

THESIS

THREE EMBEDDED CHORAL IMPROVISATION ETUDES

Submitted by

Jake DiFebo

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Master's Committee:

Advisor: James M. David

Co-Advisor: Seth Pendergast

Cara Coffino

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ABSTRACT

THREE EMBEDDED CHORAL IMPROVISATION ETUDES

Choral music educators often have to choose between sticking to their concert cycle or sacrificing some of that time to prioritize musical creativity. Teacher-Composers have recently worked to solve this issue by writing new works that scaffold the singers in the harmonic structure or rhythmic framework before calling for improvisation. Thus teachers can make low stakes musical creation part of the traditional performance.

While structured improvisation is common within standard vocal jazz repertoire, a small percentage of high schools actually have vocal jazz programs – it is far more common to have a jazz band. In the name of equity and in order to help cultivate the creativity of young singers, they too must be actively engaged in meaningful musical creation.

The following are three etudes each written to focus on a different aspect of vocal improvisation: Melodic choices in *Living for the Now*, Rhythmic in *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks*, and Syllabic in *Cognizant Consonance*. The preceding sections of composed material scaffold the following improvisational sections, encouraging the singers to hone in on their choice-making.

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Introduction

The purpose of these *Embedded Choral Improvisation Etudes* is to teach high school choral singers how to improvise in a meaningful way, outside of the vocal jazz idiom. Three pieces have been written for Level 4 SATB Choir with light divisi, each with a focus on a different aspect of vocal improv: *Living for the Now* focuses on melodic choices, *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* emphasizes rhythmic choices, and *Cognizant Consonance* highlights syllabic choices. All of the works are settings of original poems.

In 2017, Seigart called for a holistic curriculum that focuses on “the making of music, from history to composition to performance.” Embedded choral improvisation (ECI) solves many problems presented to choral music educators today: “[Choral settings’] chief mode of study involves music notation,” thus “negotiating improvisation in choral settings remains a subject to be explored in greater detail” (Farrell, 2018). A holistic curriculum also must provide a learning environment that caters to creative thinking (Silvey, 2016). By embedding the improvisation among the familiarity of composed notation, singers are supported in developing stronger self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Singing is already vulnerable, and adding improvisation on top of that is even more challenging to the mind, mentality, and emotions of young people (Davison 2010; Hogle, 2021). To accomplish something truly amazing like large-scale collective vocal improvisation, there must be a sense of stability, and ECI delivers this.

Living for the Now features the hirajoshi scale, which helps to create a transcendent space due to the intervallic content. The three sections of the piece each state a set of four melodic lines. Singers then choose from these four melodic options in the improvised sections immediately following. To simplify the process, all parts have worksheets arranged for their part with each of these melodic ideas to choose from. The sonic result of the improvised textures are

overlapping melodic phrases that use a modular approach to create a variety of different textures every performance.

In *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks*, the refrain states a doo-wop progression that remains static throughout the piece; revoiced and modulated for variety. A throwback to a childhood favorite for waiting in line, called “the pic-nic game;” this work aims to recreate the cumulative fun by listing a collection of twenty-four different food items, all appearing in alphabetical order. Inspired by elementary music rhythm charts, every food has a distinct rhythm. The singers are presented with a lower-stakes opportunity to learn the rhythms in canon before improvising rhythmic choices, and are provided with a worksheet listing all of them out in a two-part rhythmic duet to simplify the process.

The final etude, *Cognizant Consonance*, focuses on syllabic choice by providing a consistent harmonic, periodic, and textural framework. The harmonic stability of the pelog scale, balanced phrases, and identical texture between composed music and improvised music sets an expectation throughout the piece. This canvas of expectation is subverted when the students sing the same texture as the composed music, but on pre-set vowels with their choice of consonants. The improvised sections utilize box notation for a menu of consonant choices, encouraging the direct agency of every singer.

This project serves as an example of what is possible in ECI. There is much more to be learned and discovered through execution of this project in practice, and through further explorations in what is possible in choral notation. Given the current renaissance of innovation in current middle and high school band repertoire – aleatoric sections, texture, spectralism – the possibilities for choir ought to be even more endless, given the freedom of the voice as an

instrument. It is time for teacher-composers to rise to the occasion of creatively stimulating their developing singers, as everyone deserves to find their creative voice.

Lesson Plan

Setting: SATB choir class, at least 80% capable of a Grade 4.

Rationale: Students should learn to make creative decisions in a low-stakes environment that makes them sound good. Furthermore, students deserve to experience a transcendent space.

Standards: MU:Cr2.1.E.8a - Select and develop draft melodies and rhythmic passages that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.

CO High School, Proficient, 2.1 - Create increasingly complex music using melodic and/or rhythmic ideas with variations to convey intent.

Materials:

- Pencils
- *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* by Jake DiFebo
- Rhythmic Worksheet with all choices

Objectives:

1. SWBAT speak all of the rhythms with 100% accuracy.
2. SWBAT sing all pitches of the A section with 80% accuracy.
3. SWBAT improvise rhythms over the changing chords in the first improv section.

Anticipatory Set:

1. T asks basses to sing a bassline back on solfege: Do La Fa Sol

2. Sopranos: Sol Sol Sol La
3. Altos: Mi Mi Fa Fa
4. Tenors: Do Do Do Ti
5. All parts together: Focus on listening to all of the parts and tuning chords.
6. Half step higher, repeat until warm.

T asks if anyone has heard of the pic-nic game. Quick explanation of the rules:

Cumulative and alphabetical, and must be edible. Demonstration takes place with some volunteers, up to the letter E.

Procedures:

1. T passes out worksheet.
2. “Look at the WS in front of you.” Class speaks the first row together. Then two halves of the room are divided. Rhythmic duet is spoken.
3. T passes out music.
4. “Look at the music. What do you notice?” Dialogue, scaffolded to the improvisation section. “Guess who’s deciding what they want to bring to the pic-nic?”
5. Unison Melody: Via Rote/T model
6. Tempo di Rehearsal: Run all the way to improv section, going back to fix pitches as necessary.
7. Sing the pitches of the improv section on [du].
8. “Don’t forget about the improv mm. 19-26!” Run from beginning.
 - i. If it crashes, try running and then improvising spoken rhythms before adding pitch back in.

- ii. If the rhythms are good, isolate and tune the chords on [du].
 - iii. Have everyone sing the same choices together to formant tune vowels.
 - iv. After everyone feels stable, try real improv again with a full runthrough.
- 9. Run from the beginning and continue sight singing as best as possible.
- 10. Fist to Five: Confidence of your ability to make choices in the moment?
 - i. Discussion around impostor syndrome, musical shame, and improv
 - ii. Re-emphasis of lowstakes. We're naming foods.
- 11. Final runthrough!

Assessment:

- 1. Anticipatory Set is a diagnostic point at which one can decide if this piece is a good option for today. If they are having trouble with singing a simple four-part voicing of a doo-wop progression, it's not going to work.
- 2. S can speak all of the rhythms perfectly.
- 3. S can sing through all of A well enough to start improvising.
- 4. S can make realtime choices about what rhythms they want to sing, using the worksheet.

Closure:

- "The rest of the process will be extremely similar to today, but it will get easier and more seamless as we go."
- "I anticipate that we'll make more confident choices as the semester goes on."
- ToD: "On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the most fun, write on a paper how fun this was, and drop it in my guitar case on the way out."

