynamic ranges</td>
<td>Somewhat limited dynamic range</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited ornamentation</td>
<td>A vast array of ornamentation (i.e. vibrato, slides, scoops, trills, shakes, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choral</th>
<th>Vocal Jazz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal improvisation (depends on style- gospel and some world music pieces require improvisation)</td>
<td>Improvisation within almost any style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically, eighth notes are performed straight, even with syncopation (gospel and some twentieth century music does incorporate some elements of jazz swing)</td>
<td>Eighth notes are swung or performed straight (Latin, Rock, or R &amp; B), even with syncopation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal lines are typically composed to deliver text; vocal writing is idiomatic</td>
<td>Vocal parts can portray instruments, add tone colors/timbres, and accompany along with the delivery of text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these differences may seem self-explanatory, they still require mentioning.

It is imperative that these style differences are discussed with singers.

**Building and Transitioning Technique Through the Warm-up**

When reviewing and introducing the vocal pedagogy differences between the two styles, it is the author’s opinion that they will be best executed and implemented through warm-ups before the vocal jazz music is introduced. The warm-up time for choirs can often be overlooked, as all too often the choral conductors focus is rehearsal time with the music. Regardless of the level, warming up is considered the best way to establish and build vocal technique and to prepare each singer mentally for the rehearsal ahead. In this particular situation of style transition period, the warm-up time can revisit good vocal technique, can introduce the vocal jazz style, and can also provide an opportunity
for vocal exploration. It is the author’s suggestion that every warm-up should address all of the following: alignment, breath, tone, resonance, diction, and articulation.

Though there are no transitional exercises between the two styles on alignment, it is recommended that when introducing the vocal jazz style an “alignment check” should be performed to remind singers of their kinesthetic awareness and to problem-solve any unwanted tension. Since breathing technique is similar between both styles, any breathing exercises that work on the foundational process of breathing that build stamina and develop the quality of breath will be sufficient for both styles.

Before implementing the vocal jazz tone, it is the authors opinion that a thorough discussion should be given with the singers of the ensemble about the vocal technique of each style. This involves how to continue the healthy vocal technique they have learned through choral singing (breath, alignment, tone, and resonance), registers, timbres, and how to shape the vocal tract. Similar to a choral warm-up, the vocal jazz warm-up should establish good phonation and tone. This means making sure the breath is working in connection with the larynx. Exercises that help establish this are humming, sirens,\(^{83}\) or exercises that consist of sustained pitches. Humming can include sliding patterns similar to

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\(^{83}\) Sirens are a vocal exercise, typically used during a warm-up routine, that allows the singer to sing through all of the notes in their entire range. This can be done on a neutral syllable such as ah, eh, ee, oh, or oo. It is similar to a slide or glide from the lowest part to the highest part of the singer’s range.
sirens or can include specific patterns such as 1-3-5-3-1__ or 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1__, etc., at any tempo (see Figure 3.1).

![Humming patterns](image1)

Figure 3.1. Humming patterns

Sirens, regardless of length or vowel can work on breath connection, engagement of different ranges, and aid in resonance. For sustained exercises, hum a pitch for two beats and then sustain for two beats on a standard vowel. This exercise could be used to establish tall, open vowels for choral, as well as work on the broader, more conversation vowels for vocal jazz.

Another exercise to develop resonance be to sustain on a “ng” for four beats, and then sing four quarter notes on the same pitch on any standard vowel, ending with the sustained vowel for four counts (see Figure 3.2).

![“Ng” exercise](image2)

Figure 3.2. “Ng” exercise

The “ng” vowel immediately pulls the resonance forward towards the nasal cavity or front of the vocal tract and can be used in reference when there is further discussion about a brighter, forward tone.
Finally, exercises in stepwise motion or leaps of thirds on an open vowel (ah, oh, or eh) will help engage the breath as well as keeping consistent tone and vowel shape (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Leaps of thirds

When introducing the brighter tone, the more sustained exercises on brighter vowels (ee or oo) will help the singer’s ears adjust as well as give them time to modify their vocal tract. Once they feel comfortable, incorporating faster moving exercises such as the previous are of leaps of thirds or stepwise motion will be much easier in the jazz tone.

Due to the vocal jazz style utilizing a variety of timbres and resonances it is more helpful to use transitional exercises that help establish the creation of a clear, bright, and forward resonance. This can often be achieved through sirens or slides of a fifth or octave on closed vowels such as “ee”, “oo”, or “eh”. Once singers demonstrate the clear, bright ring of the forward resonance with closed vowels, incorporate open vowels such as “oh” or “ah” using the conversational jazz vowels. In many cases this may mean that they have to over-manipulate the “ah” vowel to keep bright resonance. For example, the brightest “ah” vowel might include or sound more like the “a” in “hat”. This should be adjusted once resonance within open vowels has been achieved, as not every song will require an overly bright resonance. Other exercises that help build resonance through the mixed voice or chest voice registers are typically stepwise patterns on closed
vowels. For example, 3-2-3-2-1-2-3_4-3-4-3-2-3-4_, etc., ascending and descending a full octave (see Figure 3.4). Open vowels may be used once resonance is demonstrated with closed vowels.

Figure 3.4. Resonance exercise

When working the tone used for swing, blues, or other up-tempo tunes, it can be approached first through the experimentation of registers. When learning how to lower the soft palate and sing with a more forward, brighter resonance, it is often easier to introduce this through exercises that rest within the mix or head registers, on vowels that can be manipulated from dark to bright.\textsuperscript{84} This may include sustained pitches on vowels or descending scalar passages. In choral singing, the head and mix registers are typically performed with a lowered larynx and raised soft palate. The same registers also provide the largest physical shift

\textsuperscript{84} It is highly suggested by the author that the conductor warm-up the entire range of the singer’s voice before moving on to specialized vocal jazz warm-ups.
between choral and vocal jazz, unlike the chest register where the physical difference may not be felt as strong.

When working with varying degrees of breathiness often used in ballads, bossa nova, or samba tunes, often slides of fifths or octaves (1-5-1 or 1-8-1) on the “ah” vowel work best. For treble singers, it is often easier to incorporate more breath within the tone as they go higher in their range. For the lower range it is easier to start the slide on the higher octave (8-1-8 or 5-1-5). A 5-4-3-2-1 pattern as half notes on an “ah” or any open vowel will also help with adding more breath within the tone. A further extension of this exercises would be to ask singers to go back and forth between breathy and resonant. This may mean resonant for the first slide and then breathy the second time, or vice versa.

When working on diction and articulation with singers, often the best way to transition them is through scat syllables. This does not mean that the choral conductor needs a wealthy vocabulary of such syllables, a minimal vocabulary of 10 syllables would suffice. By using the scat syllables in warm-ups, the singers work on imploding the starting and ending consonants, keeping the vowels more relaxed and conversational, and gaining perspective on which consonants work well with short or long articulations. For quarter notes, a choral director could use the syllables “doot,” “dot,” or “bop;” for eighth notes, “doo-bah,” “dah-bah,” or “doo-vah” often work best; “yah,” “bah,” or “oh” work well for half notes; and “doo-bah-bah-dah,” or “did-dl-ah” work best for triplets.

When incorporating these syllables into a warm-up, major and minor scales provide enough length and manipulation of rhythm to incorporate a variety
of different patterns. For example, have the singers sing a major scale using straight eighth notes on solfege syllables either using choral diction or vocal jazz diction. The second time have them sing swing eighth notes using the scat syllables, “doo-bah” (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Scales with solfege and swinging eighth notes

Keep in mind that the emphasis should be on the upbeat, so “bah” gets the accent, however, not so much that the “b” pops and the syllable combination sounds like “doo-pah”. Scales that work best for warm-ups and ear training are major, Dorian minor, blues, chromatic, whole tone, major and minor pentatonic, diminished, dominant, or Mixolydian. These syllables can also be used when singing through arpeggiated patterns, which is helpful when adding in the sevenths of chords. Another option for diction work is to take a word phrase out of the music and sing it all on the same pitch using swung eighth notes or the rhythm that is already written. This will help singers with text stress as well as articulation. For a more detailed study of jazz articulations, Kirby Shaw’s book *Vocal Jazz Style* goes through common jazz articulations and provides specific music examples to work on with singers.
In addition to any of the provided warm-ups above, sight-reading can also be a valuable part of learning the style and implementing vocal jazz tone. The Kirby Shaw book listed above provides four-part reading that can be used for sight reading. Another great resource for style and sight reading is Russell Robinson and Jay Althouse’s *Developing Technique Through Jazz/Pop Styles*. A similar option may be to use any traditional choral four-part sight reading. These exercises range in difficulty of rhythm and melody allowing for work on vowel shape and tone in both the choral and vocal jazz styles, blend and balance, and the alteration of rhythms. For example, if there is an exercise that contains many eighth notes, one could work on singing through the exercise with straight eighth notes and then the second time swinging the eighth notes. A conductor or the singers could take it one step further and add scat syllables, articulation, and stylistic elements (slides, scoops, falls, etc).

**Ensemble Pedagogy Transition Approaches**

Addressing balance, blend and intonation issues within the choral and vocal jazz style can be approached in a similar fashion. Once the new vocal jazz tone has been established with the singers in warm-ups, exercises encouraging listening and matching vowels can be used. To encourage listening for blend and balance purposes, singing in different configurations allows for more accountability on individual parts as well as listening across the choir for other parts. Depending on the size of the choir this can be done by switching the placement of singers in rows, singing in quartets or octets, in a circle for rehearsal purposes, or completely mixed regardless of section. When singing on
microphones, placement of the singers within the choir are not as important acoustically, as the sound that needs to be modified is what is being heard from the sound monitors that are facing the singers. This listening for blend and balance from a monitor requires more effort in matching vowels and possible adjustments from the soundboard to balance the volume of singers.

As previously stated in the tone warm-ups section, sustained pitches will help with development of vocal jazz tone but will also improve balance and blend. When working on transitioning the vowels, it may be helpful to take time holding pitches in unison to first establish a unified vocal jazz tone and vowel. Switching between choral and jazz vowels will also help differentiate the vocal technique needed for each style. Once a unified vowel is found, start adding in more pitches, building major or minor chords without sevenths, and then adding those in (see Figure 3.6).

![Chords for tuning](image)

Figure 3.6. Chords for tuning

Lastly, isolating a few chords from the music that are not tuning well can help develop vowel shape. Often the smallest changes to the vowel can make the largest difference in tuning. For a brighter sound, singing the word through more of an “ee” vowel will impact the tone, singing text through an “oh” will increase the roundness and depth, and finally singing text through an “oo” will bring about more ring and warmth to the sound. As stated in the previous chapter on the jazz ballad, for tuning difficult sections within a ballad, the author
encourages a slightly more open vowel for blending purposes. This does not always work well with more upbeat swing tunes that require a brighter vowel. If there is a need to modify a vowel for range purposes, it is often best to consider modifying the vowel with the entire ensemble.

For intonation exercises the choir should, regardless of the style, work unaccompanied as much as possible in rehearsal. Working unaccompanied will help encourage and develop the singer’s listening and musicianship skills. Too often, pitches are given to singers without requiring the singer to use their pitch memory. The more singers are tested on their own pitch memory the less they will rely on the piano. Any vocal exercises mentioned previously or any that have been previously introduced to the singers by the choral conductor can be performed unaccompanied, especially when it comes to modulating up or down by a half step. Singers will not only learn to listen to others, but they will also work on blending their vowels with those around them and it will also establish a stronger unison sound. This can also be done with sections of music, but more specifically with cadences, final notes, and starting pitches of the next musical phrase. Chromatic scales help refine ascending and descending passages within choral and vocal jazz music. Another chromatic exercise frequently done is singing intervals chromatically (C, C#, C, D, C, D#, C, E, etc.) (see Figure 3.7)

![Chromatic exercise](image)

Figure 3.7. Chromatic exercise
Lastly, taking the time to learn notes and rhythms correctly will benefit all singers and the music learning process. Allow and encourage the students to learn their parts with confidence and without the use of extreme dynamics. Musicality such as articulation and stylistic elements can be approached once the students are singing with healthy technique and have confidence with their individual part.

**Bridging the Gap Stylistically**

The information provided within this section will discuss the most approachable vocal jazz styles and how to perform them. These jazz styles not only represent standard vocal jazz repertoire but also provide an idea for beginning concert repertoire. Also included are conducting suggestions for the vocal jazz style and ensemble.

**Vocal Jazz Styles**

Within vocal jazz repertoire, most music can be classified under ballad, swing, and Latin styles such as bossa nova or samba. Each of these styles requires their own text treatment, stylistic ornaments and articulation, and rhythmic interpretation. This section of the chapter will introduce each style and how they are commonly performed in regard to tone color, resonance, diction, and musical expression.

**Ballad**

When transitioning the traditional choral ensemble to the vocal jazz, one of the best styles to start with is the jazz ballad. Due to the relaxed nature of the ballad, singers are able to more easily and confidently work on developing the
skills of register mixing, minimal vibrato, breath support, and singing in the vernacular. The jazz ballad is either performed unaccompanied (rubato) or with instruments (fixed tempo). When approaching a ballad, the musical line and a speech-like delivery guide all interpretation. Phrases will typically be more conversational and will often emphasize the natural rise and fall of the melodic line. Close attention must be made to phonetic aspects such as diphthongs, triphthongs, and consonants as they will help create stylistic authenticity in performance.

The tone color or timbre in a ballad can vary from breathy to resonant. Typically, in an unaccompanied ballad one might go with a breathier tone for blend and balance purposes. Resonance within a ballad can be used to accentuate the climax of a phrase. For an accompanied ballad, generally the sound could be performed with a more resonant and clear tone to cut through the timbre of the instruments. However, in more exposed areas, the tone color could be softer or warmer. Ultimately the decision for tone and resonance lies at the discretion of the conductor. It is suggested to experiment with either tone and resonance and use the one that provides the most musical expression of the text. Vibrato is another stylistic element to consider. If there are solo opportunities, vibrato is acceptable to use as a tone color or as an ornament. For ensemble

85 Lyons, Strategies for Developing, 45.
purposes, due to the slower tempo and close harmonies, the author would recommend that minimal vibrato be used throughout the piece.

Swing

Swing style is one of the most well-known characteristics of jazz and is often hard to teach. Swing involves syncopation, swung eighths notes (see Figure 3.8), and a consistent tempo. Syncopation, in this performative context, is most often described as accenting the notes that take place just before or after the beat. On a large scale, this means accenting beats 2 and 4 (the weak beats), unlike classical (strong beats on 1 and 3). One of the first elements to instill within singers is comfort and confidence on beats two and four. Establishing a strong and steady quarter note feel in the swing style can be more helpful than a subdivision of triplets. Once the singers feel comfortable snapping on beats two and four, the implementation of the swung eighth can be introduced.

Swing eighth notes are often notated in jazz music the same way as classical eighth notes are notated. What is often seen just below the tempo classification is seen in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8. Swing eighth notes

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Either notations can be interpreted the same way. When swinging eighth notes, the first note is longer than the second, but the accent is on the second note (the upbeat). Another way to think about swinging eighth notes is the triplet feel.

Instead of a 4/4 time feel where the accent is on the offbeat eighth note, a 12/8-swing feel puts the accent on beats three, six, nine, and twelve, with the deemphasis on beats on four and ten. A way to introduce this to the singers would be to have them sing a major scale, using the swung eighth note, and on the syllables “doo-bah.” The “doo” implies the length of the first note while the “bah” indicates the accent of the second note (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9. Swinging eighth notes with scat syllables

Finding a constant and consistent tempo is important for any swing tune. This is particularly important, as the tendency with beginners can be to rush or fall behind. Using a metronome in the first few rehearsals of a piece will help with the note learning stages. This will also help instill a stronger feel for two and four within the singers and will increase confidence with their own rhythmic feel when instruments are eventually added.\textsuperscript{88}

The tone color typically used for swing pieces is bright, as most swing tunes resemble the instruments of the jazz big band. The sopranos are the trumpet section, the altos are the saxophone section, the tenors and basses are

the trombone section, and the basses can also resemble the double bass. It is important for singers to know this as it plays into the balance of the group and the role of each part. That does not mean that the sopranos should always be loud because they have the melody, but they do help guide the entire ensemble in musical expression. Listening to big bands such as the Count Basie Orchestra, The Woody Herman Orchestra, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, Duke Ellington Orchestra, and Gordon Goodwin’s Big Phat Band and many others can help determine what is authentic stylistic ornamentation.\(^8^9\) Vibrato use in swing tunes is minimal, but if it is used, it is generally implemented as an ornament. One specific reason is that swing tune harmonies can be comprised of ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths, where minimal vibrato is recommended to allow chords to tune. Another reason is that rhythmic values tend to be shorter and the tempo is faster.

Consonants can also affect the rhythmic drive of a swing piece. If consonants are performed weakly, the piece may lose its rhythmic intensity; however, if they are performed too strong, then the legato flow of a phrase is lost. Unlike the ballad where there can be flexibility with vowels and consonants, the swing tune requires precise rhythmic subdivision to establish a swing groove.\(^9^0\)

\(^8^9\) Other resources for vocal jazz ornamentation are Kirby Shaw’s *Vocal Jazz Style* and Carl Strommen’s *The Contemporary Chorus: A Director’s Guide for the Jazz-Rock Choir*.

\(^9^0\) Lyons, *Strategies for Developing*, 74.
Latin

The term “Latin” is used as an overall expression to define music with rhythmic and stylistic elements from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. The Latin style can include Bossa Nova, Samba, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean, and Salsa. Most vocal jazz pieces, however, will use bossa nova or samba rhythmic beats. As opposed to the swing eighth notes just previously mentioned, eighth notes in the Latin style are performed evenly (straight).

The bossa nova style, mostly Brazilian in origin, is generally performed in a medium tempo with a straight-eighth note feel. Generally, in the straight-eighth styles there is less use of a triplet feel. The emphasis is still on the back of the beat (see Figure 3.10).

![Bossa Nova rhythmic feel](image)

Figure 3.10. Bossa Nova rhythmic feel

The bossa nova rhythmic pattern is used frequently when changing the feel of a ballad or swing tune. For example, “Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)” is typically performed as a swing tune; however, some artists have performed this tune slower than the original tempo and in a bossa nova feel. The Samba rhythmic feel comes from a popular Brazilian dance. It is generally performed

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92 Ibid., 12.
faster than the bossa nova, in a double-time feel, and the sixteenth note (eighth note in cut time) provides the subdivision or underlying rhythmic pulse.\textsuperscript{93}

The general vocal tone of a bossa nova or samba piece is warm and softer than what you would produce in a swing or ballad. There is more breath heard in the tone, and the resonance produced is not as bright as a swing tune. An extreme of dynamic range is not heard within these styles. A large part of the focus in this style is syncopation and repetitive rhythms, which comes from the dance origin. Diction often includes aspirate onsets and percussive consonants to emphasize the text and syncopated rhythms. Minimal vibrato is used within the group setting but is often used within solos.

Vocal Jazz Arrangement and Arrangers

When selecting vocal jazz arrangements, most vocal jazz arrangers have applied a five-level difficulty scale for choral directors to use when selecting appropriate repertoire for beginner or experienced vocal jazz ensembles. Jazz arrangers or publishers such as the University of Northern Colorado Jazz Press, Kerry Marsh, Jennifer Barnes, and Rosana Eckert provide an interpretation of scale levels in reference to their music. However, if one were to order music from a music vendor or publisher such as JW Pepper or Hal Leonard, the difficulty rating provided tends to be more dependent upon the publisher itself. Provided below is a brief summary of the five-level difficulty scale listed on Kerry Marsh’s website. It is highly suggested by the author that one considers these levels when choosing vocal jazz repertoire.

\textsuperscript{93} Zegree, \textit{The Complete Guide}, 12.
• Level One: pieces that would best suit elementary aged students as they are typically written in unison or two-part writing.
• Level Two: these pieces are typically used by junior high groups and many beginning high school ensembles.
• Level Three: these pieces are written for high school ensembles in mind. Rhythms and harmonic content can be more complex.
• Level Four: these particular pieces are aimed at more advanced high school groups and most college ensembles. There is a wide arrangement of harmonic and rhythmic material presented.
• Level Five: these pieces contain the most rhythmically and harmonically complex material. These charts can be considered professional level, although advanced high school or collegiate groups can perform them.\footnote{Kerry Marsh, “Difficulty Levels,” Kerry Marsh Vocal Jazz and Beyond, accessed February 24, 2019, https://kerrymarsh.com.}

Well-known vocal jazz arrangers include Steve Zegree, Paris Rutherford, Kerry Marsh, Phil Mattson, Michele Weir, Rosana Eckert, Darmon Meader, Greg Jasperse, Jennifer Barnes, Greg Gilpin, Mark Hayes, Jay Althouse, and Kirby Shaw. Jazz arrangements seen by these arrangers include standard jazz repertoire (swing, ballad, blues, bossa nova, samba, or bebop), but also arrangements of pop or rock tunes as well. It is the author’s suggestion that when programming an entire set of vocal jazz music for a concert, one would select a swing, ballad, and bossa nova or samba tune as the primary feature of the jazz style. The final tune can be a vocal jazz arrangement of a pop or rock tune as it will typically include the rhythmic and harmonic part writing that is similar to the previous arrangements.

Conducting the Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Conducting a vocal jazz ensemble or vocal jazz piece requires a different role from the traditional choral director. The main difference is that the importance for the conductor to stand in front of an ensemble is neither as high...
nor as stylistically necessary. Regardless of the argument, there are still choral conductors who stand in front of the ensemble during a vocal jazz performance. It is the author’s opinion that this is more than acceptable, especially when directing singers performing a new style for the first time. Eventually, the more experience a group of singers has with this new style, the conductor may want the students to gain some accountability and have them perform without every cue.

