

Together, We Sing: Goals for Singing Ensembles & Leaders

SINGING TECHNIQUES, ARTISTRY, & MUSICIANSHIP FOR ALL STYLES
SINGER-CENTERED CO-CREATION FOR LEVELS 4-5

| ENSEMBLE / STUDENT _____ | | DIRECTOR _____ | | LEVEL SCORING _____ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| VOCAL TECHNIQUE | | | | | | | | | | | | MUSICIANSHIP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Goals for Resonance & Color | | | | | | | | | | | | Goals for Body, Breath, & Effort | | | | | | | | | | | | Artistry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RESONANCE & VOWELS | | | | ENSEMBLE SOUND & BALANCE | | | | VOCAL FACILITY & INDEPENDENCE | | | | INTONATION | | | | BREATH MANAGEMENT | | | | DYNAMICS | | | | DICTION | | | | ARTICULATION | | | | RHYTHM & TEMPO: EXPERIENCING & READING | | | | EXPRESSION & ARTISTRY | | | |
| WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | WORKING FOR FLUENCY IN PREVIOUS LEVEL, EST. SCORE: _____ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Level 4 EMBODYING | 4.0–4.3 <i>Emerging</i> | • Resonance develops through shaping and tuning inner resonating spaces, healthy alignment, body awareness of pharyngeal resonance, resonant vowels, head/chest mix. | 0 | • Ensemble sound results from consistent resonance, precise rhythm, unified text, and dynamic shape. | 0 | • Ease of extended range and increased agility develops. | 0 | • Listening skills and tuning is consistent individually, within sections, and between sections. | 0 | • Buoyant, expansive breath posture, maintained from inhalation through phrase, develops. | 0 | • Dynamics from <i>p-f</i> reflect LEVEL 4 Breath Management & Resonance . | 0 | • Diction develops as poetic expression, in addition to pronunciation and enunciation. | 0 | • Artistic use of articulations develops. | 0 | • Precision and accuracy through subdivision is introduced and develops. | 0 | • Musical decisions based on cultural tradition, historic practice, style, musical markings as well as ensemble's artistic choices develop. | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Vibrant, overtone-rich, balanced tone, reflecting LEVEL 4 Breath Management develops. | 1 | • Ensemble sound results from a unified vocal technique, and encourages individual development. | 1 | • Singers demonstrate ease of <i>tessitura</i> in upper voice: S/A voices D5–G5, T/B C–F4. | 1 | • Intonation consistent throughout vocal ranges, at faster <i>tempi</i> , more challenging intervals, or text. Singers able to make adjustments to correct intonation. | 1 | • Efficiency of breath effort develops in all ranges and dynamics (<i>buoyant intercostal engagement, efficient abdominal effort and air flow, balanced and smooth onsets</i>). | 1 | • Dynamics varied within phrases, phrases/verses contrast to build an overall structure. | 1 | • Modification of diction creates consistent enunciation in range and dynamic extremes. | 1 | • Articulations are varied and reflect LEVEL 4 Breath Management . | 1 | • Poly-rhythms, layered and subtle rhythmic patterns and styles developed. | 1 | • Cultural, historical and contemporary style and performance practices develop meaningful connections. | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Resonance consistent in all vowels, including diphthongs and a variety of languages. | 2 | • Methods to create ensemble sound adjusted as voices develop (<i>voice matching, standing arrangements</i>). | 2 | • 16th note passages and ornaments sung clearly at moderately fast tempo, chromatic intervals when coached (<i>Baroque coloratura, R&B fills, Jazz scat, etc.</i>). | 2 | • Complex chords often tune accurately. Inconsistencies occur due to individual development of LEVEL 4 technique, can be coached. | 2 | • Offset breaths and “catch breaths” re-establish efficient effort. | 2 | • Balanced tone and breath effort in extreme dynamic ranges develops as LEVEL 4 Breath Management & Resonance develops. | 2 | • Rhythmically placed consonants and internal consonants are consistent with style and create a sense of forward motion and <i>legato</i> . | 2 | • <i>Legato</i> becomes consistent (<i>forward motion, sustained breath effort, balanced tone, eliding consonants</i>). | 2 | • Extreme articulation demands can affect resonance and pitch. Balanced breath effort develops, can be coached. | 2 | • Specific meaning of the text is understood, communicated by poetic declamation of text, LEVEL 4 Dynamic, Diction, and Articulation , resulting in artistically-shaped singing. | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Resonance consistency develops and extends throughout vocal ranges, S/A develop a strong and colorful mix of head and chest voice, T/B develop a vibrant, expansive mid to lower tones and a lyric, clear upper voice. | 3 | • Ensemble sound develops across varied vocal styles (<i>vibrato, non vibrato, historic styles, non-Western music</i>). | 3 | • <i>Divisi</i> within each section is possible. Complexity of <i>divisi</i> determined by personnel. | 3 | • Singers adjust intonation when singing with piano vs. <i>a cappella</i> . | 3 | • Intentional breaths develop (<i>rhythmic breaths, shaping the vocal tract, other musical elements</i>). | 3 | • Accuracy of dynamic levels in extremes of range and <i>tessitura</i> develops. | 3 | • Poetic and <i>agogic</i> accent consistently applied (<i>word and syllabic stress/un-stress, weight, length</i>). | 3 | • Varied weights of repeated articulations introduced (<i>rhythmic style or groove, poetic declamation, rhythmic pattern or style, changing dynamics</i>). | 3 | • Rhythm as an expressive element introduced and develops (<i>rubato, tempo changes, fermata</i>). | 3 | • Form is communicated through intentional shaping of structural elements, LEVEL 4 Rhythm elements, and musical details. | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Modification of vocal tract in extended registers is introduced and develops (<i>specific resonant vowels, tall or lofted space, relaxed and flexible jaw</i>). | 4 | • Balance varied based upon repertoire and style (<i>standing arrangements, flexible personnel use, stylistic dynamic adjustment for themes, chord tones</i>). | 4 | • Vocalization of non-Western classical styles developed. | 4 | • When singing <i>a cappella</i> , choir tunes well, even