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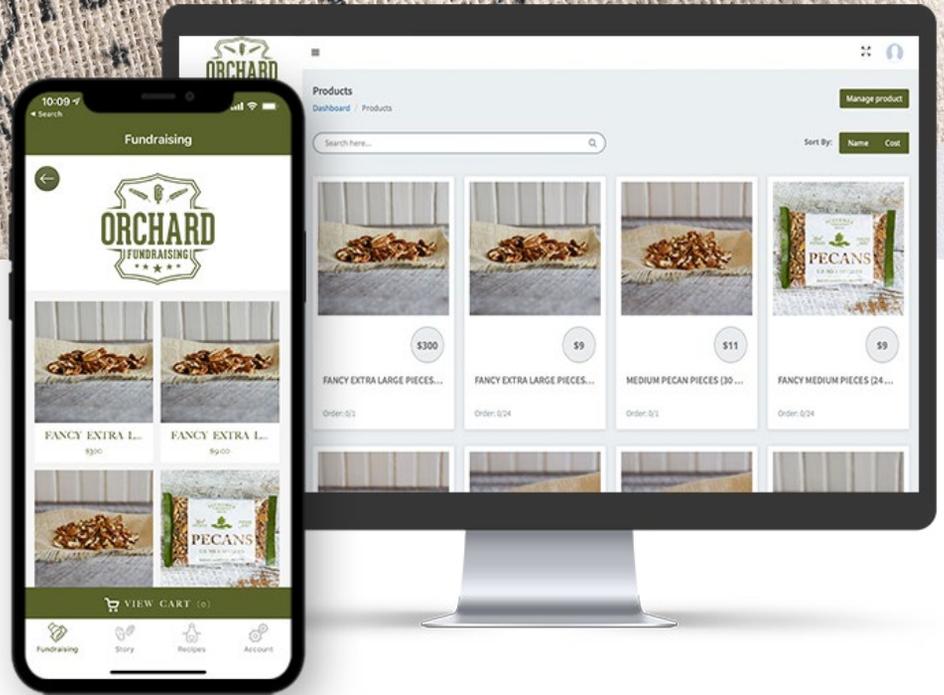
**SINGING
VS.
SHOUTING:
EXPERT
VOCAL
ADVICE**

**FINDING
YOUR
"GOLDEN
BRICK"**

**COMMUNITY,
EXCELLENCE, &
COMPETITION**



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Aron Wimberly can be reached at aron@schmerpecans.com or by calling 1.800.841.3403. Contact Orchard at info@orchardfundraising.com, call 833.850.8324, or visit www.orchardfundraising.com



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One of my mentors in college, Ron Simpson, described what he called the “Golden Brick Rule”, and it concerned how to break convention and try creative things without going too far.

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editor's letter

Happy Holidays! We have reached the finish line with holiday concerts, and now we get to enjoy loved ones and family over the next week, followed by New Year resolutions. I have several I hope to accomplish this year, but we will talk about that later.

As you well know, competition season is right around the corner. Your groups have worked diligently since last summer, and now they are about to put their hard work to the test. You all remain an inspiration to me as I see the work you do and the hours you invest, in addition to what you pour into each life that you touch.

I am among the lucky ones who gets to sit in the audience and marvel at the talents displayed on stage. One of my goals this spring is to travel to several competitions outside of Alabama, as I love witnessing the different styles and approaches put into reality by your creative minds. I admire the process that you go through to provide fresh and entertaining shows each year, and at times I have been privileged to see how your storytelling ideas evolve and become fully realized.

Thank you to each and everyone involved, and for the many hours you put in to bring to life these beautiful forms of art. I have missed being able to see you in person, and I look forward to a competition season like those we are all accustomed to having. It is true that absence makes the heart grow fonder.

We look forward to featuring a choir every issue. Please reach out to us so we can talk and show everyone how wonderful your groups are. May the joy of this Holiday season follow you throughout the year.

Happy Holidays and a Joyous New Year.

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COMMUNITY, EXCELLENCE, & COMPETITION

In 2019, the Vestavia Hills Singers
finished the competition
season undefeated.

by Lisa Gibbs, Ed.D.



