

Singing City in the Schools Curriculum Guide*

Singing City

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**Disclaimer: This guideline includes the ideas and concepts of many music educators. Some of the approaches described here are original ones, but there is no overall claim of originality. This guideline is not meant to be published in any manner, nor is there any intent of financial gain. It exists solely to put forth a SCIS philosophy that reflects all that Singing City stands for as an organization, so that SCIS instructors can gain an overall understanding of the program.*

SINGING CITY

Mission

Singing City strives to unite people through music. Through choral performance, outreach and education, the Choir is a force for change in the community.

An Overview

Singing City Choir, one of Philadelphia's premier musical organizations, was founded in 1948 by Dr. Elaine Brown, whose dream was to create a choir that makes a difference – an ensemble of artistic excellence that would not only sing but would create a sense of community with its singers and its audiences. Her idea was that people of various backgrounds could understand each other better through the common experience of music. The Choir's music director, singers, staff, board members, friends and supporters continue to recognize the influence music can have in improving the quality of life for individuals and for society.

A consistently professional level of performance and repeated critical acclaim have brought Singing City many opportunities to perform in the United States and abroad with the world's great orchestras. The Choir has performed with virtually every major conductor, including Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Eugene Ormandy, Helmuth Rilling, Leopold Stokowski, Igor Stravinsky, and Yuri Temirkanov. In 1997, the Choir was featured in a pair of Christmas Concerts with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Assistant Conductor Luis Biava. Continuing a long tradition of Messiah performances with the Orchestra, begun with Eugene Ormandy and continued under William Smith, Singing City performed Handel's beloved masterpiece with the Orchestra and Maestro Biava in December 1998, 1999 and 2000. A highlight of the '03-'04 season was a performance with Dave Brubeck featuring his Christmas choral work La Fiesta de la Posada. In December 2004 the Choir performed six holiday concerts at the Kimmel Center with The Philadelphia Orchestra and the American Boychoir.

Since Singing City was founded, its choirs have given more than 1,000 performances nationally and internationally. The Choir traveled to Cuba in May 2000 to participate in the International Choral Festival de Cuba, the first American choir to do so. A concert tour to the former Soviet Union in 1991 included stunning performances with the Leningrad Philharmonic and Yuri Temirkanov. Tours to Israel and Arab countries in the Middle East, and concert tours in the South following the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation in 1955 and during the 60's civil rights struggle trace the long-standing commitment of the Choir to equality, peace and social justice. In summer 2004, the Choir traveled to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to share its message and hope for peace.

Singing City is dedicated to making a significant contribution to the cultural life and diverse communities of the Philadelphia region. In spring of 2002 Singing City joined with The Bach Festival of Philadelphia to present Bach's Mass in B minor to an audience of over 1,100. Maestro Helmuth Rilling, one of the world's foremost authorities on Bach choral works, conducted the critically acclaimed performance. In the '04-'05 concert season Singing City collaborated with the Spiral Q Puppet Theater and Phrenic New Ballet. Singing City has sung for Liberty Medal Award ceremonies, performed with the Philly Pops Orchestra, and given concerts at homeless shelters, retirement communities and AIDs hospices. In 2001, Singing City was the recipient of Chorus America's prestigious Education Outreach Award for its outstanding choral music workshops in selected Philadelphia schools. Throughout its history, Singing City has joyfully contributed its music to create a "singing city."

SINGING CITY IN THE SCHOOLS

Mission

Singing City In The Schools gives children, who otherwise would not have a classroom music-making experience, the opportunity to discover their creative genius as singers, composers and performers.

An Overview

Singing City in the Schools (SCIS) is a music-making opportunity for third, fourth and fifth graders enrolled in schools that, due to lack of funding, have no formal music education programs.

There are three facets to the program: singing, composing, and sharing. Once a week the SCIS Director meets with the children and leads a session of singing. Over the course of the program the SCIS Resident Composer meets with all the children in small groups and/or individually several times to collaborate with them in composing an original song set to original text. At the culmination of the program a SCIS “Sharing” is held. Parents of the singers and younger students in the school are invited to “share” in the children’s musical journey. The children demonstrate their newly found singing voices, sing songs they’ve learned, listen to professional singers sing some of the songs they’ve composed, and sing one or two of the original compositions themselves.

The program runs on a semester-by-semester basis. If the program is a good fit for the school and Singing City, the program can be extended for additional semesters, up to six semesters. For example, if a program begins in September with a 3rd grade class and is extended for the maximum length, the children would be a part of SCIS through the 5th grade.

