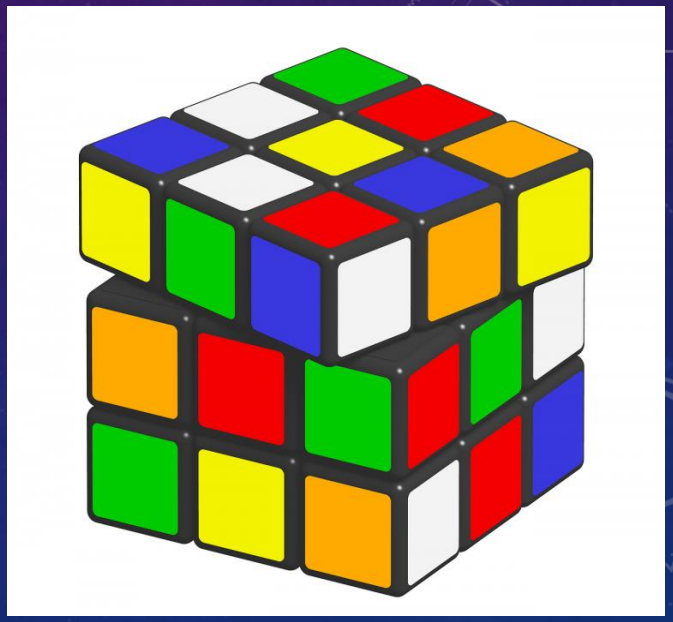
BEST PRACTICES FOR REPERTOIRE SELECTION

DR. JEFFREY ALLEN MURDOCK
DIRECTOR OF CHORAL ACTIVITIES
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

THE ALL-STATE CONUNDRUM

- A Clinician's Perspective
  - Varies from State to State
- A Secondary Teacher's Perspective
  - I have to learn all of this music for All Region!
- How are your All Region/All State Systems Organized?
  - Do you spend an entire semester working on All State/All Region music?
  - How does this serve your choir?



WHAT SHOULD GUIDE REPERTOIRE CHOICES?

Number of concerts:

- - More concerts mean more repertoire is needed, so a larger variety of pieces may be chosen.
- - Too many concerts may require simplifying the repertoire to accommodate rehearsal and preparation time.
- -Fewer concerts may mean that you might spend extra time challenging your students, but do not try to do all the things in a short amount of time!



WHAT SHOULD GUIDE REPERTOIRE CHOICES?

Types of concerts:

- - Themed concerts may require repertoire that fits with the overall theme (e.g. love songs, patriotic songs, holiday music).
- - Collaborative concerts with other groups may require repertoire that complements their style and repertoire.
- - Competitive concerts may require more challenging repertoire to showcase the choir's abilities.
- - Informal concerts may allow for more lighthearted or popular repertoire.



WHAT SHOULD GUIDE REPERTOIRE CHOICES?

Voicing

- The available voice types in the choir will determine what voicing can be performed (e.g. SATB, SSA, TTBB).
- The skill level of the choir's individual voice parts will impact the complexity of the voicing (e.g. beginner vs. advanced level tenor parts).
- The desired tone and character of the music may influence the choice of voicing (e.g. a higher voicing may create a brighter sound).



WHAT SHOULD GUIDE REPERTOIRE CHOICES?

Difficulty

- The skill level of the choir members will determine the complexity of the music that can be performed.
- The number of rehearsals available to prepare for the performance will determine the difficulty level of the repertoire that can be learned.
- The ensemble's performance goals may require more or less challenging repertoire (e.g. competition level may require more difficult pieces than a community performance).
- The difficulty of the repertoire may impact the emotional effect of the music, with more complex pieces potentially creating stronger emotional connections with the audience.
- The conductor's experience and skill level in rehearsing difficult pieces may guide the repertoire selection towards more or less challenging works.



WHAT SHOULD GUIDE REPERTOIRE CHOICES?

Age of the Chorus

- Vocal ability: As people age, their vocal range may change, and they may not be able to sing as high or as low as they once could. This is a consideration when dealing with adolescent voices as well as children's voices.
- Musical Experience: An older choir may have more experience with certain musical styles or genres, which can influence their preferences and affect the selection of repertoire.
- Lyrical content: We want to make sure the lyrics are appropriate. Avoid inappropriate subjects with high school students. More mature subject matter may be appropriate for older choirsters.
- Interest: The interests and preferences of choir members may change as they age, which can also impact repertoire selection. Older choir members may prefer more traditional or nostalgic music over contemporary styles.



