

TEMPE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Music Theory for Choral Singers

Teacher's Edition

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2013, 2014, 2015

Songs, pieces, and music theory worksheets for singing musicians

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Preface

For Students

Many of the folk tunes in this collection have a story to them. For example, “The Gallows Pole” has quite a history. While its origin is uncertain (I listed Finland as the country of origin) it recounts in many versions a young woman’s (!) attempt to be freed from her executioner. Students are encouraged to do their own research on any song that interests them. Surprises (and additional verses) likely await!

All of the songs in this book —and there are 196 of them, from humble, backwoods ditties to exalted art songs and choruses—are real folk songs, or art music by established composers; none was written as a “teaching piece.” Every folk song has been sung by ordinary people in the United States, England, Canada, Finland, Britain, France, Germany, Iceland, Russia, Japan, China, Peru, and elsewhere around the world. While the emphasis is on North American folk music, an attempt has been made to include many other cultures as well. Students also can find some excellent solo and choral repertoire suitable for performance.

To sing any song well, the singer needs to know the meaning of the lyrics. If the words of a song are in a language you don’t know, type them into an Internet translator and find out what they mean! Of course, translation software often doesn’t “understand” the subtleties of poetry, so you’ll have to use some wit to interpret the translation correctly. Some software also has a pronouncing feature, which may give you a good idea of the sound (but not the pacing) of the words. Many of the lyrics of the songs with good translations are somewhere on the Internet.

This text is organized to help you become increasingly independent in your musical skill and comprehension. Understanding the way the text is organized likely will be helpful to you, so take a moment to look over the Table of Contents. Use the index at the end to look up information and songs as needed.

For Teachers

The basic idea of the book is to give students experiences with music first, followed by analysis, and then more musical experience. The pattern for each chapter is Praxis-Theory-Praxis.


- Learning to Sing
 - Singing to Memorize (these songs are in the Teacher’s Supplement, “Songs to Memorize”)
 - Taking Dictation (melodic and harmonic)
 - Improvising Harmonies and Melodies
 - Sight Singing—Guided
 - Sight Singing—Independent
 - Ensemble Singing and Repertoire
 - Vocal Technique

- Learning about Music Theory
 - Notation
 - Intervals
 - Scales
 - Harmony and Texture
 - Phrase and Form
 - Rhythm and Meter

- Chapter Summary and Review
 - Songs and Principles
 - Crossword Puzzle
 - Coda

Because each chapter is organized in the same order (please see Table of Contents), teachers easily may choose the order of presentation for each chapter. Teachers also may decide to omit portions of chapters. For example, a teacher may decide that instructing students in vocal improvisation is beyond a class's abilities or interests and omit this portion of every chapter. Teachers also may choose radically to re-order the material: for example, a teacher might decide to concentrate on repertoire or dictation during the end of the semester, reserving that work for the last two weeks of class.

The lyrics for a number of the tunes included in the book are in French. If the teacher, like the author, is not fluent in French, she may wish to consult Google Translate at <http://translate.google.com/>. The translation engine has a pronouncing feature which, I am told, is not bad. Of course, if students in the class are studying French, they may take their songs to their French teacher and report back to the class. A peculiarity of French singing is that oftentimes a final e in a word, though not pronounced in ordinary speech, receives its own note and sound. An example is "lune" on page 3 in "Au clair de la lune." The word is a single syllable in speech, two when sung.

Pages with the symbol  contain songs the melodies to which can be combined to form quodlibets. While the combinations sometimes can create some striking and beautiful groupings, as often as not the combinations are more playful than poignant. The teacher is encouraged to be creative about combining songs, improvising harmonies, adding solos and solis, and otherwise encouraging students' independence. Beginning in Chapter 6, songs are harmonized in SSA and SATB combinations, although the intent is that only the melodies be combined to form quodlibets.

Beginning in Chapter 2, sight singing songs on left pages usually are in the bass clef and those on the right pages are in treble. The arrangement is to give all students an equal opportunity to master both clefs. Men and women are encouraged to read both left and right pages to increase their skill in reading both clefs.