Singing

During each session with the SCIS Director, the children sing rounds, partner songs, singing games, and songs from around the world. While singing these songs, the children develop singer-musicianship, by acquiring music reading skills, and learning choral techniques. A singing-based approach is employed, whereby the children learn through singing. Repertoire must be carefully selected so that all songs are of high quality, are good teaching pieces, and are fun to sing. The philosophy of this component of the program is that, while these children have had no formal singing instruction, all children can learn to sing correctly and beautifully.

Composing

During collaborative sessions with the Resident Composer, the children compose original songs based on original lyrics. These lyrics are drawn from poems that the students write under the guidance of the classroom teacher prior to the official commencement of the SCIS program. The philosophy of this component of the program is that, while these children have had no formal music instruction, all children have a song inside of them waiting to be heard.

Performing

The SCIS program culminates with a final Sharing. The concept of a Sharing is different from that of a performance. Whereby the latter’s focus is product, the former’s is process. The Sharing gives the children a goal – something to work towards without the intense pressure and high expectations that goes along with a performance. While some songs are

The Academic Standards for Arts and Humanities state that students should be able to:

- Participate in a Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
- Understand the Historical and Cultural Context of Material Presented
- Provide a Critical Response
- Provide an Aesthetic Response

performed at the Sharing as if it were a performance (including some of the original compositions), other aspects of the Sharing simply involve demonstration of warm-ups, vocal games, and skills the children have learned. The Sharing allows for a wonderful sense of accomplishment and closure at the end of the SCIS program.

SCIS Curriculum Guide

Housekeeping

Nametags

The sweetest sound a person can hear is his name. Our name is music to our ears. The children involved in the SCIS program so often receive short shrift in the attention that all children deserve. Calling children by name tells them that they are important to you. That they count. That they are special.

Calling a child by name also tells them that you know who they are, which is important for classroom management. If a child knows that you don't know her name (and she will know) she will be more likely to act out.

Nametags should be of good quality and permanent – either pinned on or worn on the neck with string. The latter creates some classroom management challenges, as the children will tend to play with them. It is suggested that the SCIS Director make the name tags and then hand them out personally for the first couple of sessions, as a way to learn names quickly.

Seating Chart

Seating charts are vital to good classroom management, especially for the singing component of the program. While all children behave better if they know where they belong, the underserved children involved in the SCIS program tend to be hyper-challenged if their space is undefined, inconsistent, and inadequate. This is due to the fact that space is so often at a premium in their lives. The bottom line is everyone likes to have their own space – a place they can call their own.

Seating charts will also help you, the instructor, learn names quickly. The classroom teacher should create the seating chart. Arched rows are suggested with as much space between chairs and rows as possible.

Nametags can be placed on the chairs before the children enter to room so that they know exactly where they belong. This also allows for seating chart adjustments to be made efficiently when necessary.

Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher is a vital to the singing component of the SCIS program. He should be utilized for:

- Classroom management (their mere presence should help enormously)
- Room set-up
- Nametag distribution
- Creation and maintenance of seating chart
- Handing out of papers, music
- Modeling (having them participate as a learner is empowering to the children)
- Communication with parents (for sharing details, classroom management)
- Keeping score: competition between rows, or boys and girls, can be a great motivator

Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans are important. The children know intuitively when there is no plan as to what is to be accomplished in the course of a lesson. A good lesson is like a good story, play, or symphony. It has an arc with a beginning that grabs your attention, a middle that holds your attention, and an end that has satisfying closure.

The Beginning

The first activity should be engaging and immediately gratifying. True, the children haven't warmed up yet. But this is not the average school choir. Anything too technical or labored at the start may result in you losing them for the rest of the session. The children need a reminder as to why they're working hard on how tall they should be opening their mouth for the 'ah' vowel. That reminder is a song! A fun, quick piece in a limited range, like "Che che kooleh," is a great opener.

The Middle

The key to life and to singing is variety. Any given 45-minute session should involve 3 – 4 (or more) singing activities. Teach as much through music-making as possible. If something technical must be addressed outside the singing of a song (ie, deep breathing) keep it short and fact-paced.

The End

The last thing the children do is sing something from beginning to end. This could be the "Say Goodbye" round, or an octavo. Because the program only meets once a week, closure is important.



Some Basics

Short-term goals

The focus of the singing aspect of the program is just that: singing. Children want to sing and so they should do lots of it, right away. And yet, they have so much to learn about how to sing correctly and beautifully. In a school where there is a formal music program musical the children have already "found" their singing voices by the 3rd grade. The goal then is to catch-up in a hurry. The challenge is to teach the children how to find and use their singing voices, how to read music and sing music well through the singing. Developing the children's musicianship is important, but only as a means to an end: allowing them to experience the joy, the deep satisfaction of singing in a choir. Who knows what life will hold for these children tomorrow – or any of us for that matter. If we've brightened the lives of these young people through singing, giving them a sense of community and connectedness, we've done our job. This in essence is what Singing City is all about.