Suggested Rehearsal Guides

Title/Composer or Arranger: *Living for the Now*, Jake DiFebo

Section Description:

Table 1: *Living for the Now* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 1

Section Name	A	AI	B
Measures	1-14	15-22	28-43
(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	Repeated notes may go flat without energy Hirajoshi scale may take some getting used to	More independent as an improviser	Tresillo against 4/4 will take trust in the piano part Tritone in melody Interesting rhythm in third melody
(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Diphthong navigation Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close	Individual diction and tone issues will be more pronounced so warm up and take good breaths.	Diphthong navigation Brightness of “am”, “smiling”, “trying”
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Phrase height emphasis	Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	Phrase height emphasis Continuous legato polyphony Commit to breaths
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges	Existential dread	Processing that emotion via improvisation	Honest reflection

Table 2: *Living for the Now* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 2

Section Name	BI	C	CI	End
Measures	44-51	57-68	69-76	81-93
(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	More independent as an improviser	Melodic leaps Second melody has descending tritone Third melody tricky	More independent as an improviser	F-natural then F-sharp in S

(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Individual diction and tone issues will be more pronounced so warm up and take good breaths.	Melodic leaps might need legatoification	Individual diction and tone issues will be more pronounced so warm up and take good breaths.	Diphthong navigation Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	Phrase height emphasis Balancing tritone leap with rest of texture	Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	Slightly different phrasing from the intro
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges	Processing that emotion via improvisation	Epiphany	Processing that emotion via improvisation	Catharsis

Title/Composer or Arranger: *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks*, Jake DiFebo

Section Description:

Table 3: *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 1

Section Name	Refrain	A	I	B	C
Measures	1-10, 27-36, 55-64, 160-169	11-18	19-26, 47-54, 76-84, 100-107, 125-132, 152-159, 182-189	37-46	65-76
(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	This provides stability for the whole piece.	Rhythms simple but important	Distinct rhythmic texturing. Independence required.	Rhythms simple but important	Rhythms simple but important
(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Homophonic (vowels match despite new keys)	Brightness decisions “dar-JEE-ling”	Tone may suffer as people scramble to gather their groceries for the picnic (improvise)	Brightness decisions	Brightness decision
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Keeping the same phrasing despite new	Blend within sections	Everyone has to listen to the entire ensemble	Blend within sections	Blend within sections

	vowels in different keys		WHILE making decisions.		
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges	Choreography for the refrain?		Try to pick random rhythms on the chart; make sure to add them incrementally based on what's already been presented (cumulative)		

Table 4: *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 2

Section Name	D	E	F	G	End
Measures	85-99	108-124	133-151	170-181	190-207
(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	Rhythms simple but important	Rhythms simple but important	Rhythms simple but important	Rhythms simple but important	Mozart to Bluesy ending is challenging
(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Brightness decisions	Brightness decisions	Brightness decisions	Brightness decisions	Close to consonant on "yum"?
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Blend within sections	Blend within sections	Blend within sections	Blend within sections	Blend and balance throughout finale
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges					

Title/Composer or Arranger: *Cognizant Consonance*, Jake DiFebo

Section Description:

Table 5: *Cognizant Consonance* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 1

Section Name	A	AI	B
Measures	1-18	19-27	31-40

(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	Pelog scale will take some getting used to.	Improvising with the scale will take mastery.	Pelog scale will take some getting used to. Syncopated rhythms
(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Brightness Diction decisions	Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	Brightness Diction decisions
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Building phrase as more voices join the texture Dynamics	Dynamics	Building phrase as more voices join the texture Breaking that phrasing up differently in this verse Dynamics
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges	What makes for good lyrics?	Can we express the same intent without the words?	What makes for good lyrics?

Table 6: *Cognizant Consonance* Rehearsal Guide, Pt. 2

Section Name	BI	C
Measures	40-49	52-60
(1) Note/Rhythm Challenges	Improvising with the scale will take mastery. Syncopated rhythm mastery for improv Pickup	Babble and babble and gab all your consonants away Harmony of the finale may take some work
(2) Tone/Intonation/ Diction	Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	Brightness Diction decisions
(3) Expression/Blend Challenges	Dynamics	Dynamics
(4) Communication/ Inspiration Challenges	Can we express the same intent without the words?	Can we express the same intent without the words?

Suggested Rehearsal Schedules

Legend:

- (1) Notes and Rhythms = NR
- (2) Tone/Intonation/Diction = TID
- (3) Expression/Blend = EB
- (4) Communication/Inspiration = CI

Table 7: *Living for the Now* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 1

<i>Living for the Now</i>	A	AI	B
Week 1	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to A</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>
Week 2	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to A</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation Brightness of “am”, “smiling”, “trying”</p>
Week 3	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to A</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>

Week 4	TID – How do we sound as a full group? In each section? Diphthong navigation Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close	TID – How do we sound individually? Diphthong navigation Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close	TID – How do we sound as a full group? In each section? Diphthong navigation Brightness of “am”, “smiling”, “trying”
Week 5	EB - Phrase height emphasis	EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	EB - Phrase height emphasis Continuous legato polyphony Commit to breaths
Week 6	EB - Phrase height emphasis	EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	EB - Phrase height emphasis Continuous legato polyphony Commit to breaths
Week 7	CI - Existential dread	EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	CI - Honest reflection
Week 8	CI - Existential dread	CI - Processing that emotion via improvisation	CI - Honest reflection

Table 8: *Living for the Now* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 2

<i>Living for the Now</i>	BI	C	CI	End
Week 1	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to B -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing with worksheets -hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to C -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing with worksheets -hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale

Week 2	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to B</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Melodic leaps might need legatofication</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to C</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>
Week 3	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to B</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?</p> <p>-Unison rote singing with worksheets</p> <p>-hirajoshi exercises to refresh scale</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently?</p> <p>-go back to C</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation</p> <p>Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close</p>
Week 4	<p>TID – How do we sound individually?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation</p> <p>Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Melodic leaps might need legatofication</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound individually?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation</p> <p>Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close</p>	<p>TID – How do we sound as a full group?</p> <p>In each section?</p> <p>Diphthong navigation</p> <p>Sopranos open up vowels for high notes, tenors close</p>
Week 5	<p>EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction</p>	<p>EB - Phrase height emphasis</p> <p>Balancing tritone leap with rest of texture</p>	<p>EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction</p>	<p>EB - Slightly different phrasing from the intro</p>
Week 6	<p>EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will</p>	<p>EB - Phrase height emphasis</p> <p>Balancing tritone leap with rest of</p>	<p>EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times</p>	<p>EB - Slightly different phrasing from the intro</p>

	obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	texture	will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	
Week 7	EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	CI - Epiphany	EB - Different voices singing different vowels at different times will obfuscate the lyrics without strong diction	CI - Catharsis
Week 8	CI - Processing that emotion via improvisation	CI - Epiphany	CI - Processing that emotion via improvisation	CI - Catharsis

Table 9: *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 1

<i>Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks</i>	Refrain	A	I	B	C
Week 1	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to main section -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet
Week 2	TID – Does the tone change across the various keys? Does the tone vary by section?	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to main section -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet

		-worksheet duet	stability	-worksheet duet	
Week 3	<p>TID – Does the tone change across the various keys?</p> <p>Does the tone vary by section?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general? Brightness decisions “dar-JEE-ling”</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to main section</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>
Week 4	<p>TID – Does the tone change across the various keys? Does the tone vary by section?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general? Brightness decisions “dar-JEE-ling”</p>	<p>NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to main section</p> <p>-have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>
Week 5	<p>EB - Does the breathwork and phrasing change across multiple keys?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general? Brightness decisions “dar-JEE-ling”</p>	<p>TID – How is the tone of each independent singer?</p> <p>Do some singers have individual diction issues?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>	<p>TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?</p>
Week 6	<p>EB - Does the breathwork and phrasing change across</p>	<p>EB – Are we blended among sections?</p> <p>As a choir?</p>	<p>TID – How is the tone of each independent singer?</p>	<p>EB – Are we blended among sections?</p> <p>As a choir?</p>	<p>EB – Are we blended among sections?</p> <p>As a choir?</p>

	multiple keys?		Do some singers have individual diction issues?		
Week 7	CI - Choreo?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Is everyone listening to the entire choir while making decisions simultaneously ?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?
Week 8		EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	CI – Are we fully addressing the cumulative nature of this piece in our improv?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?

Table 10: *Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 2

<i>Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks</i>	D	E	F	G	End
Week 1	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -fermata'd chords -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet
Week 2	NR - Are people singing the right notes and	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section?

	rhythms as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	-Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	-Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	as a section? -Unison rote singing -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet	-fermata'd chords -unison rhythm practice with the worksheet -worksheet duet
Week 3	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?
Week 4	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?
Week 5	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?	TID – How unified is the brightness on every vowel? Do vowels match in general?
Week 6	EB – Are we blended among sections? As a choir?	EB – Are we blended among sections? As a choir?	EB – Are we blended among sections? As a choir?	EB – Are we blended among sections? As a choir?	EB – Are we blended and balanced among sections? As a choir?

Week 7	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?
Week 8	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?	EB – Phrasing as sections? As a choir?

Table 11: *Cognizant Consonance* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 1

<i>Cognizant Consonance</i>	A	AI	B
Week 1	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to A -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms
Week 2	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to A -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms
Week 3	TID- How bright do we sound as sections? As a group?	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to A -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have	TID- How bright do we sound as sections? As a group?

		more stability	
Week 4	TID- How strong is each section's diction? The whole group?	TID - Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	TID- How strong is each section's diction? The whole group?
Week 5	EB - Building phrase as more voices join the texture	TID - Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	EB - Building phrase as more voices join the texture Breaking that phrasing up differently in this verse
Week 6	EB - Dynamics	EB - Dynamics	EB - Dynamics
Week 7	CI - What makes for good lyrics?	CI - Can we express the same intent without the words?	EB - Dynamics
Week 8	CI - What makes for good lyrics?	CI - Can we express the same intent without the words?	CI - What makes for good lyrics?