PHOTO BY ANGEL BAKER / VESTAVIA HILLS SINGERS

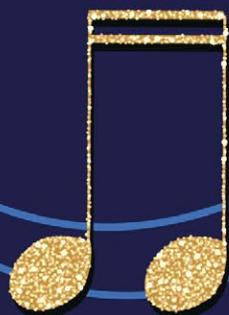
IN 2019, the Vestavia Hills Singers finished the competition season undefeated. Dr. Megan Rudolph, who led the choir program at the high school from 2000-2021, attributed the success of the group to the dedication of each student working for the success of the whole. During a 2019 interview, Dr. Rudolph explained her approach to teaching as well as the value of arts education. “We learn how to work together on something bigger than ourselves. We learn how to always realize that we are a part of a bigger chain, and if we’re not pulling our weight, we’re not going to be successful.” Building personal character, supporting good citizenship, and using constructive criticism effectively were hallmarks of Dr. Rudolph’s choir department.

The Singers continued their winning streak in 2020, and Dr. Rudolph again mentioned the goal of developing compassionate people who take pride in what they do. In a local newspaper, Dr. Rudolph emphasized that students “are taught to learn during the process of creating the performances,” and that they “learn to be part of something bigger than themselves and to not underestimate their own potential.” There is a sense of family within this show choir, where the students support each other through both good and hard times, and support others by cheering on rival schools at competitions. Dr. Rudolph finished the 2020-2021 school year on that high note before moving on to a position at Miles College.

Taylor Stricklin and Noah Burns are embracing Dr. Rudolph’s commitment to students, and they are embracing the importance of arts education. Taylor



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and Noah were hired in 2020 and 2021, respectively, and are continuing the tradition of community, excellence, and competition at Vestavia Hills High School in Vestavia Hills, Alabama.

During the busy season of holiday performances and exams, I interviewed Taylor and Noah. What follows is a transcript of our conversation:

Thank you both so much for agreeing to this interview! I appreciate your time. Let's start with some background information. Were you in show choir in high school?

Noah - I was in show choir for three years at Bumpus Middle School and three years at Hoover High School.

Taylor - I was in show choir for 7 years throughout middle and high school at Simmons Middle School and Hoover High School.

Do you have a favorite "show choir moment" for you personally?

Noah - My favorite show choir memory is performing at a festival at Disney World. I got to sing a solo during the guys' number in the middle of Downtown Disney, and it was truly an unforgettable experience!

Taylor - My favorite show choir moment was during my time teaching at Dauphin Junior High School in Enterprise, Alabama. My first year there, we had a lot of members who were new to show choir, and we spent most of that year learning how to perform. My second year, we returned lots of students and ended up sweeping a competition! I'll never forget everyone's excitement when they realized their hard work had been recognized.

Performing a solo at Disney World and winning competitions after only two years are definitely incredible experiences!

What, if anything, has changed between then and now for high school show choir?

Taylor - Everything has become bigger. When I was in high school, we didn't have any costume changes or set pieces. The show choir world has become more about the overall production and immersing the audience in the world of your show.

Noah - I was also in show choir in high school, and we had limited costuming and set design, too. Things have definitely changed regarding the presentation of songs and dance!

Let's shift gears a bit and talk about the COVID-19 pandemic. Did you discover a particular strategy or two for teaching and listening during the days of remote teaching or hybrid teaching?

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We were lucky to have been in some form of face-to-face teaching last school year. We began the year on a hybrid, alternating schedule, and then we went fully in person after the first nine weeks of school. During the hybrid period, we had students who were at home join the in-person class via Google Meet. They were expected to have their music out and to be going through the choreography as if they were in class. We also utilized part tracks more than we ever had to ensure that students who were at home had the tools they needed to be able to come back and pick up right where we were.

How did you engage the students during that time?

We really tried to engage the students who were online by having conversations that sometimes had nothing to do with show choir or even music for that matter. Even though choir is often an important release for our students, last year we noticed that students who were quarantined or fully

remote needed to communicate with their peers because they had been isolated for so long.

Communication is such an important part of our lives. Those spontaneous conversations that happen in class do serve the purpose of connecting students in community with each other.

Fall 2021 started fully in-person, correct?

Correct!

Is there an anecdote you can share of how the 2021 school year started for you and the students? The emotions, the approach to planning and teaching, etc.?

There was certainly a sense of excitement and expectancy in the air during the start of the year. It was easy to tell that the students were eager to get back to some sense of normalcy, and we were excited to try to help provide that in the best way possible. Our goal at the start of the year was to reestablish the sense of community

that was so difficult to cultivate during the pandemic. We were intentional about spending time geared specifically toward strengthening the bond between ourselves and the students, as well as between choristers. After all, choral singing is innately communal and therefore meant to be done together!