Long-term goals

The long-term goal is to transform these young people into singer-musicians. After all, everyone sings. Many sing badly. Some only sing when they are alone in the car or the shower. But everyone sings. It is a universal human behavior. But singer-musicians are much more rare. They know how to sing correctly, how to find their way around a piece of music, and how to perform with confidence for a delighted audience.

Modeling

Modeling and "call and response" can be very helpful to a child trying to find his singing voice. A teacher "calls" exactly what she wants to hear and the child responds back, imitating what has been modeled for him. When "calling" it is suggested that the teacher place a hand on her chest, and then extend that hand towards the class to indicate a response is desired. These visual and aural cues allows for efficient learning without a lot of explaining.

Singing
**Academic Standards For Arts
and Humanities**

Addresses Elements and Principals Of:
Duration * Intensity * Pitch * Timbre
Sing * Read and Notate Music * Improvise

If it is crucial that the instructor model in the children's vocal range. A male teacher must sing up an octave in his falsetto. Singing in his changed voice range will only reinforce the poor modeling the children hear all around them.

Range

Initially, any exercise or song used must stay above middle c (c4). The octave d4 to d5 is ideal. Once a child has discovered his singing voice – hopefully in the first session – he should soon be able to sing

the range of a fifth from a4 to d4 with ease. From there, the challenge lies in expanding the child's vocal range. He should soon be able to sing up to d5. Descending exercises, scales, melodies are strongly encouraged. This allows him to find his head voice more easily.

Their Singing Voice

First and foremost the goal of SCIS's singing component is to help the child find her "singing voice". Much like learning how to ride a bike or play the violin, a child must be taught how to sing. While it is true that a few of us are born gifted musicians, most of us need instruction to discover the musicality that is inside. All children can and want to sing beautifully. They just need to be shown how. The challenge lies in the fact that children today are bombarded by pop singers who for the most part use their chest voice (speaking voice) rather than the head voice that is employed for choral singing. With the proper instruction, most children find their singing voice with relative ease. It is important to get the children to think of the speaking voice versus the singing voice in terms of antonyms.

Heavy vs. Light
Loud vs. Soft
Low vs. High

The speaking voice is heavy, loud, and low while the singing voice is light, soft, and high. Imagery can be very helpful. The speaking voice is a caramel apple and the singing voice is cotton candy. The following exercises are suggested.

"Siren" and "Roller Coaster"

- Glissandi from high to low to high again on an "ooh" and a "wee" respectively.
- This activates the head voice and the kids love it.

"This is my speaking voice"

- Explores our ability to speak, whisper, shout, and sing.
- Introduces "sol" and "mi" Kodaly signs.

"Hippety-Hoppety"

- Incorporates sol-mi and can expand to so-la-mi.
- Introduces call and response.

"Che Che Koole"

- Has a "Simon Says" element to it.
- Stays within the range of 5th and can be taken up in half-steps as a warm up.
- Starting on the A above middle C is suggested.

“Welcome”

- Also stays with the interval of a 5th and introduces melody, harmony and descant.
- Three-part homophonic singing can be introduced with this short song.

“Bombela Westimela”

- Range of a 6th in AB form.
- Good opportunity to introduce the concept of form.
- South African song game that involves passing a rock around a circle at the B section.
- Requires coordination, and is great fun.

“Zum Gali Gali”

- AABA form, Israeli work song.

Rounds are fun and helpful in introducing confidence and independence in singing. Some suggested rounds are:

“To Tell A Tale or Two”

- Good song to sing at the start of session.

“Say Goodbye”

- A song to sing at the end of a session.

“Vesper Canon”

- Has a range of an octave, with neumaticisms and rests.
- Good for later in the semester.

There are many others that are suitable. Whichever songs are used, they should be taught by rote, without music. The emphasis should be aural and not written. Still, the elements of music can be introduced by helping children hear the basic elements of music:

- High vs. Low (pitch)
- Long vs. Short (duration, rhythm)
- Loud vs. Soft (dynamic)
- Fast vs. Slow (tempo)
- Connected vs. Disconnected (line)
- AB vs. Verse/Refrain (form)
- Classical vs. Folk vs. Popular (genre)

Since the SCIS program involves the children in composing, it is helpful to talk about music from the viewpoint of a composer. Example: “If you the composer want an important syllable of the text to have emphasis, you might choose to make the note you assign to that syllable a long note, or have it sung loud, or have it be a very high pitch. This approach gets the children in the mindset of being composers.

How to Sing Beautifully

Good choral technique is vital if a child is to learn how to sing beautifully. Written explanations should be kept to a minimum if not avoided. Again, the focus should be the aural experience of singing, using appropriate exercises, vocal games, and songs.