One of the first skills to master when conducting a vocal jazz ensemble is the count off. It is often the best and most stylistic way to start a swing, bossa nova, or samba tune. When conducting most traditional choral pieces, a conductor does not generally give the accompanist a full two bars of conducting before the accompanist plays. However, the two-bar count off commonly used in vocal jazz and big bands establishes the tempo and style of the entire piece before it is even played. When counting a swing tune off, establish the tempo of the tune by counting off two full measures in the tempo and snapping on beats two and four.¹⁵ It is not necessary to beat any type of four pattern to your students or to the instrumentalists during this count off. For a Latin count off: snap on all quarter note beats while saying, “one__two__one, two, three, four.” When performing with a rhythm section, often times a conductor might step out of the way of the singers after the count off and stand near the rhythm section to

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help provide rhythmic cues. This allows for the focus to be on the singer’s and their performance.\(^{96}\)

Another element to consider when conducting the vocal jazz ensemble is the traditional choral conducting gestures. After counting off the ensemble, it is not recommended by the author that a conductor would go back to performing traditional choral gestures. Instead, it is recommended that a conductor use gestures similar to a big band leader. Generally, a big band leader provides cues for entrances, rhythmic accents, dynamics, and cut offs. The gestural purpose is not large and is not needed if the singers are prepared enough. When conducting a ballad, the opportunity to conduct in the traditional choral setting is more acceptable. However, there is often a choice as to whether the conductor or the students lead the ensemble when performing a ballad in a performance setting. This can largely depend on the preparation and musicality that has been rehearsed. Again, it is the author’s recommendation that the conductor makes the final decision as to how to lead the ensemble through their repertoire in performance.

CHAPTER IV

VOCAL JAZZ IN THE CHORAL CLASSROOM: EIGHT-WEEK CURRICULUM STUDY

Purpose of the Curriculum

Discussed within the first chapter of this document was the justification and purpose for this study. Research indicated a lack of vocal jazz ensembles across the United States as well as lack of conductor education. While there are efficient pedagogical resources written on both choral and vocal jazz ensembles, there are no resources that provide a curriculum on how to implement the vocal jazz style. Often times, the hardest part about creating a new ensemble or learning a new style is finding the applicable resources, appropriate repertoire, and then creating a plan on how to use the information. This curriculum was put together with the busy choral conductor in mind, who has interest in providing a new learning experience for their students and themselves but who also lacks the time for searching through resources and repertoire.

An important part of this curriculum was to explain to the conductors the primary purpose of the study, what information was included, and how they could use the material. Before section one, an opening letter and overview of the study was provided with the above information along with contact information of the author for future questions on the material within the curriculum or how to
implement the curriculum within the classroom. This statement was not only to inform the conductors of the purpose, but to have been potentially shared with the students.

In order to proceed with the study an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval had to be obtained. The observations, feedback, and focus of the curriculum was strictly on the conductor and the conductor’s experience, not the students. Permission to perform the curriculum study was only granted by the school, the school district, and the conductor. Choral conductors were asked to communicate with the author outside of the classroom for questions or concerns and the author’s purpose was to strictly observe, having no communication with the conductor or students during rehearsal. The study was not to interfere with established classroom or course expectations set by the school or choral conductor. To maintain confidentiality, no video or audio of rehearsal or concert performances were taken, and no data findings were shared with the conductors.

Provided Research Material

The curriculum could have been approached from just the vocal jazz standpoint, essentially making it another vocal jazz pedagogy resource but with a weekly goal list and provided repertoire. Instead, the purpose was to create something that used the already established knowledge of the choral conductor of traditional choral music and how to rehearse an ensemble. The reason for including these elements is that the vocal jazz ensemble, besides stylistic differences, can be approached in a similar fashion through vocal and ensemble pedagogy.
Vocal Pedagogy

The vocal pedagogy section of the curriculum was created to refresh choral directors on the important fundamentals of vocal technique. Information included alignment, breath, vocal production, phonation issues, resonance, and vibrato. These sections were specifically highlighted for use of transition material. Information was largely collected from Melissa Malde, Mary Jean Allen, and Kurt-Alexander Zellar’s book *What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body*. Information within this book is based upon Body Mapping and Alexander Technique.

Choral Pedagogy

The choral pedagogy section discusses elements of blend, balance, intonation, and diction within the traditional choral ensemble. Each section addresses possible concerns along with suggestions on how to problem solve. Suggestions made by the author are universal and are meant to be used within the vocal jazz section should the same problems arise for blend, balance, intonation, etc. They also bring attention to the rehearsal tools that most conductors already have that can be used as transitional material. Information regarding ensemble pedagogy was taken from *Choral Pedagogy, 2nd edition*, by Brenda Smith and Robert T. Sataloff, and *The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting: A Handbook for Achieving Vocal Health* by Margaret Olsen.

Vocal Jazz Pedagogy

The first half of the vocal jazz pedagogy section contains the largest amount of transitional material. It discusses the similarities and differences in
vocal production as well as how to produce the vocal jazz tone. The stylistic elements that are presented are largely based upon the repertoire that was chosen for the study (ballad, bossa nova, and swing). Within each style description is a discussion about the common performance practice, the type of vocal production it requires, and any other stylistic elements such as vibrato and diction.

The second half of the vocal jazz section pertains to the ensemble concerns of balance, blend, intonation, diction, articulation/ornaments (vibrato), and stage presence. It is suggested by the author that any problems that arise can be problem solved with any of the suggestions provided within choral pedagogy segment. The diction portion specifically addresses the differences between choral and vocal jazz vowel formations and the use of consonants.

Along with the curriculum, each conductor was given Kirby Shaw’s *Vocal Jazz Style* to help with stylistic interpretation as well as common stylistic articulations. Conductors were encouraged to use this with students as sight reading material or to find ways to implement the ornaments within the repertoire.

Minimal vibrato singing is also addressed, along with suggestions by Diana Spradling on how to approach vibrato in jazz singing. Lastly, stage presence was offered as a suggestion by the author as most vocal jazz ensembles include some sort of movement within their performances. To get a perspective on how much choreography can go into performances, links to YouTube videos were provided to the conductors. Information from this section
was taken from *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz: Including Pop and Other Show Styles* by Steve Zegree, *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* by Paris Rutherford, *Vocal Jazz Style* by Kirby Shaw, and *Jazz Singing: Developing Artistry and Authenticity* by Diana Spradling.

**Jazz Improvisation**

Due to the amount of time and all of the material presented within the curriculum, the vocal improvisation section was minimal. This was largely based upon the assumption that between rehearsing the pieces, introducing a new style, and incorporating all the other activities that were suggested, there may not have been a large amount of time to dedicate towards learning improvisation. It included the beginning improvisational aspects of syllables, rhythm, melody, and how to improvise through a jazz tune. To aid in building a vocabulary of syllables for the students and conductor, the author provides some suggestions for eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and triplets, along with exercises that incorporate rhythm and syllables together. The melody section discusses how conductors can use the scales provided in the warm-up section to assist with creating melodies for scatting. Also suggested is the use of a melody from a lead sheet. To help students that may be shy with improvisation, group improvisation exercises were provided.

If the conductor is able to get through the melodic section of improvisation, the next step is to improvise through any one of the lead sheets that was provided. A further step was a group transcription of a vocal solo. The author
provided two suggestions of quality vocal improvisation solos and links to their recordings in the YouTube listening section. The information for this section was taken from and referenced Michele Weir's book *Vocal Improvisation*.

Rehearsal Techniques

Rehearsal technique was not included within the choral pedagogy section as the assumption was that the choral director had already established successful music learning techniques. This section is specifically directed towards the vocal jazz style. Listening is highly encouraged throughout the curriculum, but it is especially encouraged during the warm-up part of the rehearsal. The conductor could have the students listen to a vocal jazz group and discuss what they heard, or the conductor could use the vocal jazz warm-ups to encourage new ways of listening while singing. For example, having the students sing through chromatic, blues, or minor scales, or build chords that incorporate elevenths, thirteenths, or ninths. The music learning techniques that are suggested discuss how the conductor can approach a jazz piece with the students, how to work on difficult rhythms, how to incorporate musical ornaments, and how to fine tune chords within the music.

The vocal jazz repertoire selected for the study will be discussed later on in this chapter. In order to help with the preparation of the repertoire selection, a section on how to work with a rhythm section was added. Each jazz piece
requires the use of the full rhythm section, or at least a bass player, drummer, and pianist. Information on how to communicate effectively with a rhythm section was taken from *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz: Including Pop and Other Show Styles* by Steve Zegree. Lastly, a conducting section was added to provide choral conductors with insight as to what is commonly expected of the director within a vocal jazz group. Information for this section was taken from the Steve Zegree book and *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* by Paris Rutherford.

**Weekly Goals**

Before all materials were put together, the creation of the curriculum was discussed with every participating choral conductor as to what expectations would be needed to produce a successful transition. One of them was a table of weekly goals on the implementation of the jazz style (pages 154-156 of Appendix B). The purpose of the weekly goals was to provide conductors with an idea on what should be accomplished after a week’s worth of rehearsal time. The goals cover:

- When to introduce repertoire
- What listening to incorporate
- What style of lead sheet could be used for sight-reading
- How much improvisation to get through
- How much stylistic elements should be incorporated within the music

Each listening and sight-reading example correlated with the introduction of the new jazz piece and jazz style. The improvisation goals were designed so that students were taken through all beginning stages, to be able to improvise through a lead sheet, and finish a transcription a week before the concert.

Overall, the curriculum was designed so that all material was presented within
the first seven weeks, and the eighth week focused on finishing up curriculum material and final preparation of the concert.

**Warm-ups and Lead Sheets**

The warm-ups provided by the author were designed to expand the knowledge and provide more options for the choral conductor. The major, melodic minor, natural minor, Dorian, blues, major and minor pentatonic, dominant, and chromatic scales were provided for improvisation purposes as well as everyday warm-up use. They were written using only eighth notes and, on the syllables, “doo-bah”. Two types of vocaleses were created for ear training purposes. The first is major, minor, augmented, and diminished triads sung on “loo”. The second one consists of singing through major, minor, and dominant seventh chords, also on the word “loo”. Conductors were encouraged to change the syllables and rhythmic feel to fit a particular style. Jazz chords were included for tuning and listening purposes. They could be sung on any syllable and implemented however the conductor saw fit. A list of lead sheets was suggested for sight-reading purposes and to help with the stylistic implementation of swing, ballad and bossa nova styles. There were five swing, three blues, four ballads, and four bossa nova tunes. Conductors were also suggested to use the Kirby Shaw book for any further sight reading and stylistic exercises.

**Listening**

As a way to encourage listening throughout the curriculum, a listening list and questionnaire were provided for in-class use and discussion. The listening
examples for the questionnaire specifically involved groups from the 1930s to current (The Boswell Sisters to Vertical Voices). The document contained questions based upon elements of music theory (time signature, tempo, form, and style), what instruments were present, use of improvisation, presence of articulations or ornaments, and personal reflection. A larger listening list was provided that conductors could share with the students for any outside listening. This included male and female vocalists, vocal groups, instrumentalists, and big bands. To help aid in learning a possible aural transcription of a vocal improvisation solo and sight-reading, YouTube links of specific recordings were also provided.

**Repertoire Selection**

The repertoire for the curriculum was selected based upon a previous conversation with the conductors about the ability level of choirs, the voice type of each choir, and the amount of repertoire that could be prepared. All choirs had soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voice parts and each choir could learn music between the grade levels of two and four.97 Four pieces were selected to demonstrate a transition of the choral and vocal jazz style.

As stated within the first chapter, the traditional choral piece was selected by each choral conductor with the guidelines that the piece was written by a well-

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97 Grade level is based upon the difficulty levels of rhythm, melody, range, and tessitura within a piece. JW Pepper includes their own grade levels of easy, medium easy, medium, medium advanced, and collegiate. They also use grade levels from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Virginia, and Maryland. Kerry Marsh has his own rating system based upon similar classifications.
established composer, the text was timeless or relevant, consisted of strong idiomatic writing, included creative craftsmanship, had aesthetic attraction, and provided teaching opportunities. The vocal jazz pieces were selected by the author of the study, with the intentions that they showed a transition of style and included multiple styles of vocal jazz. The ballad, “The Water is Wide,” arranged by Darmon Meader, is not necessarily considered a jazz ballad, as the melody and text are based upon a Scottish folk song. What allows this to be a suitable transitional piece is that it still incorporates strong homophonic choral writing, tall choral vowels, and lyrical melodic writing. The “jazz” that Meader incorporates is the use of the scat syllable “doo” for the unaccompanied introduction, which also incorporates close harmonic writing. Meader also incorporates a number of extended-tertian “color tones” in his harmonies.

The bossa nova tune, “Girl from Ipanema” arranged by Paris Rutherford, was selected as the third tune to provide a seamless transition from the ballad. This tune is slightly more upbeat in tempo, has a constant rhythmic drive, contains a lyrical melody, and continues on with the straight eighth note pattern. However, it begins to incorporate more jazz elements like syncopated rhythms, the vocal jazz tone (warm and somewhat breathy resonance), and conversational diction. Stylistic ornaments such as scoops, falls, and aspirate onsets can also be incorporated as they fit within the stylistic needs of the genre.

The last tune, “We’ve Got a World That Swings” arranged by Kerry Marsh, is in the swing style. Unlike the other tunes where the voice parts are SATB, this piece is arranged for SAB, as it is a more beginning-level jazz tune. This tune is
the culmination of all vocal jazz elements discussed within the vocal and ensemble pedagogy sections. It requires the bright forward resonance, conversational diction, swung eighth notes, big dynamic contrasts, and many stylistic ornaments such as scoops, falls, and plops. By the time the choir sings this piece, the audience should hear a significant difference in tone color and stylistic differences from the traditional choral piece.

**Observations**

Observations with the choral conductors were set up on a bi-weekly basis (week two, four, six, and eight). This was to allow the conductor enough time to become familiar with the curriculum within the first week as well as have enough time to plan rehearsals with all of the material that needed to be covered. Data collection of the observations entailed the warm-up routines, how much and what material was being incorporated into the rehearsal of the jazz curriculum, the rehearsal techniques chosen for learning music (choral or jazz), adaptions, if any, being made to the weekly goals, and the degree to which they met weekly goals. Each conductor’s observations were kept anonymous, and no information or feedback was shared with the conductors for confidential reasons or fear of manipulating the data.

**Assessment**

Found in Appendix D (page 178) is a rubric that assessed the concert performance at the end of the eight weeks. The rubric was used to grade the performance of the choirs and whether or not a transition was present. The rubric
was comprised of seven categories that applied to both choral and vocal jazz styles. Each category was graded as either excellent, great, good, or poor. Categories included vocal production, ensemble singing, musicality, time and rhythm, style and interpretation, rhythm section, and presentation and transition. The vocal production category assessed tone quality, intonation, technical aspects, and diction. Ensemble singing included the balance and blend of the singers and the preciseness of entrances and cutoffs. Musicality evaluated the musical sensitivity, phrasing, and dynamics of the performance. Time and rhythm assessed the rhythmic feel, steadiness of the beat, and rhythmic accuracy. Style and interpretation judged whether or not stylistic ornaments were used and if there was consistent use of idiomatic devices and nuances. The rhythm section category focused on how they were supporting the singers, whether or not they were playing in the correct style, and the degree to which the singers were dynamically balanced. The last category of presentation and transition measured the level of success in making a stylistic transition.
CHAPTER V
CURRICULUM STUDY OUTCOME

Observations

Observations of all three choral conductors were performed on weeks two, four, six, and eight of the study. While observing the rehearsal, the author of this study did not participate in any part of or have any interaction with the students during the rehearsal. The observation material that was collected was to gain perspective on pedagogy, rehearsal techniques, understanding of the incorporation of the curriculum, and to assess if weekly goals were being met. The information presented within this section is an objective summary of the pedagogy observed, the student connection, the adaptations made, and the materials used.

Conductor One

The warm-ups performed for every rehearsal consisted of alignment, breath, vowels, and resonance. Typically, stretching occurred at the start of every rehearsal. The alignment instruction given to the students was very similar to that provided in the curriculum. There were some differences in placement of the arms and shoulder structures. Deep breaths would always occur before breathing exercises. The primary breathing exercise that was used was inhaling for a specified number of counts and then exhaling on another specified number
of counts. The exhale was either silent or through a “ts” consonant. Humming was used a variety of ways, either through slides or with a specific melodic pattern. A repeated vocal exercise titled “throwing darts” was where students would sing a major or minor triad on the syllables “mee,” “meh,” “mah,” “moh,” and “moo,” while pretending to throw darts. This appeared to work on articulation and vowels mostly. These were often used to work on dynamics as well. Sirens were commonly used for resonance building, but not as frequently as the other exercises used during warmups.

The conductor included much more jazz related warm-ups within the first observation than what was observed for the other weeks. The conductor incorporated the major, natural minor, and blues scales on swung eighth notes, using the “doo-bah” syllables. Students experienced more difficulty with intonation on the natural minor and blues scale. The conductor tried having them sing on solfege syllables in order to aid in intonation, which helped them to some extent. Before introducing each scale to the ensemble, there was no explanation of how the scale was built or no visual aid. The conductor also tried using the jazz chords that were provided within the curriculum. These were printed out for the students to see. While singing the exercise on “nah,” the students had a more choral-like tone. The chords were built from the basses upwards (BTAS) in real time and then the conductor would gesture with hands or verbally instruct students to move to the next chord. The sopranos had a hard time moving to the minor sevenths from the root and were typically singing unison with the basses,
who were holding out the root of the chord. An explanation of chord qualities, color tones, or progression was not given to nor discussed with the students before performing this exercise. This was the only rehearsal that was observed using any of the jazz warm-ups provided. There was minimal explanation of the jazz tone overall. Within the first two observations, the conductor spent a great deal on the warm-up process which provided less rehearsal time with the pieces. The majority of the warm-up was focused on creating choral tone and working on balance and blend.

The first two observations exhibited a heavy focus on the choral, ballad, and bossa nova tunes. What was mostly observed within the first two observations was that the students were singing in the choral tone and using choral diction. The overall tone was dark in all pieces, sometimes too heavy which caused intonation problems, and the consonants were of the choral style within the bossa nova tune. The darker timbre was more suited to the choral tune as it was a spiritual. The warmer/darker resonance and diction was stylistically sound. The conductor used solfege for sight-reading parts, worked with individual voice sections on note learning, and also incorporated many repetitions to aid in the learning and retention process.

By the third observation, there seemed to be a significant difference of vowel shape and overall diction between the two styles. There was a lot of unaccompanied work during this observation with the students, and it resulted in improved blend. The spiritual demonstrated consistent choral tone and diction;
however, there were still intonation issues due to vowel shapes within sections as well as resonance. The bossa nova tune’s tone was significantly lighter, while more conversational diction was implemented. Syncopation was more accented by this week and small stylistic ornaments such as scoops and falls were being applied. The swing tune was not as bright and resonant in tone. The sopranos and altos were often hard to hear and there was no lead sound coming from the soprano section. There were intonation concerns with the tune written in SAB because some of the basses had problems with the higher notes. The rhythmic feel of the swung eighth notes was consistent, and the diction was more conversational in the swing tune than the bossa nova. Elements such as cutoffs and entrances were not quite together, and dynamics, phrasing, and stylistic ornaments were also not clear.

The final observation was dedicated to rehearsing the tunes with the rhythm section. The conductor was playing the drum set while facing the choir because a drummer was not present. The full rhythm section appeared to aid in the rhythmic drive of the swing tune. Despite the loudness of the rhythm section within the rehearsal room, the choir was not able to demonstrate balance among the sections. The men were far louder than the women. Without the direction of the conductor, entrances and cutoffs were not together, and there was no lead sound from the sopranos. This may be because of a lack of resonance in the tone. The conductor was observed demonstrating a bright, forward resonance within all rehearsals; however, the author is unsure if a discussion was made
about the different types of modal registers in order to project sound. At this point there were not many musical elements such as dynamics or stylistic ornaments that were present. The bossa nova tune was also rehearsed with the rhythm section. Within this piece, there was no strong unison sound within the soprano or alto parts; however, the balance among all parts was stronger in this tune. The tune lacked energy and emphasis on the syncopated rhythms and jazz style elements.

Throughout the observations, the students seemed to be interested in the music and what the conductor was trying to accomplish. They appeared to be energized more for the swing tune than the other selections. During the observations, there was no discussion of the stylistic differences of the pieces or the progression of style among the pieces, so students may have not understood the purpose of the study. The students seemed to be engaged in every rehearsal. Based upon the observations, there were no noticeable adaptations made other than the adjusted timetable of when the repertoire was introduced.

The materials that appeared to be used most by the conductor were the weekly goals, one or two lead sheets for sight-reading, and parts of the vocal jazz section within the curriculum. Per the observations of the author, no listening activities were performed, no sight-reading of lead sheets, and the Kirby Shaw book was never implemented. On the other hand, these items could have been introduced when the author was not observing. Due to the time constraints, the conductor cut out the improvisation section to focus on more rehearsal time.
Conductor Two

The warm-up process for this conductor appeared to change with every observation. For the first two observations the conductor used the "Corcovado" and "Honeysuckle Rose" as sight-reading, and as a warm-up for the students. In the third observation the teacher used more choral and tone building exercises. This particular warm-up included breathing, stretches, tone exercises such as lip trills, vowels, and major scales using the swung eighth notes with the syllable "doo-bah." The fourth observation did not include any warm-up as the students went straight into rehearsing repertoire.