We also spent a good bit of time at the beginning of the year working strictly on building a strong, confident, healthy sound in all of our groups. Students needed to feel and hear again what it was like to sing uninhibited by a virtual or spatial barrier. All in all, we wanted to instill confidence in our students, reestablish good rehearsal techniques, and create a positive learning environment that would carry into the rest of the year!

I'm sure it was a goosebump-producing and heartfelt-inspiring experience to be together in person again and singing after such a long time apart!

Dr. Megan Rudolph led the department for 21 years before moving on to a new position at Miles College in 2021. In what ways were you able to smoothly transition so the students were comfortable?

We are so thankful for Dr. Rudolph and her years of service to this school and community. She truly established a tradition of choral excellence at Vestavia, and we are striving every day to maintain and build on that tradition.

One of the ways that we are able to give the students some sense of continuity during this transition period is by not straying too far from the normal experiences and performances that the students have become accustomed to in the past. For example, we are hosting the ACDA Contempo Festival, traveling to familiar competitions, taking a Spring trip, and participating in Celebrate the Season (the Vestavia



PHOTO BY ANGEL BAKER / VESTAVIA HILLS SINGERS

Hills High School Performing Art Department's Annual Holiday Celebration).

Another way we are hoping to smooth the transition is by communicating and expecting similar expectations that were established by Dr. Rudolph. Students are expected to lead by example and "do their due diligence" as she would often say!

Obviously, things will not be exactly the same as they have been, but that isn't our intention. We hope to be good stewards of the program that Dr. Rudolph left behind and to treat the students in a way that makes them feel heard and respected as we figure out what the new normal looks like!

What do you have planned for the Vestavia Hills Singers for the rest of the school year?

We are currently in the process of building and cleaning our show for the 2022 competition season. We are extremely excited to travel and compete, as well as to host the ACDA Contempo

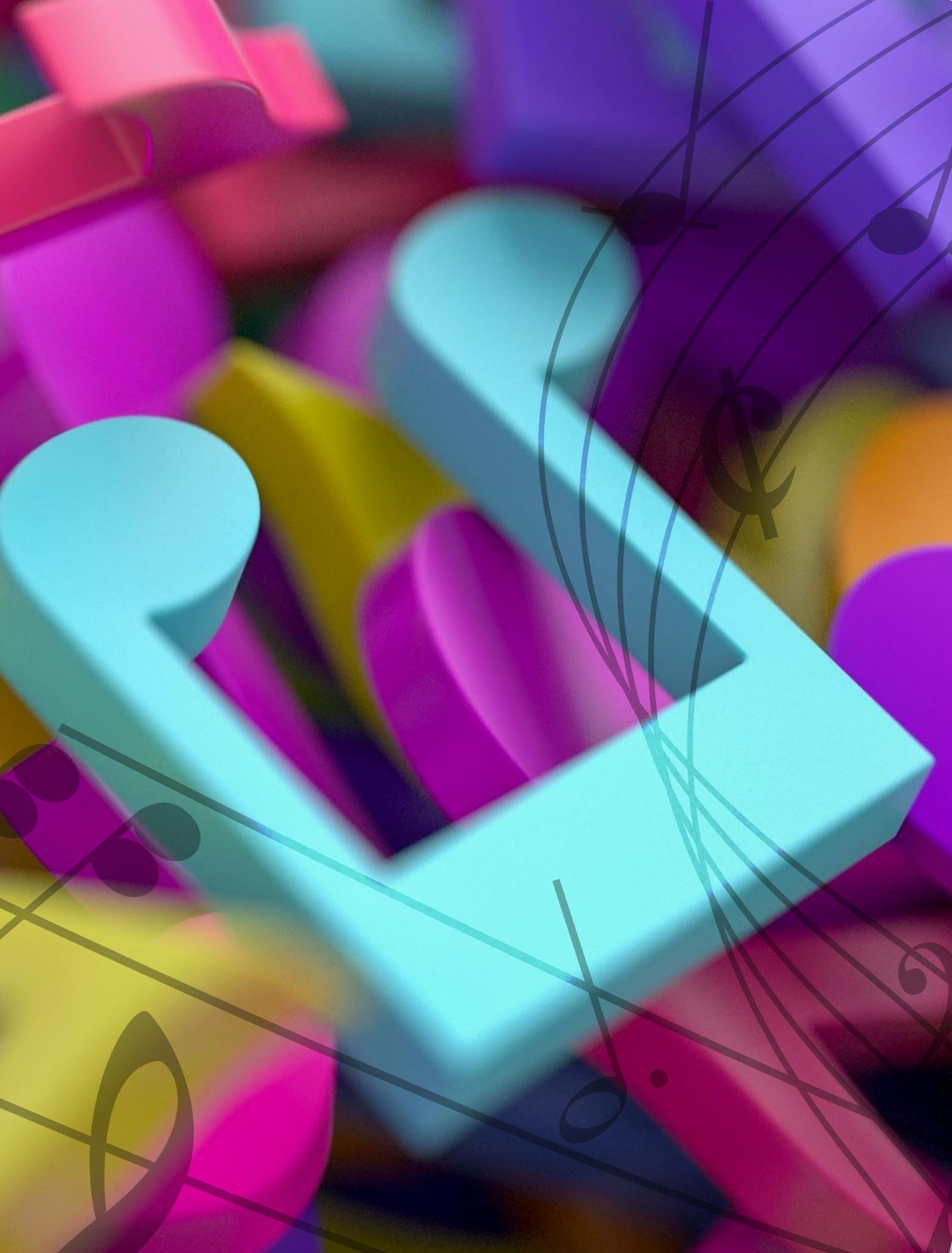
Festival (an annual showcase of non-traditional choral groups from around the state and the Southeast) in mid-January.