if overall pitch center may move flat or sharp. | 4 | • Healthy and balanced breath management can be applied to all vocal styles. | 4 | • Subtle or quick shaping of dynamics to reflect text, rhythmic patterns, and style develops. | 4 | • Expressive variation of text develops (<i>dialect, duration or placement of consonants and color of vowels for style</i>). | 4 | • Ornamentation, non-Western styles, and other subtle expressions develop. | 4 | • Rhythmic weight, style, or feel develops in addition to metric precision (<i>folk, jazz, dance forms, Baroque</i>). Body movement appropriate of style is encouraged. | 4 | • Extra-musical means of expression expand and develop fluency (<i>programming, movement, visual elements</i>). | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.4–4.6 <i>At Level</i> | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| VOCAL TECHNIQUE | | | | | | | | | | | | MUSICIANSHIP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Level 5 FLUENCY | 5.0–5.3 <i>Emerging</i> | • Vibrant, overtone rich, balanced tone develops, reflects LEVEL 5 Breath Management , and is consistent in all registers and dynamics, style, or language. | 0 | • Ensemble sound develops with a unified vibrant, overtone-rich, and balanced tone, consistent in all vowels, registers, as well as unified musical elements. | 0 | • Balanced tone and effort develops in sustained <i>tessitura</i> in all registers. | 0 | • Intonation accurate in all registers. | 0 | • Efficiency of breath effort develops consistency in all ranges and dynamics (<i>buoyant intercostal engagement, efficient abdominal effort and air flow, balanced onsets</i>). | 0 | • Balanced breath effort creates a natural rise and fall of dynamics in all registers. | 0 | • Text is natural and artistically shaped, consistent with LEVEL 5 Resonance . | 0 | • Articulation reflects LEVEL 5 Breath Management , develops artistic subtlety. | 0 | • Precision develops, reflects LEVEL 5 Breath Management , in all rhythms and styles. | 0 | • Mature artistry develops through culturally informed, historically researched practice, as well as authentic reading of composer's markings. | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Resonance develops through a naturally and artistically shaped text, resulting in a flexible tonal approach. | 1 | • Ensemble sound consistently develops while individuals maintain a relaxed and healthy sound, relative to style, language, or type of resonance desired. | 1 | • Chromatic intervals and passages, complex rhythms, dissonant intervals and harmonies sung clearly, inconsistencies of resonance and clarity occur, can be coached. | 1 | • Complex harmonies of varied styles tune easily. Singing in varied temperaments and non-Western tuning can be coached. | 1 | • Varied use of <i>appoggio</i> develops (<i>messa di voce, ease of extended registers and dynamics</i>). | 1 | • Subtle or quick shaping of dynamics to reflect text, rhythmic patterns, and style is consistently demonstrated. | 1 | • Technically demanding dynamics are introduced and develop (<i>sotto voce, messa di voce, fp, sfz, ppp, fff</i>). | 1 | • Enunciates text clearly in a variety of languages, including more challenging languages, with appropriate dialect determined by language, region, or history. | 1 | • Inner pulse consistent. Knowledge of subdivision is demonstrated by precise rhythm in all styles. | 1 | • Vocal technique, musical elements are flexible and shaped by genre, and authentic culturally and historically-informed practices. | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • Resonance can be inconsistent in the most demanding of passages or languages, can be coached. | 2 | • Ensemble sound is flexible, determined by repertoire, vocal and stylistic demands. | 2 | • Challenging coloratura passages can be coached. | 2 | • Inconsistencies occur due to developing technique, breath management and <i>vibrato</i> , solutions can be coached. | 2 | • Intentional breaths develop consistency (<i>rhythmic breaths, shaping vocal tract for resonant vowel, register, vocal quality, articulation</i>). | 2 | • Dynamic distortions of resonance, vowel, <i>vibrato</i> , can be coached. | 2 | • Intentional tonal difference related to dialect and style are desired and coached. | 2 | • Balanced tone and effort develops through long articulated passages, extremes of articulation, dynamics, and <i>tessitura</i> . | 2 | • Poly-rhythms, layered and subtle rhythmic patterns and styles develop fluency. | 2 | • Specific meaning of the text is conveyed empathetically through musical elements, and informed cultural or historical context. | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • S/A lower register is a functional mix of head and chest voice, upper voice balanced, agile, vibrant. | 3 | • Balance is varied, determined by musical and stylistic demands of repertoire (<i>standing arrangements, flexible use of singers, adjustments of resonance, vowel, dynamic</i>). | 3 | • Any <i>divisi</i> possible as determined by personnel. | 3 | • Singers maintain correct pitch center in a <i>cappella</i> singing in addition to melodic, harmonic tuning. | 3 | • Offset and “catch breaths” become artistically, poetically, and rhythmically shaped and placed. | 3 | • Dynamic markings interpreted as flexible guides through which an artistically shaped musical line is sung, rather than absolute. | 3 | • Expressive modification of consonants and enunciation develops (<i>rubato, delaying onset, legato, tessitura, balance with instruments</i>). | 3 | • Articulation markings interpreted as a reflection of an artistically sung text and musical line, rather than absolutes. | 3 | • Rhythm as an expressive element, consistently demonstrated with precision (<i>varied style, weight, momentum, and rubato</i>). | 3 | • Form results from attention to style, musical elements and composer's markings, creating an artistic and structural whole. | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | • T/B consistently vibrant and expansive in mid to lower voice, upper register is clear, forward. | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.4–5.6 <i>At Level</i> | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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FESTIVAL NAME