Table 12: *Cognizant Consonance* Rehearsal Schedule, Pt. 2

<i>Cognizant Consonance</i>	BI	C
Week 1	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to B -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms
Week 2	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to B -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	NR - Are people singing the right notes and rhythms as a section? -pelog exercises to refresh scale -Speak the rhythms

Week 3	NR – Are people singing the right notes and rhythms independently? -go back to B -have full sections make decisions beforehand to have more stability	TID- How bright do we sound as sections? As a group?
Week 4	TID - Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	TID- How strong is each section's diction? The whole group?
Week 5	TID - Consonants must be made with tongue and lips to not compromise vowels	EB - Building phrase as more voices join the texture
Week 6	EB - Dynamics	EB - Dynamics
Week 7	EB - Dynamics	CI - Can we express the same intent without the words?
Week 8	CI - Can we express the same intent without the words?	CI - Can we express the same intent without the words?

Living for the Now

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 1
for SATB

Living for the Now

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 1
for SATB

Jake DiFebo

$\text{♩} = 110$

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

$\text{♩} = 110$

p

6

A B C

S Time with e - ter - nal flow, hear the__ plea deep in my soul: Slow down long e-nough that I

A Time with e - ter - nal flow, hear the__ plea deep

T Time with e - ter - nal

B.

Pno.

11

D

S feel con - trol. Mo - ments that you stole!

A in my soul: Slow down long e-nough that I feel con - trol.

T flow, hear the__ plea deep in my soul:___

B. Time with e - ter - nal flow...

Pno.

15 3

S

A

T

B.

Pno.

23

S

A

T

B.

Pno.

28

S

A

T

B.

Pno.

A

Am

Am I lis - ten - ing?

A

Am

I lis - ten - ing? Smi - ling at my e - ne - mies?

4 33

S I lis - ten - ing? B Smi - ling at my e - ne - mies? C Try - ing to see the beau - ty in the lit - tle things?

A B smi - ling at my e - ne - mies? C Try - ing to see the beau - ty in the lit - tle things? D That is how I must live: in the

T A Am I lis - ten - ing? B Smi - ling at my e - ne - mies?

B C Try - ing to see the beau - ty in the lit - tle things? D That is how I must live: in the now. Live in the

Pno.

39 D

S That is how I must live: in the now. Live in the now.

A now. Live in the now. Live in the now.

T C Try - ing to see the beau - ty in the lit - tle things? D That is how I must live: in the now.

B now. Live in the now. Live in the now.

Pno.

44

S

A

T

B

Pno.

52 5

S

A

T

B

Pno.

Ped.

57

S

A

T

B

Pno.

simile

64

S

A

T

B

Pno.

6 ⁶⁹

S

A

T

B

Pno.

⁷⁷

S

Time with e-ter - nal flow, please ne-ver cease since now I know: A B

A

Time with e - ter - nal flow, A

T

B

Pno.

⁸⁵

S

All the lit - tle mo - ments are me - mo - ries. Li - ving for the now! C

A

please ne - ver cease since now I know: B C

T

Time with e - ter - nal flow, please ne - ver cease since now I know: A B

B

Time with e - ter - nal flow, A

Pno.

89

S. Li - ving for the now! Li - ving ev - ery mo - ment for the now! rit. 7

A. C. All the li - tle mo - ments are me - mo - ries. mo - ment for the now!

T. B. please ne - ver cease since now I know: ev - ery mo - ment for the now!

B. A. Time with e - ter - nal flow, for the now!

Pno.

The musical score is written for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Soprano part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The Alto part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The Tenor part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The Bass part begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The Piano part begins with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of one sharp. The score includes lyrics for each part and a piano accompaniment. The Soprano part has a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The Alto part has a 'C' (Crescendo) marking. The Tenor part has a 'B' (Basso) marking. The Bass part has an 'A' (Alto) marking. The Piano part has a 'Pno.' marking.

Figure 1: *Living for the Now*, Score

Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 2
for SATB

Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 2
for SATB

Jake DiFebo

$\text{♩} = 140$

2 SOPRANO *mf*
I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you

ALTO *mf*
I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you

TENOR *mf*
I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you

Bass *mf*
I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you

Piano *mf*

5

S. lots of yum - my good - ies and you know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of

A. lots of yum - my good - ies and you know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of

T. lots of yum - my good - ies and you know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of

B. lots of yum - my good - ies and you know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of

Pno.

8

S. what you want to bring The gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

A. what you want to bring The gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

T. what you want to bring The gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

B. what you want to bring The gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

Pno.

3 3

A

S. Ap - ples Ba - na - nas

A. Ap - ples Ba - na - nas

T. Ap - ples Ba - na - nas

B. Ap - ples Ba - na - nas

Pno. *mp*

15

S. Cu - cum - ber Dar - jee - ling tea

A. Cu - cum - ber Dar - jee - ling tea

T. Cu - cum - ber Dar - jee - ling tea

B. Cu - cum - ber Dar - jee - ling tea

Pno. *mf*

19

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

27

S. I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

A. I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

T. I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

B. I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

Pno.

32

S. know I'm tal-kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

A. know I'm tal-kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

T. know I'm tal-kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

B. know I'm tal-kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

Pno.

37

B

S. Ap-ples Eggs Feta

A. Ba-na-nas Eggs Feta

T. Cu-cum-ber Eggs Feta

B. Dar-jee-ling tea Eggs Feta

B

Pno. *mp*

43

S. *Green on - ions Ha - li - but*

A. *Green on - ions Ha - li - but*

T. *Green on - ions Ha-libut*

B. *Green on - ions Ha - li - but*

Pno. *mf*

47

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

55

S. *I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you know I'm tal-kin' food! so*

A. *I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you know I'm tal-kin' food! so*

T. *I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you know I'm tal-kin' food! so*

B. *I'm go-ing to the pic-nic and I'm gon-na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you know I'm tal-kin' food! so*

Pno.

61

S. at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

A. at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

T. at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

B. at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The gro-cery list you've writ-ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

Pno.

65

C

S. Ap-ples Ha-li-but Ice cream sand-wich-es

A. Ba-na-nas Eggs Ice cream sand-wich-es

T. Cu-cum-ber Fe-ta Ice cream sand-wich-es

B. Dar-jee-ling tea Green on-ion Ice cream sand-wich-es

Pno.

71

S. Jam-ba - la - ya Ket-tle corn Lime

A. Jam-ba - la - ya Ket-tle corn Lime

T. Jam-ba - la - ya Ket-tle corn Lime

B. Jam-ba - la - ya Ket-tle corn Lime

Pno.

7 77 7

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

85 **D**

S. Ap-ples Ha-li-but

A. Ba-na-nas Eggs

T. Cu-cum-ber Fe-ta Ice cream sand-wich-es

B. Dar-jee-ling tea Green on-ion Jam-ba-la-ya

Pno. **D**

91

S. Ket-tle corn Mac-a-ro-ni and chee

A. Lime Mac-a-ro-ni and chee

T. Mac-a-ro-ni and chee

B. Mac-a-ro-ni and

Pno. *mp*

8

94

S. *Noo - dle cas - se - role* *Oat me - al*

A. *Noo - dle cas - se - role* *Oat me - al*

T. *Noo - dle cas - se - role* *Oat me - al*

B. *chee* *Noo - dle cas - se - role* *Oat me - al*

Pno.

98

S. *Pep - per - ro - ni piz - za*

A. *Pep - per - ro - ni piz - za*

T. *Pep - per - ro - ni piz - za*

B. *Pep - per - ro - ni piz - za*

Pno. *mf*

100

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

9 108 **E** 9

S. Ap-ples Ha-li-but

A. Ba-na-nas Eggs

T. Cu-cum-ber Fe-ta Ice cream sand-wich-es

B. Dar-jee-ling tea Green on-ion Jam-ba-la-ya

Pno. **E**

114

S. Ket-tle corn Noo-dle cas-se-rolé Que-so di-a-blo

A. Lime Oat-me-al Que-so di-a-blo ra-vi-o li

T. Pep-per-ro-ni piz-za Que-so di-a-blo ra-vi-o li

B. Mac-a-ro-ni and chee Que-so di-a-blo

Pno. *mp*

120

S. ra-vi-o li Sri-ra-cha To TSSS

A. Sri-ra-cha To TSSS

T. Sri-ra-cha To TSSS

B. ra-vi-o li Sri-ra-cha To TSSS

Pno. *mf*

125

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

134 **F**

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

139

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

145

S. *Ve - g'ta - ble*

A. *Ve - g'ta - ble*

T. *U - don noo - dles* *Ve - g'ta - ble*

B. *U - don noo - dles* *Ve - g'ta - ble*

Pno.