Before the first observation took place, the conductor had mentioned to the author of the study that all pieces were introduced within the first week. It is also worth mentioning that the conductor sat at the piano and played the parts for the students during rehearsals. The first observation of this conductor and ensemble seemed to show a strong connection to the weekly goals or at least the implementation of the materials within the curriculum. The repertoire goal of the rehearsal was focused towards the bossa nova tune. To help the students prepare for the style, the conductor had planned on sight-reading the bossa nova tune. This seemed to work successfully as the students were already in the mindset for the type of jazz tone and conversational diction that is required for this piece. Smaller elements such as cutoffs and entrances were not as clear and there seemed to be a lack of energy which resulted in a slower tempo. This lower energy carried into the first few minutes of rehearsal with the swing tune. The
students appeared to have a grasp on notes during the unison beginning as well as a good swing feel. Diction was conversational, but cutoffs were not clean.

For the second observation, the conductor focused much of the rehearsal on the swing tune. Again, a lead sheet was used for sight-reading and warm-up. The lead sheet was also in the swing style, therefore it helped with the rhythmic feel and tone color. The conductor separated parts and worked on individual sections with a few repetitions. They rehearsed one time with the use of the piano and one without. The conductor also separated out rhythms by having the students speak the text with the written rhythm. At this stage of this piece, they were still in the process of learning notes and rhythms. The conductor separated the ensemble for sectionals where they worked on the swing piece for the rest of the class time.

The third observation was the first time all pieces had been run through since the start of the curriculum. Ending chords had questionable intonation and sections were not well-balanced. The sopranos and altos appeared more confident with their parts compared to the tenors and basses. For both of the jazz tunes, cutoffs were still not clean and there was either a lack of energy within both pieces or lack of rhythmic drive. The jazz tone and diction were conversational and they were implementing some of the vocal jazz stylistic ornaments such as scoops and plops. The choral tunes lacked a strong choral tone. Treatment of the consonants was inconsistent. The vowel sounds and vowel shapes were thin and lacking in resonance at times. Before each piece
there was no discussion of the tone or style that each song requires. Every song appeared to be in the jazz style.

The final observation did not include a rhythm section rehearsal or a rehearsal with the accompanist. The conductor was still working from the piano. The swing tune was much more together with cutoffs and with stylistic ornaments; however, the swing feel was not together. It sounded as if there was more emphasis placed on the first eighth note than the second in consecutively swung eighth note passages. Intonation issues occurred at the start of phrases and some diction was too conversational or too bright. The choral tune was lacking in appropriate tone, especially coming from the brightness of the swing tune. There was no discussion of the difference in styles and what the new tone should be for the choral piece. There were blending and balance issues that could have been fixed with more vowel unification. Again, the diction was conversational for a choral piece. The ballad was a little stronger with tall vowels and the unisons were blended nicely.

The conductor had a strong connection with the students throughout the observations. From the energy and enthusiasm shown by the students, it appears as though the conductor did an exemplary job of explaining the process as well as introducing the jazz style through multiple recordings. The students were engaged in the listening activities and sight reading and they seemed to have a positive attitude about both the study and process. Based upon the observations of the author, the conductor made adaptations to the weekly goals. Changes included when pieces were introduced to the ensembles and when
each piece was rehearsed. Towards the end of the eight weeks, most of the rehearsal time was spent on rehearsing pieces and working on memorization.

The materials that the conductor used were the listening lists, the listening questionnaire, the Kirby Shaw book, the lead sheets, and some of the vocal warm-ups. Due to the amount of time and all the material given, the teacher did not use the improvisation section. Listening appeared to be the most used aspect out of the entire curriculum. The author is unaware if any videos were watched outside of the observations. The conductor also explored more listening examples than what was provided.

Conductor Three

The warmup routine for the third conductor was a balance between traditional choral techniques and those more suited for the vocal jazz ensembles. Typically, the warmup would start with humming to connect breath and phonation. Next, there would be a series of major or minor scales on solfege where the students would concentrate on tall, open choral vowels. After that, the conductor would vary in the use of major, Dorian, or natural minor scales with the swing eighth notes and use the syllables “doo-bah,” “dah-bah,” or “lah-bah” to encourage conversational diction. Students would sing through the circle of fifths, through the ii-V-I chord progressions used in improvisation, and the arpeggiated triads (major or minor) with occasionally added sevenths. Throughout the warmup the conductor would direct the ensemble on the type of tone they wanted for each exercise. For most of the duration of the warmup, if not all, the
warmup was done unaccompanied. Another frequent warmup was circle singing. This process consists of a section coming up with a riff and the other sections coming up with a riff of their own that was complementary to the others. The riffs would be added one section at a time.

For every observation, this conductor would rehearse all four pieces. The conductor appeared to have a specific plan as to what pages and measures needed to be rehearsed. It was not until the third and fourth observation that they performed complete run-throughs of each piece. In the first two observations, the students were working unaccompanied and would often have to find their notes based on their pitch memory. Throughout the rehearsals of the choral and ballad pieces, the conductor would adjust vowels to match the choral tone as well as address the need for stronger consonants. The swing tunes were also rehearsed unaccompanied. The conductor paid particular attention to the cutoffs, breaths, and entrances and often separated chords that were not tuned correctly by having the students hold and work on vowel shape or resonance. Tone and diction were addressed right away if it was not fitting within the style. The conductor was specific and often provided a detailed description or demonstration of the desired sound. When isolating parts, the conductor would have them use solfege.

The third observation included more of the accompaniment with each tune. This rehearsal ran through the pieces in concert order (choral, ballad,}

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98 A riff is a short, melodic and rhythmic phrase that is repeated.
bossa nova, and swing). The first two pieces demonstrated a choral tone with tall vowels and strong consonants. There was a focus to tune chords and work on the rhythmic timing of the end of the ballad. The jazz pieces were rehearsed a little slower or simply lacked some rhythmic drive. The tone for the bossa nova was breathy and had a warm resonance that worked well for blending and balance purposes. Cutoffs and emphasis on the syncopation would help with the rhythmic drive. For the swing tune, the cutoffs were not quite together. Often times, singers were holding the notes a beat longer. The swing felt lighter than the first two observations and the conversational diction also helped with the syncopation.

With the final observation, the students and conductor made great progress regarding all the pieces and stylistic elements. This rehearsal was performed with part of the rhythm section. The bass player had rehearsed with them during the dress rehearsal earlier that day. The accompanist and drummer practiced with the group for this rehearsal. For the bossa nova tune, the conductor implemented some egg shakers for two students to play and some auxiliary percussion played by a colleague that helped with the rhythmic drive of the piece. This tune was very polished with clean entrances and cutoffs. The tone was warm, resonant, and stylistically appropriate for the piece. The only element that could have been added was an improved stage presence. The swing tune was very clean, contained a great rhythmic feel, and had a bright, forward resonance similar to a jazz band. They added in some choreography to the tune which added a fun element to the stage presence. The choral tune was
the third piece to be rehearsed and the students immediately made a switch to choral diction. They exhibited very clean cutoffs and entrances as well. The ballad had a mixture of tall choral tone in the unison areas, and a little bit of bright tone and minimal vibrato in the sustained parts (under the solo). They lacked a little bit of energy with the sustained notes, but overall the piece was very well prepared.

Throughout each observation, the conductor had clear expectations and the students were willing to work above and beyond. They asked many questions for clarification in tone or pronunciation. With the listening that was observed, the students seemed to show enjoyment and were able to provide feedback on stylistic items and how they could use what they heard within their own performance. From the first observation it was very clear that they were enjoying the repertoire (especially the swing tune). They were engaged in every rehearsal, worked hard on the stylistic differences, and seemed to enjoy the experience as a whole. This seemed in large part due to the preparation of the conductor.

While it was not asked of any of the conductors, this particular conductor used the curriculum with all three ensembles in their program. To clarify, each ensemble did not perform the same repertoire. The conductor selected other repertoire and adapted the curriculum for the two other ensembles based upon their ability level. The conductor made adaptations of when the repertoire and styles were introduced. The conductor used most all of the curriculum
information, listening, lead sheets, and some of the Kirby Shaw ornaments were implemented. The improvisation section was not used.

**Concert Assessment**

During the concert assessment, no recordings were made by the author of the performances due to the IRB restrictions and confidentiality. For reference, the rubric can be found in Appendix D (page 178).

**Conductor and Ensemble One**

The performance of Conductor and Ensemble One demonstrated a performance that contained aspects of both excellence and greatness. In the vocal production category, the ensemble performed with unified vowels and consonants in both styles. They sang with great traditional choral and vocal jazz tone quality. They had minimal intonation issues across all pieces and the singers were using well-supported vocal technique most of the time. In considering elements of ensemble, the group paid precise attention to entrances and cutoffs. There were some minor balance and blend issues among the sections. In the choral and ballad pieces, the soprano section was louder than the others. However, in the jazz tunes, the tenors and basses had a tendency to sing louder than the soprano and alto parts.

When assessing the musicality, dynamics were included but not all dynamics suggested by the arranger were incorporated. The ensemble offered a musical presentation most of the time; however, phrasing was not always executed well in the choral or ballad tunes. In the choral pieces, the choir sang with excellent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel. Nearly all of the rhythm and
note values were performed correctly. Within the jazz tunes, there was a consistent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel. Most of the note values and rhythms were performed correctly within the jazz style. For all pieces they had a strong rhythmic feel.

The style and interpretation of the choral tune was accurate. The articulation and diction were consistent and there was some use of idiomatic devices and nuances. For the vocal jazz tunes, the style and interpretation was fine but not always consistent in the use of jazz articulation and diction. There was some use of idiomatic devices and nuances. A bass player and drummer were hired to complete the rhythm section for the jazz pieces. However, they only played on the third and fourth tune (bossa nova and swing). The rhythm section performance was strong and supportive to the vocal jazz ensemble. They played with excellent rhythmic feel and were in balance with the vocal ensemble (the ensemble was not amplified).

The overall presentation by the conductor and the ensemble showed a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm towards most of the music within their set. Visually, the students appeared to be engaged in the performance. There was a fairly clear transformation from choral to vocal jazz in style. Most of the transition occurred within the genre changes of the pieces. The traditional choral work was a gospel arrangement, which tends to incorporate more of a brighter tone and conversational diction. Due to this selection by the conductor, the tone quality and diction of all four pieces was similar. A brighter tone and a mix of
conversational diction and traditional choral diction was used throughout all pieces. Articulations and ornaments within the jazz pieces provided more stylistic difference than the choral and ballad tune, which seemed to be lacking some of these elements.

Conductor and Ensemble Two

The performance of the second conductor and ensemble also shared aspects of an excellent and great transition. There were more components such as intonation, tone quality, and diction that often placed them within the great and good category. The vocal production of the ensemble was fine, but they had some intonation problems within the first piece. This was unaccompanied, so elements of diction and musicality were much more exposed. The singers sang with well-supported technique most of the time, and vowels and consonants were mostly unified in all pieces. The ensemble itself had some minor balance and blend issues. These occurred within the choral and ballad pieces. Not all entrances and cutoffs were together as an ensemble in all of the tunes.

The ensemble was musically sensitive for most of the performance. Most of the phrases within the choral and ballad pieces were well planned and executed; however, not all of the dynamics that were suggested by the arranger were used. There was a consistent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel within the jazz tunes. At times, the choral tune tended to be inconsistent with tempo. Most of the note values and rhythms were performed correctly within each style. Overall, there was a good rhythmic feel amongst the ensemble. The
incorporation of stylistic elements and the interpretation of the choral and jazz tunes were fine and fairly consistent regarding the use of articulation and diction. There was use of idiomatic devices and nuances in all of the tunes.

A student bass player and drummer were used to complete the rhythm section. As a whole, the rhythm section for the jazz tunes displayed a strong and supportive role to the vocal jazz ensemble. They played with consistent rhythmic feel for both tunes. For the bossa nova tune the balance and blend was a little better and more sensitive to the style and singers. For the swing tune, the rhythm section (especially the piano) was at times too loud.

Overall, the performance showed a fairly clear transition between the choral and vocal jazz style. Visually, the students demonstrated a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement for the musical set. The choral piece displayed tall vowels and strong consonants, despite some intonation concerns. This led nicely into the tone used for the jazz ballad. The tone was a little brighter; however, consonants were still performed in a more traditional choral manner and not conversational. The bossa nova piece was the first clear transition point for tone as the ensemble portrayed a breathy, warm resonance that represented the style well. Syncopation and rhythmic drive also made this transition clearer. In the final swing tune, the choir demonstrated brighter and more forward resonance; however, there were some stylistic ornaments and dynamics that were left out.
Conductor and Ensemble Three

The performance of Conductor and Ensemble Three fit well within the first column of the rubric. The vocal production of either style was performed with excellent tone quality and good intonation. The ensemble sang with well-supported tone and had unified vowels and consonants throughout each piece. The ensemble as a whole sang with excellent balance and blend and there was precise attention made to entrances and cutoffs. The musicality of the ensemble was the highlight of the performance. Each piece was not only performed with appropriate style but was also musically sensitive to each genre. The phrases were well planned and executed effectively, and almost all dynamics suggested by the arranger were implemented.

There was an excellent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel within the ensemble, especially with the addition of the rhythm section within the jazz tunes. Nearly all of the rhythm and note values were performed correctly within both styles and there was a strong rhythmic drive. The overall style and interpretation of each piece was executed well. There were some elements of jazz articulation and ornaments that could have been used within the bossa nova and swing tune that were left out. A little more emphasis on the syncopated entrances within the bossa nova tune and cleaner cutoffs within the swing tune would have made a positive difference. The swing tune could have also used a little more conversational diction. The rhythm section displayed a strong, supportive role within the performance. They played with excellent style and rhythmic feel for
each jazz tune. They were in balance with the ensemble quite well, even with all of the auxiliary percussion instruments added for the bossa nova tune.

The overall performance demonstrated a clear transition from choral to vocal jazz. Visually, the students showed excitement and enthusiasm throughout the entire musical set. The choral and jazz ballad were performed with tall vowels and strong consonants (even more so within the ballad). This might have been due to the tempo difference and the sustained notes allowing for more time to adjust for balance and blend. There were very minor issues with vowels in the choral tune mainly amongst the sopranos compared to the rest of the ensemble. This could have also been because of the range of the soprano part in comparison to the lower parts. The bossa nova tune was performed with conversational vowels and a warm resonance. The conductor paid close attention to the trading of the melody between voice parts. Each section was musically sensitive to whomever had the melody. The swing tune demonstrated the forward, bright resonance that is stylistically needed. Ornaments used, such as plops and scoops, along with dynamic interjections, made for a memorable closer. They also included some hand movements and body gestures to emphasize a couple of moments within the text, which added to the overall presentation of the piece.

**Conductor’s Reflections and Feedback**

At the end of the eight weeks and after the performance, each conductor had a chance for reflection on the process and material presented within the curriculum. Each conductor was provided a survey involving sixteen questions
that discussed the material provided, feedback from the students, strengths or weaknesses, and whether the curriculum could be improved upon regarding any teaching aspects. Below is a summary of each of the three conductor’s answers.

Conductor One

The eight weeks did not provide enough time to teach the entire curriculum. It did provide a multitude of starting points for the vocal jazz process. It included an incredible wealth of resources and examples, and arguments in defense of the jazz style. The curriculum was very well written and easy to understand and apply. There was more than enough information provided and at times it was overwhelming. There was a lot to sort through and perhaps a deeper organizational structure would help teachers sort through the information more quickly.

The students largely enjoyed the eight weeks. A student commented on the difficulty of finding certain notes often, or when certain notes were found they sounded wrong. However, as we know with jazz, the more “fun” notes to sing are the ones that may “sound wrong” to some. The students also enjoyed singing through the jazz tunes “Cry Me a River and “It’s Only a Paper Moon” that were suggested by the author. They were also drawn to the style once we incorporated movement. The students seemed to enjoy learning the swing tune better than performing it and the opposite happened with the bossa nova tune. So much of their learning depends on quality literature. Some students found the switch between the diverse styles to be confusing and frustrating.
Overall the music was approachable. The depth of knowledge was a major strength. The lack of organization was the largest weakness. There was no further exploration into the resources listed. By participating in the curriculum, the conductor felt more confident in approaching a jazz piece. The elements of jazz tone ideals and stylistic elements have become more familiar and seem as though they can be implemented more easily in the future. Largely, this has provided some quality information that can be applied to different ensembles and choral styles and has increased the amount of rehearsal techniques to use in the future.

Conductor Two

The eight weeks was a good introduction into vocal jazz, but there was not enough time to get through the entire curriculum. If there were three tunes as opposed to four, we might have been able to get through more of the curriculum. The listening was one of the biggest positives from the curriculum. The guided listening choices and the questionnaire (which was turned into a packet), helped everyone become acclimated with the style. The eight-week goals helped with planning, and the vocal jazz pedagogy section helped with terminology and being able to cross-reference it with previous choral and vocal pedagogy knowledge. There were too many sight-reading examples suggested for the eight weeks. Perhaps a more guided list of specific examples would have been more beneficial. The choral and vocal pedagogy sections were unnecessary for them (the conductor), but the information provided was very useful. The improvisation section was not necessary for this particular curriculum study. However,
improvisation is a large part of the vocal jazz style, so it should be a part of any vocal jazz curriculum. Overall, there was a plethora of information provided. They (the conductor) felt as though they were set up for success with the curriculum, so they could pass on relevant knowledge to their students.

There was some initial push back from the students about the study. Many of them were not excited about learning something new. However, as time went on, they enjoyed the music more and more. Listening was a crucial part of all learning and it helped them become more familiar with the sounds of vocal jazz. They really benefited from working with the rhythm section, and although the sight-reading was difficult, they enjoyed the process. The in-class listening seemed to encourage outside listening, as students would often bring in their own listening examples. They enjoyed learning about the vocal jazz articulation, especially vibrato, and the swing tune was by far their favorite piece. The students did not care for the small portion of improvisation that was introduced; the syllables seemed to be the hardest part for them to grasp.

The music was very approachable. The jazz ballad was the hardest piece due to the use of the major sevenths, flat ninths, flat thirteenths, etc., which were the hardest to tune. The conductor frequently used the Kirby Shaw book for articulations; however, they did not explore many of the other resources listed. The greatest strength of the curriculum was that it allowed the instructor to go from the known to the unknown, using the daily elements of choral teachings and expanding them to the realm of vocal jazz. Using the listening and suggested
jazz warm-ups helped them gain a greater sense of style and the sight-reading helped the students become familiar with jazz rhythms and notation. The largest weaknesses were the time frame and the lack of jazz theory presented. The conductor would have liked more information about scales and jazz chord progressions.

With no prior experience, the effectiveness of teaching the vocal jazz style has greatly increased. The Kirby Shaw book helped with the development of style and articulation. The conductor expressed a better understanding of how to lead students to independence for a performance, since the jazz style does not require a conductor to stand out front. The conductor’s ability to work with a rhythm section has improved as well as the understanding of vocal improvisation. The curriculum has taught the conductor to pay more attention to the finer details such as blend and vowel unification. It also encouraged the conductor to use more sight-reading, as it can help train the students to learn music in a timelier fashion. The conductor has added more listening activities to all of their ensembles as result of the curriculum and has created a similar listening guide for other groups. In conclusion, the conductor expressed that they will not be afraid to try different styles in the future and feel confident in their ability to teach a new style. The conductor also feels as though their teaching has improved and are hoping to convince the students of this particular ensemble to go to the University of Northern Colorado Jazz Festival in the near future.
Conductor Three

The eight-week period provided enough time to touch on most concepts and tasks, but not enough for all, particularly the improvisation. Much of the challenge was trying to decide what to do when and for how long. Having gone through the curriculum once, given another chance the conductor would approach the curriculum differently. The resources, pedagogy, and the opportunity to use the curriculum were beneficial. The suggested sight-reading charts, YouTube examples, Kirby Shaw book, and artist listening suggestions provided a wealth of material that will be used for years. The pedagogy helped with uncovering the vocal jazz style and provided a framework on how to use it for instruction. The conductor had made several attempts in the past to weave vocal jazz into their music program, with little progress. This opportunity provided a springboard to offer something more substantial than previous efforts and has led the conductor to reflect on their own practices on how to incorporate vocal jazz in any choir. The eight-week goals were the hardest to implement as they did not follow the normal plans of what is typically accomplished within the first quarter of the semester, and the improvisation section was not necessarily needed for this study.

The feedback from the students was unanimously positive. They enjoyed working and performing all of the music and were open to the stylistic nuances of each tune. They also enjoyed the circle songs as a warm-up and felt inspired by the listening examples. There were no aspects that the students did not enjoy.
The music was approachable for all involved. The YouTube links that were provided by the author were turned into a playlist that was shared with the students to listen to outside of class. It is uncertain as to how many students may have used this outside of class. The Kirby Shaw book was also used to incorporate some of the jazz nuances and instill the jazz language. The overall strength of the curriculum was that it was clearly designed for a choir director with minimal knowledge of jazz traditions or jazz pedagogy. It provided a systematic approach to incorporating the vocal jazz style, technique, and literature in the traditional, large choral rehearsal. The content and presentation of material was easy to follow and maintained a high level of academia and professionalism. A weakness of the curriculum was its vast scope, which was excessive for an eight-week period. The conductor felt as though they were leaving out too much because of time constraints and preparation for a concert. Largely, the curriculum provided a pedagogical framework on how to incorporate jazz within their program. It has provided them with a language to communicate stylistic nuances so that they don’t have to come up with new vocabulary on their own. The warm-ups suggested by the author will be used to help develop specific jazz techniques which can be used in other ensembles as well.