DATE

SCHOOL

CHOIR NAME

CONDUCTOR

NOTES

SCORING FOR EACH LEVEL

X.0–X.3 / EMERGING

Choir has been introduced to the concept and understands

X.4–X.6 / AT LEVEL

Choir demonstrates regularly

X.7–X.9 / FLUENCY

Choir understands and applies when coached to always demonstrates

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- Each descriptor is a learning goal of a particular **LEVEL** of experience.
 - Teachers initially should determine what level of learning goals is appropriate for their ensemble.
 - Singers and Teachers are encouraged to work together to co-create which goals are important for their unique ensemble.
 - All learning goals are designed to apply to all types of ensembles, regardless of singing style or repertoire. However, not all goals may be desired for a particular ensemble.
 - Some descriptors describe “negative traits.” These are included as they are a natural part of development and should not be a criticism, possible causes are provided. Assessment occurs in multiple ways: not all types are necessary for every ensemble.
 - **TYPE 1:** At the beginning of the year, the teacher/leader should look at the various levels of learning goals and determine which set are appropriate for the experience and outcomes desired for their ensemble.
 - **TYPE 2:** As the ensemble works toward certain goals (no more than two or three at a time) the director can determine when it is time to assess the choir.
 - The numbers 0–9 to the side of each set of goals represent the percentage of time the group demonstrates a technique. For ex. 1 would mean the choir repeats the goal 10% of the time. When the technique or goal is present .7–.9, the group is encouraged to move on to other types of goals at that level, or goals in the next level with the same concept.
 - **TYPE 3:** Some ensembles attend adjudications for feedback. Whereas this form can be used for competition, it has been **created to de-emphasize competition**, and rather **focus on growth** of each ensemble in their own way.
- FOR ADJUDICATION:**
- The choir must first self-assess where they feel they are in terms of the development of the **LEVELS** and learning goals.
 - The choir’s self-assessment is then shared with the adjudicator to inform them of what the choir’s focus and goals are.
 - The adjudicator will then listen to reflect on the choir’s assessment, and using the form create suggested pathways for continued learning and growth.
 - A score may or may not be included as to indicate the percentage of time a technique is demonstrated. Scores may be helpful to show that there is no end to the possible growth of a singer and ensemble!