148

S. *Wa - ter - me - lon* *Xy - li - tol*

A. *Wa - ter - me - lon* *Xy - li - tol*

T. *Wa - ter - me - lon* *Xy - li - tol*

B. *Wa - ter - me - lon* *Xy - li - tol*

Pno. *mf*

152

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

160

mf

S. I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

A. I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

T. I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

B. I'm go - ing to the pic - nic and I'm gon - na bring to you lots of yum-my good-ies and you

Pno.

165

S. know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The

A. know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The

T. know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The

B. know I'm tal - kin' food! so at the store go get some more of what you want to bring The

Pno.

168

S. gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

A. gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

T. gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

B. gro - cery list you've writ - ten now I'd like to hear you sing!

Pno.

13

G

13

170

S. Ap - ples Ha - li - but

A. Ba - na - nas Eggs

T. Cu - cum - ber Fe - ta Ice cream sand-wich-es

B. Dar - jee - ling tea Green on - ion Jam - ba - la - ya

Pno.

G

175

S. Ket-tle corn Noo-dle cas-se-rolé Que-so di-a-blo Xy-li-tol

A. Lime Oat me-al ra-vi-o li U-don noo-dles

T. Pep-per-ro-ni piz-za Sri-ra-cha Ve-g'ta-ble

B. Mac-a-ro-ni and chee To TSSS Wa-ter-me-lon

Pno.

182

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

[illegible]

40

Cognizant Consonance

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 3
for SATB

Cognizant Consonance

Embedded Choral Improv Etude No. 3
for SATB

Jake DiFebo

Piano $\text{♩} = 140$ *mf*

6 *mf* To
for good ly-rics?
What makes for good ly-rics?
makes good ly-rics?

12 cap - ture the hu - man sp - irit We try to find the per - fect word
cap - ture the hu - man sp - irit find the per - fect word
hu - man sp - irit find the per - fect word
the hu - man sp - irit We try to find the per - fect word

16 To help make sense of what oc - curred.
To help make sense of what oc - curred.
To help make sense of what oc - curred.
sense of what oc - curred.

mf *p*

19

[f], [p], [t], [w] [h], [k], [n], [s] [l], [g], [l], [m] *mf*

[k], [p], [s], [t] [f], [p], [t], [w] [h], [k], [n], [s] [l], [g], [l], [m] *mf*

[k], [p], [s], [t] [f], [p], [t], [w] [h], [k], [n], [s] [l], [g], [l], [m] *mf*

[k], [p], [s], [t] [f], [p], [t], [w] [h], [k], [n], [s] [l], [g], [l], [m] *mf*

[o] [a] [a] [a] [a] [i]

28

mf Would

mf not speak a word?

mf But what if we could not speak a word?

mf if we could not speak a word?...

mp

34

we still com-muni - cate and be heard? all we could mus - ter were... a con - so - nant, lives as con - fi - dent?

still com-muni - cate and be heard? mu - ster were... a con - so - nant, Would we live our lives as con - fi - dent?

[d], [n], [s], [w]

cate and be heard? mus - ter were... a con - so - nant, lives as con - fi - dent?

mf *pp*

41

Phonetic labels: [b], [h], [k], [w]; [d], [n], [s], [w]; [b], [h], [k], [w]; [d], [n], [s], [w]

Dynamic markings: *p*, *f*, *mf*

Instruction: (first time only)

50

Lyrics: Just bab-ble and bab-ble and gab all your know... what to say bab-ble and gab all your Next time you don't know... what to say gab all your you don't know... what to say all your

Dynamic markings: *mf*, *p*

55

Lyrics: con so-nants a - way Sure they'll be ut - ter - ly con-fused But you will al-ways be a - mused!

Dynamic markings: *mf*, *p*

Figure 3: Cognizant Consonance, Score

Improvisation Worksheets

Living for the Now: SOPRANO

A Section Improv Choices – mm. 15-22



Figure 4: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, A Section - A

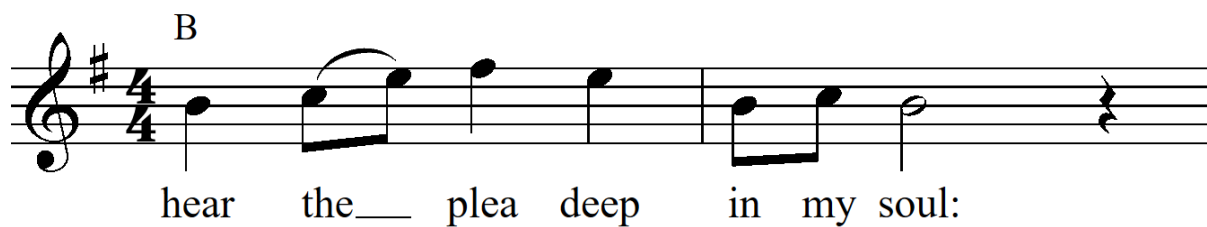


Figure 5: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, A Section - B

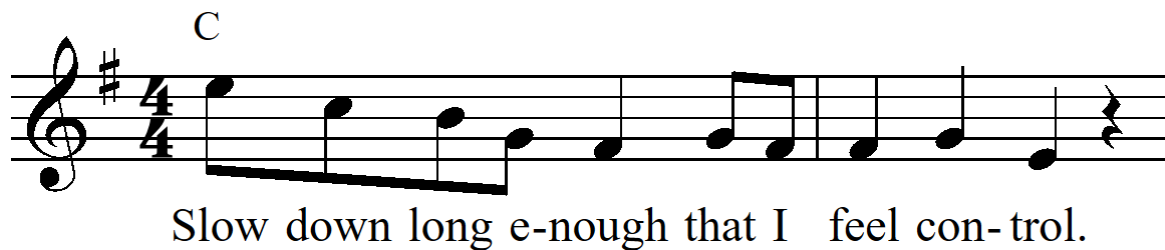
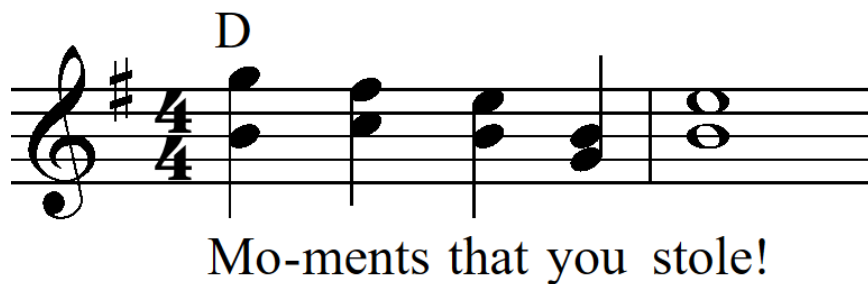


Figure 6: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, A section - C



(Two options for D)