Based upon the reflections of each conductor, it appears that the curriculum provided strengths as well as a few weaknesses that can be altered for the future. These weaknesses regarded the amount of information that was provided and its relevancy, the amount of time to be able to use all of the information provided, the organization of the material, and to provide information
and activities that build knowledge and enthusiasm amongst all singers and conductors. These future changes will require more discussion with participating conductors in order to grasp the type of information that needs to be included for success. It will also determine the amount of time needed and the best method to organize the material so that the transition is clear and effective.

The strengths listed by the conductors include the approachable repertoire, gained knowledge and vocabulary of the vocal jazz style, a desire to learn more and plan for incorporating vocal jazz in the future, and the amount and type of information that was included. While there may have been a large amount of information to sort through, all conductors felt as though the information provided prepared them for a successful transition. A greater (and perhaps more important) success was that each conductor felt as though they had a better grasp of the vocal jazz style. They also expressed that they were more comfortable educating ensembles and singers in the future.

**Conclusion**

Within the first chapter, the author discussed some anticipated challenges that might occur over the eight weeks. These included the selection of lead sheets, the vocal improvisation section, working with a rhythm section, and the overall preparation of the conductor. The lead sheets were meant to be used as sight-reading examples (single melody line with text, chord progressions written above the melody line, and an indication of the style) and to become familiar with the different jazz styles the ensemble was performing. They appeared to provide
helpful stylistic information for implementation and there was enough material that the conductor could pick and choose what would work well with their rehearsal planning. According to some of the feedback from the conductors, there were too many options and most often they were not able to use them as much as they wanted. In one observation, the lead sheets were being used as sight-reading, the melody was in natural minor, and the students had a hard time singing through the melody consistently. Although keys and melodies were considered in the selection, the varying degree of difficulty for high school students was not considered to full extent. For future use, a list of lead sheets that have difficulty levels, styles, and keys would be more beneficial for conductor and student use. This would also improve stylistic knowledge as well as ear-training.

The largest anticipated challenge with the improvisation section was whether or not the conductors would be able to use any of the material during the eight weeks. As per the author’s observation, each conductor removed it from the weekly goals. While each said it was a valuable part of the vocal jazz education and was a segment all three wanted within the curriculum, the repertoire and implementation of the style took more precedence. Perhaps it will be something these conductors will use in the future as an ongoing learning process for themselves and their students.

Working with a rhythm section was not a challenge for any of the directors. The initial concern was that not all of them were going to be able to have a
complete rhythm section or it was going to consist of a student rhythm section, so the ability level may not be consistent. Fortunately, they all had hired or found well-versed instrumentalists to accompany the ensembles. The performances were not affected with the small amount of rehearsal time most of them had. This speaks highly of the musicians they hired as well as how well they communicated the desires or needs of the repertoire.

The last challenge of how each conductor might prepare for the eight weeks was different for every conductor. Since the style itself was new, the vocabulary was unfamiliar, and the knowledge of the style itself was minimal, it was interesting to see how each conductor approached the curriculum and how they implemented the learning of the new style among themselves and their students. It was very clear that the vocal and choral pedagogy sections were not read in detail compared to the vocal jazz section due to the fact this information was already known. However, it did allow for some helpful transitional elements that could be used by the conductor. The listening aspect was the second largest part of the curriculum as well as the most important factor needed with introducing and implementing this new style. Two out of the three conductors applied this well within their ensembles and it influenced positive student learning experiences and appreciation for the style.

The provided weekly goals seemed to be the largest part of the curriculum that was modified, which was expected of all conductors. While two of the conductors liked the overview of goals, one particular conductor would have liked
a sample lesson plan of how one would implement all of the materials within a rehearsal. A suggestion was to incorporate at least a week of sample lesson plans for conductors to follow.

Another important element noticed by the author was how well some conductors built enthusiasm or appreciation in the students for this new style. This largely had to come from each conductor’s own personal enthusiasm as well as preparation to convince the students it was worth learning. The bigger question was: did the conductor find personal value in what they were teaching? The answer was different with each conductor. One conductor was hesitant due to previous knowledge of some vocal jazz groups, and the music performed was too “hokey.” With their own preparation of the curriculum, they found a way to interweave it into all of their choirs and saw a purpose of jazz education in every choral ensemble. Another took on the challenge and with the preparation found ways to improve their own personal instruction and provide more musical challenges for students within their program. The last conductor did not use all materials presented with the curriculum and the learning outcome appeared minimal for the conductor and the students. All three answers to the survey also support the outcome of their performances. While all three demonstrated a transition of traditional choral music to vocal jazz, the range of the transition also depended on how well the students were prepared. Overall, these conductors said yes to an experiment that most would not want to commit to at the start of the school year and were willing to grow as educators, grow musically, and
increase their knowledge of choral styles. They are highly commended for their work and dedication to this entire curriculum process.

What was largely learned from producing this study was that there is need for more research and education of the vocal jazz style and how to provide relevant transitional material to conductors. While this study was specifically centered around the secondary level, the future goal is to create a variety of curriculums and further participant studies. This includes other ability levels, such as upper-elementary, middle school, post-secondary, and community or professional level choirs.

For curriculums and studies that are created for upper-elementary or middle school levels, the vocal and ensemble pedagogy sections would be included to help with the explanation of terminology for young singers. A larger transitional section that focuses on healthy vocal development would be important as the singers are still developing physically. This may mean more involved and written out warmups for conductors to follow. There would be a beginning improvisation section that focused more on group improvisation. Sight-reading examples would stay more centered around short musical examples as opposed to reading lead sheets. Although the lead sheets contain a unison vocal melody line, many melodies are advanced in leaps and rhythms. Repertoire selection would stay within a level one or two (grade level listing on page 59). Listening would be more directed towards ensemble singing, as opposed to solo
singing. The largest reason for this is due to the type of repertoire they would be singing and the lack of solo opportunities.

When developing a post-secondary or professional/community group study and curriculum, the author would not include the traditional choral and vocal pedagogy sections. The jazz pedagogy section would include more advanced stylistic elements and fundamentals. A more in-depth listening list and improvisation section that included more elements of theory would be added. A list of lead sheets based upon ability level, key, and style would be provided for sight-reading and improvisation purposes. To add to the sight-reading examples, the author would include musical examples that were more harmonically and rhythmically complex. This would largely stay within the level of repertoire the ensemble was performing. The repertoire chosen would stay between levels three and five.

A few general elements to change would be the overall organization, the type of feedback from the conductor and singers, and the amount of time to implement the curriculum. Perhaps for quick reference, the curriculum would have tabs for larger sections as well as a list of pages that discuss specific elements such as tone, style, listening lists, or scales for improvisation. There is also room for the creation of an online element that would help with singers’ individual practice or use in rehearsals. There would be a strong need, regardless of level, to obtain feedback from the singers and conductor. The feedback would need to be more specific in strengths and weaknesses of the material provided, as well as successful and unsuccessful transition materials.
Finally, despite the level, it would be more beneficial to the conductor and ensemble singers to participate in a twelve- to sixteen-week study. This would allow for all sections to be taught along with the rehearsal of repertoire. Sample daily or weekly lesson plans would also be included to help with time management and implementation.¹

The success or failure of the study was largely dependent on the material and process that the author had provided the conductors. Another indication of success or failure to a lesser aspect was grounded in the conductor’s abilities to demonstrate a transition based upon what they learned or what they implemented from the curriculum. There were aspects of success observed with all three conductors in implementing the provided material. However, there was some lack of effectiveness due to the amount of time to perform the study and the volume of information provided. Perhaps there was another lack of effectiveness in that the concert assessment rubric was not shared or known to the conductors before the concert. The decision to not share this information with them was that the assessment was specifically geared toward the use and material of curriculum, not just the performance. If the conductors would have seen the assessment there is a possibility that there could have been different performance outcomes. It is the author’s opinion that not sharing the

¹ Another aspect learned by the study is that while the vocal jazz style may be respected or acknowledged by all choral conductors, not every conductor will want to implement or showcase this specific style or ensemble within their program. The study was not meant to create any issues or persuade the participants that the vocal jazz style is superior to all others. It was strictly meant to find transitional means to help current and future choral directors who are interested in how to direct and implement the vocal jazz style.
assessment allowed the conductor to focus on the entire curriculum as opposed to the outcome of the performance.

Lastly, while this was a learning experience for the conductors, it was also a valuable learning experience for the author of the study. The process of how to write a curriculum, what materials to include, and the amount of research performed to support claims, provided a learning experience that allowed for the author to grow as an educator, a researcher, a mentor, and a musician. The amount of knowledge that each participating conductor had about choral pedagogy was inspiring and also provided new tools for the author as well. This includes better rehearsal strategies and techniques, pedagogy vocabulary that is easily understood by singers, and strategies to introduce new styles and fundamentals to singers. Knowledge and information gained from this study was beneficial to all those involved, and it will hopefully continue to grow and provide more useful tools for other choral educators about the vocal style.
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
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Lara Moline, DA
University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

[129336-2] Vocal Jazz in the Choral Classroom: A Pedagogical Study
Amendment/Modification

APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
September 7, 2018
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Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.
APPENDIX B

CHORAL TO VOCAL JAZZ: EIGHT-WEEK CURRICULUM
CHORAL TO VOCAL JAZZ: EIGHT-WEEK CURRICULUM
-Moline
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Dear Choral Conductor,

It is with the deepest gratitude and appreciation that I present to you my eight-week curriculum study on the transition of choral to vocal jazz music. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with such fine musicians and conductors as yourselves, as well as the chance to work with a choir in your own choral programs. I hope your experience with the curriculum is one of knowledge, growth, and of excitement for the future of your programs.

Within this packet I have included information that is mostly based upon the repertoire I have picked for your choirs. While it is not all-encompassing of the vocal jazz style, the resources provided should help you with the selected repertoire as well as answer any other curiosities you may have over the course of the eight weeks. As a reminder, I am here to help with the entire process so please feel free to direct any questions you may have to me at the information below.

Thank you again for this incredible learning opportunity for all involved and I look forward to working with you over these next eight weeks.

Best,

Lara Moline
OVERVIEW

The purpose of this eight-week curriculum study is to guide any choral conductor through the process and transition from choral to vocal jazz repertoire. Included items are: pedagogy, a table that outlines weekly goals, listening exercises, warm-ups, and outside resources to help further the understanding of vocal jazz. As stated in the introduction letter, this curriculum will not be all-encompassing of the vocal jazz style due to the repertoire that has been chosen and the time commitment; however, this program will provide referrals to helpful resources for present and future use.

The pedagogy examined in this curriculum will include elements of standard vocal pedagogy, choral pedagogy, and vocal jazz pedagogy. The choral pedagogy section will be a reminder of common elements used in typical choral ensemble singing. The vocal jazz pedagogy will involve elements of the style and the techniques commonly used in jazz ensemble singing, along with differences and similarities between choral and vocal jazz styles. One of the goals of this study is for the conductor to be able to use previous pedagogical knowledge and translate it to a different style, regardless of the size and experience of the students within the ensemble.

The eight-week curriculum table will highlight weekly goals for the choral conductor to follow during this process. Excluded from the table will be the choral piece, which will be selected and prepared by the conductor. The three other subsequent pieces are assigned weekly goals that encourage implementation of jazz stylistic elements. The study will conclude with a concert that will demonstrate the results of the eight-week learning process.

While this study is mostly focused on repertoire, there are a few rehearsal techniques that are included to help guide everyday rehearsal. The study is not meant to infringe upon the established rehearsal techniques of the conductor, but instead offer a supplemental source for learning and delivery of the new content. Also discussed will be the conductor’s role during the rehearsal and performance process.

The other resources provided in this packet will include tools for everyday rehearsals. These include warm-ups, sight-reading pieces, listening exercises, recordings, and other written resources that the conductor is encouraged to use. It is strongly encouraged that all participating conductors use all or as much of the resources provided in this study to help demonstrate the transition of choral to vocal jazz music.

Throughout any part of this process, I will be available for help as well as a resource for any questions or concerns. Bi-weekly observations will be performed throughout the eight weeks to observe the curriculum process. This is a unique
experience for all involved and one that I hope will provide new knowledge and curiosity of other styles in the choral world.

The choral conductor and myself will select the four pieces to be rehearsed and performed over the eight-weeks. The recommendations for choosing the choral piece are below:

- The piece is written by a well-established composer.
- The text is either timeless or relevant.
- The piece consists of strong idiomatic vocal writing.
- The piece includes craftsmanship (i.e. creative and imaginative musical ideas, establishes musical goals, etc.)
- There is aesthetic attraction to the piece.
- There are plenty of teachable/challenging opportunities within the piece.

The three other pieces are selected based on the ability level of the choirs participating. The three pieces chosen are in SATB/SAB voicing with a variety of ability ranges in mind. Darmon Meader’s arrangement of “The Water is Wide” serves to help transition the traditional choral sound to the vocal jazz sound. The “Girl from Ipanema” is in the style of abossa nova Latin tune, which will continue the transition of jazz harmonies and stylistic elements. The final piece by Kerry Marsh, “We’ve Got a World that Swings”, is a standard swing tune that incorporates all elements of the vocal jazz style. The musical set will be performed as such.

1. Traditional choral work
2. “The Water is Wide” arranged by Darmon Meader
3. “The Girl from Ipanema” arranged by Paris Rutherford
4. “We’ve Got a World That Swings” arranged by Kerry Marsh
PEDAGOGY

The material below is separated into vocal, choral, and vocal jazz pedagogy. The information is not meant to overstep anything you have already established with your students and your own pedagogical stance in your choral classroom. It is simply suggested as good reminders and means of common ground between the two styles.

**Vocal Pedagogy**

As choral teachers in public school we not only function in the roles of conductor and music mentor, but we are most likely the only voice teacher our students will ever have. The amount of time we have in the classroom is never enough and although we would like to share the interesting and exciting facts about the human voice, realistically we have to pick and choose the knowledge that is necessary for student learning. Below is an overview of some vocal pedagogical elements that can be used in both choral and vocal jazz ensemble singing.

While I am not going to go into great detail about the anatomical elements of these pedagogical concepts, I do recommend that you purchase the resource *What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body* by Melissa Malde, Mary Jean Allen, and Kurt-Alexander Zeller.

**Posture**

One of the important key elements in singing is posture as it affects our sound and breathing. When discussing posture with students, it is essential to address that posture is more than keeping the body relaxed and standing up tall; posture is having an awareness of the skeletal and muscular structure of our body. This could take up an entire lesson with students by discussing and mapping out our skeletal structure. Instead, I will highlight a few items for you to consider with your students.

- Often times when we ask students to “relax” their posture or keep their bodies in a state of relaxation, we are actually asking the students to put their bodies in a position that is not conducive to good singing posture. Although the intention behind “relaxed” is well meaning and a reminder for students to not stay tense while singing, good posture is not just relaxed; it is focused and purposeful. Another word to try with students is release. Using the word release allows for the students to focus on where tension is occurring in their body and making a physical shift to release that tension while still keeping ideal posture.

- Another idea to help students understand correct posture is to help them create a sense of kinesthesia (*kinesthesia* is the awareness of body position and movement through sensory organs in the muscles and joints). If students can become aware of how their body works, where sensory receptors are, and how the muscles and skeleton work together, they will be able to locate and correct unwanted tension. This can be
achieved through activities of aligning posture from the head to feet, identifying specific spots on the body where tension typically occurs, or having them lay on the floor and asking them to feel the entire floor under their body.

- The skeletal structure should be used as the main support system of the body. Unwanted tension occurs when the muscles are trying to compete with the job of the skeleton. This can occur when we are holding a folder, locking our knees, standing on one hip, etc. However, balance and mobility improve when you allow your skeletal structure to do the work. To help aid in building correct posture for your students, here are six points of balance that highlight the use of the skeletal structure.

1. **A-O Joint** - The atlanto-occipital joint aids in the support of your 9- to 13-pound head and it helps deliver weight to the rest of the spine. It is located in the between the middle of your ears. The A-O joint also helps with releasing unwanted tension in our neck. In order to balance and release tension, drawing small circles or infinity signs with the tip of your nose to help loosen and reestablish balance of your head.  

2. **Thorax/Lumbar Spine** - This region of your skeletal structure ranges from your sternum to the lower back area (lumbar). If a singer tilts their thorax too far back, this places tension on the lower spine. To help balance this region, have students lay down on the floor with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Once the entire thorax and lumbar are aligned with the floor, have the students stand up and use their kinesthesia to balance this area. A step further would to have students walk forward keeping the kinesthesia active.  

3. **Arm Structure** - Your arms connect to the rest of your skeletal structure by the sternoclavicular joint. This specific connection allows you to move your arm down, up, back, forward, and even in circles; it is the basis for all arm movement. Too often we create tension when holding folders because we focus the support in our elbows or upper arms. If support is focused from the sternoclavicular joint, then muscle tension releases and the ability to hold a choir folder becomes much easier. If a student stands with their shoulders caved in or their shoulders are pressed too far back to keep their sternum high, this also creates tension. Ask the student to create the same shoulder width in the front and in the back. This will allow for proper skeletal support and release neck, back and chest muscle tension.  

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100 Ibid., 46-8.

101 Ibid., 55-8.
4. **Hip Joints** - The hip joint is meant to carry the weight of your upper body down to the legs. When standing, the weight is distributed from the spine to the hipbones, and then down each thigh. In order to help balance this with your students, have them sit down in a chair. Most of them will sit on their tailbone and collapse the upper body. Instead have them rock on to their sit bones (the bottom part of the hips). Immediately their thorax will raise and will be in alignment with their hips. Have them stand from this position.\(^{102}\)

5. **Knee Joints** - The knee joint is positioned behind and just a little lower than the kneecap. The kneecap has three positions: bent, locked, or balanced. For example, a common problem in singers is locked knee joints. This is typically due to the thorax being too far back in comparison to the lumbar spine. Therefore, the knees are compensating to make sure you do not fall backwards. Balance knees do not need to bend. In order for your students to feel the difference, have them lock their knees and then release, then bend and release. Finally, ask them to allow the knees to balance themselves.\(^{103}\)

6. **Ankle Joints** - The ankle joint is the meeting place for both of the lower leg bones (tibia and fibula), and they require the same upper body balance as the knee joints. Each foot has three arches that help distribute the weight of your body. The transverse arch (under the toes), the lateral arch (outside of the foot), and the medial longitudinal arch (inside of the foot). These three arches create a sort of tripod to balance your weight. Discuss with your students the three areas of the foot and have them stand and kinesthetically feel and balance their weight on the tripod.\(^{104}\)

**Breath**

Understanding how the breath works and how to build good breath control as a singer can be researched and theorized a multitude of ways. Instead of explaining how we actually breathe to students, we often take the fast route and tell students to “belly” breath, to breathe from their diaphragm, or to breathe from their toes. While this might make sense to you because you have the background knowledge of where a good breath comes from, the imagery for students can either help or confuse them. In this section I will provide some new exercises for you and your students to try. If you would like to research the anatomical process of breathing and are in need of exercises to help engage

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\(^{103}\) Ibid., 51-2.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 52-5.
student understanding in breath support, I encourage you to look into the source previously mentioned above.

Our lungs act like a fireplace bellow. As we push air out, our lungs get smaller. As we take a breath in, our lungs expand creating space for the new breath. Taking a good supported breath involves the entire thoracic region of our bodies (yes, that includes the skeletal and muscular structures). It is important for students to be aware of the muscles and bones (ribs, pelvis, and spine) used while taking in a breath. While you may not have time to explain it all anatomically, the below information should provide a kinesthetic awareness for your students. A full breath should engage all of these things:

1. **The Diaphragm** - When we inhale, the diaphragm contracts and applies pressure downward, expanding the lower ribs and pulling down on the lungs and heart, while putting slight pressure on the lower spine. In exhalation, the diaphragm releases and the air is pushed out of the lungs.

2. **The Ribs** - The ribs are essential for good breathing. As stated previously the diaphragm expands the lower half of our ribs. However, a more vigorous breath needs access of the entire ribcage for a stronger inhalation. When inhaling, the entire rib cage should expand with the help of the muscles surrounding the ribs. In exhalation these muscles release and the ribs go back to their normal position.

3. **The Abdominals** - We are aware from the diaphragm’s movement that the abdominal muscles are extended outwards as the diaphragm pushes down during inhalation. When exhaling the abdominal muscles will release and return to their original position.

4. **The Pelvic Floor** - The pelvic floor lies at the bottom of our torso and is vital for breathing. As you inhale the pelvic floor expands and deepens to allow for more room. During exhalation the pelvic floor rises to the original position.

**Vocal Production**

Without going into too much terminology and details about how the voice works (all anatomical curiosities can be found within the Malde, Allen, and Zeller text previously mentioned), I would like to highlight some important concepts of how the larynx functions during vocal production.

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106 Ibid., 74-9.
107 Ibid., 80-9.
108 Ibid., 90-7.
109 Ibid., 97-9.
The larynx consists of cartilages, muscles, membranes, and ligaments. Each of these structures aid in the ability to phonate (either speaking or singing) and manipulate the range of phonation. The cartilages provide a skeletal-like structure for the muscles and ligaments to attach to within your larynx, and the muscles, ligaments, and membranes control or aid in the movement of the vocal folds. When these structures work together simultaneously, they determine pitch and register.