During and after the competition season, 'Singers' also works on concert music to be performed at state assessment, concerts, and community events!

Acknowledging there will be differences, communicating with the students, and encouraging excellence through this transition will continue Dr. Rudolph's legacy of community, excellence, and competition. Congratulations on your successes through the challenges of the pandemic and the transitional period of beginning your careers at Vestavia Hills High School!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: PUPN staff writer Lisa Gibbs earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration in 2018. She is an advocate for arts, particularly dance, in education and for increasing the financial well-being of artists through financial education.

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GOING BEYOND THE SCORE

by Anita Cracauer

**How to Involve Your
Instrumentalists in the
Important Task of Adapting
the Music as Your Show Evolves**



Most of the top show choirs in the nation work closely with an arranger throughout the entire show production process, from conception to performance. Groups such as these put on shows that approach a level of professionalism, particularly in the way they integrate their musical scoring with their stage visuals. For the 99% of directors who don't have the luxury of an arranger co-producing their show, this level of performance might seem unattainable. But with just a little bit of effort, any director—with the help of instrumentalists—can take a score beyond the notes on the page to achieve a higher level of performance not unlike those displayed by top choirs.

The first step in the process is to realize that the score you receive from your arranger is only a starting point. One of the biggest misconceptions out there is that you can't change a score once you receive it. Nonsense! Arrangers can only do so much at the beginning of the design process. We craft the structure of a chart based on its function in the show, writing creative parts for each voice and instrument to the best of our ability. But let's face it—the majority of the work bringing the arrangement to life happens after our job is done, when we send the score to the director. Arrangers simply cannot predict what will happen to the song during the process of rehearsal, choreography, and staging. Directors need to realize that one of the most important aspects of their job in producing a show is to ensure that the

music adapts and evolves to serve the needs of the show and the performers. Knowing some confusion and/or fear might be involved with this issue, rest assured that copyright law explicitly allows for educators to make changes to music that they've purchased.¹

Being aware of the need to make sure your music adapts with your show is the first step. Now let's get practical—what types of changes am I alluding to? Basic changes involving transitions should be the director's number one concern, and they've been discussed before. But it's good to hear a reminder: staying alert to how the music flows from one song to the next in a seamless way is critical. For the most part, this involves keeping tonalities from clashing. Changing a key for smoother flow or better vocal sound is the number one tool in a director's arsenal for arrangement revision, and it should be employed often. Choreographers can also help with basic

structural adjustments as the show evolves, being a second set of eyes to point out if the show is lacking in certain visual or textural elements. But let's go further and consider the individual instrumental parts.

Think of your score as if it is a movie soundtrack, where the music and sound effects perfectly compliment the visual picture. This integration process begins after the arrangements have been choreographed and the show is in the beginning stages of being assembled. At this point, I recommend having the singers and band perform each song fully staged on risers while recording the performance. Next, gather your band together to watch the video of each song with their scores and a pencil in hand. As they watch, have them brainstorm ways they might be able to accent the visuals they are seeing. I'm certain that given the chance, student instrumentalists can fully rise to the challenge of going beyond

the notes on the page and adding some improvisational elements to enhance the visuals, or simply to heighten the emotion of the show in a particular moment. For instance, a pianist might add some whole-tone scale passages to a dream sequence or other-worldly scenario, or take a few chords and tremolo them in a high register for a dramatically tense situation. A percussionist might take note of dance moves that stand out visually (strong arm hits in a dance break, ripples, an elegant slide) and accent the moves with a sound matching it, switching up the tone color so as not to exhaust the ear.