Figure 7: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, A section - D

B Section Improv Choices – mm.44-51



Figure 8: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, B section - A



Figure 9: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, B section - B

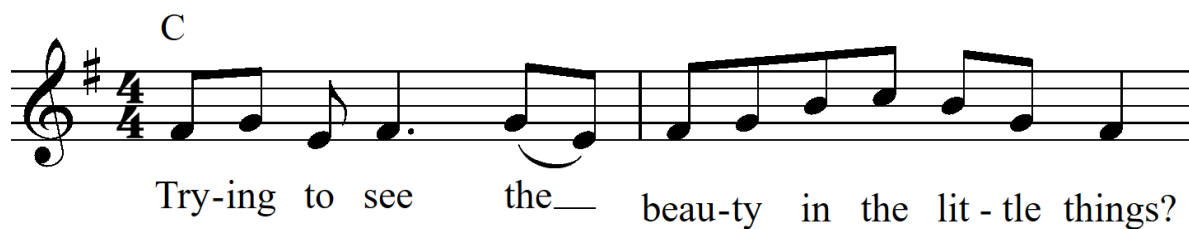


Figure 10: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, B section - C

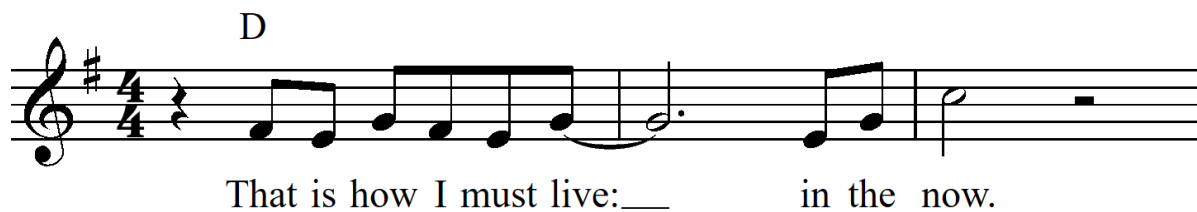


Figure 11: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, B section - D

C Section Improv Choices – mm. 69-76

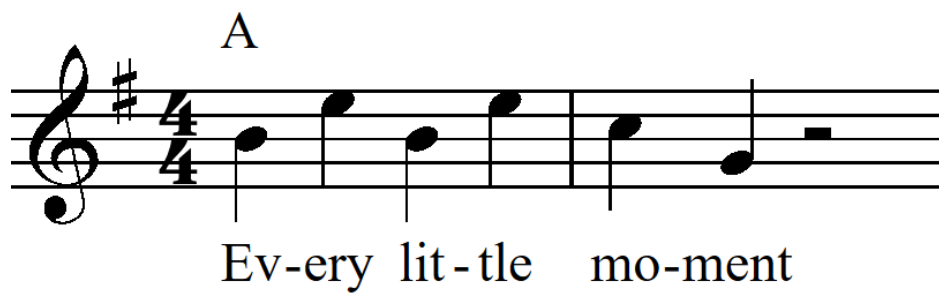


Figure 12: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, C section - A

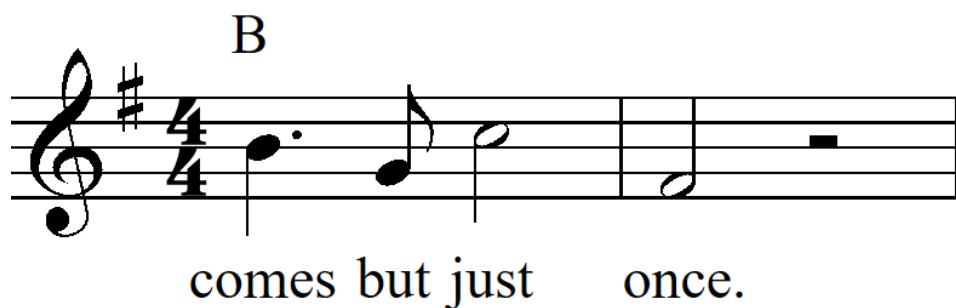


Figure 13: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, C section - B



Figure 14: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, C section - C



Figure 15: *Living for the Now*, Soprano, C section - D

Living for the Now: ALTO

A Section Improv Choices – mm. 15-22



Figure 16: *Living for the Now*, Alto, A section - A



Figure 17: *Living for the Now*, Alto, A section - B

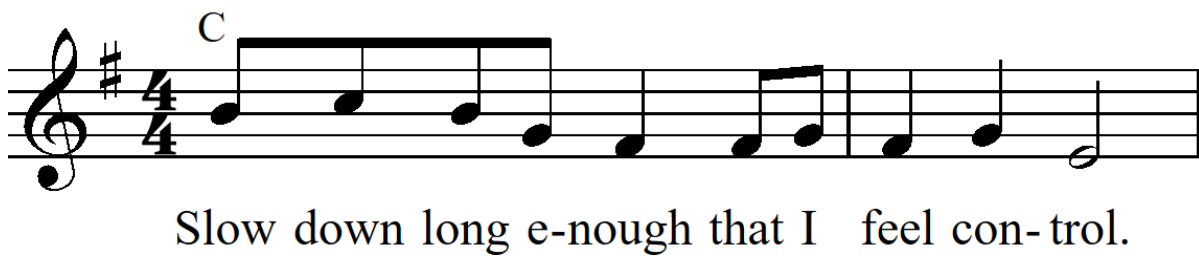


Figure 18: *Living for the Now*, Alto, A section - C

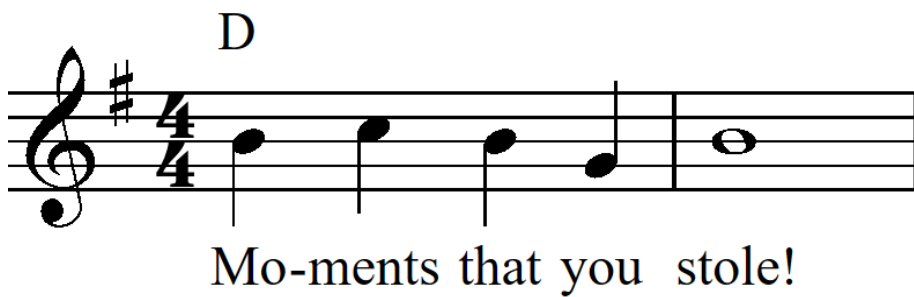


Figure 19: *Living for the Now*, Alto, A section - D

B Section Improv Choices – mm.44-51



Figure 20: *Living for the Now*, Alto, B section - A



Figure 21: *Living for the Now*, Alto, B section - B

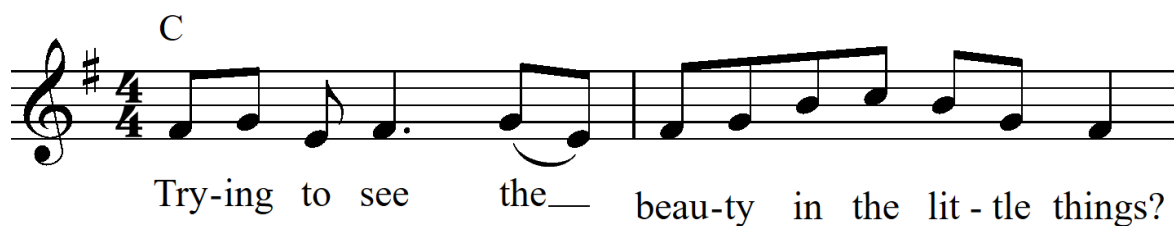


Figure 22: *Living for the Now*, Alto, B section - C

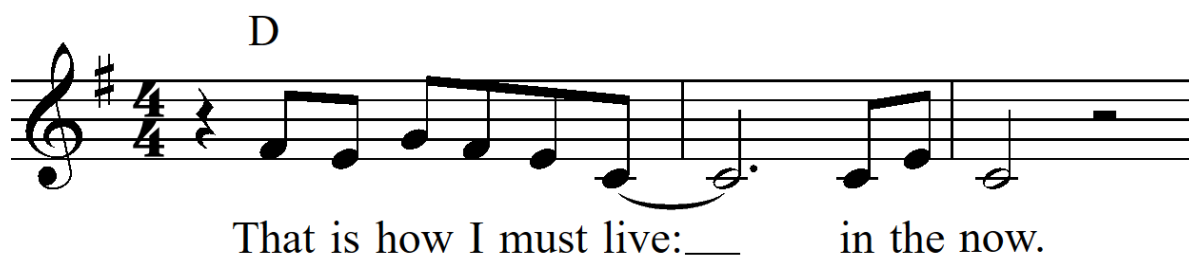


Figure 23: *Living for the Now*, Alto, B section - D

C Section Improv Choices – mm. 69-76



Figure 24: *Living for the Now*, Alto, C section - A

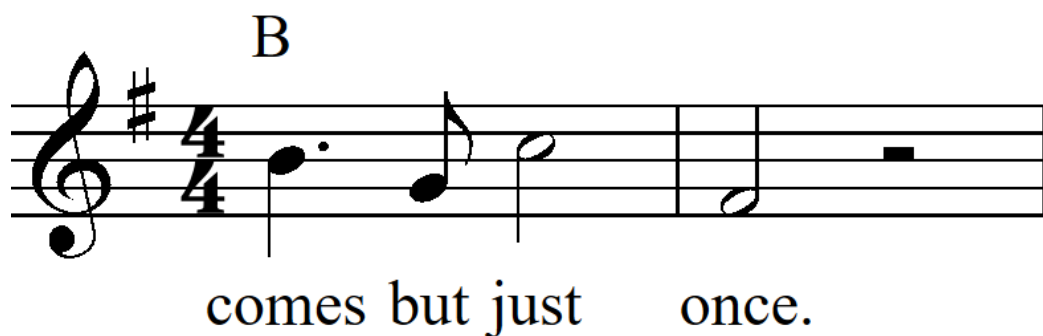


Figure 25: *Living for the Now*, Alto, C section - B



Figure 26: *Living for the Now*, Alto, C section - C