Physical Warm-Up

- When it comes to singing, their bodies are the instruments, and they have to get an instrument ready to “play”, just like a violinist tunes his strings, or a trumpeter oils her valves.

- Exercises: shoulder rolls, stretches, eyebrow sit ups, hopping on one foot

Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Explain and demonstrate shallow breathing vs. deep breathing
- “Blow-sip-snake”: have them blow candles out on their birthday cake, sip in a thick milk shake, and hiss like a snake.
- “Blow-gasp-blue”: graduate to have them silently gasp air in through the nose and mouth (to approximate actual breathing), and then sing on a5 on the syllable “blue”

Posture

- Sitting: Edge of the seat, no back on chair, right foot forward, left foot back, hands on the knees. If music is in hand, hold music with left hand, balance with the right. Asking the children to “sit tall” will magically bring them close this posture.
- Standing: Feet six inches apart, right foot slightly forward, “heavy” hands, or hold music in left hand and balance with the right.
- Heavy Hands: have the children pretend their hands are much heavier than they really are. Not so heavy that the hands droop to the ground. But heavy enough so that they “can’t” scratch their cheek, fix their hair, elbow the child next to them. Great discipline is required to maintain heavy hands for an entire song. It will take time for the children to be successful with this. Again, this is the start of their musical journey. But it must begin somewhere.

Vowels

- Explain that vowels allow us sustain sound
- The mouth has to be open and tall for vowels to sound
- If the mouth is one finger “tall” you get the “ooh” vowel; two fingers tall for “oh”; three-finger tall for “ah”
- Tongue should always be “asleep in bed” with tip of tongue behind bottom teeth

Staggered Breathing

- Once the children understand that vowels are used to sustain pitch, they should learn this most important technique. They can try sustaining a vowel, breath when they need to and come back in on the same vowel, as long as they don’t breath when the singers around them are breathing
- Point out that by staggering the breath, theoretically a choir can hold a note for days. Of course, you’d have to order out for pizza, but there is no time limit. This is the great wonder of choral singing. Not even the greatest singers in the world can hold a note forever like a choir can.
- Once they can do it on a pure vowel, they should do it with a real word, such as “go”. They must be told not to come back in on the word “go” after they take a breath, but the vowel “o”.

Consonants

- Consonants allows us to understand the lyrics/text
- Final consonants must be sounded together

The Conductor

- The very concept of a conductor needs to be introduced
- Ask the children what a conductor does
- Many children (and adults!) who are not musicians underestimate the need for a conductor, seeing her as simply “waving her arms” and suggesting that “anyone can do that”. Explain that without a conductor, there is no way for a large group of people to begin or end singing together.
- The Three “L’s”. Learn your music, Look at your conductor, and Listen to your fellow singers. Take final consonants, for example. Because all three “L’s” are vital if final consonants are to be sounded together, this is a good opportunity to introduce the three “L’s”. The first – “Learn”– requires a fairly high-level of music reading ability. Knowing that the final “t” is to be place on beat 1 or on the “and” of 4 requires advanced skill. However, “Look” and “Listen” should be fostered from the start of a young person’s singing career, as they will always be the most important tools a singer has.

The Phrase

- Phrases are musical sentences. Children know sentences have periods at the end of them. Once they are presented with this analogy they can hear where one phrase ends and another begins by listening for the aural periods.
- “Welcome”: Have the children hold up one finger and ask them to hold up additional fingers as you sing in a new phrase. Some of the children will put lots of fingers up right away, thinking each note is a phrase. There should only be four fingers up at the end of the song.
- “We’ve Come Today”: Sing this song and again ask them to hold up fingers and count the phrases. There are four phrases. Once this song is learned, you can do this song in a round.
- Rounds help foster independent singers and paves the way for part singing.

The Composer

- Explain that when a composer writes a song, she has to put notes (or “itches”) to words.
- The composer break up the words of the text (lyrics) into syllables and assigns a note to it. This is how a melody is written.
- Sometimes the composer decides that a syllable gets more than one note.
- Sing “Sing Legato” and ask them to hear which syllables have been given more than one note.
- Explain that such syllables are called neumatic syllables. (“neumatic-twomatic”)
- Ask them to count the number of notes for each of the neumatic syllables in “Sing Legato”
- Explain that you can only breath before a phrase begins and after a phrase ends.
- Legato vs. Staccato vs. Marccato: Use the Kenneth Jennings Sing Legato exercises (“*Sing legato*”, “*staccato*” and “*marcato*”) to demonstrate how phrases can be sung in different ways. These exercises relate back to phrase and how a phrase can be sung. This also deals with the idea of line.