Speaking of the percussion—your drummer, the foundation of your entire group, should know every move of every dance break, and construct fills and crashes accordingly. A drummer can add a heartbeat kick drum to a suspenseful moment, or a cymbal scrape to an artistic gesture. A brass section might add some

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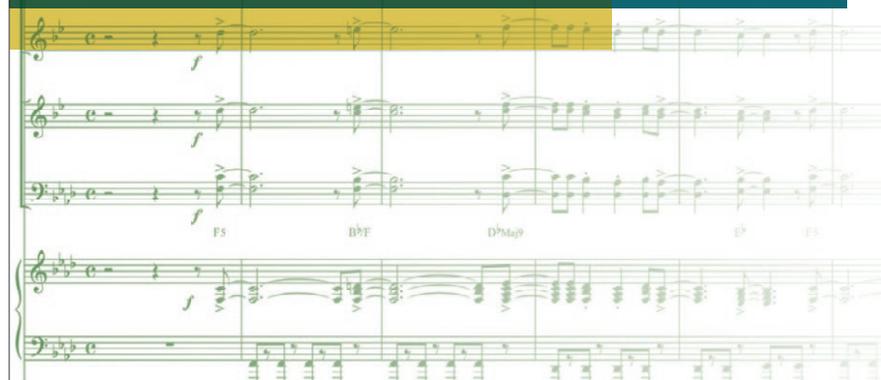
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highly distorted dissonant ‘punches’ or glissando wails to a fight scene. A guitarist can use a variety of effects pedals and distortion to enhance the overall sound atmosphere, or use a slide or Ebow to heighten a sad or poignant scene. A synth player has a whole orchestra at their fingertips—it’s probably the easiest for them to come up with effective ways to highlight the action. Adding color with a wide variety of instrumentation is a synth player’s most important function—and if the written score hasn’t provided such opportunities throughout the show, help your student explore the available patches on your synth and use the piano part as a springboard for further improvisation.

Sometimes all it takes is a little bit of noodling with an exotic synth patch to reveal an interesting musical idea! The point of this exercise is to get creative and try something out—and then in the final steps of the show production, watch

the show again with your accompanists and evaluate if your additions enhance the show or detract from it. If something isn’t helping the visual picture or mood, take it out—and that goes for music that was originally scored by the arranger as well.

Unfortunately, I’ve seen far too many performances where the band seemed totally disengaged. As a former show choir band member who roots hard for their success, it breaks my heart, and it makes me wonder whether those students have been taught that as accompanists, they are just as much a part of the performance as the singers are—and they need to act accordingly on stage! But fortunately, you can show your instrumentalists just how vital they are by participating in this exercise of music adaptation with them. It will help them take ownership of the show and engage each performance with enthusiasm. They will know the show inside and out—they

will, after all, be proud co-creators of the adapted soundtrack—and they will have met the creative challenge of bringing the music full circle from the screen of the arranger to the stage of the final performance.

Story rerun by reader request.

1 U.S. Department of Education: Adoptable Copyright Policy: Fair-Use Guidelines for Music, Letter D: “Purchased sheet music may be edited or simplified if the fundamental character of the work is not distorted.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Anita Cracauer is the founder of ShowChoirStock.com, an online catalog of show choir arrangements. She has worked as a freelance arranger, songwriter, and publisher in the show choir industry since 2001. In addition to writing and publishing, she judges competitions across the country and educates others on the topics of arranging, songwriting, and copyright licensing/publishing.

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Singing vs. Shouting

**VOCAL ADVICE
FROM AN EXPERT**

by Dina Else

In show choir, our end product is the result of hours of practice and preparation. These are hours split among the many facets of the genre, the two primary facets being singing and dancing.



tell the singers in my studio that to be an outstanding performer you need to prioritize four tasks: 1) vocal technique, 2) musicianship skills, 3) communication/acting ability, and 4) developing mental strategies that help them to overcome any challenges they may encounter. This article addresses the vocal technique component of being a performer, and it will aid you in helping your singers reach a level of excellence that will keep them singing with a clear, energized, and healthy tone from the beginning of your season to the last note of your closer at the final competition.