Figure 27: *Living for the Now*, Alto, C section - D

Living for the Now: TENOR

A Section Improv Choices – mm. 15-22



Figure 28: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, A section - A



Figure 29: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, A section - B

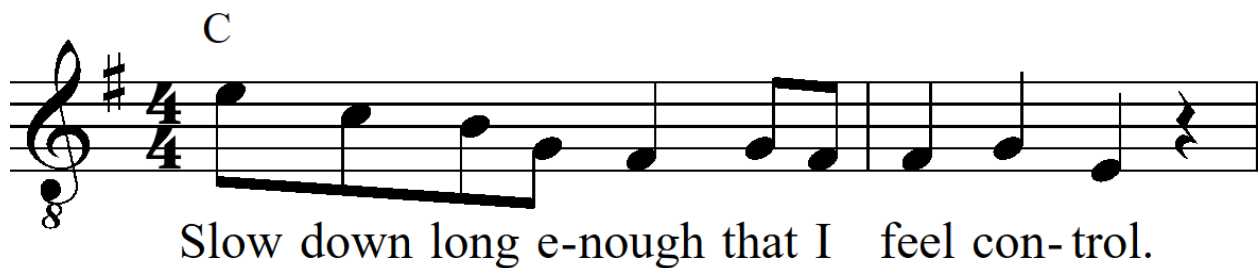
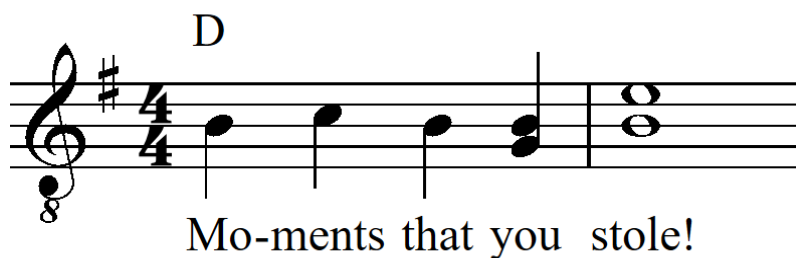


Figure 30: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, A section - C



(Two options for D)

Figure 31: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, A section - D

B Section Improv Choices – mm.44-51



Figure 32: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, B section - A



Figure 33: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, B section - B

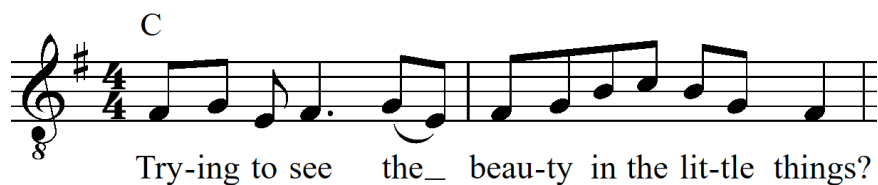


Figure 34: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, B section - C



Figure 35: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, B section - D

C Section Improv Choices – mm. 69-76

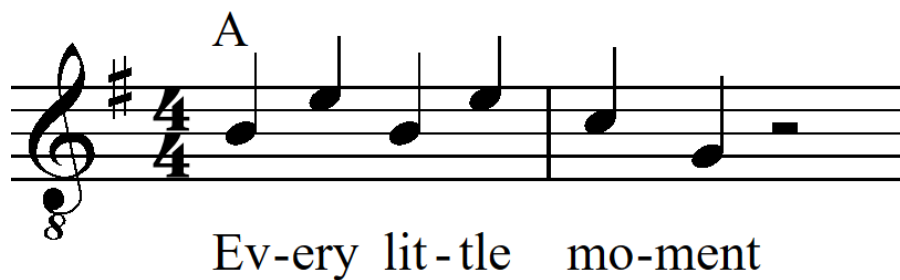


Figure 36: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, C section - A

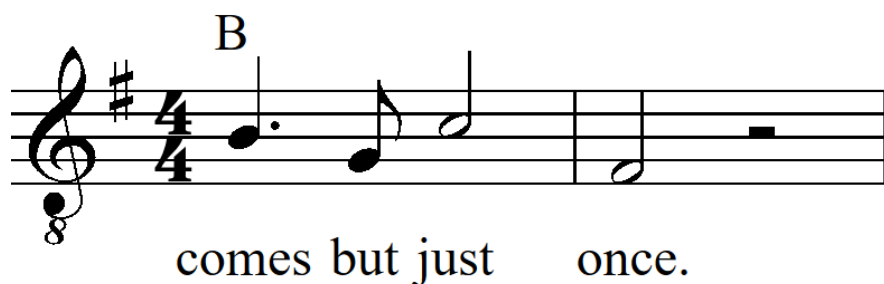


Figure 37: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, C section - B

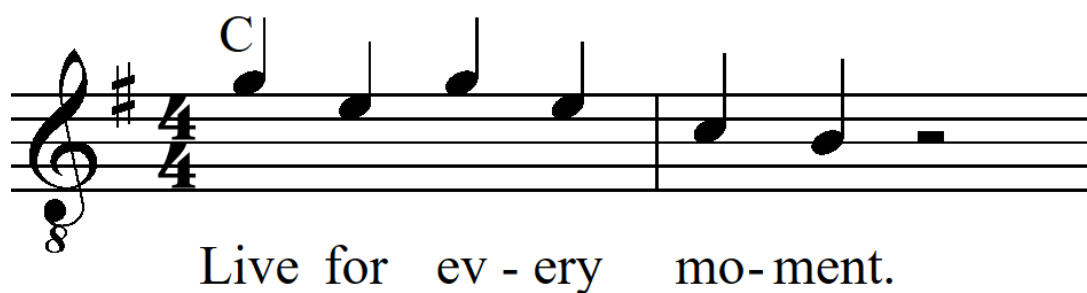


Figure 38: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, C section - D



Figure 39: *Living for the Now*, Tenor, C section - D

A Section Improv Choices – mm. 15-22

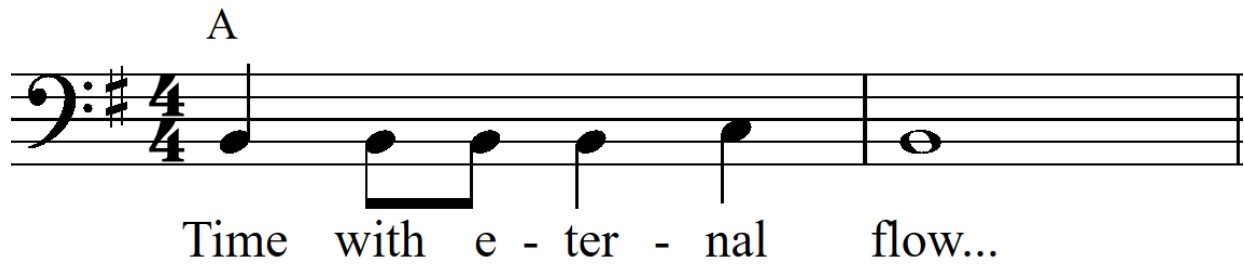


Figure 40: *Living for the Now*, Bass, A section - A



Figure 41: *Living for the Now*, Bass, A section - B

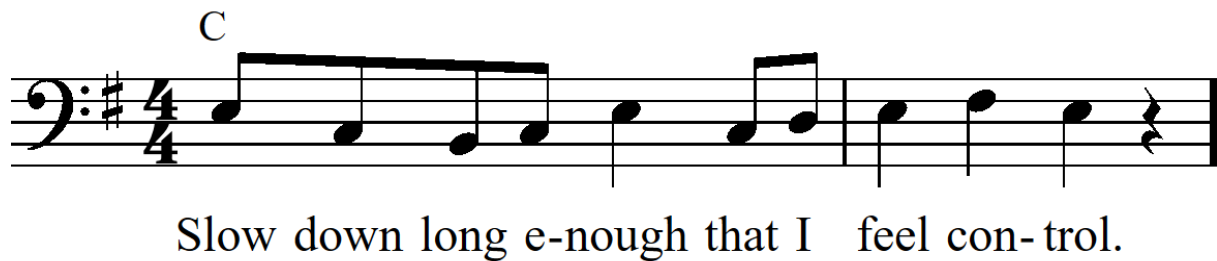


Figure 42: *Living for the Now*, Bass, A section - C

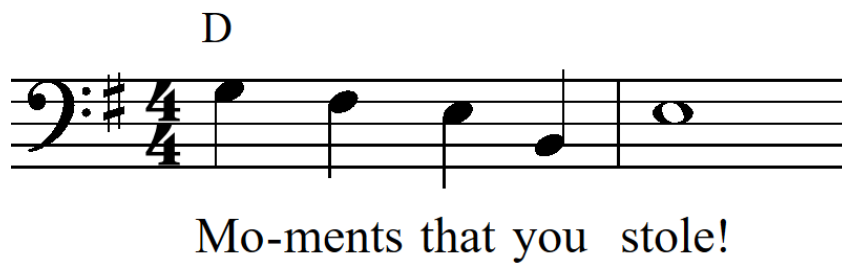


Figure 43: *Living for the Now*, Bass, A section - D

B Section Improv Choices – mm.44-51

A



Am I lis - ten - ing?