Labeling types of registers often vary depending on what book or article you read and the author (for language continuity within this section and the rest of the pedagogy section, I will use the same vocabulary listed within the Malde, Allen, and Zeller text). Based upon the structure of the larynx, our voice can produce three registers: the modal register, the falsetto/flute register, and the glottal fry.\(^{110}\)

Before the discussion of registers, there are two muscle pairs that are specific to determining pitch: the thyroarytenoid and cricothyroid muscles. The thyroarytenoid muscles help make up part the vocal folds or the vocalis. The cricothyroid muscles are located behind the vocal folds, near the cricoid cartilage. When phonating, these muscles shorten and lengthen the folds within the larynx.\(^{111}\)

The modal register can be divided into chest voice, mixed voice, and head voice. The chest voice typically occurs when the vocal folds become short and thick, therefore producing a lower frequency. The head voice occurs when the vocal folds become thinner and longer, producing a higher frequency. When the contraction of the folds is more or less equal than the chest voice or head voice, the tone color created by the mixture of the head and chest voice is the mixed voice. Both the thyroarytenoid and cricothyroid muscles are engaged during this register.\(^{112}\)

As a singer continues to ascend into their register there is a point when the cricothyroid muscles can no longer produce higher pitches when the thyroarytenoids are still involved with phonation. When the thyroarytenoid muscles release completely from phonation, the falsetto and flute range is produced. The exact opposite happens for glottal fry. Glottal fry occurs with the cricothyroid muscles are completely disengaged. While the glottal fry is often used in speech and some popular musical styles, it is typically not used within classical and choral singing.\(^{113}\)


\(^{111}\) Ibid., 140-1.

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 142.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 143.
Phonation Issues

To address issues of a breathy, strident, or tight sound, this may be more related to the individual singer and not the section or choir itself. However, knowing that high school singers are still going through body changes, most singers will grow out of the breathy stage. If you do have a singer who may be past the adolescent stage and has trouble phonating, there could be a number of reasons why they may be having trouble. If you are uncomfortable working with them on your own, suggest them to a knowledgeable private studio teacher or to an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor. The strident sound is often created when there is force on the larynx. This can often occur when the chest voice is taken too high in their modal range where the singer could use mix or head voice instead. The tight sound, similar to strident, is when the laryngeal muscles are working too hard to make a sound. Closure should be gentle, and tension can be released through aspirate onsets or readjustment of the AO joint to release neck tension.

It is important to remind students that dynamics should be regulated with the speed of breath flow and not the reaction of the vocal folds. When singing softly, air is released slowly creating minimal air pressure behind the vocal folds. When singing loudly, the air speed is much quicker creating higher pressure beneath the vocal folds.

When considering intonation with young singers, there could be a multitude of issues. However, if you are certain that the student has correct posture, good breath control, and there isn’t any tension seen within the larynx, consider the below issues and adjustments.

1. **The range of the phrase is too wide.** It is easier to sing in tune with a narrow range. If the phrase is causing the singer to shift between multiple registers, then the overtones created could cause intonation issues. Try experimenting with a new register within the modal register that would allow for more comfort and ease when singing the passage in question (i.e. chest, mix, or head voice).

2. **Carrying a register too high or too low.** If chest voice or other heavy production is brought into the higher range of a phrase, this could cause the singer to sound flat and it might sound strained. If the singer brings the light registration to low, the sound will often be sharp. Again, experiment with the passage to find a suitable solution.

3. **Student is unable to hear the pitches.** Permit enough repetition to allow for the ear and mechanism to change to the new register shift.

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115 Ibid., 149.

116 Ibid., 149.

117 Ibid., 149.
Often bad habits are made without conscious decision and until they are fixed, repetition may be needed.

4. **Resonance is not engaged.**

*Resonance*

Resonance is created by the sound produced in the vocal folds that is resonated within the vocal tract. The vocal tract consists of:

- Skull
- Pharyngeal constrictors (throat muscles)
- Jaw (mandible)
- Tongue
- Soft palate
- Cheek muscles (buccinators)
- Lips
- Larynx
- The opening of the larynx and throat (aryepiglottic sphincter)\(^{118}\)

When the vocal tract is in motion, the maximum amount of space will be available when the AO-joint remains in balance. A classical or choral singer will also find freedom when they keep the lips released and the cheeks long. The larynx is also typically lower, and the soft palate is raised during this style of singing as well.\(^{119}\) For other styles like vocal jazz, the larynx may be raised a little higher and the soft palate is lower. The lips and buccinators are also pulled back a little to provide less space but a more pointed timbre; often resembling a more speech-like approach. Resonance is needed regardless of the style.

When discussing resonance with your students, avoid using the following images.

1. To increase space by lifting the soft palate, one might use the image of lofting a parachute. This is often referred to breath support adjusting the movement of the soft palate. Unfortunately, breath does not generate the movement of the soft palate. The soft palate is moved by muscles and has no relation to airflow.\(^{120}\)

2. The placement of resonance in the “mask” is often referred to when a director is looking for a forward or bright, resonant sound. There are many muscles and bones that make up the face. By focusing the sound in one area of the face, one may actually prohibit the singer from using other muscles to that would better contribute to the desired sound. Sensations of resonance vary within each singer. However,

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\(^{119}\) Ibid., 155.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., 191.
sensations in certain areas can be used as a guide to develop resonance.\textsuperscript{121}

3. When creating more space with in the mouth and mask area, often conductors ask singers to lower the jaw or raise their cheekbones. The jaw, when released, does not drop straight down. The jaw swings back at the TMJ (temporomandibular joint). The cheekbones are part of the skeletal structure of the skull. To ask students to move them independently from the other skeletal structure of their face is quite impossible as well. There are also no muscles of the face that connect to the skull that lift the soft palate.\textsuperscript{122}

\textit{Vibrato}

Vibrato is a widely discussed topic in the singing world, regardless of the style. With high school students it is often encouraged to allow for as much freedom as possible with a growing and maturing voice. Realistically, there are high school singers who have a natural vibrato and some that have not developed a natural vibrato. For purposes of this curriculum I will adhere to the term “minimal vibrato” when discussing it in the jazz style.

Vibrato is often used as a color choice amongst different styles of choral music as well as ornamentation. The exact source of how vibrato occurs is not fully understood. The assumption that vibrato occurs when there is complete freedom within the muscles implies that no muscles that attribute to phonation are actually working. However, in phonation both muscles (the cricothyroid and thyroarytenoid) are working together to create a frequency.\textsuperscript{123} According to Melissa Malde from \textit{What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body}, is that most likely vibrato is the natural tremor rate of our bodies. It is also widely accepted that when the intrinsic muscles of our larynx are engaged in response to subglottic pressure, vibrato occurs.\textsuperscript{124} Vibrato and minimal vibrato is something that should not be forced and can be developed with any singer.

Technique is the most important aspect in singing any style of music. A solid technique provides a strong basis for a singer to create healthy, life-long singing habits regardless of the music they are singing. Without being fully aware of your instrument and what it can do can affect how you use your instrument long term. As a choral conductor myself, I would highly encourage singers to participate in the traditional choral setting to learn technique before exposing them to a style that requires more technical demand of their instrument. Typically, most show choir or jazz/pop ensembles are made up of the strongest singers. However,

\textsuperscript{121} Malde, Allen, and Zellar, \textit{What Every Singer}, 192.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 192-3.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 50.
due to scheduling issues within the school that is not always the case. As a voice teacher, and possibly the only voice teacher for your students, dive into the technical aspect for your students benefit regardless of the ensemble you are in front of.

**Choral Pedagogy**

The choral pedagogy listed below is to offer additional resources and tools to the vocabulary you already have. This information was put together from a number of written resources either in book form or from the ACDA Choral Journal. I have listed these resources for further investigation in the “Other Resources” section of this packet. Please feel free to explore beyond what I have provided in this section.

As the previous section highlighted some vocal specific pedagogy to work on with your choir, the material below will discuss overarching concepts of the choral ensemble such as balance, blend, intonation, and style characteristics of common choral repertoire.

**Blend/Balance**

Blend and balance are often the hardest tasks to work on with a choir. While you may have balanced numbers with in each section of your choir, the amount of strong verses lighter singers can affect the overall balance within the section and the choir. If every member of the choir were always singing with good technique, that alone would change the balance and blend of the choir. Subsequently this is not always the case. One of the biggest factors to improving balance and blend within the choir is to encourage listening amongst the students. Below are some suggestions to encourage better listening amongst your choir members.

1. Have the singers sing in different configurations. Not only do the singers hear their part in a different location acoustically, but they are also now hearing another part they may have not heard before. Below are some ideas to try.
   - The first two rows of the choir split evenly soprano on the left and altos on the right. If you sing repertoire that requires multiple divisions, have the first row be soprano two and alto two, and the second row be soprano one and alto one. The third and fourth consist of tenors and basses. Place the basses behind the sopranos for tuning purposes and the tenors behind the altos. Again, for multiple divisions in music have them sit like the women.
   - Rows: 1st row is altos, 2nd row is sopranos, 3rd row is tenors, and the 4th row is basses.
   - Quartets or octets with even voice parts
   - Large circle within sections
   - Sing mixed up regardless of section within four rows or in a circle.
2. Ask the students to sustain a “bad” vowel on a singular pitch. As they listen across the choir, ask them to change the vowel so that they improve balance, blend, and intonation. You can do this over a certain number of beats. Start with the longest number of beats and then move to a shorter number of beats.125

3. Start with one section and have them sing a pure vowel on a single pitch. Ask another section to join in and match the vowel. Keep adding until the entire choir is singing on the same vowel. This can also be done with smaller numbers (i.e. 2-4 people and then build upon).

4. If the choir is having a hard time balancing or blending on a certain word or phrase of text and you are looking for a clearer sound, ask the students to do the following:
   - Sing the text through an “ee” for more brightness
   - Sing the text through an “oh” to increase roundness and depth
   - Sing the text through an “oo” to increase resonance and warmth

   If you have to modify a vowel for range considerations, consider unifying the vowel amongst all sections of the choir.126

5. If you have the resources, take an audio recording of the students. Often times this feedback will provide the honest answer on if the choir is balance and blended.

**Intonation**

There can be a number of reasons for intonation problems within a choir. Like balance and blend, impure vowels can affect intonation of the section and the choir. Another aspect can be each student’s vocal production. Lack of breath control, poor posture, or lack of resonance can also affect the sound of the choir. The acoustical environment and the structure of the music may also affect intonation. Regardless of the issue, intonation can be improved upon and the choir can be taught how to listen with more focus. Not only do students need to listen for blend within their individual sections, but also be able to tune chords amongst the choir and listen for overtones. Some exercises to achieve this are below.

1. A habit we tend to get into is playing the entire exercise with the students and modulating for them with the piano. Instead playing the piano for every exercise, select an easier warm-up and have the students sing through the exercise themselves while modulating a half step up or down. See how far they can get without your help. For every rehearsal, make a new goal whether they know it or not. This

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126 Ibid., 7.
exercise will also help with blending vowels and listening across the choir for a unison sound.

2. Chromatic scales are not only useful in choral repertoire preparation but in vocal jazz as well. The ability to fine tune half steps can be challenging for students. At first try playing just the octaves while they sing the chromatic scale ascending and descending. Then eventually work on it without the piano.

3. To fine tune chords and cadences within music, have your choir warm-up on sustained chords. Use vowels like oo, oh, ah, eh, and ee to work on vowel uniformity. This not only helps listening across the choir for intonation and overtones, but it also helps with blend/balance. When doing this exercise with my choirs I have the soprano and basses on the root, the tenors on the fifth of the chord, and the altos on the third. I advise them that a hand gesture in the upward direction refers to a half step up and vice versa. Try tuning just major and minor chords with the choir at first while moving up and down several times. Another option is to try this with chords from the actual repertoire.

4. Changing the standing position either within sections or the entire choir. Circles also help with listening.

5. While learning passages of music, have them sing it unaccompanied. This not only helps with tuning intervals and chords but also demonstrates whether or not they have learned the part.

6. Remind students of proper vocal technique within the rehearsal. This does not mean explaining posture in depth every time you mention it nor taking time out the rehearsal to make sure everyone is breathing right. Find one word for each item that you can mention just before they sing (i.e. posture, support, resonance, etc.) to remind the students of what they can improve upon to make their sound better.

7. Make sure note learning is efficient and correct from the start. Also avoid using extreme ranges of dynamics from the start. Allow the students to learn their parts with confidence before you add in other elements that affect vocal production. One way to help this learning process is to separate the text from the vocal line. They can focus on the intonation of the melody easier without the worry of text.  

8. Finally refer to the Vocal Pedagogy section for any additional information.

Diction

Choral music’s greatest feature is the ability to deliver a story while creating a musical sound. Being able to clearly enunciate any text is reliant on our articulators: tongue, teeth, lips, jaw, hard and soft palate, and glottis. Joan Wall’s International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A Manual for English and Foreign Language Diction not only provides anatomical pictures to understand articulator

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usage, but it also provides word lists to better implement the International Phonetic Alphabet with students. I strongly encourage this resource for both choral and vocal jazz singing.

In choral singing, vowels are pure and more open than those of vocal jazz. Since classical and choral singing requires more length of the vocal tract and a larger space for the sound to resonant, typically vowels will be more rounded and more resonant. Diphthongs are characteristically performed with the first vowel sustained and ended with the second vowel just before moving on to the next word. Consonants will also be emphasized and less conversational; this is mostly due to the acoustic nature of choral music. Shadow vowels (A vowel sound that occurs in between or at the end of final consonants. Typically, a schwa vowel is used.) will often be used to help with the enunciation of consonants. These can appear either at the end of phrases (i.e. blessed-uh) or in between two words that start or end with consonants (i.e. that-uh-the).

When learning text, it is important that students are able to produce and understand the right movement to make with their articulators; this takes time and repetition. Without repetition of correct articulator movement, students may have the text memorized mentally but are unable to perform the text effectively.\(^{128}\) Regardless if it is in English or a foreign language, the more frequent the practice, the more performance ready your students will become. Speaking the text with the written rhythm will help increase mobility and also ensure expressivity and timing of consonants.

For purposes of this study, a detailed description of diction for all choral styles is not necessary. To appease your curiosity, listening to recordings of professional choirs will not only help with pronunciation and diction but also provide you with authentic stylistic qualities as well. Below are some examples of well-known choirs.

- Cambridge Singers
- The Robert Shaw Chorale
- The Monteverdi Choir
- The Tallis Singers
- The Sixteen
- King Singers

When in doubt, do not be afraid to research more about the period of genre and the composer.

*Trust Your Experience*

While there are a few more items that could be discussed in this section like articulation, expression, rehearsing techniques, and choral conducting gestures, as veteran teachers much of this study is reliant on your musicianship skills and

the ability to take your students on a musical journey. Your programs would not be as successful as they are without your leadership. As previously stated, take the above information and add it to what you already know. Enjoy and dive into the part of this study that you are already familiar with but embrace and learn from the new challenge ahead. Hopefully you find that you are more equipped for the journey than you thought.

**Vocal Jazz Pedagogy**

The pedagogical information provided within this section comes from many resources listed within the “Other Resources” section of this packet. Many of the articles listed will discuss vocal jazz as a solo art form, but the information provided is useful to understanding the overall style of vocal jazz. This material is also useful from a group standpoint as well. However, for purposes for this study, comparisons are done from one style of ensemble singing to the next. Solo jazz singing will not be a part of this pedagogy section.

Before getting into the pedagogy of vocal jazz, it is important to identify the similarities and differences between choral and vocal jazz singing. These similarities may seem obvious, but without previous technical knowledge they can be challenging to explain to students and to demonstrate.

Three common misconceptions about vocal jazz that are common fundamentals of choral singing: breath, mixing of the registers, and the use of vibrato. In order to perform vocal jazz, a common misunderstanding is that the tone should be breathy. This results in breath support that is often labeled as un-energized or lazy. Not every style of jazz and certainly not in ensemble jazz singing is there a requirement of breathy tone. Often times the voice is portraying an instrument of the jazz big band and that requires a full and resonant sound from the singer. The ability to produce round and pure tones in jazz requires the breath to be engaged and full of energy.\(^{129}\)

Placement and mixing of registers is difficult for anyone singing in a new style. However, when concerned about intonation, balance, and blend, the same considerations of vocal technique in a choral ensemble can be made within the vocal jazz ensemble. Finally, vibrato is a widely discussed topic amongst jazz singing. Vocal jazz is a style that does use minimal vibrato, but it is also a style that uses vibrato for ornamental or tone color purposes.\(^{130}\) If we were to ask our singers to perform a Palestrina piece with minimal vibrato, as it would be stylistically appropriate, we would also ask for their tone to have energy for expressive and phrasing purposes. This technique is very similar to group jazz singing as well.

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\(^{130}\) Ibid., 72.
Other commonalities of choral and vocal jazz singing are:

- Balanced skeletal and muscular posture.
- Breath support
- A jaw and tongue free from tension.
- The use of the entire vocal tract.
- The modal and falsetto registers are used in choral and vocal jazz singing.
- Glottal, aspirate, and balanced onsets are used in both types of music.
- Vocal jazz, depending on the repertoire can use more glottal onsets than choral music.
- Pure vowels and vowel modification.
- Phrases are built on musical line and text (generally 4-8 measures).
- Typically sung in the keys composed/arranged in. Solo jazz singing allows for the possibility to change keys depending on the range and timbre wanted from the singer.

When comparing the two genres, there are naturally quite a few stylistic and pedagogical differences. For side-by-side comparison, Table B.1 lists each style and their specific characteristics. Note that this comparison is an overview made from traditional choral repertoire and not contemporary choral or twentieth century choral music as these genres are highly influenced by jazz and other musical styles.

Table B.1. Choral vs. Vocal Jazz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Choral</th>
<th>Vocal Jazz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic- no amplification</td>
<td>Acoustic- no amplification</td>
<td>Microphone amplification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment includes: piano, orchestra, percussion (World music)</td>
<td>Accompaniment includes: piano, bass, drums, guitar, vocal percussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical choral ensemble ranges from 20-60 singers</td>
<td>Typical jazz ensembles range from 6-16 singers, jazz choirs 26-50+, and small jazz ensembles 4-8 singers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal tract expanded (i.e. larynx low, soft palate high, lips and buccinators lowered, etc.)</td>
<td>Vocal tract shifts in length and expansion depending on style (larynx is typically higher, lowered soft palate, wider vowels as opposed to taller vowels, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone is a balance of bright and dark</td>
<td>Tone is brighter; more reminiscent of instruments (especially in swing tunes)-created by a shallower vocal tract and wider vowels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full resonance; limited timbres</td>
<td>Varying degrees of resonance dependent on style; many timbres (i.e. breathy to resonant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATB ranges are generally within a specific tessitura associated with the voice part</td>
<td>Tenor and bass parts (except for a walking bass line) do not consist of a wide range through many registers. Soprano and alto ranges typically sit in the mid to low registers. These lower registers for the soprano and alto parts require strength and flexibility in chest and mixed voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal diction</td>
<td>Conversational/vernacular diction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall articulation is conservative</td>
<td>Overall articulation is more varied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme dynamic ranges</td>
<td>Conservative dynamic ranges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited ornamentation</td>
<td>A vast array of ornamentation (i.e. vibrato, slides, scoops, trills, shakes, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal if any improvisation (depends on style- gospel and some world music pieces require improvisation)</td>
<td>Improvisation within almost any style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically, eighth notes are performed straight, even with syncopation (gospel and some twentieth century music does incorporate some elements of jazz swing)</td>
<td>Eighth notes are swung or performed straight (Latin, Rock, or R &amp; B), even with syncopation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal lines are typically composed to deliver text; the voice is its own identity.</td>
<td>Vocal parts can portray instruments, add tone colors/timbers, and accompany along with the delivery of text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part writing follows classical standards</td>
<td>Part writing does not always follow classical standards (i.e. the root is not always in the bass or soprano line, tenors and altos often have extensions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the differences listed above, the ensemble pedagogy and rehearsal techniques used in the choral ensemble can transfer over to the vocal jazz ensemble. Balance, blend, intonation, tone, and diction issues still arise with the vocal jazz music. As a choral director, you have the same musicianship skills to problem solve many, if not all of these same issues despite the challenges of the style. My late mentor, Steve Zegree, firmly believed that the vocal jazz ensemble was an extension of the choral ensemble. As an alumnus of the Gold Company program, this has never been truer as his rehearsal techniques are still found regularly in my rehearsals, whether I am in front of a traditional choral or vocal jazz ensemble.

Before I jump into the specific styles you will be performing with your students, let me first point out the largest learning tool in jazz: listening. The best way to absorb and understand the vocal jazz style is to listen to how past artists defined this style of music and to the new artists who are expanding upon what has
already been created. Listening also helps create and establish a jazz vocabulary. It is also important for students to listen to vocalists and instrumentalists as the vocabulary can be applied to both. While you may not have the time to listen to an entire album with your students weekly, use the weekly sight-reading charts provided and their YouTube recordings as a listening exercise. After reading through one lead sheet discuss the form, style, instruments used, improvisation, and eventually discuss any subjective comments. You will find recordings for the sight-reading tunes under “YouTube Links” and I have also provided a section of solo vocalists, group vocalists, and instrumentalists in the “Listening Suggestions” section.