As a show choir judge, I can't tell you the number of times I've sat on a panel and felt like I was on the receiving end of shouting rather than singing as the show unfolded. When this is the case, the number one vocal issue is a lack of understanding of breath support. Essentially, it's either the throat being the power source instead of the breath, or the breath being used as weight instead of energy. Before we delve into this topic, we need to have a brief discussion about body alignment and what constitutes a good breath intake.

Body Alignment and Breath in Show Choir

I agree with Julie Andrews when she sings, "Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start"; for me, that beginning



is body alignment! I'm not referring to the "sit up straight", "stand at attention like a soldier", or even the "good posture" kind of alignment. Instead, let's focus on the body alignment which considers that your body IS your instrument.

Before we break down how this particular form of instrumentation works, let's make sure we acknowledge that there is power in habit. Younger generations (and our generation for that matter) have developed poor body alignment habits from bending over laptops, texting on phones, carrying book-bags from class to class, and poring over tests at their desks. As choral directors, we've certainly got our work cut out for us!

As I address good body alignment practices and why they're so important, I do realize this is a genre that combines dancing and singing at the same time. But when you are in the beginning stages of learning the music and getting the singing "in their bodies", it's vital that this is managed correctly. Otherwise, you will pay for it in frustrating vocal scores for the rest of the season.

What Constitutes Good Body Alignment?

- 1 The alignment should feel confident, regal, and/or noble, and it should be accompanied by an inner sense of balance and poise.
- 2 The body should be elongated and tall with a lengthening of the spine.
- 3 The head should assume an easy position over the body so that the neck is free. For optimal head/neck alignment, I have my singers make sure their ears/shoulders and chin/sternum are in alignment. This opens up the throat for a full body tone.
- 4 The sternum is elevated with the rib cage feeling open, buoyant, and expanded, giving the lungs and diaphragm room to do their jobs. I often use the phrases "broad shoulders" or "expanded shoulders" to help them achieve this result.
- 5 The hips. Let's stop here for a moment. The hips are a place that young singers tend to get out of alignment. Females especially tend to stand in one of two ways, either



with the hip and pelvic bone protruding forward, or with a tinge of sway backwards, with the tailbone and buttocks popping out. Ideally, the hips should find a happy medium between the two and be in alignment with the spine, neck, and shoulders. Believe it or not, if the hips are out of alignment, it throws off the head and neck as well as the jaw and tongue.

6 Knees should be loose and relaxed.

7 In regard to stance, the feet should be slightly apart (I prefer shoulder width) and the weight evenly distributed. I encourage my singers to “feel the floor,” imagining they have four prongs (like the prongs at the end of a plug that you insert into an electric socket) that they plug into the floor. The “prongs” are located at the big toe, little toe, and at both sides of the back of the heel. This allows the energy to flow through the entire instrument.

There are three ways to get others to act on a task: ask them, force them, or get them to recognize for themselves why it’s in their best interest. Start your year off by making body alignment of primary importance. Help your singers recognize for themselves why it’s in their best interest. As your students start to wrap their brains around the fact that respiration is the motor that makes the machine run, they will have a better understanding of why correct body alignment is essential.

Tip: One of the biggest culprits to poor alignment is the octavo or music folder. Students can easily fall into the habit of holding the music down closer to their lap and looking down at it, which obviously affects the pharyngeal space. This, in turn, affects the tone. Encourage your students to hold their music up and use their eyes to look at the music rather than hindering the position of the head and neck. Then, hold them accountable for meeting this standard.

Moving Past “Tanking Up”

Young singers need to look at breath as their friend. More often than not, they view breath as something for which they

are fighting or gasping. In my experience, left to their own devices, most high school students will “tank up” by taking a high, clavicular breath. I refer to it as the “get ready to blow out all the candles on your birthday cake” breath! I think the origins of the “tank up” breath could be traced back to everyone’s 2nd birthday.

Let’s explore the idea of “tanking up.” When you try to inhale all of the air in the room, you overcrowd the lungs, which induces a faster rate of breath expulsion. Simply stated: When you “tank up”, you trigger the muscles of exhalation. When students take a breath in preparation for singing, they often instill tension. To the contrary, help them think of breathing as a way to satisfy the lungs, not to overcrowd them.