Figure 44: *Living for the Now*, Bass, B section - A


B



Smi-ling at my e - ne - mies?

Figure 45: *Living for the Now*, Bass, B section - B

C



Try-ing to see the_ beau-ty in the lit-tle things?

Figure 46: *Living for the Now*, Bass, B section - C

D



That is how I must live:___ in the now.

Figure 47: *Living for the Now*, Bass, B section - D

C Section Improv Choices – mm. 69-76



Figure 48: *Living for the Now*, Bass, C section - A

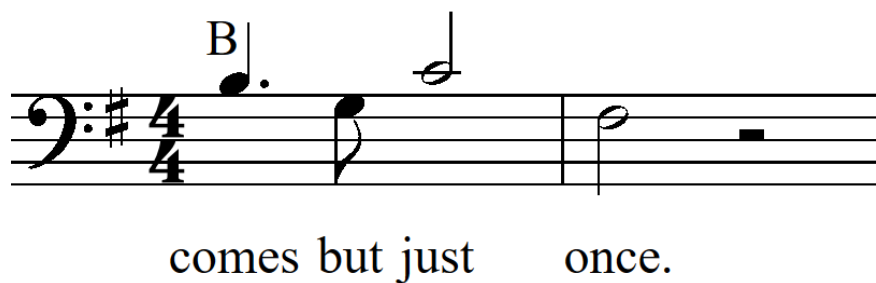


Figure 49: *Living for the Now*, Bass, C section - B



Figure 50: *Living for the Now*, Bass, C section - C



Figure 51: *Living for the Now*, Bass, C section - D

Pic-nic Tricks for Kicks

Rhythm Options

1 Apples Ba - na - nas Cu - cum - ber Dar - jee - ling tea

5 Eggs Fe - ta Green on - ion Ha - li - but

9 Ice cream sand - wick - es Jam - ba - la - ya Ket - tle corn Lime

13 Mac - a - ro - ni and chee Noo - dle cas - se - role Oat me - al Pep - per - ro - ni piz - za

17 Que - so di - a - blo ra - vi - o li Sri - ra - cha To TSSS

21 U - don noo - dles Ve - g'ta - ble Wa - ter - me - lon Xy - li - tol

Figure 52: Pic-Nic Tricks for Kicks, Rhythmic Worksheet

Annotated Bibliography

Importance of Choral Improvisation

Brumbach, G.A. (2020). The Effects of Two Jazz Pedagogical Approaches on Improvisation and Ensemble Performance Achievement by High School Musicians. *Jazz Education in Research and Practice* 1(1), 41-58. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/811547>.

Although the goal of this particular project is to create a set of non-jazz choral improvisation pieces, it is important to understand the relationship between a hands-on approach to theory and a more prescriptive methodology. The study sought to compare a theory-based approach and a practice-based approach to improvisation. The study found that practice-based musicians felt more willing to express themselves in their play and were more likely to listen to jazz outside of school. In the same way, it would appear that music with embedded choral improv combines both avenues into one transcendent experience.

Farrell, F. (2016). In Search of a New Tradition - Improvisation in Choral Settings. *Canadian Music Educator*, 58(1), 33–38.

A nice primer on choral improvisation, this article summarizes much of the available research on the topic during the 2010s. Although not much new information is discussed, it provides a practitioner-level dive into the ideas, also providing a quick how-to for implementation and experimentation. The author of this article returns with additional insight in their dissertation a few years later.

Freer, P. K. (2010). Choral Improvisation: Tensions and Resolutions. *The Choral Journal*, 51(5), 18–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23560514>.

This article for choir teachers is about incorporating improvisation into the typical choral environment, including the challenges, benefits, and solutions. Describes Michael DeLalla's four-phase approach to improv: sensing, enacting, noticing, reforming. He then applies it as a framework for starting out with improvisation in choral classrooms. Freer also compares this framework to Raymond Tallis's own Anticipating, Contacting, Thinking, Doing. Both are useful ways to break down improvisation, and this serves as a useful framework for teaching improvisation.

Harrington, E. C. (2019). *Improvisation in the beginning choral rehearsal* (Order No. 13862415). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2273838091).

Retrieved from

<https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/improvisation-beginning-choral-rehearsal/docview/2273838091/se-2>

Detailed Master's thesis investigating the effects of including improvisation in the curriculum on student musical achievement and experience. Findings indicate that improvisation helped fifth- and sixth-graders to enjoy the social experience more. Furthermore, the intonation and blend of the choir was stronger than the control group with a more traditional choral program.

Hirschorn, D. N. (2011). *Vocal improvisation and the development of musical self-efficacy and*

musical self-image in adolescent choral musicians (Order No. 3471637). Available from

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (887909772). Retrieved from

<https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/vocal-improvisation-development-musical-self/docview/887909772/se-2>

A mixed methods methodology was used in this dissertation that examines the musical self-image and the self-efficacy of middle school choral singers in a vocal improvisation setting.

Findings include that students felt they improved as singers in various ways from working through an improv class. Identity navigation and other forms of intrapersonal development are a result. Literature review includes extensive resources on vocal improvisation research.

Hirschorn, D. N. (2019). Research Report: Vocal Improvisation and the Development of Musical Self-Efficacy and Musical Self-Image in Adolescent Choral Musicians. *The Choral Journal*, 60(5), 53–62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26870156>

A practitioner article that summarizes the main points of the thesis with some updated resources. This article is extremely brief, and thus works as a useful advocacy tool for choir teachers to plead to administrators. By naming some more common resources that one might use in the lessons themselves, Hirschorn helps readers to find quick solutions to an entire field of challenges.

Kascub, M. & Smith, J. (2009). *Minds on Music: Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

A useful guide for currently practicing and preservice music teachers who wish to teach composition to children. This book is one of the most cited resources on teaching composition. The book includes sample lesson plans and ideas to help get a teacher-composer going. There is a very relevant chapter on music defined by various parameters: tension/release, congruency/incongruency, expectation/surprise, etc.

OTT, C. J. (2015). Connection, Communication, & Context: Improvisation in a Choral Setting. *The Choral Journal*, 56(1), 38–45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24580577>

Beginning with a quote by Robert Levin about how polish and execution are emphasized, resulting in consistency but not necessarily creativity; this article is a practitioner article geared towards choir directors. It provides a framework for circle songs that can be applied to any genre

of music. A common word many people in the article use to describe the sensation of improv is “exhilarating.”

Preponis, A. (2021). *The importance of improvisation in a Chorister’s development toward musical fluency* (Order No. 28651075). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2584339328). Retrieved from <https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/importance-improvisation-chorister-s-development/docview/2584339328/se-2>

This currently unavailable thesis from CalState LA is one of the most recent accounts of the fluency benefits that come from vocal improvisation. Supposedly features useful information about how to include vocal improvisation in a traditional choral classroom not dedicated to any improv. There is also a curriculum for how to accomplish this.

Rhiannon. (2013). *Vocal River: The Skill and Spirit of Improvisation*. Hakalau, HI: Rhiannon Music.

Style-hopping singer and composer Rhiannon discusses the spiritual benefits of vocal improv, as well as a curriculum and discussion of her philosophy of vocal improvisation. Her website now includes a pdf version of the book, and it comes with thirty-three charts to help guide and start improvisation sessions.

Siljamäki, E. (2022). Free improvisation in choral settings: An ecological perspective. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 44(1), 234–256.

<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1177/1321103X20985314>

This study found that an adult choir which engaged in vocal improvisation found common ground among many singers of varying skill levels. By meeting in the “asylum” of collective,

free vocal improvisation, singers were more inclined to take risks. The increased agency and willingness to make choices seems to come from the temporary ego-loss of creative musicking.

Snedeker, J.L. (2020). Expanding Comfort Zones: An Improvisation Curriculum for Applied Studios. *Jazz Education in Research and Practice* 1(1), 97-117.

<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/811535>.

This author is a non-improvising French horn player turned improviser. Snedeker discusses his experience growing up intimidated by improvisation, but now that he is an improviser, he is a better musician in every style, a better performer in front of any crowd, a better listener, and a better teacher. He goes on to describe a curriculum that all music majors taking applied instruction in their degree programs should have. It's perhaps much more simple than many people make it out to be! Obstacles and solutions addressed.

