FINDING THEIR SPACE:

RE-INVENTING THE CHORAL AUDITION

Dr. Alyssa J. Cossey, DMA
University of Arizona

All materials available online at
alyssacossey.com

"Don't worry— it's just an audition."

HOW DOES YOUR AUDITION FUNCTION?

Pre-Audition Materials

* Requirements & Language:

    * Access (audition time, experience)

    * What do they have to know before they can audition?

* Financial Requirement (exception clause)

* Grades/Behavior

Grade & Behavior Option

Grade Verification Form

Students please have your teachers complete this form and return it to me at your audition. A grade is needed for every class to be eligible for choir next year. (Please make sure that each grade has a signature).

Student Name:_____ Current Grade Level:_____

Semester GPA:_____ Current GPA:_____

Class	Current Grade	Teacher Signature
1._____	_____	_____
2._____	_____	_____
3._____	_____	_____
4._____	_____	_____
5._____	_____	_____
6._____	_____	_____

If your overall GPA is under 2.0 and/or you are currently failing one or more classes please explain how you intend to improve your grade(s) by the end of the year and what your academic goals are for next year. (If more room is needed please attach a separate piece of paper)

Audition Requirements

Audition Requirements

The following is a list of what you should be prepared to do at your audition. Please remember that your time slot is only 10 minutes. Plan on arriving early to ensure that our audition schedule stays on time.
-Sing a portion of any song that demonstrates your current vocal ability (a cappella)
-Complete tonal memory exercises
-Determine your range (high-low)

Those auditioning for Chamber Singers or Women's Ensemble will also be required to:
-Label and define symbols commonly found in music
-Sight-read various rhythmic and melodic exercises

* Establishing clear expectations

* Varied expectations for different ensembles/ students

* Do you even have to hear them?

COMPONENTS OF AN AUDITION

* Vocal Range

* Tonal memory & pitch orientation

* Sight-reading

* Solo Performance

* Callbacks (Ensemble Audition)

Students do not need to complete every component of the audition to be successful!


VOCAL RANGE

Vocal Range

* What are you listening for?

  * Range (Usable vs. extreme)

  * Tessitura

  * Break/Register Shift

  * Health

  * Development

  * Vibrato

  * Color

* What do you need (Do you have 20 sopranos and 2 altos?)

> Note:
> You may listen for different things in different voice parts.

Range Testing Procedures

* Give each auditioner a chance to be successful:

  * Speaking before singing

  * Find spoken pitch ("Hello…")

  * Always meet them where they are

  * Three-note pattern (or less)

  * Navigating break/register shifts

  * Accessing head voice

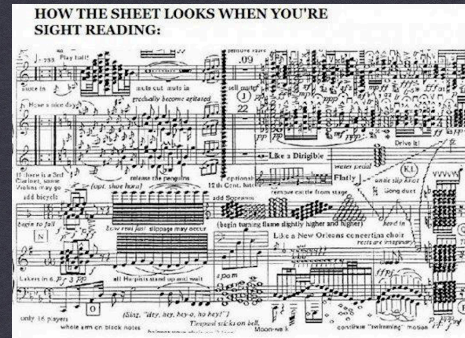***If you spend 10 minutes on just this step it is worth it!!!**
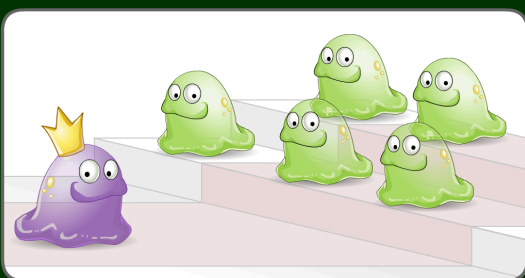
TONAL MEMORY

PITCH ORIENTATION

Tonal Memory

* Traditional Exercises

  * Step-wise to atonal

* Other options:

  * Major scale patterns (stepwise, leaps on I, IV, V)

  * Alternative tonal scales (minor, pentatonic, etc.)

  * Examples from repertoire: two descending P4ths

  * Patterns found in voice parts

  * Moving in parallel motion (3rds)

  * Pitch orientation (Choir Blobs)

    * https://www.echalk.co.uk/music/music.html

SIGHT-READING

HOW THE SHEET LOOKS WHEN YOU'RE SIGHT READING:

HOW IT LOOKS AFTER YOU'VE PRACTICED:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!
Up above the sky so high, like a diamond in the sky.
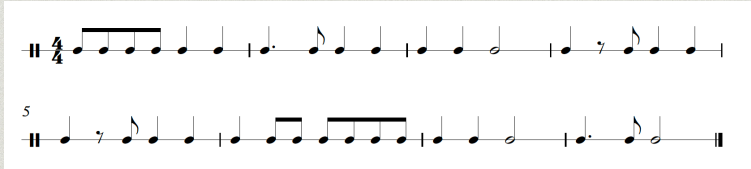Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!

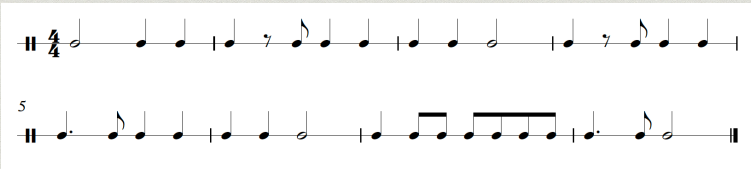## Sight-Reading
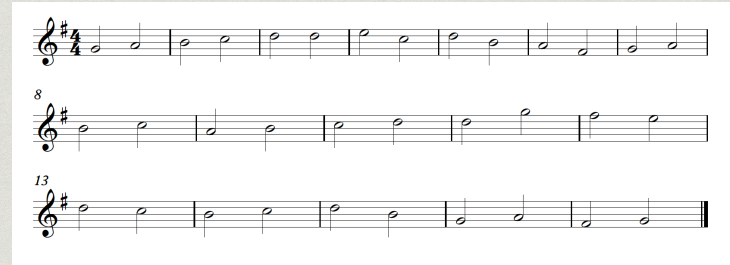
* Rhythmic only

* Tonal only

* Combined

Rhythm

Do this…

Not this…

Tonal

* Uniform rhythm

* Stepwise motion, leaps (I/IV/V), & leading tone

Combined

* Only complete if student is successful at reading separate rhythmic and tonal exercises

*Remember: Students must leave the audition feeling successful. If they struggle with any section, move on. You should have all of the information you need.

SOLO PERFORMANCE

Solo Performance

* What are you listening for? (Pros/Cons)
  * Song selection (24 Italian art songs/rep list/student selection)
    * Any style (Is a pop song ok?)
  * Accompanied or unaccompanied
* Mindful singing
  * Tests audiation skills
  * Happy Birthday, My Country Tis of Thee, etc.

CALLBACKS

Callbacks

* Paradigm:
  * Solo audition for an ensemble setting
* What to do:
  * Learn a piece
    * How quickly can they learn it
    * How well do singers collaborate
  * Hear different combinations of voices/sections
    * Pre-plan different groupings (by color)

FINAL THOUGHTS

A **"successful"** audition is all that stands between a student and their chance to be a **lifelong musician**.

With our help every student can **find their space** in the choir.

THANK YOU!!

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA   ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
Email: ajcossey@gmail.com

Slides available at: **www.alyssacossey.com**