When I teach the initial breath intake, I explain to students exactly what happens as the diaphragm muscle does its work. One of my favorite YouTube videos to show my singers what’s happening inside their bodies is a 3D Diaphragm Demo by 3-D Yoga on YouTube. I turn down the volume so that they are focused solely on what they are seeing. The all-around expansion that is felt at the back, sides, and front, I

explain, is the result of the dissension of the diaphragm as it pushes, or crowds, the internal organs alongside the expansive movement of the intercostals.

When breath is taken in without pushing for a result—when the air dropping to the bottom of the lungs is allowed to create the expansion—there is a natural filling out of the front, back, and sides of the body, centering around the waist but also radiating down from there. It may look the same, but it isn't. The breath itself must inspire the fullness and expansion, and the body needs to be in an optimum position to receive it.

Triggering and Noisy vs. Silent Breath Intake

As we wrap up our discussion of breath intake, I would like to point out that we don't think about breath in our everyday normal breathing. The muscles automatically take the breath in, not unlike how they do when we are

sleeping. For singing, however, we have to breathe when the music tells us, and we breathe at specific times according to the phrasing and rests in the music. This is why it's necessary to train yourself to become aware of what the natural action is. Once you have heightened your awareness of the natural action, you can learn to trigger it. A singer's goal is to take the automatic action and turn it into a conscious process. You still breathe when you want and need it, but you are doing so along natural lines.

Speaking of taking a breath when we want or need it—similar to the process for speaking—the breath should be inspired by the thought about to be communicated in the music. The breath for singing should be a natural response to the musical phrase the singer is about to vocalize.

Before I move on from breath intake, let's also consider noisy as opposed to silent breath intake. The silence indicates

that the root of the tongue muscle is out of the way, the soft palate is raised, and the pharyngeal space is nice and open. Silent breath also encourages the singer to allow the air to drop in-down-and-out. I also use the breath intake to encourage my singers to heighten awareness of their backspace and open up all of that resonant space. One of my voice teachers used to call it “making a reservation for my voice before I sang.” We need our singers to take advantage of the amplification and full-bodied sound that comes with opening up the throat and lifting the palate. The time to do this is during the breath intake!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dina Else is a highly sought-after vocal technician/specialist, choral clinician, motivational speaker, festival conductor, and adjudicator throughout the United States. The choral ensembles and show choirs she works with are consistently awarded “Best Vocals” and highest honors in competitions and festivals.

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Finding Your “Golden Brick”

HOW TO PUSH BOUNDARIES WITH SUCCESS

by Garrett Breeze

THE GOLDEN BRICK RULE

One of my mentors in college, Ron Simpson, taught a lesson that has since informed my composing and arranging every day. He described what he called the “Golden Brick Rule”, and it concerned how to break convention and try creative things without going too far. Imagine you’re looking at a red brick wall, only one of the bricks is made of gold. To what is your eye immediately going to be drawn? The golden brick, of course, is going to stand out among the red bricks. Taking the analogy further, if you had a wall that was made entirely of golden bricks, no single brick would stand out.

His lesson was simple: When you’re writing a song, there should always be something that makes it unique or special. However, you shouldn’t try to cram every creative idea you have into one song. It’s best to pick one or two ideas, and then “follow the rules” on everything else so that your creative ideas stand out. It’s tempting for inexperienced arrangers, directors, choreographers, and so on, to prove themselves by throwing every idea they have into the mix. They may be great ideas, but putting them all together ends up being excessive—like that wall made of gold. That much gold is really valuable, but ultimately, it’s a bit of an eye sore.

Risk vs. Reward

There are several benefits to pushing boundaries and testing new ideas. First and foremost, it’s an educational experience for your students. Maybe you have students with unusual skillsets that you want to feature, or maybe you’re feeling stuck in a rut and need

to shake things up. It could also be that what you've tried in the past has not been successful.

There's usually an element of risk involved with trying something new. It's possible the judges won't like it, that the students won't buy in to it, or that it just doesn't work the way you thought it would. But pushing boundaries in smaller, more gradual ways allows you to experiment without the risk of an entire show bombing.

