**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.