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Balancing Difficulty
  - Essentially, for every hard piece you choose, you should choose an “easier” piece to counter balance.
- Choose a variety of music
  - You, the teacher/conductor, are likely the main person from which students will be “indoctrinated” with their choral music repertoire preferences.
  - Murdock (2015) writes extensively about ensuring musical diversity in the program.



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Choose Music that Excites YOU!
  - If you “ain’t excited” about it, how can you expect your students to be?
- Range/Tessitura of each voice part.
  - Range v. Tessitura
  - Questions to ask yourself when thinking of choosing a piece with an extreme tessitura.
- The Text!
  - Questions to ask yourself about text when choosing music.



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Sacred v. Secular music
  - You have to be careful – people will get mad and sue, and complain to superintendents, or chairs, or deans, or whoever is
  - Choral music was rooted in the church (HELLO???)
  - Separation of church and state – doesn't mean we cannot perform sacred music, just that music should have clear historical and educational benefit.
  - There is tons of case law to support the teaching of sacred music in schools.



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Sacred v. Secular music
  - NAfME suggestions guidelines for choosing music while conforming to the constitution and maintaining religious neutrality.
    - Is the music selected on the basis of its musical and educational value rather than its religious context?
    - Does the teaching of music with sacred text focus on music and artistic considerations?
    - Are the traditions of different people shared and respected?
    - Is the role of sacred music one of neutrality, neither promoting nor inhibiting religious views?
    - Are all local and school policies regarding religious holidays and the use of sacred music observed?
    - Is sensitivity to various religious believes represented by students and parents observed?



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Accompaniment
  - You don't have any money, you don't have an accompanist, and you can't play it yourself…. WHY IN BLAZES ARE YOU CHOOSING MUSIC WITH THESE DIFFICULT ACCOMPANIMENTS?!?!? (Okay, I'm done.)
  - If you can have an accompanist, get one. You can't focus fully on your choir when you have to play.
  - Be creative! Use Instruments and organs, and orchestras when you can!
- BEWARE of Transcriptions and Arrangements
  - Whether singing Hogan, Haydn, Handel, Hindemith, or Howells, be careful with "arrangements" – Are they authentic? Correct?



BALANCING REPERTOIRE CHOICES

- Size/Vocal Maturity of your choir
  - Should be self-explanatory
  - Don’t manipulate your choirs to achieve a sound!
- Texture/Divisi
  - Unison? Two Part? Three Part? Four Part? All the Parts! - When might you use each of these??
    - Pergolesi - Stabat Mater (2pt),
    - Quilter - Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal (unison)
    - More parts doesn’t necessarily equal better.
    - Paulus Pilgrims Hymn (4pt v. 8pt)
- Potential Audiences
  - Tailor your repertoire selection to the audience for whom you’ll be performing.

REPERTOIRE FOR CHANGING VOICE CHOIRS

Considerations:

- **Vocal Range:** Children's voices undergo significant changes during adolescence, and their vocal ranges may fluctuate or shift as a result. Therefore, it is essential to choose repertoire that accommodates the changes in the choir's voices. For example, it may be necessary to choose music that allows boys to sing within a limited range or to have the boys sing in a different octave than the girls.
- **Balance:** Balancing the changing voices in a middle school choir can be challenging. It is important to choose music that allows for a balance of voices, ensuring that no one part is overly strained or overshadowed. Choosing music with simple harmonies or unison parts can be an effective way to ensure that all choir members are able to participate and contribute to the overall performance. Also Consider instrumentation!

- Z Randall Stroope – The Pasture

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT MY HARD AND FAST RULE IS???????

PROGRAM (OR SELECT REPERTOIRE) FOR THE CHOIR YOU HAVE, NOT THE CHOIR YOU WISH YOU HAD!!!!

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MUSIC??

- Concerts!!!
  - Go to concerts, take notes, steal music!
- Colleagues!!!
  - Ask your fellow choral director colleagues what they've done and how successful they were, then steal it.
- Conventions!!!!
  - Reading sessions, going to featured concerts, etc.
- Music Retailers and Publishers!
  - They will mail you lots of stuff – lots of it is questionable, much of it will be good. LISTEN TO THE WHOLE CD and find the diamonds in the rough!
- CPDL, IMSLP, State Choral Festival Lists, Recordings, YouTube, Professional Journals.
- SAVE EVERYTHING!!!!

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QUESTIONS???



THANK YOU!

DR. JEFFREY ALLEN MURDOCK

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

JEFFREYM@UARK.EDU

FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM/X: @JALLENMURDOCK

HTTPS://JALLENMURDOCK.COM