**MUS-721 Performance Practice and Literature**

***“Teaching Music Through Performance in Choir – Vol. 1”***

**Part 1 – The Teaching of Music**

**Chapter 1 – Does it Sing?**

* Begins with breath
  + Physical and spiritual connection
  + Channel through which music can flow
  + Grow toward balance between making and allowing
* Consider the meaning of each musical moment
  + Each moment has a past and a future
  + Vertical and horizontal aspects must be in balance
  + Music in full form is allowed to communicate

**Chapter 2 – Does it Dance? Stylistic Awareness from Polyphony to the Classical Period**

* Polyphony(1450-1600)
  + Direct descendant of Gregorian chant, which is the direct descendant of speech
  + Non-metrical
  + Legato melody
    - Larger intervals indicate word stress
    - Longer note value indicates greater intensity, weight and body
    - Follow all natural rules of speech
  + Dynamics are determined by number of parts
    - No crescendo and diminuendo aside from what happens naturally
  + Pulse is determinant of tempo
* Baroque (1600-1750)
  + Revolt against counterpoint
  + Emphasis on dramatic expression
  + Harmonic choral structure
  + Much more metrical than polyphony
    - Regular accentuations
    - Syllabic stress was not the dominant factor
    - Beat one became dominant
  + Phrasing is weak to strong – 4 basic principals
    - Any weak beat must lead to a strong beat
      * Thesis (thetic) – strong beats
      * Arsis (arsic) – weak beats
    - Short to long
      * Shorter time values always lead to longer time values
    - Repeated notes
      * Often separated, further subdivision of weak to strong
    - Change of song
      * If the melody line changes, the turn determines the necessity of the notes after the turn as being treated as weak
    - Just because I feel like it! (Robert Shaw)
  + Triple meter
  + Dynamics are terraced
  + Tempos are unhurried
* Classical (1750-1820)
  + More elegance, charm and grace
  + Always uses a lighter beat
  + Structural perfection of the figured bass disappears
  + Harmonic approach with some contrapuntal writing
  + Increased use of chromaticism
  + Unusual rhythms
  + Longer phrases with cadences avoided or resolved deceptively
  + Dynamics are increased
  + Extreme tempos

**Chapter 3 – Practical Performance Practice in the American Slave Song**

* West Africa Music
  + Monotheism (one God)
  + Workers had music to help in accomplishing common tasks
  + Music was used to spread news and gossip, express discontent with employers and politicians
  + Music accompanied daily lives of children
  + Griots were trained musicians and passed down the oral histories of their people through song
  + Call and response
  + Polyrhythms
* Evolution of the Spiritual
  + Came about as response to hardships of the slave life
  + Not all slave songs are religious
  + Shows relationship between song and the Holy Spirit
* Slave Song Categories
  + 5 categories:
    - Religious – direct reference to the images of King Jesus, the devil, judgment and heaven
    - Freedom – reference to Moses, the Hebrews, and people of Israel in the sense of deliverance
    - Escape – called “coded spirituals” or “telegraph spirituals”
    - Shout and Hollers – serves as instruction
    - Work songs – used as people worked in the fields
* Issues of Performance Practice
  + No transcripts available to assist with how they are performed
    - Key issues to be dealt with
      * Dialect and use of it
        + Phonetic decay
        + Consonants
        + Dipthongs
        + Schwa
        + Clipping words
      * Tempo and rhythm
      * Appropriate type of vocal timbre/color

**Chapter 4 – Modern Music**

* You are what you sing – choice of repertoire
* Choice of repertoire determines largely what our choir is and what it is to become
  + Is Modern Music a Dirty Phrase?
    - Fresh and new
      * Some find it too demanding and complex
      * Some find it too aesthetically challenging
    - Can fail to grow because easier music often fails to stimulate or challenge
  + What is Modern Music?
    - Music of recent origin that uses techniques of composition that are less familiar
    - We sometimes fail to understand that there are many musics rather than just one music and that they all serve different purposes
  + Developing an Appropriate Mindset
    - Be bold
      * Score preparation
      * Strong sens of desired musical outcome
      * Strong commitment to the aesthetic significance
      * The end of the journey should be known and understood before it commences
    - Enjoy the journey
      * Performance-driven programs are unlikely to be healthy for conductors or singers
      * Often audience is significant source of evaluation – not good
      * Be ready to defend the process and to educate
    - Enjoy the company
      * Our prime responsibility is to the singers
    - Become a risk taker
      * Don’t limit the choir by your own perceptions or by tentative and cautious decision making
    - Become a true leader
      * Don’t be intimidated by negativity that may come from the unknown
      * Be passionate
      * Play the role of passionate advocate
    - Play with the music
    - Approach rehearsals as workshops
      * Process is more important than the outcome
    - Break the tyranny of the tune
    - Avoid repertoire that is modern for modern’s sake
      * Repertoire that lifts singers above the ordinary
      * Good texts, poetic imagery and mature themes
      * Children are the pinnacle of that art
    - Develop a diverse palate of colors
  + Setting Out
    - Qualities and Techniques appropriate for modern music
      * Clusters
        + Chords comprised of notes very close together
        + Sing glissandos
        + Musical wave
        + Random tone
        + Familiar melody
        + Create cluster
      * Melodic devices
        + Make use of singing irregular intervals
        + Practice singing a song and starting a new phrase on the note it previously ended on
        + Practice singing modal patterns or whole-tone scales
        + Sing scales to numbers, omitting various ones from the sequence
      * Rhythm and meter
      * Timbre
        + Unusual vowel colors
        + Sing vowels to match colors
        + Sing vowels to match emotions
        + Sing vowels to match places
        + Sing vowels to match various instruments
        + Teach harmonic overtone singing
      * Aleatory and graphic notation

**Chapter 5 – Meeting National Standards for Music Education for Music Education through Choral Performance**

* In 1994 the National Standards for Arts Education: What Every American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts
* What are the National Standards for Music Education?
  + Content Standards
    - Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
    - Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
    - Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments
    - Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
    - Reading and notating music
    - Listening to, analyzing and describing music
    - Evaluating music and music performances
    - Understanding relationships between music, the other arts and disciplines outside the arts
    - Understanding music in relation to history and culture
  + Achievement Standards
    - Analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music
    - Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music
    - Identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity, variety, tension, and release in a musical work
    - Demonstrate the ability to perceive and remember music events by describing significant events occurring in a given aural example
    - Compare ways in which musical materials are used in a given example relative to ways in which they are used in other works of the same genre
    - Analyze and describe uses of the elements of music in a given work that make it unique
  + Opportunity to Learn Standards
    - Every music course provides experiences in creating, performing, listening to and analyzing music
    - The repertoire taught includes music representing diverse genres
    - Every music course meets at least every other day in periods of at least 45 minutes
    - Choral ensembles and classes be offered during the school day so that all members of each ensemble meet as a unit
    - At least one performing organization other than band, orchestra, and chorus be available for each 300 students in the school
    - Every performing group present a series of performances or an open rehearsal each year for parents, peers and the community
    - Beginning, intermediate, and advanced choral instruction be available
    - A library of music be provided that includes at least seventy five titles for each type of choral group
    - Every choral rehearsal room contain at least 1800 square feet of floor face, with the ceiling being at least 16 feet high.