They Can Read Music

Whether someone “reads music” is a relative question. On one end of the spectrum is the person who, when handed a piece of music, cannot make heads or tails of it. He cannot read music. On the other end of the spectrum is the person who can sight-read anything handed to her. She is a professional singer-musician. This highly-developed skill takes years of training and experience. But the beginning singer can and must begin learning how to read music. Like singing itself, everyone can learn. The SCIS program starts students on this journey. Since the SCIS program involves the children composing, it is helpful to talk about how music is written from the viewpoint of a composer. Example: “If you the composer want an important syllable of the text to have emphasis, you might choose to make the note you assign to that syllable a whole note, or have it sung forte, or have it be a very high pitch on the musical staff. This approach gets the children in the mindset of being a composer.

Octavos

At this stage, you should start introducing octavos. Exercises, song games and rounds are fun and are wonderful teaching pieces, but working on octavos challenges the children and gives them a real sense of accomplishment when they have mastered them. They also facilitate the reading of music because otherwise, they are too difficult to learn by rote. Genres should vary. Again, these songs should be of high quality, good teaching pieces (suitable range, not too many neumaticisms, appropriate text), and fun to sing. There should be a good balance between challenging the children and also allowing them to succeed.

Unison is Beautiful

True unison singing is rare, especially with beginning singers. When the children begin reading music, the pieces chosen should be unison. Not until they have mastered unison singing should they attempt pieces that feature divisi. Below are some suggested songs. They can be performed by singing the melody only and still be quite effective, since not all of them are published in unison.

SCIS Soloists

If a piece calls for a solo, consider involving a member of Singing City (SC) to cover it. Or if a piece is two or three part, you could involve several members of SC to cover the other vocal lines. There are several advantages to this approach. The children get to hear and enjoy a piece performed with divisi before they themselves are ready to sing in parts. They get to watch an experienced singer in action. It also gives SC members an opportunity to be involved in the program. Such involvement will enrich a rehearsal or sharing immensely. If the SCIS program continues for several semesters, the songs can be revisited by adding second and third parts, as well as allowing children to serve as soloists.

UNISON PIECES

“Yupik Chant”

- Short, simple unison piece
- World music piece

“O Christmas Tree”

- Short AABA piece

“This Little Light of Mine “

- Unison
- Intermediate, due to neumaticisms and a high note of f5

“Pie Jesu”

- Unison
- Challenging because of neumaticisms and upward leaps
- Classical

“I Need You To Survive “

- Contemporary / gospel
- Very low range, but a great song with an important message

“Dormi, Dormi”

- Easy unison lullaby

“And God Shall Wipe Away All Tears”

- Unison piece
- Tessitura is a bit higher – good challenge

TWO-PART PIECES

“Good Night”

- Lullaby
- Great beginner piece
- Second part in the second verse can be sung by an adult soloist

“Christmas Time Is Here”

- AABA

“Baby What You Gonna Be”

- Lovely lullaby
- Christmas text

"Seed To Sow"

- Great message; kids love it.
- Adult soloist sings verses, children sing refrains

"Evening Prayer"

- Serious literature
- Beautiful piece, text
- Adult soloist can sing it through first, and then let soloist sing non-melody lines

"Suo Gan"

- Beautiful Welsh lullaby
- AABA

"Dance Boatman Dance"

- Fun folk song
- Clapping

"Al Shlosa D'Varim"

- Beautiful Hebrew text
- Soloist can introduce piece, and then sing B section
- B section partners with A section
- Opportunity to sing two or three-part final cadence

"When You Believe"

- Great pop ballad
- Verses a bit low, can be sung by adult soloist
- Refrains sung by choir
- Bridge in Hebrew

"Appalachian Suite"

- Three American folk songs

"I Have A Dream"

- Social justice theme
- Straight-forward

"Fill The World With Music"

- Nice sentiment
- Some meter and neumatic challenges

THREE-PART PIECES

"Praise His Holy Name"

- Terrific gospel song

"God Is"

- Gospel piece with a great message of commonality between Christians, Jews and Muslims

Melody Sheets

At the start of the music reading process, the children should only be given a “melody sheet”, as opposed to the actual octavo. Dealing with systems is overload at the start of their journey.

After they can find themselves around a melody sheet, they are ready to take in hand an octavo. However, it should be a unison piece. Introduce them to the concept of systems and accompaniment staves.

Once they are ready for two-part octavos explain how sometimes the soprano part (part 1) sits on top of the alto note (part 2), and how they can follow the stems going up if they are soprano, and stems down if they are alto. In some songs, each part has its own staff.

By reading music, the children can begin to develop a visual understanding of concepts that up to now they’ve only experienced aurally:

High vs. Low (of a pitch)
Long vs Short (duration, rhythm)
Loud vs. Soft (dynamic)
Fast vs. Slow (tempo)
Connected vs. Disconnected (line)
AB vs. Verse/Refrain (form)
Classical vs. Folk vs. Popular (genre)

Below are specific concepts that should be covered with each element. Again, starting with melody sheets, then moving to unison octavos, and then divisi octavos, will allow for a gradual, more pedagogical approach to learning how to read music.