An emphasis on SATB singing and four-part harmonic analysis begins in Chapter 5 and continues throughout the rest of the text. Three- and four-part settings of the tunes are my own. Music theory is

limited, for the most part, to the common practice period of the 18th and 19th centuries of Western music.

Finally, the teacher should know that this text is not “teacher-proof.” That is, no student could benefit fully from this text without the guidance of an experienced teacher’s musicianship. While a class could begin at page 1 and proceed to each subsequent page, the instructor is encouraged to use plenty of musicianship, creativity, and perceptiveness while progressing through the book. In a day when online, programmed instruction is becoming increasingly popular, this book decisively requires the human interaction between curious students and an artistically sensitive, musically accomplished, and passionate educator. The text is a tool the teacher can use, not a substitute for good pedagogy.

Sources and Acknowledgements

The book is the product of three years of writing, collecting and scripting songs, creating worksheets, discovering new teaching methods, trying things out on students, corrections, and research. It is the culmination of twelve years’ work and experimentation, and it is an attempt to bring together many materials useful in teaching students to sing and understand the theoretical aspects of music. Even so, the author understands that the teacher will wish to supplement the materials contained herein with her own favorites and preferences.

An excellent supplemental resource for the book is *The King's Singers Book of Rounds, Canons and Partsongs*, published by Hal Leonard. Some of the rounds in the present volume were taken from this bountiful supply of music ancient to Romantic.

I wish to thank my friend, music educator Paul Strivings for pointing me to some wonderful materials. In particular, Richard Johnston’s *Folk Songs North America Sings* (Toronto: E. C. Kerby Ltd.) was an invaluable source for many of the songs appearing in this volume. Johnston’s book contains hundreds of folk songs which he has sequenced, cataloged, and indexed in a most ingenious way. I recommend the book as a supplement to this present volume.

I also used the following fine books as sources for the folk songs in this text:

- *132 Folk Song Favorites*, edited and compiled by Alexander Shealy. Copa Publishing Company. 1955.
- ACDA repertoire list: http://acda.org/repertoire/sr_high_school/repertoire - ACDA
- *Folk Songs North America Sings* (Kodaly method) for modal songs – *FSNAS* (Richard Johnston, *Folk Songs North America Sings*, E. C. Kerby Ltd., Toronto Music Publishers, 1984)
- *Folk Songs of Many Nations*. Collected and edited by Louis C. Elson. John Church and Company. 1905. On Google Books.
- *Folk Songs of Many Peoples*. Compiled and edited by Florence Hudson Botsford. Volume 2. New York: The Women’s Press. 1921. On Google Books.
- *Keyboard Performer (Book V)*, by Guy Duckworth, Evanston, Ill.: The m-f Company, 1966.
- *One Hundred Folksongs of All Nations*, edited by Sir Granville Bantock. On Google Books

- *The Great Family Songbook*, Dan Fox and Dick Weissman, New York, NY: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers
- *The King's Singers Book of Rounds, Canons, and Partsongs* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2002)

Dr. Terry Eder of Plano Senior High School in Texas devised and refined the creative, matrix and canonic approaches to improvising with solfège that appears in this book, beginning in Chapter 5.

Kiann and Steven Mapes, formerly of Tempe Preparatory Academy, presented me with a curriculum based both upon music theory and music practice, the intersection of which is the foundation for this book.

The book reflects, but does not exclusively follow, Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Orff methods of musical instruction. The approach to harmony is influenced by the work of nineteenth century theoretician Hugo Riemann (1849-1919) and American composer Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987).

My mentor in my Doctoral program was Dr. Guy Duckworth, whose flamboyant, transcendent genius is reflected in the overall design of the book, the use of actual folk music rather than composed teaching tunes, and the conceptual design of increasingly complex scalar and harmonic organizations.

My colleague, fellow music educator, and friend Lenore Wilkison has been a source of encouragement and advice throughout the writing of this book. In particular, her understanding of state and national music standards was of great value to me.

While these colleagues and sources were indispensable in the creation of the book, any mistakes that appear – and that have somehow escaped the notice of my perceptive students – are entirely my own.

Finally and most importantly, thank you to my dear wife Louise, without whose unreasonably unfailing support and practical ideas the project never would have been completed.