



Solving the *Mystery* of the Middle School Boys Choir

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for the Missouri Music Educators Conference

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Daily Activities Outline

- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Vocalization
- ▶ Question of the Day – “If you care for me”
- ▶ Rhythm Training
- ▶ Melodic Training
- ▶ Theory Lesson
- ▶ Literature Work, 2 - 4 songs
- ▶ Ear Training (throughout rehearsal)

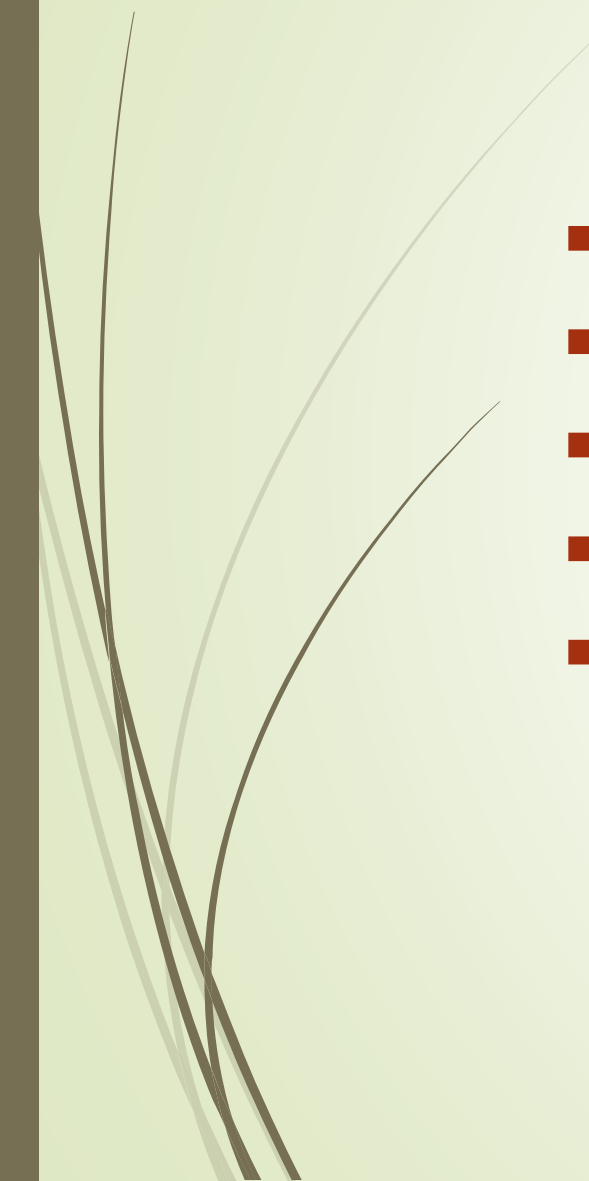
- ▶ The order of these activities frequently change to keep it “fresh”

Who are we talking about? This guy.





Body, Ear & Vocal Activation

- ▶ Finding the voice – hums, slides, sirens, long tones
 - ▶ Singing in octaves rather than unisons
 - ▶ Finding the falsetto – 2 claps & a Rick Flair
 - ▶ Organize the wiggles
 - ▶ Tune the ear
- 

Teaching the New Dogs Some Tricks

Boys choir version
of singing “in-tune”



#goals





Suppressing the Jerk

Navin R. Johnson, a homeless man, directly addresses the camera and tells his story. He is the adopted white son of African American sharecroppers, who grows to adulthood naïvely unaware of his obvious adoption. He stands out in his family not just because of his skin color but because of his utter lack of rhythm when his adopted family plays spirited blues music.



▶ Takadimi – Carol Kreuger

▶ System that works

- ▶ Small to Tall
- ▶ Teaching ties as transitions

▶ Buster's Message

- ▶ “Here's a comment you never hear. Emma said “I can read complicated rhythms than the other band kids because of choir.” What?!? That's not the rules of the Universe! Band kids read better and choir kids hear better. It's a basic law of physics. Lol! Thanks for enriching my child instead of chasing trophies.”

▶ Award winning percussionist/band director gives in to the cult!

▶continued

Rhythmic Literacy

- ▶ Confirm, and daily reaffirm (whatever your system!)
 - ▶ Call & response - ear first, eyes last
 - ▶ Daily activity on board
 - ▶ Rhythmic dictation
 - ▶ Rhythm clumps
 - ▶ Rhythmic telephone game

Rhythmic Literacy Continued



Melodic Literacy

- ▶ Call & response on neutral syllable – sound only
- ▶ Add solfege syllables – sound & symbol
- ▶ Add handsigns for kinesthetic affirmation
- ▶ Build tonal relationships with exercises (see below)
- ▶ Abbreviated exercises on board
- ▶ Read from sight reading books.....



Solfege Exercises.pdf



Melodic Literacy



Sight Read (Sight Read.pdf)



Round Reading (Round Reading.pdf)



Boys Baroque.pdf

Well-paced, cleanly designed for a choral rehearsal

The entire curriculum can be completed in 3-5 lessons in less than a year's time

Work communally on board or individually at seats w/ dry erase boards

The curriculum can be printed if you don't have a SmartBoard

At the end of each unit, there is an assessment/review

Theory!

Masterworks
Press

Literature

- Have specific goals in mind for each song
- Can they be successful?
- Boys just wanna have fun!
- Range is BAE
- Variety is the spice of life



'Til The Walls Come Down.pdf



Sing Me a Song of a Lad That is Gone.pdf



Gloria in Excelsis Deo.pdf

- ▶ Ring it & Sing it!
- ▶ Adapt using solfege
- ▶ Learn the pattern
- ▶ Force yourself to use it

Working the Inner-Ear

Avoid the Time Suck

Transitions can be sloppy & noisy

Average time lost is 6 minutes per 1 hr rehearsal

21.6 hrs lost – over 4 weeks

A 3rd year 8th grader would have lost 13 weeks of rehearsals

A senior, cease instruction at the end of August



Time Suck!

Energy level high

Energy crescendo through transitions

Plan transitions

Sing during transitions or movement

Ask questions of individuals while transition

The “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” technique



Personal Accountability