Williams, S. (2021). Consider Getting the Blues. *Choral Journal*, 62(4), 53–59.

An argument made for vocalists singing through simple blues charts as a basic place to start improvising. Links to Kerry Marsh charts are included. This is basic information that many choir directors with no experience in popular music need – basics of why you should do improv, and how to get started.

Yun G. J., Willingham L. (2014). JABBLE! Choral improvisation: A model of shared leadership.

The Phenomenon of Singing, 9, 238–250.

Provides a definition for embedded choral improvisation, as well as some of the extramusical benefits of choral improv. Students took on a greater ownership of the creative process in the room, and the conductor became more of a tool rather than the focal point and origin of hierarchy. Essentially, choral improvisation democratized the process of musical decision-making, thereby changing the social environment.

Execution of Choral Improvisation

Bell, C. L. (2004). Harmonizing and Improvising in the Choral Rehearsal: A Sequential Approach. *Music Educators Journal*, 90(4), 31–36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399996>

One of the bedrock articles at the foundation of this field of research, this article by Bell aims to introduce concrete methods of incorporating improvisation in choir, but falls short of meaningful agentic engagement with everyone in the ensemble in that every improvisation texture is purely solo and accompaniment, or simply harmonic decision-making. While this is a useful approach to teaching a choir how to become a jazz choir, it's clear that at this point, the individual agency of everyone in the choir was only starting to become a goal in this field.

Farrell, F. (2018). *Improvisation in choral settings* (Order No. 10744359). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2082295361). Retrieved from <https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/dissertations-theses/improvisation-choral-settings/docview/2082295361/se-2>

This thorough DMA dissertation is a case study of three choral educators in the United States and their use and inclusion of improvisation. Though the case study itself is limited in scope, the literature review is vast and helpful in finding a recent survey of information relating to current practices of choral improvisation – the main takeaway is that establishing limited parameters is a good idea. Concludes with a call to action for music educators to solve the problem of improvisation amidst the culture of choral music notation being so important.

Kerchner J. L. Strand K. & DiOrio D. (2016). *Musicianship: Composing in Choir*. GIA Publications.

A collection of several writings from various authors on how to incorporate composition and improvisation into a more traditional, performance-oriented choral program. Though all are

helpful, three of the chapters hone in on improvisation – those written by: Wong, Silvey, and Greenberg. These authors are teacher-composers with much experience in infusing creativity into traditional choral classrooms.

Potterton, M. (2015). Classical Improvisation—A Powerful and Effective Addition to Choral Warm-Ups. *The Choral Journal*, 56(5), 55–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24579746>

This article provides a set of methods to include improvisation into the classroom, most of which are tied to the warm-up process. I think this is a smart way to incorporate improv – however, since an anticipatory set should funnel the lesson plan, I disagree with this pedagogy. The students are being exposed to improvisation, but I wonder how disconnected this feels from the rest of the lesson.

Seigart, S. R. (2017). *Choral improvisation: Toward a curriculum for university choral settings* (Order No. 10281673). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1939044055). Retrieved from <https://ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/choral-improvisation-toward-curriculum-university/docview/1939044055/se-2>

This dissertation for a Conducting DMA features a curriculum for how college-level choral singers ought to learn improvisation as part of their normal choral curriculum. The author includes fifteen different compositional/improvisational processes that feature fifty points of entry. Many of these can be adapted for K-12 ensembles.

Small, C. (1998). *Musicking: The meanings of performance and listening*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

This article explains why a worksheet is helpful for the process of improvisation. A “Music Matrix” is simply a worksheet that lists all of the possible options for an improviser. Structure

makes improv more accessible, but simply adhering to the structures put in place by jazz literature is exclusive. Instead, the Music Matrix must be tailored to that specific work and its intentions.

Stalter, T. (2018). Quiet Contemplation and Ecstatic Abandon: The Choral Music of Gabriel Jackson. *The Choral Journal*, 58(9), 34–55. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26412992>

While this article is mostly a celebration of his compositional style, there is an excerpt of one of Jackson's scores – *Ave Regina caelorum*. This is a useful example for any choral composer who wishes to get into structured improvisation. While it's more timeless than what I want for a more metered high school piece, it serves as a useful demonstration of what's possible in notated scores.

Wong, P. W. (2016). Creative Musicking: An Approach to Collaborative Choral Composition. In *Musicianship: Composing in Choir*.

“Creative Musicking” is the goal, and perhaps embedded improvisation is the way to accomplish this. Wong describes Hong Kong-based teacher-composer Chi-Hin Leung's work entitled *Dynamic* as an innovative avenue for including the performer's creative work as part of the product. Improvisation is both a product and a process, and this separates creative musicking from improv exercises or warm-ups.

Environment for Choral Improvisation

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

According to social cognitive theory, people avoid challenges they don't feel prepared for, and flock towards the challenges they feel competent to tackle. Musicians will have the strongest self-efficacy in their play and singing when they feel competently prepared.

Culp, M. E., & Jones, S. K. (2020). Shame in Music Education: Starting the Conversation and Developing Resilience. *Music Educators Journal*, 106(4), 36–42.

<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1177/0027432120906198>

An explanation of contemporary shame research and how it translates to music education. Guilt = “I did a bad thing”. Shame = “I am bad”. There are four types of musical-based shame: formal (I don't know enough), creative (my ideas are bad), performative (I'm a bad performer), or identity-based (I listen to bad music). Music educators must know what to look out for, starting with themselves and their colleagues, if they want to mitigate musical shame in their classrooms.

Davison. (2010). The Role of Self-Efficacy and Modeling in Improvisation Among Intermediate Instrumental Students. *Journal of Band Research*, 45(2), 42–58.

A study meant to investigate whether self-efficacy and instrumental improvisation were related. It turns out that improvisation does increase instrumental self-efficacy. The author suggests improvisational activities such as “singing tonal and rhythmic patterns and learning songs and bass lines by rote.”

Greenberg, Talia. (2016). Creating Improvised Group Song Arrangements. In *Musicianship: Composing in Choir*.

The author was a director for an a cappella group in college, and discussed their process for adding improvisation to their arrangements to create live arrangements. This is a complete lesson plan that a choir director could simply pick up and then do in one class period on whim. It also discusses what makes an a cappella group feel more democratic than a traditional choir. Part of

this is the increased agency of each member. Much of this musical agency comes from the intentional inclusion of improvisation – an environment where individual musical choices have value and effect, just as much as other individual choices.

Herrera D., Matos L., Gargurevich R., Lira B., and Valenzuela R. (2021). Context Matters:

Teaching Styles and Basic Psychological Needs Predicting Flourishing and Perfectionism in University Music Students. *Front. Psychol.* 12:623312. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.623312

A study on university music students' perceptions of their teachers and how well they met their basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence), as compared to their type of perfectionism (maladaptive or adaptive). It was found that flourishing was more related to students who felt their BPN were met; frustration and perfectionism as it is colloquially known were more related to students whose needs were not met.

Hogle, L. A. (2021). Fostering singing agency through emotional differentiation in an inclusive singing environment. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 43(2), 179–194.

<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1177/1321103X20930426>

A phenomenological study of singing self-efficacy as it relates to musical shame. Research suggests that singing shame is often a result of “wounding [producing] deficit, disability, and shame.” Four themes occurred: Wounding incidents, Seeking singing agency through enhancing and protective strategies, perceived obstacles to singing self-efficacy, and personal definitions of what it means to be a good singer.

Reeve, John Marshall. (2016). *Autonomy-Supportive Teaching: What It Is, How to Do It*.

10.1007/978-981-287-630-0_7.

An extremely important article detailing how music teachers can support autonomy in their teaching. Since improvisation is inherently vulnerable, it is essential that all improvisers feel

autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Basic Psychological Needs Theory). One major aspect is acknowledging negative affect and allowing that emotion to be valid without any challenge to processing it.

Silvey, Philip E. (2016). *Awakening Creativity in the Choral Classroom*. In *Musicianship: Composing in Choir*.

Teacher-composer Silvey argues that before any composing can take place, students must learn how to act and think creatively. There are three principles he posits for how to do this: (1) creators seek inspiration and have intentions at the outset of the process, (2) creators work from multiple options, (3) creators make value judgements about ideas.

Weisberg, R.W. (1986). *Creativity: Genius and other myths*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

Weisberg argues that creativity can and should be scaffolded. There are different levels of stakes in creativity that matter a great deal for teaching developing creators. He also devotes much of the writing to defeating the myth of the “musical genius”.