What Success Looks Like

Many commonplace aspects of show choir were once considered experimental. Story shows, huge set pieces, bringing the band on stage, large mashups, and modern styles of dance are just some examples of many whose origins were viewed as a "creative leap." But success like that doesn't just happen. It's a deliberate process that includes the following five steps:

- Set clear goals for what you intend to accomplish. Don't just experiment for the sake of it.
- Be sure your students understand your goals and encourage them to trust the process. It doesn't matter how great an idea is—if your students don't support it, it's likely to fail.
- Bring in outside help. Our artform is a collaborative process, and when you're testing new ideas, a fresh, objective set of eyes and ears is crucial.
- Focus on your group's brand. Make sure that what you do well is still featured in the show.
- Keep quality at the forefront. Trying something new but doing it poorly will draw more criticism than doing something with mediocrity that happens to be mainstream.

Returning to the golden brick analogy, ultimately, it's up to you to decide how

many "walls" are in your show. Maybe your big idea is one that unifies the entire show—in this case, one brick in a single wall may be what's right. Maybe each song in your show is a different wall, and you can try out new, exciting ideas in each song. Or maybe you break it down further and find a golden brick for each section of a song. The point is not to discourage you from testing new ideas—the point is to make sure you're setting up your show so that you can get maximum credit for your ideas.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: With more than 1,000 show choir arrangements in circulation, Garrett Breeze is a sought-after clinician and adjudicator whose credits include film and television, Broadway stars, and Grammy-winning classical artists. His show choir music is available at breetunes.com and he recently launched a new catalog of music for concert and church choirs at holidaychoirmusic.com.

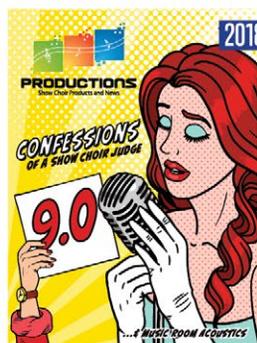
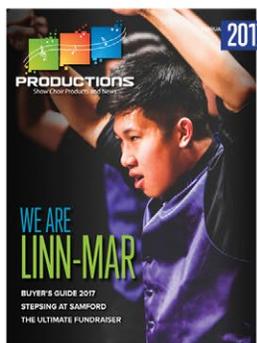


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IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP

STAGE RIGHT RYAN C. ALDRIDGE



QUESTION: What got StageRight into risers and portable risers for choirs and show choirs?

StageRight became immersed in Music Education Risers by listening to the directors' need for a sturdy and robust system, one that can withstand students' dynamic movements, and that offers flexible arrangements in addition to quick set-up for performances/competitions. Our portable platforms are a great solution that provides a rigid, wobble-free system that can easily be assembled in a variety of configurations. Through word of mouth in the music education market, StageRight quickly became a solution-driven supplier of quality-built Risers.

QUESTION: What sets your risers apart from others?

There are a couple of main attributes that make the StageRight platforms unique, including our Dual-sided, Honeycomb-core Decks and unitized understructure. The dual-sided deck essentially doubles the wear-life of surfaces; this you can use on one side for the first ten years and then flip over for the next ten years (or use one side for performances and the other side for practice). The honeycomb-core absorbs the

drumhead effect for an extremely quiet walking surface. Our Z-800 supports are unitized, so there are no loose parts. Horizontal and diagonal bracing provide super sturdy and rigid support for a wobble-free system. Together, the decks and supports are easy to set up and allow for a variety of arrangements. Simply place the support in the shape of a 'Z' and place the deck on top. There are no tools and no loose parts.

QUESTION: When a group chooses you, what can they expect from StageRight?

StageRight prides itself in superior customer service, and this includes an experienced and friendly sales staff, quality built and American-made equipment, as well as continued post-sale support. As a family-owned business, we understand the need to earn your trust and keep providing the level of service to help support your program.

QUESTION: If our reader was sitting in front of you, what questions would you ask them?

StageRight wants to better understand your current program needs and future growth development so we can provide a



riser or portable platform system that will grow with your program. We want to learn about the number of students you need to accommodate; about the space where the equipment will be utilized, which helps provide a starting base; about the equipment, and if it will be used for both practice/classroom and performance/competition, or if you have separate needs. There are other questions we hope to ask, too: How will the equipment move through campus or be stored in the summer? For future consideration, where do you see your program in the near future? Will you need to rearrange the risers between different performance styles? Will there be cross-sharing of the platforms between departments or classes?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ryan C. Aldridge is a Digital Marketing representative with StageRight Corporation. StageRight is a designer, manufacturer and distributor of portable staging equipment such as pit fillers, stage extensions, folding stages, choral risers, band risers, music chairs, orchestra enclosures, acoustical shells, telescopic risers, etc. We are able to provide custom equipment, excellent customer service, and quality products.



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