High and Low

- Staff: five lines, four spaces
- Naming the lines and spaces (by number, by letter)
- Read left to right, just as you read words
- “Where’d I stop?”
- Measures “Side to side finger bracket”
- Note that moves higher on staff, lower on staff, stays on the same line or space “Up-Down-Same”;
- Kodaly hand signs. (“Scale Song”)
- Clefs: G for Soprano and Alto, F for Tenor and Bass
- Systems (“Side to Side finger brackets”)
- Whole Steps vs. Half Steps

Long and short

- Eggs colored in (short) vs. eggs not colored in (long)
- Stems
- Dots (make notes longer)
- Whole notes, Half notes, Quarter notes, Eighth Notes, Sixteenth Notes, Dotted Notes
- Counts each note gets (in Common Time)
- Ta-Ti counting (doesn’t require understanding of Time Signatures)
- Time Signatures
- Number-counting (requires understanding of Time Signatures)

Loud and Soft

- The concept of “dynamics”
- Dynamic Markings: ff—mf—mp—p—pp
- Decrescendo vs. Crescendo (“Sing a Little Louder”)
- Subito

Fast or Slow

- Concept of “tempo”
- Vivace-Presto-Allegro-Andante-Adagio-Lento
- Rallentando
- A tempo
- Accelerando

Connected and Disconnected

- Legato, Staccato, Marcato
- “Sing Legato”
- “Staccato”

Style

- Secular vs. Sacred
- Classical vs. Folk/Popular

Form

- Concept of form (order of song, different sections of song and how they repeat)
- AB
- VR
- Same vs. Different vs. Similar

Composing
THEY DISCOVER...
THE POEM INSIDE
THE MELODY AND RHYTHMS INSIDE
HOW THE TWO ARE PUT TOGETHER

Most people find the idea that they themselves could compose a song hard to believe, let alone a child with no musical training. The composing component of the SCIS program is based on the firm belief that there is creative genius in everyone. Children especially are ideal for tapping this creativity. They do not have many of the creative inhibitions that adults have because no one yet has told them that they can't compose a song!

The emphasis of the composing component is not on technique or cleverness, but authenticity and personal expression.

THE POEM

Each student writes a poem under the guidance of the classroom teacher. The teacher decides the form and process by which the poem is written. The topic should be of the child's choosing that deals with a life experience. This is important because it paves the way for the child, under the guidance of the SCIS Resident Composer (RC) to express himself by tapping the creativity within.

MUSICAL CREATIVITY WORKSHOP

The RC works with small groups of children to tap their musical creativity. This involves melody and rhythm improvisational “games” which allow the children to discover musical ideas they did not know they had. These games are fun and engaging in a way that gets the “creative juices” flowing without intimidating the children or putting them on the spot.

COMPOSING THE SONG

Expressing oneself creatively is a personal, revealing exercise that requires trust. At this stage, the children have a level of creative comfort with the RC and are willing to sing their poems by improvising a melody. In many cases, the melodies are excellent, and provide a melodic germ for the creation of a complete, polished song.

ARRANGING AND NOTATING THE SONG

The RC then arranges and notates a song for voice or choir and piano based upon the student’s recorded lyric and melodic improvisation. The aim of the RC is to create a successful song by capturing the core affect and feeling the student communicated in her improvisational performance. This is crucial, so that the student feels the deepest sense of ownership possible in the final product – a collaborative effort between them and the RC.

Sharing

THEY DISCOVER...

WHAT IT MEANS TO SHARE

HOW TO BE A PERFORMER

HOW TO BE A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

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A SCIS sharing consists of the following:

- an audience of parents, fellow students, the school principal, SC staff and members, invited guests
- a venue that allows for the children to be successful as singers, composers, performers, and sharers
- the children sharing vocal exercises, games, rounds that have helped them become singer-musicians
- the children singing songs they have learned
- soloists from SC singing some of the songs written by the children and the RC
- the children themselves singing one or two of the songs written by their fellow students and the RC

HOW TO BE A PERFORMER

Just as there is a difference between a singer and a singer-musician, there is a difference between a singer-musician and a performer.

Performance face

Choral music should not only be heard, but felt by the singer and seen by the audience. Smiling while singing is not possible because it is not conducive to proper vocal ombachure.. Still, a gentle smile should be encouraged before the singing begins, during interludes, and after the song has ended. There’s nothing more off-putting to an applauding audience than a choir that stares blankly at them as if they are zombies.