Another important aspect to discuss is tone. As the music transitions from choral to vocal jazz, one of the most important and noticeable factors should be tone color. As stated in Table 1, the choral tone color is typically a balance of bright and dark. The sound is open, free, and resonant throughout the entire vocal tract (larynx is low, and vowels are tall). The vocal jazz tone is still open, free, and resonant, but is typically produced by a shallower vocal tract. The larynx typically sits higher, the diction is more conversational (wider vowels, not as strict consonants), and the resonance “feels” more forward (brighter, but not louder) in the vocal tract. Each style of jazz requires a varying degree of resonance and tone color. The best way to describe this to your students is to have them listen to the groups listed in the “Listening Questionnaire and Listening Examples” section. It is important to advise students to not mimic the voices on the recordings but to imitate the color and timbre they are using.

**Ballad**

The ballad that was chosen for this study is a mix of a traditional folk song with some elements of jazz harmony and style. Within this piece there will be some jazz components that you will want to incorporate in the background vocals. This piece was programmed second as the ballad is greatest way to introduce students to the vocal jazz style. The reason being is that the commonalities between a traditional slow choral piece and an accompanied jazz ballad both require special attention to harmonies, rhythms, balance, blend, intonation, tone, vowel unification, and diction.\(^{131}\)

When approaching a ballad, allow the musical line and a speech-like delivery to guide your interpretation.\(^{132}\) This is not only true for ballads; this concept can be applied to the other tunes as well. There is some opportunity for freedom within this piece, but not like that of an unaccompanied piece. The jazz ballad is mainly about freedom of interpretation and emotional content. Find a few places within this piece where you can stretch the tempo. This may be around the key changes or when the soloist is singing.


\(^{132}\) Ibid., 14.
The tone color in a ballad can vary from breathy to resonant. Typically, in an unaccompanied ballad one might go with a breathier tone for blend and balance purposes. A clearer or brighter tone could be used to accentuate the climax of the ballad or any parts that are louder in dynamic. For accompanied ballads, the sound could be more resonant and clear. In more exposed areas, the tone could be softer. Ultimately the decision for tone relies on text expression and musicality. If you were to listen to groups like The Real Group, New York Voices, or Singers Unlimited, there use of tone color for unaccompanied ballad can be resonant the entire way through. Experiment with your students to find a tone that matches the tune the best.

Another stylistic element to this ballad would be to decide where vibrato can be used, and if it is used as an ornament or as a color. In the unison section of this piece, the vibrato could emphasize the tone color of the group. When the song splits and there is a soloist and background vocals, the soloist can choose to use vibrato throughout or as an ornament (i.e. energized minimal vibrato and then allowing the vibrato to appear at the end of a held note). The background vocals, especially with the tighter harmonies, will want to use minimal vibrato for clarity of intonation.

Swing

The swing style is one of the most well known characteristics of the jazz style and often times hard to teach. The term mostly refers to the rhythmic aspect of the swing style. Swing involves syncopation, swung eighths notes, and a consistent tempo. Syncopation is most often described as accenting the notes that take place just before or after the beat. On a large scale, this means accenting beats on 2 and 4 (weak beats), unlike classical (strong beats on 1 and 3). One of the first elements to instill within your students is comfort and confidence on beats two and four. While this seems like an easy task, most students who have a stronger classical background will find this more challenging. Take the time try this with your students, even if they are able to succeed on the first attempt. When you start incorporating music and slight movement what seemed like an easy task may become harder with all elements involved. This will also provide you with another opportunity to listen to some vocal jazz with your students.

Swing eighth notes are often notated in jazz music the same way as classical eighth notes are notated. What is often seen just below the tempo classification is in Figure B.1.

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Both of these notations can be interpreted the same way. When swinging eighth notes, the first note is longer than the second, but the accent is on the second note. Another way to think about swinging eighth notes is the triplet feel. Instead of a 4/4 time feel where the accent is on the offbeat eighth note, a 12/8-swing feel puts the accent on three, six, nine, and twelve, with the macro beats on four and ten. If you were to sing swung eighth notes with scat syllables you would use “doo-bah” (i.e. doo-bah, doo-bah, doo-bah, etc.). The “doo” implies the length of the first note while the “bah” accents the second note.

Finding a constant and consistent tempo is important for any swing tune. This is particularly important, as the tendency with beginners can be to rush or fall way behind when swinging. Use a metronome to aid in the first few rehearsals and note learning stages of these pieces. This will help them get a better feel for two and four with the constant “click” reminder. It will also help the students feel more confident with their own rhythmic feel when instruments are eventually added.\textsuperscript{134}

The tone color typically used for swing pieces is bright, as most swing tunes resemble the instruments of the jazz big band. The sopranos are the trumpet section, the altos are the saxophone section, the tenors and basses are the trombone section, and the basses will also resemble the double bass. It is important for students to know this as it plays in to the balance of the group and the role of each part. That does not mean that the sopranos should always be loud because they have the melody. Listen to some of the jazz bands provided in the “Listening Suggestions” section to discover the type of balance commonly used within a big band. Ideally, you’ll want the vocal jazz ensemble to resemble a big band.

Vibrato use in swing tunes is minimal and if it is used, it is strictly as an ornament. Swing tune harmonies can contain ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths, so for intonation purposes the use of full vibrato can muddy the intonation. Vibrato can also affect the clarity of articulation as well. As part of the warm-up exercises provided, there are a few articulation exercises written by Kirby Shaw that help describe the type of ornaments used in the swing style. These will be important to work on for your closing swing tune.

\textsuperscript{134} Spradling, \textit{Jazz Singing}, 56.
Latin

The term “Latin” is used as an overall expression to define music with rhythmic and stylistic elements from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{135} As opposed to the swing eighth notes just previously stated in the last few paragraphs, eighth notes in the Latin style are performed evenly (straight). The Latin style can include Bossa Nova, Samba, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean, and Salsa. For this study, the piece chosen for your group is in Bossa Nova Latin style.

The bossa nova style is one of the most common beats found in the Latin jazz style. Mostly Brazilian in descent, it is generally interpreted in a medium tempo with a straight-eighth note feel.\textsuperscript{136} Figure B.2 demonstrates the typical rhythmic feel. Typically, in the straight-eighth styles there is less use of a triplet feel. The emphasis is still on the back of the beat.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{bossa_nova_rhythmic_feel.png}
\caption{Bossa Nova Rhythmic Feel}
\end{figure}

The bossa nova feel is also the Latin feel that is used frequently when changing the feel of a ballad or swing tune. For example, “Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)” is typically performed as a swing tune. However, some artists have performed this tune slower than the original tempo and in a bossa nova feel.

When listening to Latin jazz vocalists like Astrud Gilberto, João Gilberto, Antônio Carlos Jobim, or Luciana Souza, the tone quality is light, breathy, and yet there is still a resonance within the sound. There is also use of more aspirate onsets. The general tone is warm and softer than what you would produce in a swing or ballad. Most importantly, Latin music emphasizes the rhythm (syncopation) and the text. Minimal vibrato is used in this style. Often times vibrato is used at the ends of phrases, typically the last few beats of a held note. For listening purposes with your students, below are some specific groups and sounds that could be implemented:

- New York Voices “Baroque Samba”, “Chamego (Betty’s Bossa)”, “Don’t You Worry ‘Bout a Thing”
- Beachfront Property “Wave”
- PM Singers “Corcovado”
- Groove for Thought “Spain”

\textsuperscript{135} Zegree, The Complete, 12.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 12.
Balance, Blend and Intonation

When fixing issues of balance, blend, and intonation within the ensemble, any of the previous suggested exercises in the choral pedagogy section would also work in this style. Make sure to keep in mind the new tone color and conversational diction. The soprano and alto sections should work together and generate a unified timbre. Baritones and basses will have an easier time matching the timbre of the tenors than vice versa.\textsuperscript{137} I cannot stress enough that a lot of this new style is listening to vocal groups as well as listening amongst the choir. In a smaller jazz ensemble, it is easier to fix a section of 4-6 singers. In a large choral setting, the more voices there are, the more difficult it can be to find one unified sound. Often allowing for more unaccompanied moments within rehearsals so students are forced to listen will help immensely. Also working vertically chord-by-chord and building chords from the root will also help with ear training.

As stated in Table 1, dynamic ranges are not as extreme as those in choral music. This is mostly due to singers performing with amplification and the style itself. It is often much easier to allow for a microphone to adjust how loud and soft you sing by how far the microphone is away from your mouth, instead of controlling dynamic contrast with your breath. In this case, encourage singers to continue to use their breath support to adjust dynamics like they would in choral repertoire. Often times, focusing the resonance more forward within the vocal tract will also produce a dynamic change. Singing with brighter resonance doesn’t necessarily mean singing louder, it just appears louder because the sound created is clearer and focused. Singing texts through “oo” or “ee” vowels will help pull the resonance forward, along with singing with a shallower placed jaw.

Diction

Another fundamental difference between choral and vocal jazz is diction. The traditional concert diction emphasizes vocal production and is also important for acoustic purposes. While pure vowels are important in vocal jazz singing as well, traditional choral diction changes the tone quality that is needed in a vocal jazz ensemble. Most vocal jazz ensembles sing on microphones, so the approach to diction is more conversational. Consonants at the start of a word will be crisp while ending consonants will be imploded or deemphasized. Typically, this is due to the feedback (popping noise) you would get from singing on a microphone.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{137} Spradling, \textit{Jazz Singing}, 58.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 57.
For consonants within words or phrases, they become weaker as well. For example, in the phrase “we’ve got a world that swings”, the “t” would be softened by using a “d”. The phrase would then change to “we’ve gahda world that swings”. Another point to highlight is that the shadow vowels often used in between and at the ends of words in traditional choral singing are not used in jazz singing (“that swings” the “t” and “s” are elided. You would typically stay away from “that-uh-swings”). For purposes of this study and the fact that the singers will not be on microphones due to the size of the choirs and resources, there will need to be an increase of consonant use so that the words are heard acoustically. A suggestion would be to emphasize final consonants of words and all voiced consonants. However, still make them as conversational as possible.

Vowels produced within the vocal jazz ensemble are also conversational. You would not pronounce the word “it” like “eat”. The production of the vowel is more relaxed and typically wider to help with a forward, brighter sound. The jaw, although released from tension, is not as open either. This again attributes to the tone color you are trying to create with your students. In a ballad where students are having trouble with balance and blend, I usually suggest bringing in the corners of the mouth and lowering the jaw ever so slightly. This tiny adjustment makes a world of difference with held notes on vowels. For words with diphthongs it is best to unify on the initial vowel sound and then resolve the second vowel as a group at the cutoff or just before the final consonant.

One last diction element to highlight is the use of the schwa vowel. The schwa vowel is used frequently instead of a pure “ah” vowel. This often pertains to words that often start phrases like “the”, middle of phrases like the word “of”, and words that start with an open “ah” such as “above”. Typically, any text that starts on a pick-up beat is de-emphasized, and therefore the vowel is de-emphasized or more conversational.

**Articulation/Ornaments**

Like the jazz big band, the vocal jazz ensemble has a vocabulary of articulations and special effects. To avoid repetition, you have been given a helpful tool by Kirby Shaw entitled, *Vocal Jazz Style*, to work on with your group and the pieces they can be applied to. The effects provided authenticate the jazz style one step further but are not necessary if they take precedence over notes and rhythms. However, learning the correct rhythms, harmonies, and lyrics with accurate blend, balance, intonation, and tone is far more important. Take some time to experiment with your students and decide what articulations and effects fit best.

Vibrato has been discussed mostly within this section as an ornament or tone color. To understand how to use the vibrato as an ornament, it is important to know how to create minimal vibrato. It is important that when describing this type of vocal technique that you avoid terms such as, “constricted”, “limited”, “tight”, or any other term that could reference creating tension somewhere within their
vocal mechanism. One of the articles listed in the “Other Resources” section by John Nix, describes how to address the use of vibrato in choral rehearsal. In the article, Nix describes that minimal vibrato is created through airflow rates and glottal adduction. Vibrato requires more air pressure and less glottal adduction, while minimal vibrato is the opposite. Vibrato is not completely void in the voice. In essence, a singer is not reducing the rate of the vibrato, rather they are reducing the extent of the vibrato. In order to experiment with this in your classroom with students, here are a few exercises to try from the Nix article.

- Sirens- either intervals of fifths or octaves
- Sliding up to a sustained pitch and using minimal vibrato
- Alternate a sustained note using vibrato and minimal vibrato. The air stream should be the same throughout and the sense of freedom should be the same with vibrato and minimal vibrato.

According to Diana R. Spradling and her book *Jazz Singing: Developing Artistry and Authenticity*, there are nine different ways vibrato can be used as an ornament in jazz singing. While some of these embellishments are specific to solo jazz singing, there are a few that would be commonly used in ensemble singing. Keep in mind that they are used as ornaments and not used on every sustained pitch within a piece. Many sustained pitches will not include vibrato due to the intonation needs of certain chords. When in doubt, listen to the vocal groups provided in the listening section to determine how often to use these types of embellishments. Below are some common vibrato embellishments:

1. A sustained pitch on one syllable that starts out with minimal vibrato and then vibrato is engaged after a few seconds, finishing the sustained pitch with vibrato.
2. An ascending or descending slide that starts with minimal vibrato and ends with vibrato (similar to the first ornament).
3. Vibrato is engaged on voiced consonants (m, n, or ng).

*Stage Presence*

The final aspect of vocal jazz pedagogy is stage presence. There is no expectation for your students to learn choreography on top of challenging music, and typically most jazz ensembles do not use choreography. As someone who has experienced both choreographed and un-choreographed vocal jazz, there can be a happy balance. A couple of items to help engage the audience in your performance might be:

- Facial expression and reaction to the text.
- Engaging with one another (i.e. making eye contact)

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140 Ibid., 411.
141 Spradling, Jazz Singing, 35-6.
• Snapping on two and four during the swing tunes. Not everyone has to do this. Sometimes when the whole group snaps, it can be aurally and visually overwhelming. Mainly ask the students to feel the beat in their bodies.
• Hand and arm gestures that accent text or syncopated rhythms.

I have included some videos on the “YouTube Link” section of high school groups and college groups to help provide an idea of what stage presence can look like. Most importantly, do what feels comfortable but still allows for the audience to become engaged in your performance.
IMPROVISATION

The keys to successful improvisation are practice, imitation/transcription, and listening. Unfortunately, with eight short weeks and a mixture of repertoire, there is not enough time to examine all of the details of improvisation. Provided in this section are common beginning elements of vocal improvisation. Listed in the “Other Resources” section of the curriculum packet is a list of improvisation books that can help further the progress and curiosity of vocal improvisation.

Short History of Vocal Improvisation

It has often been cited that the first attempt at scat singing occurred with Louis Armstrong. During a recording session for the tune “Heebie Jeebies”, it is said that the music had fallen of his stand and on to the floor. Being unable to pick up the music off the floor, he scatted nonsense syllables to replace the words. Regardless of where it came from, scat singing has been around since the 30’s and 40’s when vocalists came up with a way to imitate the sounds and phrases of instrumentalists. These nonsense syllables are now a standard element of the vocal jazz style. They became inspiration for Duke Ellington’s “Creole Love Call”, they were implemented into standard tunes as part of the melody like “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If it Ain’t Got that Swing)”, and as the complexity of the skill grew so did its popularity among vocalists. Eventually it became standard performance to take a chorus or two of an improvisation solo.¹⁴²

Syllables and Rhythm

One of the hardest elements to vocal improvisation is choosing what words or syllables to sing. Luckily, we have great recordings and videos of some of the best vocal improvisers like Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, Chet Baker, and Louie Armstrong to imitate. As you introduce your students to the vocabulary of scat singing, here are a couple of key factors when choosing syllables:

1. Flow - choose syllables that make sense rhythmically in a phrase. A lot of percussive syllables at a fast tempo could become a tongue twister. While you want your solo to be rhythmically interesting, keep in mind the type of syllables that flow better together in long or short phrases.

2. Articulation - scat singing is not about singing as many notes as you can and without interesting rhythms and articulations. There should be rests and articulated ideas within a solo.

3. Imitation - choose an instrument to imitate and find vowels and consonants that mimic the tone color and articulation of that instrument.

Before jumping into improvisation right away, take the time to have your students build a small list of syllables for standard jazz rhythms (i.e. quarter notes, eighth

notes, triplets and half notes). This can be brainstormed as a group by listening to some recordings and writing down what is heard, or you can take the syllables used from Michele Weir’s *Vocal Improvisation* book, located in chapter six. I have included some syllables with note durations below. Try to stay away from the “shoo-bee-doo-bee”, “scoo-bee-doo-bee”, “yea-buh-da-buh” stereotypes as they are not authentic vocal jazz syllables.

- Quarter notes: doot, dot, bop
- Eighth notes: doo-bah, da-bah, doo-vah
- Triplets: doo-bah-dah and did-dl-ah
- Half notes: yah, bah, oh

Before adding notes, I have included some exercises that might help your students become more familiar with the vocabulary. The Michele Weir book also has some call and response rhythms with syllables and a recording to chant along too as well.

1. Create a four-bar rhythm that repeats using all of the syllables your students have come up with. These rhythms could be made of 1) all four bars are filled with quarter notes, 2) two bars could consist of quarter notes and two bars of eighth notes, or 3) one bar of quarter notes, two bars of eighth notes, and one bar of triplets, etc.
2. Have students write rhythms on the board and attach syllables to the rhythm.
3. Speak improvise four-bar rhythms. First, try a call and response between you and your students. Then open it up to other students to take the lead. Second, go around the room and have each person take four bars. Then extend it to 8 bars if possible.

After spending some time on just rhythms and speaking the syllables, try adding in small elements of notes. I would suggest keeping it as simple as possible because you have now added one more thing to think about in improvisation.

1. With no accompaniment, try a call and response between you and the students by only using one note. You can increase the number of notes the more familiar the students become with syllables and rhythm.
2. Try a twelve-bar blues accompaniment from either iReal Pro or on the Jamey Abersold YouTube links in B-flat. Teach the students the roots of the chord changes first and have them sing the roots on whole notes, then once they become more familiar add in different rhythms.
3. An extension of the previous exercises would be to try a call and response adding in different notes of the chords with the accompaniment (i.e. roots, thirds, fifths, and seventh). Students can take the lead with the call and response and you can have students each take four bars to start and then eight bars when they are more comfortable.
Melody

One of the hardest elements of vocal improvisation is creating a melody that sounds good over chord changes. Jazz instrumentalists practice hours and hours of scales, arpeggios, and ii-V-I combinations in order to improve their improvisation skills in performances. Strong vocal improvisers also practice these elements. It is not likely that on top of learning repertoire and introducing a new style that you will be able to cover all scales, all of the possibilities of arpeggios, common ii-V-I combinations, and jazz theory within the eight weeks. However, I have provided a few different scales in the warm-up section that will incorporate different rhythms and syllables to help build note choices for improvisation.

Another aspect that is highly approachable with melody and improvisation is melodic variation. Using the established melody is a great idea because 1) it already fits over the chord changes, 2) it follows the form of the chart, and 3) it is easy to come back to when note choices become hard or the singer has gone astray. Michele Weir provides a great exercise in chapter 5 of Vocal Improvisation that takes a twelve-bar blues form and melody, and each repetition of the melody is enhanced or paraphrased. While you may not have this resource, any one of the blues charts I have provided for sight-singing can work with this same exercise. You may also try this with any one of the swing charts as well. Here is how you can vary the melody in different steps:

1. Sing the tune as is the first time.
2. Switch to syllables and keep the same melody and rhythm.
3. Staying on syllables, change aspects of the rhythm.
4. With syllables and rhythmic changes, start adding in notes that are either a step above or below the melody. It is best not to stray too far away. Sometimes starting and ending on the same provided notes is the biggest help.
5. Lastly, see what the students can come up with on their own.

Improvising Within Different Styles

When it comes to improvising in different styles, as you may want to try with your students and the sight-reading charts provided, it is important to keep in mind the style of the tune. Swing and blues charts will have the same feel of swung eighth notes. Many of the swung rhythmic choices used within a swing tune can also be used in a blues tune. Note choices that focus on the thirds and sevenths (leading tones) will increase interest in the melody. Latin tunes require a straight eighth-note feel and there is a large focus on syncopated rhythms. Note choices can vary and often emphasize the rhythm. Sometimes keeping the melody simple and focusing on the rhythmic variation can be more effective than multiple notes. When improvising on a ballad, a large portion of the decision is the feel of the ballad. Ballads can either be performed in a straight eighth feel or a 12/8 swing feel. A ballad with a straight eighth feel will have simpler rhythmic choices...
and lend itself to being more of a lyrical solo. A 12/8 feel will lend itself to syncopated, swing rhythms.

**Putting it All Together with a Tune**

When putting all the elements together to improvise with a tune the best way to approach this is with the sight-reading tunes you will have already mastered throughout the weeks of this curriculum. Start out with the blues as this will be the first style and form you will have scatted over with the exercises provided in this section. Then as the students feel comfortable, move on to the Swing, Latin, and then Ballads. A typical rundown of a chart with vocal improvisation might look like this:

1) First time through- sing the melody or the “head” of the tune once (unless the melody is short, then there is room for repeating the melody).
2) Second time through- improvise over the entire form once
3) Third time through- sing the melody once again and end the tune.

Typically, if you were performing this in front of an audience, you would work out an intro and ending with the combo you were performing with. You might also scat more than one time through the form of the tune. In some styles like Latin or ballads where the form is AABA, you would scat over the beginning A sections and then sing the lyrics at the B section and end the song after the final A section. There are a multitude of options for singing solo jazz tunes, and this is not our focus of the study. However, if you would like to give your students an opportunity to try improvisation on a solo tune, this is your chance to do so.

**Exercises for the Group**

To dive in and experience more improvisation with your students, I have listed some additional activities you can try with your students. It might be a good idea to start out with some of these activities as exercises and as an introduction into improvisation.

1. Circle singing- Have the ensemble stand within sections in a large circle around the room. At first, you will want to lead the group in this exercise. There is no specific section or voice part you have to start with. Typically, I start with the basses and create a riff for them to repeat. Continue by adding on a section or group of people, one at a time, with different riffs that go along or match the style and or harmony you have already created. Experiment with dynamics, new riffs, vocal and body percussion.
2. Telephone- This exercise is similar to the childhood game. Have one student start out with a short rhythmic phrase using syllables. The person next to them repeats the idea but makes a slight variation. The next person repeats what they just heard before them and changes it slightly. The idea is to enhance what was just performed. Keep going
until the initial idea has transformed into something different. You can also do this with melodic phrases as well.

3. Trading/Listening- While improvising over the blues, have the students take 4 bars and improvise over the changes. The next person to improvise has to start out their four bars by stealing the last bit of the solo that the person before them sang.

4. Musical Conversation- split the ensemble into pairs. While improvising over the blues each student must take turns asking a question and the other answers but only through improvisation.

**Transcription**

Over the course of eight weeks I strongly encourage that you and your students work on a transcription together. The best way to understand and familiarize ourselves with something new is to imitate those who did it best. This will be a fun project for your students and something they can learn and take ownership of learning together. Below are a couple of approachable solos to try. Feel free to transcribe them all if time permits:

1. Chet Baker: “Do It the Hard Way,” “It Could Happen to You” from the album *It Could Happen to You* (See the YouTube Links for these tunes)

2. Ella Fitzgerald: “Them There Eyes” from *Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald: Ella & Basie*. “Take the A Train” from *Pure Ella*. (See the YouTube Links for these tunes)
REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

The rehearsal techniques provided in this section are to help guide you through the vocal jazz rehearsal. It is important for students to understand the style difference of the music they will be performing as well as the preparation and mindset it takes to perform two different styles of music. The biggest preparation and adjustment for them will be to adjust how they listen as a choir.

Warm-up

I strongly encourage you to continue the normal warm-up routine with your students that you have already established. It is important for students to be reminded of the vocal technique you have taught and how they can transfer over what they already know to this new style of music. It is helpful to remind them that good breath support and good posture are a constant in both styles. To help aid in preparing your students for new sounds, I have provided a warm-up section that includes scales for improvisation and arpeggios and chord exercises to enhance ear training. On the days that vocal jazz and choral repertoire will be worked, I would advise a longer warm-up at the start or another warm-up before starting a different style to ensure students full engagement in the transition.

When starting a vocal jazz warm-up, immediately encourage listening as you run through scale. Scales that are practiced unaccompanied will help with tuning the thirds and sevenths. A chromatic scale will also help with fine-tuning small intervals. The arpeggios will encourage helpful practice on syllables and conversational diction. They will also outline chord qualities allowing the students to sing every note within the chord.

To encourage listening beyond scales and the outlining of chords, take the time to sing chords that don’t fall under traditional choral writing. It is often common for notes to be doubled in choral writing (especially the root), while in jazz part writing four-part texture means four different notes are sung. The root of the chord is not often placed in the bass voice. When performing with a rhythm section, the root of the chord is often played by the double bass or piano, leaving more chord options for the choir to sing. For example, a voicing for a G dominant seventh chord could consist of the basses singing the minor seventh, the tenors will sing the third, the altos will sing the fifth, and the sopranos will sing the root. What sends caution in this type of voicing is that the basses and tenors are singing a tritone apart. This is a hard interval to tune because it is the third and seventh of the chord and it is not typically heard in traditional choral writing. This means training the ears of the basses and tenors for intervals such as these. While the part writing leading up to this note may be logical, if this is a held note at the end of a phrase, it is important for students to hear intervals such as these and know how to tune them to the rest of the group.
When singing these types of chords as a warm-up, as a practice for balance and blend exercises, try these options. These are changes are also illustrated in the chord exercises:

- Start out as a major chord with the basses and sopranos singing the root in octave unison. Then move the sopranos down two half steps to the minor seventh and allow for the group to tune and hear the new four-part harmony.
- Go back to the major chord and this time move the basses down to the seventh.
- Keep the basses and ask the tenors to move down a half step creating a minor seventh chord.
- Ask the basses and tenors to move up one half step creating a major seventh chord.
- To add in another chord note, have the altos move up two half steps so they are singing the thirteenth instead of the fifth.
- Another addition for low basses is to have them drop down and sing the root with the sopranos. This creates a five-part voicing.

There are many options to voice chords. Take some time outside of rehearsal with the music and plan out what might be hard chords to tune with the choir. Start with these as your warm-up that way they become familiar when rehearsing.

**Music Learning Techniques**

Before presenting this music to your students, it is encouraged that you have taken the time to become familiar with the pieces. There is no expectation that you become a vocal jazz expert before presenting this music to your students. It will be a great learning process for you and your students to encounter. However, the more you can research, listen, and practice the voice parts yourself to help determine where trouble spots might be, the better your rehearsals will go. I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to do some listening outside of rehearsal to all types of vocal groups. Every director has a specific personal taste to the group vocal jazz sound. Listen and learn to imitate the tone you want so you can effectively describe and demonstrate it to your students. Also, provide your students with outside listening lists.

Learning notes and rhythms can be the toughest part of rehearsal. There are a variety of tools that you undoubtedly have under your belt to keep the rehearsal process fun and educational. To add to what you already have, here are a few jazz specific things that might help with the learning process:

- Keep the style present while learning notes and rhythms. Regardless of the learning tempo, make sure that the rhythms are constantly swung if you are working on the swing tune, straight and accented on the backbeats for straight eighths, etc. The last thing you want to do is re-learn the style.
• When working rhythms, change the words into common scat syllables that you have worked on during improvisation/sight-reading. This will help with feeling the natural accents of the rhythmic phrases and help with emphasis of text.
• Correct notes and rhythms are the foundation of vocal jazz music. Slowly incorporate stylistic ornaments (i.e. shakes, falls, scoops, etc.) once enough repetition has been done and you are sure the students know the piece.
• Incorporate as much listening as you can into rehearsal. The more familiar students are with the vocal jazz tone, the easier it is to imitate.
• Work vertically and horizontally. Take the time tune all of the chords from all angles.
• Try these suggestions when needing to tune chords in the music:
  1. Isolate the interval within the two voice parts that are having trouble tuning. Have them sing the interval together and on the vowel only, no consonants. If you are tuning the G dominant chord illustrated earlier, start with the basses and add the tenors, then switch who starts first. This allows both parts to hear the interval from a different viewpoint.
  2. Next have the same two parts sing the entire measure with words, holding the final chord. It is important for the students to hear where they start the measure and how they finish the measure. Allow for enough repetitions for success.
  3. Build the chord up from the root, third, fifth, and seventh. Too often we start from bottom to top in a choral situation because the basses typically have the root. Building the chords this way will allow the singers to identify and tune to the appropriate voice part.
  4. By building the chord from root to the seventh, it is likely that the tritone is not the only interval that needs tuning. In situations where the bass and the soprano are a second apart, one will natural pull the other into unison. Repeat the steps above to help tune this interval.
  5. Finally add in all the voices and isolate the measure chord by chord. Start slowly and increase the speed, adding in written rhythm and style.

Working with a Rhythm Section

Over the course of this study you will have the opportunity to work with other musicians. Having an instrumental combo perform with a vocal jazz group is a great learning experience for all involved. Whether the musicians are hired or they are students, it is important for everyone to know that the instrumentalists and the vocalists are two equal components of the ensemble. The goal is to create music together.
Communication is often the hardest part when working with an instrumental combo. Understanding the role of each instrument within the combo will help you communicate better with the instrumentalist. You do not have to have a lot of personal experience on each instrument to be able to communicate style, but you do have to be familiar enough with the style in order to effectively connect with the combo.

In a typical choral setting the pianist is usually the only accompanying instrument. Many aspects of keeping steady tempo and helping create style are usually important components of a collaborating accompanist. The role of the pianist in vocal jazz is quite different. Jazz pianists in a vocal jazz ensemble provide harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic support. This may mean playing the written piano part, playing the vocal parts, playing rhythmic patterns that help define the style of music, adding to the music with short melodic or harmonic fills, reading chord changes, or playing improvised solos.\footnote{Zegree, \textit{The Complete Guide}, 36.} In the two vocal jazz charts chosen for you, the piano parts are written out. It is highly suggested that your accompanist follows these accompaniments if they are unfamiliar with the jazz style.

The drums provide a unique sound to the jazz combo because they can offer a variety of colors and sounds. One of the main tasks of the drummer is to match the bass player’s tempo. Once a drummer accomplishes this, they have the ability to explore their creativity and add effects that contribute to the sound and style of the ensemble.\footnote{Ibid., 39.} When playing, your drummer should be aware of dynamic contrasts made by the singers. Make sure that there is no confusion between dynamics and intensity. The drums provide strong support for the singers, so they should play with energy and intensity, despite the style or dynamic changes.\footnote{Ibid., 39.} Lastly, because the singers will be without amplification, the overall sound coming from the drumset will need to be softer, but not played with any less tenacity. If the drums are too loud the singers will have a tendency to over sing. Encourage your singers to sing on technique and well-supported breath but be aware of the balance in the performance space so the singers are not straining to be heard. Encourage your drummer to have a pair of brushes, lightweight wooden sticks, and mallets in their stick bag. That way there are options for accompaniment but also to provide different timbres.

The most important member of the entire rhythm section is the bass. It has two primary functions in the jazz combo: to provide harmonic foundation for the music and to establish the sense of time, pulse, and groove for the entire ensemble.\footnote{Ibid., 37.} In more popular styles you would typically use an electric bass and for standard...
vocal jazz charts you use a double bass. Both instruments require an amplifier, which can change the amplification and tone for certain pieces. If the resources are not available for a double bass, an electric bass will work fine as a substitution. For faster swing tunes, the tone will need to be bright and cleaner to be easily heard by the performers and audience. This would mean adding more treble into the mix of the amplifier. For slower tempo songs or rock and pop styles, the tone can appear darker. When mixing the sound on the amplifier, the bassist should avoid having too much low end in the sound as the pitches become less defined. When rehearsing with the rhythm section, experiment with the tone quality of the bass for each tune.\footnote{Zegree, The Complete Guide, 37-8.}

A few other considerations for the bass player:

- Always tune with the piano before starting rehearsal and before a performance.
- Elevate the amplifier off the ground for a clear and more well defined bass sound.
- It is important for tempo and rhythmic purposes that the bass player can play even quarter notes in a walking bass line. If this is a trouble area for the bass player, encourage practice with a metronome.
- Each note should be clear and defined, however the sound should be connected from one note to the next. This happens when the bass player keeps their fingers on the string at all times regardless of shifting positions. Fingers that aren’t touching the strings can sometimes create a staccato accent, which is not wanted for a walking bass line.\footnote{Ibid., 37-8.}

In the two charts that you will be performing with your students, there is a bass line provided for the bass player to play.

When communicating specific style elements for your instrumentalists to play, the best way to describe what you want is to have done enough listening of jazz pianists, bassists, and drummers. It is important to hear what a jazz combo sounds like when they accompany a soloist and when they accompany a group. This will also help when you are advising them on a specific style to play. If the instrumentalists in the combo are inexperienced, provide them with a list of recordings that they can listen to and try to imitate. Some of the best recordings to provide are those that demonstrate the style you are singing, if not the actual recordings of the songs you are performing. Most importantly, provide them recordings with vocalists. The way a combo accompanies vocalists is much different than playing in a jazz band. They need to understand the stylistic differences that are required when playing with vocalists.
Conducting the Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Conducting a vocal jazz ensemble or vocal jazz tunes require a different role from the traditional choral director. The main difference is that the need for a conductor to stand in front of an ensemble is neither as high nor as stylistically necessary. Are there directors that still stand in front of their ensembles? The answer is yes, and for beginning vocal jazz conductors I think this still acceptable. Eventually, if this is something you want to pursue within your program, you will want the students to gain some accountability and have them perform without your every cue. For purposes of this study, do what feels comfortable for you and your students.

One of the first skills to master when conducting a vocal jazz ensemble is the count off. It is often the best way to start any up-tempo tune. Typically, we do not give our accompanists a full two bars of conducting before they come in, but in this case, your count off sets the tempo and style of the entire piece, before it is even played. When counting a swing tune, establish the tempo of the tune by counting off two full measures in the tempo and snapping on beats two and four. It is not necessary to beat any type of four pattern to your students or to the instrumentalists during this count off. For the bossa nova count off: snap the straight eighth note subdivision and while saying, “one, two, one, two, three, four”. When performing with a rhythm section, often times a conductor might step out of the way of the singers after the count off and stand near the rhythm section to help provide rhythmic cues. If you are not comfortable with this, it is okay to stand in front of your group. Once counting off the ensemble, the last thing you want to do is go back to traditional choral gestures. Instead you should be trying to think like a big band leader. You are there to provide cues for entrances, cues for rhythmic accents, dynamics, and cut offs. Your gestural purpose is not large and is not needed if the students are prepared enough.

When conducting a ballad, the opportunity to conduct in the traditional choral setting is more welcomed. The piece within this study will require traditional choral gestures, so feel free to engage your students with your conducting style. For future reference, there is a choice as to if you stand or do not stand in front of the ensemble during a ballad. Often times if you are not there, the students performing a rubato ballad could lose engagement with the music and musicality. However, if you are standing and guiding your group through a rubato ballad, they can be much more focused and attentive to your gestures. Whatever you choose to do with your ensemble is perfectly fine. The music is the most important aspect of the performance, not the conductor. Allow yourself to be the facilitator to the music making process.
This eight-week table (Table B.2) is to help guide the incorporation of vocal jazz with your students. As the author of this curriculum, the structure of the weekly goals is based upon the route I would take with my own choir. Due to the fact that I am unfamiliar with your students’ and their ability levels, you have my permission to modify the weekly goals to benefit your students’ learning. Note and rhythm learning goals will not be added to this table, as it is trusted that your rehearsal techniques will prepare students in this area.

Goals throughout the eight weeks will consist of when to introduce styles, what sight-reading examples to use, suggested listening examples, and how to approach improvisation. The improvisation goals set for each week are suggested if there is time. None of the tunes selected for the performance have improvisation sections built in. If you choose to incorporate improvisation into rehearsals, you are free to modify each week as see fit for your student’s learning. For consistency and for the easiest transition purposes with learning, it is suggested that you start with the choral and ballad pieces first. It will also help with discussion of the similarities and differences of the two styles.

**Table B.2. Weekly Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Weekly Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repertoire:</strong> Introduce all pieces this first week; the choral tune selected, and the ballad should be the focus of this week’s rehearsal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listening:</strong> Every rehearsal this week should consist of one listening example to introduce the vocal jazz style. Present the listening questionnaire and use the group recordings provided. There is no specific order to follow with the recordings, however for this first week make sure there is at least one ballad, one Latin tune, and one swing tune. Choose at least one recording that consists of a vocal improvisation solo.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sight-Reading:</strong> By the third or fourth rehearsal, have the students read through a blues chart (i.e. “Tenor Madness” or “Now’s the Time”). After reading the chart down, listen to the recording provided in the YouTube section and discuss some of the stylistic elements heard. It is suggested that you become familiar with the style of blues and do not start any improvisation just yet.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improvisation:</strong> Any of the listening recordings you chose to listen to this week will have some aspect of improvisation, whether it is instrumental or vocal. Discuss elements of improvisation (i.e. where scat singing came from, how it is used within solo singing, scat syllables, etc.). After a discussion of improvisation, discuss/create a list of scat syllables. This can either be done with those already provided or by listening to some of the listening examples provided.</td>
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</table>
| Week 2 | **Repertoire:** Choral tune and jazz ballad.  
**Listening:** This week’s goal of listening should be based upon the style of the ballad. Make sure there is at least two examples of a ballad and the other examples could be of a different style, but the style highlights balance, blend, intonation, or tone.  
**Sight-Reading:** The sight-reading style for the week should go along with the style you are working on as an ensemble. Choose one or two tunes to sight-read.  
**Improvisation:** After creating your list of syllables, work through the suggested rhythmic exercises provided in the improvisation section.  
**Stylistic Elements:** The stylistic elements for this week are based upon discovering the differences of the choral and vocal jazz style. The biggest element that should be established is the jazz tone. |
|---|---|
| Week 3 | **Repertoire:** Review previous tunes as needed, work on the ballad and introduce one of the other jazz tunes.  
**Listening:** The listening for this week should include a ballad and a few tunes to introduce the next vocal jazz style. As a reminder, use the listening questionnaire to encourage discussion.  
**Sight-Reading:** Sight-reading can be a choice of another ballad or an introduction into the new style. As a reminder, make sure to listen to the recordings of the tunes after reading the charts to help implement style.  
**Improvisation:** Review the rhythmic exercises with syllables and introduce the melodic exercises with syllables. Try at least one of the group exercises provided.  
**Stylistic Elements:** Regardless of the style you chose next to rehearse, you can now start introducing the Kirby Shaw elements of vocal ornamentation. Choose at least three exercises to work on with the group and then if possible, incorporate them into the sight-reading chart. |
| Week 4 | **Repertoire:** Review previous tunes as needed, introduce last jazz tune style.  
**Listening:** Introduce the last style through listening and start to incorporate all other group recordings to encourage more style-driven discussions.  
**Sight-Reading:** Choose a sight-reading tune that is in the same style as the final jazz tune introduced. You may go over more than one style this week to gain more proficiency of all styles.  
**Improvisation:** Choose one of the blues/swing tunes to review melodic paraphrasing. Try splitting up the form of the chart for call and response exercises and trading 4 or 8 bars. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Repertoire</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Sight-Reading</th>
<th>Improvisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Continue rehearsal based upon student needs.</td>
<td>Listening: Listening this week should be focused only on stylistic elements such as ornamentation, dynamics, and articulations and how the group can include these into their pieces. By now all of the jazz styles should be introduced so any recording should work for discussion purposes.</td>
<td>Sight-Reading: The sight-reading is open to any style. However, if the students seem to be having trouble grasping certain elements of one particular style, feel free to only focus on that particular style.</td>
<td>Improvisation: Listen to and choose a piece to start transcribing with the ensemble.</td>
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<td>Stylistic Elements: Review all previous Kirby Shaw exercises, choose three more to experiment with in the sight-reading charts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Continue rehearsal based upon student needs.</td>
<td>Listening: Use this week’s listening to work out any stylistic elements that are still not grasped within repertoire.</td>
<td>Sight-Reading: Continue sight-reading charts based upon students’ needs.</td>
<td>Improvisation: Continue learning transcription.</td>
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<td>Stylistic Elements: Start incorporating stylistic elements from the Kirby Shaw exercises into repertoire. Not all of them may fit into the pieces, but if they do, add them for authenticity (only if the students are ready and notes and rhythms are learned). Also focus on other musicality items such as dynamics and articulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Continue rehearsal based upon student needs.</td>
<td>Listening: Record the students’ performance of all pieces at the start of the week and play back their recording during the next rehearsal. Have a discussion about their recorded performance and come up with any goals that still need to be met.</td>
<td>Sight-Reading: Continue sight-reading and incorporate elements of jazz improvisation (i.e. having all students improvise over the second time through the form all at one to themselves, asking for a volunteer to try soloing, or trading bars).</td>
<td>Improvisation: Finish transcription.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stylistic Elements: Finalize the stylistic elements needed for the jazz tunes and work on musicality items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Concert week- final rehearsal needs.</td>
<td>Listening: Listening is more than welcomed this week, but do not feel obligated to spend the time since it’s concert week. The primary focus is on the repertoire.</td>
<td>Sight-Reading: same as above.</td>
<td>Improvisation: same as above.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stylistic Elements: Solidify elements in the repertoire.</td>
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VOCAL WARM-UPS AND EXERCISES

I have included a variety of scales that can be used for warm-ups or for the improvisation section. Please use these as much as needed when warming up your students as well as to describe the melodic note choices they might use when improvising over certain chords. Next to the scales listed below, I have included a brief chord list for application of improvisation.

You will also notice the chromatic scale that is in a “swing” style with articulations. Please feel free to use this as a vocalese warm-up with your students and as ear training. There is also a chromatic scale that is consists of quarter notes for more focused tuning.

The arpeggios provided of different chords will help students with melodic choices for improvisation or to help with ear-training. They can be sung on the provided syllable and vowel, but they are open to other vowels and consonants as well. Feel free to adapt these scales and warm-ups to encourage more stylistic practice for your students. Although the scales are listed as swung eighths and at a metronome marking of 100, they can be interpreted as straight-eighths for the bossa nova and practiced at a slower tempo.