Composing
Academic Standards For Arts and Humanities

Addresses Elements and Principals Of:
Composition * Form * Harmony * Rhythm *
Texture * Compose * Arrange * Improvise

And there are other parts of the face that can help express the mood of the song: cheeks, eyebrows, nostrils, eyes, forehead. At first this will seem impossible to the children because these are subtle movements. In time, they will become aware of just how much facial movement is possible, and how much facial expression can add to their sound. This in turn improves their performance and therefore adds to the audience's enjoyment.

Letting the Body Sing

Good singing posture does not mean the body has to be stiff and full of tension. Children will often assume you want them to stand like wooden soldiers. Encourage the children to let their bodies "sing" with the phrasing of the music. This will result in more engaging performance, both aurally and visually. The body singing should not distract from the singing. It is not choreography or dancing. The goal is to let the music be felt as well as heard.

One exercise that explores this concept is "Pretend you're a tree." This helps the children get comfortable with letting their bodies "sing." Have the children pretend they're trees. These trees have no branches. (hands are heavy, by their side the entire exercise) First the tree stands completely still – there is no wind at all. Suddenly there's a breeze. The tree waves ever so slightly in the breeze, but the roots of the tree (feet) stay planted, never moving. The breeze turns into wind. The tree waves even more – forward, back, to the left, to the right, in a circular motion. The wind turns into a storm and the tree moves even more, but still the roots stay planted.

Performance Academic Standards For Arts and Humanities

- Demonstrate Ability and how arts can communicate experiences, emotions and stories
- Recognize the function of rehearsal and practice session
- Apply Traditional and Contemporary Technologies for Performing
- Analyze Cultural and Historical Perspective of Music

Letting the body sing is not the same as dancing, or choreography. Nor should it ever be a distraction for the audience. If the feet stay planted on the ground and the hands remain "heavy" (though free) this should not be a problem. Essentially it is the torso that moves in a way that is reflective of the mood, tempo, and genre of the piece. Doing so will allow the audience to feel and see the music as well as hear it. Research tells us most of what we hear is what we see. This alone makes the case for performance faces and bodies that sing.

Choreography

Different from "body singing", choreography is specific movement that involves moving the arms and feet in a very specific way in a very specific moment in the music. It is highly encouraged that choreography be utilized if appropriate to the genre, and arrangement of the song.

Bowing

Children love to take bows as much as they like to sing. They have all sorts of ideas about how to bow, and so the important thing is to decide on one way and rehearse it as if it was a song. In fact, it will take almost as much time to perfect it. But do let them bow often during the Sharing, and even at end of a rehearsal. These children may never get the chance to take a bow again in their lives. What a shame, for bowing is a joyous act. It sends a strong message to the children bowing that they have done something noteworthy. Indeed they have!

The following is a suggestion on how to bow:

- move the arms from the heavy hands position at the side of the body to the front of the body so that the palms are facing the legs
- bend at the waist — not too fast, not too slow — to a 90 degree angle
- while holding the 90 degree angle, have the children say to themselves — not too fast, not too slow — "Singing City in the Schools"
- have them come up — not too fast, not too slow — and allow the arms to resume the heavy hands position

Explain peripheral vision to the children and let them use their peripheral vision to make sure they bow together, stay down together, and come up together. A bow by a choir in perfect unison is as impressive as any song they might sing perfectly.

Talking

We ask the children not to talk during a rehearsal. If our lesson has been planned well, they have very few opportunities to talk. Generally, if children are singing, they can't talk. What a great reason to sing! But a child who isn't used to performing will often talk during a song. It is mostly nerves that causes him to do this, as opposed to blatant disobedience. Other times it is because he subconsciously feels that he is one of many and that his focus, his discipline, his voice, doesn't matter. He thinks in such a big crowd, he won't be noticed. He must be told and shown otherwise.

Applauding and Waving

Children who are not used to performing will often applaud for themselves, and wave at their audience – especially if an audience member is waving at them. You should explain to them that clapping is the job of the audience, not the performers. Waving is not appropriate for singer or audience member, but if Grandma should wave at them, they should not wave back.

HOW TO BE A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

If children are taught how to be good audience members, they will be good audience members. Too often we assume children (and adults!) know how to be audience members.

The Screen vs. Live Performance

Ask the children what the main difference is between watching performers on the television, computer, or movie screen and watching them in a live performance: in the case of the latter, they can hear and see their audience. This might seem obvious, but it needs to be pointed out to people not familiar with live performance that the performers will be affected either positively or negatively depending on the behavior of the audience.

Worship vs. Live Performance

Some of the children belong to churches where it is acceptable and encouraged for the congregation to comment and even shout out during the sermon. Because a service has a similar dynamic to that of a live performance, it is important to point out the difference. It is quite possible that the parents of the children might behave in this way during a sharing, which is simply them expressing their appreciation for the children's performance and your work with them.