Please feel free to use the jazz chords in as many different combinations as possible, on different vowels, and on different notes. You are not required to use these chords every time you want to do tuning exercises with your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Chords</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Scale</td>
<td>CMaj7, C6,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melodic Minor Scale</td>
<td>Cmi7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Minor Scale</td>
<td>Cmi7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blues Scale</td>
<td>Cmi7 or C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Pentatonic Scale</td>
<td>CMaj7 or C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Pentatonic Scale</td>
<td>Cmin7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Scale</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorian Scale</td>
<td>Cmi7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For diminished or half diminished chords, it is possible to use the minor scales for beginners. It would be beneficial to go deeper into jazz theory to explain scale degrees as a way to introduce more advanced scales like the diminished scale or the bebop scale.
**Scales and Vocal Exercises**

**Swing Eighths, Quarter note = 100**

**Major Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Melodic Minor Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Natural Minor Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Blues Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Major Pentatonic**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Minor Pentatonic**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Dominant Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Dorian Scale**

```
Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa    Doo    Sa
```

**Chromatic Scale—Swing**

```
Doo    Sun    Do    Doot    Doot    Doo    Doot    Doot    Doot    Sun    Dut    Dan
```

---
Chromatic scale - Doo ascending, Dah descending

Major Triads - continue up or down a half step

Minor Triads - continue up or down a half step

Diminished Triads - continue up or down a half step

Augmented Triads - continue up or down a half step

Major Seventh - continue up or down a half step

Minor Seventh - continue up or down a half step

Dominant Seventh - continue up or down a half step
JAZZ CHORDS FOR WARM-UPS

\[ \text{\textcopyright{} Jim Doxas 2003} \]
SIGHT-READING LEAD SHEETS

To help establish practice with the different vocal jazz styles, below is a list I have included of sixteen lead sheets suggestions for weekly sight-reading purposes. Feel free to use more than two per week. The charts can be sung by either unaccompanied or accompanied by the iReal Pro accompaniment. If you are comfortable playing through the changes on the piano, please feel free to do so. Once you have read through the charts, listen through a recording listed on pg. 55 of this packet.

I have not provided specific tempo markings for these pieces because jazz music is open to interpretation. Feel free to change the tempo of any of the pieces and open them up to other styles. It is likely that one of the swing tunes could be changed into a bossa nova feel. The ballads could also be changed into a swing tune as well. Regardless, I hope this will be an enjoyable exercise for you and the students while exploring their improvisation and creativity skills.

The two blues tunes that have been provided do no have words. Use these two tunes as a way to work on scat syllables. This may mean reading through and letting what comes naturally work for you. If not, feel free to work out the syllables as a class.

Swing:
Do Nothin’ Til You Hear from Me
Honeysuckle Rose
In a Mellow Tone
It’s Only a Paper Moon
On the Sunny Side of the Street

Blues:
Bluesette
Now’s the Time
Tenor Madness

Ballad:
Come Rain or Come Shine
Cry Me a River
I’m Old Fashioned
I’ve Never Been in Love Before

Bossa Nova:
A Day in the Life of a Fool
Corcovado
Desafinado
How Insensitive
LISTENING QUESTIONNAIRE AND LISTENING EXAMPLES

Listening is the best way to become more familiar with the vocal jazz style as well as learn from some of the greatest vocal jazz groups around. To help implement this in your classroom, a listening questionnaire has been provided to help guide students through educated listening.

Listening Questionnaire Examples

The list below contains vocal jazz groups and specific songs links on YouTube that range from the early 1930’s to current. Feel free to explore entire albums of these groups outside what I have provided and use your own findings.

Hi-Lo’s:
“Fascinatin’ Rhythm”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmD0wOY8VTA
“I’m Beginning to See the Light”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1SVGYWJ0Io
“Georgia on My Mind”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYU03Q6tvyk

The Boswell Sisters:
“Everybody Loves My Baby”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItUzHJJ3aAo
“Mood Indigo”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtD-zAsRSVFU

Four Freshman:
“There Will Never Be Another You”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1U6MPmEN7A
“I Remember You”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XkbErl_7EU

Les Double Six: These pieces are in French, but these standards are in English.
“Tickle Toe”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tN7_eBrctCQ
“Boblicity”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmRCQ7yqkys

Lambert, Hendricks and Ross:
“Charleston Alley”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ-XTwIPvPQ
“Moanin”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ-XTwIPvPQ
“Avenue C”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E99TIXB_weg
Manhattan Transfer:
“On the Sunny Side of the Street” – long intro, vocals start at 1:50
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5hPOWsdJs
“A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcYAg7fH38kc
“Four Brothers”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdKEAyxrPd8
“Joy Spring”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vwoa1mp-iu4

Phil Mattson & P.M. Singers:
“New York Afternoon”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40ZD5BOFEkw
“Desafinado”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5uBQUUKWk4
“I’ll Be Seeing You”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxtXq1IOZo

New York Voices:
“Stolen Moments”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP6mX_HtgGl
“Giant Steps”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v8JgycbA0
“Caravan”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfKsRsiq4nk
“For All We Know”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4f_Bu68h3U
“Loves Me Like a Rock”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Bhb1iFChC8

The Real Group:
“Pass Me the Jazz”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRgOjKWobSl
“It Don’t Mean a Thing”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dr5oU4dJR08
“Chile Con Carne”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yzv1KS1xyNE
“A cappella in Acapulco”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zplz_eW1j1w

The Singers Unlimited:
“Fool on the Hill”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_NNeeTSRvY
“Green Dolphin Street”
"You Are the Sunshine of My Life"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfeoCL18Nr4

Groove for Thought:
“Teach Me Tonight”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpCAw_2vhTo
“Harold’s House of Jazz”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFTlv31iex4
“Who Let the Rain In”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdBC5GjwFCc

Take 6:
“Sweet Georgia Brown”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDoBoYgWQWo
“Shall We Gather at the River”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSnuHNjwSvc
“Just in Time”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK704WXPUg8

Vertical Voices:
“Dandaya”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jANbO_pGxaA
“The Cry and the Smile”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=382-d1hnRs8
“First Train Home”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpLkurC0o-8
1. Name of the group: ____________________________________________

2. Title of the song:____________________________________________

3. What tempo and/or time signature is this tune in?________________

4. Can you name a style/feel that matches this tune? (i.e. swing, blues, Latin, ballad, jazz waltz)______________________________________________

5. What is the form? AABA    ABA    AB    12-bar Blues

6. What voice parts are present (i.e. SATB, SA, SAB, TB)______________

7. What instruments are accompanying this vocal group?______________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

8. Are there any improvisation solos? If yes, who are they performed by?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

9. What vocal jazz articulations do you hear? (i.e. slide, scoop, shake, vibrato, etc)?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

10. What are some other unique stylistic aspects about this group that are interesting to you?
    ______________________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________________

11. What can we use stylistically from this group and apply it to our own singing?
    ______________________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________________
LISTENING SUGGESTIONS

This section contains a list of jazz vocalists, jazz instrumentalists, and a bigger list of vocal jazz groups. Please feel free to share this list with your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Vocalists</th>
<th>Male Vocalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyrielle Aimee</td>
<td>Louis Armstrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karrin Allyson</td>
<td>Chet Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernestine Anderson</td>
<td>Tony Bennett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee Bridgewater</td>
<td>Nat “King” Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Carter</td>
<td>Harry Connick Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Hampton Callaway</td>
<td>Kurt Elling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Christy</td>
<td>João Gilberto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Clooney</td>
<td>Johnny Hartman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Cole</td>
<td>Jon Hendricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Al Jarreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nnenna Freelon</td>
<td>Eddie Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrud Gilberto</td>
<td>Kevin Mahogany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billie Holiday</td>
<td>Bobby McFerrin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Horn</td>
<td>Mark Murphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etta Jones</td>
<td>John Pizzarelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norah Jones</td>
<td>Frank Sinatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Jordan</td>
<td>Mel Tormé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy King</td>
<td>Joe Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana Krall</td>
<td>George Benson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Lawry</td>
<td>Ray Charles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Dollison</td>
<td>Bing Crosby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abby Lincoln</td>
<td>Sammy Davis Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin McKelle</td>
<td>Antonio Carlos Jobim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen McRae</td>
<td>Louis Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Monheit</td>
<td>Curtis Stigers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita O’Day</td>
<td>Leslie Odom Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dianne Reeves</td>
<td>Michael Bublé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Ross</td>
<td>John Proulx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecile McLorin Salvant</td>
<td>Jamie Cullum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esperanza Spalding</td>
<td>Gregory Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierney Sutton</td>
<td>Andy Bey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Vaughn</td>
<td>Theo Bleckmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinah Washington</td>
<td>Peter Eldridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunny Wilkinson</td>
<td>Jose James</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassandra Wilson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Wilson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocal Jazz Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beachfront Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boswell Sisters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clare Fischer  
Four Freshman  
The Hi-Lo’s  
Just 4 Kicks  
The King Singers  
Lambert, Hendricks and Ross  
Manhattan Transfer  
New York Voices  
The Real Group  
Rockapella  
SoVoSo  
Take 6  
True North  
Trenchcoats  
Vertical Voices  
Vox One  

Les Double Six  
Glad  
Jackie & Roy  
The King Sisters  
The L.A. Jazz Choir  
Johnny Mann Singers  
Phil Mattson & P.M. Singers  
Rare Silk  
The Ritz  
The Singers Unlimited  
Swingle Singers  
VoxOne  
Groove For Thought  
Straight No Chaser  
M-Pact  
Vocalogy

**Instrumentalists**- this is just a basic list as there any many great instrumentalists to listen and learn from.

**Sax:**
- Cannonball Adderley
- Benny Carter
- Ornette Coleman
- Stan Getz
- Dexter Gordon
- Joe Henderson
- Coleman Hawkins
- Gerry Mulligan

**Trumpet:**
- Louis Armstrong
- Clifford Brown
- Miles Davis
- Dizzy Gillespie
- Freddie Hubbard
- Lee Morgan
- Clark Terry
- Wynton Marsalis
- Kenny Wheeler
- Randy Brecker

**Piano:**
- Count Basie
- Dave Brubeck
- Duke Ellington
- Bill Evans
- Oscar Peterson
- Horace Silver
- Art Tatum
- Chick Corea
- Herbie Hancock
- Fred Hersch
- Thelonious Monk

**Bass:**
- Ray Brown
- Ron Carter
- Charles Mingus
- Christian McBride
- Victor Wooten
- Jaco Pastorius
- Dave Holland
Piano cont.:
Bud Powell
Fats Waller
Mary Lou Williams
Shirley Horn
Robert Glasper

Guitar:
George Benson
Kenny Burrell
Wes Montgomery
Joe Pass
Jim Hall
Pat Metheny

Drums:
Art Blakey
Mel Lewis
Max Roach
Brian Blade
Billy Childs
Jack DeJohnette

Big Bands:
Benny Goodman
Count Basie Orchestra
Gordan Goodwin’s Big Phat Band
Brian Setzer Orchestra
Duke Ellington Orchestra
Stan Kenton Orchestra
Gene Krupa
Glenn Miller Orchestra
Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra
Weather Report
Yellowjackets
Snarky Puppy
YOUTUBE LINKS

Stage Presence Videos: Here are a few videos of stage presence. Feel free to use all or find some others that might highlight what you might want on stage.

Western Michigan University
Gold Company “Country Dances”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG71YVH9wf8

Western Michigan University
Gold Company “Pure Gold”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO5-R0YfsbM

Western Michigan University
Gold Company “I Got Rhythm”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnMkXvIlxrs

University of Northern Colorado
Vocal Lab “Lisa”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFmoJcjiRu8

Bellevue College
Vocal Jazz Ensemble “Come Back to Me”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WriTfs40HJs

Valencia High School
Vocal Jazz Ensemble “All About that Bass”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0u9yGj7uR0

Westsyde Secondary School
Vocal Jazz Group “New York State of Mind”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFaSkH0JL2U

Austin High School
Vocal Jazz Ensemble “Blue Skies”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PqQyob2Ras

Folsom High School
Jazz Choir “Bassically Speaking”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvMGyeLMKYk

Cedarburg High School
Vocal Jazz “Without a Song”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sF3YNp6fFA

Clarence High School
Vocal Jazz “My Favorite Things”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OysFeQcU3xY

Transcriptions:

Chet Baker:
“Do It the Hard Way” (0:57-1:44)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PIGYSBsqSc

“It Could Happen to You” (1:20-1:58)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IdsrDxdGMY
Ella Fitzgerald:
“Them There Eyes” (0:55-1:41)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7siMDAGKieU
“Take the A Train” (1:27-2:08)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ_4cRG8B1g

Sight-Reading Tunes
BALLADS:
“Cry Me a River” - Ella Fitzgerald
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI779D2tLlyk
“I’m Old Fashioned” - Chet Baker
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3JvzsICN-I
“I’ve Never Been in Love Before” - Frank Sinatra
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BX1iKx7J1ls
“Come Rain or Come Shine” - Sarah Vaughn
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN9ntziP0_A

LATIN:
“Desafinado” - Stan Getz and Joao Gilberto (Portuguese version)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=So718wk426c
“One Note Samba” - Al Jarreau
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErTmUsedA7M
“Corcovado” - Astrud Gilberto
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9srw5FRm5eA
“Black Orpheus” - Anna Salleh
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfibwW-bQos

SWING/BLUES:
“In a Mellow Tone” - Ella Fitzgerald
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISaxBVtc4eU
“Do Nothing ‘till You Hear From Me” - Harry Connick Jr
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MHgkBOApuy
“It’s Only a Paper Moon” - Nat King Cole
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHrSX1xX2oY
“On the Sunny Side of the Street” - Esperanza Spalding
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqtxO4tiZxs
“Honeysuckle Rose” - Jane Monheit
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXBSGGEQevA
“Tenor Madness” - Sonny Rollins Quartet with John Coltrane
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MkUvZUTFUc
“Now’s the Time” - Eddie Jefferson
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pORrMwj8gkl
“Bluesette” - Sarah Vaughn
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gcaTIsNWlO

Improvisation Links:
B-flat Blues - Jamey Abersold
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae_tBkCqeQ
OTHER RESOURCES

The resources provided in this section provide more instructional help for the vocal jazz ensemble as well as some pedagogy items not discussed. Feel free to buy some of these resources or print off articles, as they will be great tools if you decide to pursue more jazz with your program.

**Highly suggested resources for your bookshelf before the school year starts, as they will be informative and helpful resources for this study.

**Vocal Pedagogy

**What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body** 3rd Edition - Melissa Malde, Mary Jean Allen, and Kurt Alexander

*Your Voice: An Inside View* 2nd Edition - Scott McCoy

**Choral Pedagogy

*Choral Pedagogy* 2nd Edition - Brenda Smith and Robert T. Sataloff

*The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting: A Handbook for Achieving Vocal Health* - Margaret Olson

*The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy* - Frank Abrahams and Paul D. Head


**Vocal Jazz Pedagogy

**The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz: Including Pop and Other Show Styles** - Dr. Steven Zegree

*The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* - Paris Rutherford

**Vocal Jazz Style** - Kirby Shaw

*Jazz Singing: Developing Artistry and Authenticity* - Diana R. Spradling

**Articles

“Practical Applications of Vocal Pedagogy for Choral Ensembles” - Lynn A Corbin, Mar. 1986, pg. 5. ACDA Choral Journal

“Pedagogy and Vocal Jazz” - Diana R. Spradling Nov. 1986, pg. 27. ACDA Choral Journal

“15 Resources for the Vocal Jazz Director” - Diana R. Spradling, Mar. 1999, pg. 68. ACDA Choral Journal

“Advocacy for Jazz Pedagogy; Where to Find Resources and Quality Teaching Tools” - Vijay Singh Sept. 2006, pg. 47. ACDA Choral Journal

“Recharging Your Vocal Jazz Battery” - Kirk Marcy June 2007, pg. 48. ACDA Choral Journal

“A Definition of the Vocal Jazz Group: An Ensemble of Solo Singers, One-on-a Mic” - Diana R. Spradling Aug. 2009, pg. 50. ACDA Choral Journal
“What is the Best Vocal Jazz Repertoire?” - Patrice Madura Ward-Steinman May 2013 pg. 53 and February 2014, pg. 53. ACDA Choral Journal
The entire June/July 2015 ACDA issue- All Jazz articles
“Standardization of Vocal Jazz Articulations and Inflections”- Dan Schwartz Dec. 1979, pg. 24. ACDA Choral Journal
"'Come On-A My House": An Invitation to Vocal Jazz for Classical Singers"- Noel Archambeault May 2006, pg. 73. ACDA Choral Journal
http://www.vocapedia.info/_Library/JOS_files_Vocapedia/JOS-070-4-2014-411_vibrato_nonvibrato_singing.PDF

Improvational Tools
**Vocal Improvisation- Michele Weir
Vocal Improvisation: An Instrumental Approach: Patty Coker and David Baker
21 Bebop Exercises for Vocalists and Instrumentalists- Steve Rawlins

Lead sheet/Accompaniments
**iRealPro- iTunes store or any app store
**The Real Vocal Books
Jamey Abersold

Jazz History Texts
Jazz 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Jazz- John Szwed
Jazz: A History- Frank Tirro
Jazz Styles: History and Analysis- Mark C. Gridley

Jazz Theory Texts
The Jazz Piano Book- Mark Levine
The Jazz Theory Book- Mark Levine
Jazz Theory and Practice- Richard Lawn and Jeffrey Helmer
APPENDIX C

CHORAL TO VOCAL JAZZ CURRICULUM SURVEY
Choral to Vocal Jazz Curriculum Survey

Please provide as much information as you can to the questions below.

1. Did the eight-weeks provide enough time for the curriculum to be taught?

2. List three items that benefited your instruction with the curriculum.

3. List three items that did not benefit your instruction of the curriculum.

4. Did you feel as though there was enough information provided to be successful?

5. Was there information that was not needed in order to perform the curriculum?

6. Describe some of the feedback of the students.
7. What were some elements that the students enjoyed?

8. What were some elements that the students did not enjoy?

9. Was the music approachable?

10. Did you explore or purchase any of the resources listed? If so, how did you use them and in what ways were they beneficial?

11. What are the overall strengths of the curriculum?

12. What are the overall weaknesses of the curriculum?
13. How has your effectiveness at teaching jazz has improved?

14. How has your effectiveness at teaching any style improved?

15. Did any part of this curriculum help strengthen other elements of your instruction?

16. Is there anything new that you learned from the curriculum that you can use in the future or other ensembles?

Please list any additional comments about the curriculum below.
APPENDIX D

CHORAL TO VOCAL JAZZ CONCERT ASSESSMENT
## Choral to Vocal Jazz Concert Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocal Production</th>
<th>Excellent tone quality. Lack of intonation issues. Presents well-supported technical singing. Unified vowels and consonants</th>
<th>Great tone quality. Minimal intonation issues. Singers are singing with well-supported technique most of the time. Vowels and consonants are mostly unified.</th>
<th>Good tone quality. Some intonation issues. Singers are singing with some support and technique. Vowels and consonants are not always unified.</th>
<th>Poor tone quality and many intonation issues. Singers are not singing with technique. Vowels and consonants are not unified.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble Singing</td>
<td>Excellent balance and blend amongst the singers. The music is precise with attention to entrances and cutoffs</td>
<td>Minor balance and blend issues amongst the singers. Entrances and cutoffs are not all together.</td>
<td>Balance and blend issues. Entrances and cutoffs are not together.</td>
<td>Many balance and blend issues within sections and the choir. Entrances and cutoffs are not examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicality</td>
<td>Musically sensitive and artistic performance. The phrasing is well-planned and executed effectively. Dynamics are incorporated.</td>
<td>A meaningful presentation most of the time. The phrasing is not always executed well. Most of the dynamics are incorporated.</td>
<td>A somewhat meaningful presentation. There is not a lot of musical phrasing. There is minimal use of dynamics.</td>
<td>There is a lack of meaningful presentation. This is no musical phrasing or use of dynamics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time/ Rhythm</td>
<td>Excellent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel. Nearly all of the rhythm and note values are performed correctly within the jazz style. Strong rhythmic feel</td>
<td>A consistent steadiness of beat and rhythmic feel. Some of the note values are performed correctly within the jazz style. Pretty good rhythmic feel.</td>
<td>A somewhat consistent steady beat and rhythmic feel. Not all of the note values and rhythms are performed correctly within the jazz style. Good rhythmic feel.</td>
<td>There is a lack of steady beat and rhythmic feel amongst the singers. Many mistakes with the notes values and rhythms. A lack of rhythmic feel is demonstrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style Interpretation</td>
<td>Excellent use of jazz articulation and diction consistent with the vocal jazz style. Excellent and consistent use of idiomatic devices and nuances.</td>
<td>Great but not consistent use of jazz articulation and diction. Use of idiomatic devices and nuances.</td>
<td>Good but not consistent use of articulation and diction. Some use of idiomatic devices and nuances.</td>
<td>No consistent use of articulation or diction. No idiomatic devices or nuances are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm Section</strong></td>
<td>The rhythm section has a strong, supportive role with the vocal ensemble. Playing with excellent rhythmic feel for each piece. They are in balance with the vocal ensemble.</td>
<td>Somewhat strong and supportive role to the vocal ensemble. Playing with consistent rhythmic feel. They are mostly in balance with the vocal ensemble.</td>
<td>Slightly supportive to the vocal ensemble. Inconsistent rhythmic feel. Not always in balance with the vocal ensemble.</td>
<td>Not supportive to the vocal ensemble at all. Poor rhythmic feel and does not balance with the vocal ensemble.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation/ Transition</strong></td>
<td>Students show excitement and enthusiasm throughout the entire musical set. There is a clear transformation from the choral to vocal jazz style in tone, articulation, and all other elements of the jazz style.</td>
<td>Students show a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm for their musical set. There is a pretty clear transformation from the choral to vocal jazz style in tone, articulation, and all other elements of the jazz style.</td>
<td>Students are somewhat engaged in the music. There is a slight transition of the choral to vocal jazz style in tone, articulation, and all other elements of the jazz style. There is mostly still a choral tradition or style present.</td>
<td>Students are not engaged in the music making process. There is no transition from the choral to vocal jazz style that can be perceived.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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