Venue

The "venue" is the place in which a performance takes place. For choral concerts, a venue is usually a place of worship, an auditorium, or on special occasions, a theater or hall.

Applauding vs. Shouting/Waving

In a venue the children should be told there are two ways to show approval of a performance:

1. applauding after a song (not during)
2. shouting "bravo!" (male performer), "brava!" (female performer), "bravi!" (plural)

Shouting at or waving to performers is not acceptable behavior from audience members.

Cell phones & Texting

It is not acceptable to use cell phones in a venue from the time the performance begins until the time it ends.

Exiting

Ideally, audience members should not get out of the seat until the end of the performance. If absolutely necessary, exiting the venue to use the bathroom or cellphone should take place in between songs during applause. It is never

acceptable to get up and move around the venue while singing is taking place.

Talking

It is not acceptable to talk – or even whisper – while singing is taking place. If something must be said, it should be in between songs, during applause.

EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for the Principal

1. The principal will assign a staff person to be the administrative point-person for the duration of the program. This staff person will:
 - see to it that the singing and song-writing spaces are in order and accessible with the lights turned on before the arrival of the SCIS Director and RC.
 - be on hand for any copying needs
 - be the liason between the SCIS Director and Principal
 - be the liason between the SCIS Director and the Classroom Teacher
 - be the liason between the SCIS Director and the maintenance staff
2. The principal will secure a singing space and a song-writing space for the duration of the program.
The singing space should:
 - be a open space large enough to accommodate a group of 35 children and 5 adults
 - have a tuned piano or full-size, weighted keyboard
 - be well-lit, ventilated, maintained
 - have enough chairs (not desks) for 30 people
The song-writing space should:
 - be large enough to accommodate a group of 5 children and 3 adults.
 - have a tuned piano or full-size, weighted keyboard
 - be well lit, ventilated, maintained
3. The Principal will be present for the first SCIS session to introduce the SICS Director and RC, as well as be present for the entire sharing session on the final day of the program. It is also expected that the Principal will “stop-in” during each session, schedule permitting.
4. The Principal will be on hand to deal with any disciplinary problems that arise.
5. The Principal will complete a SCIS evaluation form at the conclusion of the program. The evaluation form must be returned to the Singing City Choir Administrator within a week of the final Sharing Session.

Expectations for the Classroom Teacher

1. The classroom teacher will guide the student participants in the writing of poems that will serve as the lyric material for the student-composed songs. (See “Writing a Song Lyric” in this manual for more details.)
2. The classroom teacher will provide a list of student participants to the SCIS Director 30 days prior to the first session.
3. The classroom teacher will be present for ALL singing sessions involving the SCIS Director and the students and be responsible for classroom management. If for any reason the classroom teacher must be absent for all or part of the

session, a certified classroom teacher who the student participants respect as an authoritative figure in the school must be present.

4. The classroom teacher will maintain accurate attendance records for each session. The classroom teacher will encourage students to be present on session days.
5. The classroom teacher will make sure that the students have their SCIS-supplied name tags on (over their heart) before the arrival of the SCIS Director and the RC.
6. The classroom teacher will facilitate communication between the SCIS Director and the parents of the student participants. This includes:
 - sending out permission slips for participation in SCIS
 - communicating any disciplinary matters that requires parental involvement
 - sending out an invitation for the parents to attend the final sharing session
7. At the conclusion of the program, the classroom teacher will direct the students in completing a program evaluation form. The evaluation forms must be returned to the Singing City Choir Administrator within a week of the final Sharing Session.

Expectations for the Students

1. The students will come to each session wearing their name tags (over their hearts) and will wear their name tags for the duration of the session.
2. The students will be on time for each session.
3. The students will be enthusiastic.
4. The students will be eager and willing to participate in all music-making activities, including poem writing, choral singing and song-writing.
5. The students will respectful of the SCIS Director and the Resident Composer.
6. The students will be supportive of their fellow student-participants, encouraging them to take risks as they make music.
7. The students will not talk unless granted permission. If they see the SCIS Director or RC raise their hand, it means silence is requested, and they will immediately raise their own hand to encourage those around them to be quiet.
8. The students will have fun making music.
9. The students will do their best to not be absent on days when SCIS sessions are scheduled.
10. Barring serious illness or family emergency, the students promise to be present for the SCIS final sharing session.

Expectations for Parents

1. The parent/guardian will return the parental permission form for participation in SCIS.
2. The parent/guardian will address discipline challenges involving their child if they are asked to do so.
3. The parent/guardian will see to it that, barring serious illness or family emergency, their child promises to be

present for the SCIS final sharing session.

4. The parent/guardian will see to it that they, or another family member, will attend the SCIS final sharing session.
5. The parent/guardian will see to it that their child is dressed in the appropriate attire for the SCIS final sharing session.