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The Singing Child

For the child, to sing is to turn interests, experiences, and feelings into a personal musical expression. Kimberly sings about flowers, and Tony about lions, bears, dogs, and dragons. Michelle chants with Rosalita and Candy the songs of their hand-clapping games. Robert and Charoen trade songs they learned at church and in the temple, making up new words and tunes as they sing them. Lonnie sings before sleep, while Tuyen invents new tunes in the morning. Wayne mixes singing with lip-syncing all the latest tunes on MTV. Heather eagerly awaits her weekly choir rehearsals, while Marla sings her solos like the singing star she dreams of being.

The sounds of singing children can bring joy to those who listen, for these sounds emanate from their childlike thoughts and experiences. The quality of children's voices reflects a combined innocence, playfulness, and energy that befits them. Children sing alone and together, with and without the accompaniment of instruments or the electronic media of tapes, television, and radio. They sing spontaneously and often without knowing it—at meals, while walking to school, and in the middle of an independent school project. As they imitate and personalize the songs they have heard, children bring joy to themselves as well as to those who listen.

In today's high-tech societies, some may say that the singing child is an anachronism—a symbol of days gone by. Some may believe that "children would rather be entertained than entertain" themselves and others by singing, that "boys beyond grade two do not sing," and that "folk-song singing has been replaced by rock-song shouting." This gloom-and-doom

In this chapter:

- **The Developing Child Voice**
- **Physical Training for the Child Voice**
- **Toward Accurate Singing**
- **The Vocal Model**
- **Selecting and Teaching Songs**
- **How to Teach Singing in Parts**
- **Children's Choirs**
- **Assessment of Singing**
- **Reasons to Sing**
- **Scenario**

perspective can discourage teachers and parents who recall their own active childhoods as singers and who wish to incorporate songs within the learning experiences of children.

Are children singing less (and less well) in the contemporary world of high-tech media? While the media may appear to pacify children as they entertain them, children begin to sing at or before the stage at which they acquire speech—at a time before they may even be attracted to the media. It follows that children will continue singing when given opportunities to do so. Away from their tapes and television, they sing a great deal. Teachers and parents can provide occasions for singing—before classes and assemblies, at the start and close of the school day, after dinner, before bedtime, or while camping, walking, or riding in the car or on the bus. These are the times for singing favorite songs as well as for learning new ones. As for the media, rather than reducing children's singing, radio, recordings, and television may be stimulating their songfulness as well as adding to their repertoire (Campbell, 1998).

What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts: National Standards for Arts Education (MENC, 1994) describes singing as primary content in a sequential program of study. Children can develop the skills to sing independently and together, on pitch and in rhythm, with appropriate timbre, diction, and posture. Children in the elementary grades can learn to sing expressively, with regard to the appropriate use of dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation. Further, children should sing a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures, and they should progress from singing melodies with simple ostinatos to rounds and canons. These goals are attainable by children when led by trained music teachers in programs with instruction that is thorough and consistent.

Singing is a phenomenon for all ages, times, and cultures, but it begins and is nurtured in childhood. Children's vocal development can be greatly enhanced through training. The teacher who understands the physiology and capabilities of the young voice will select an appropriate repertoire and instructional techniques for children from preschool through the elementary grades. Contrary to the myth that singing lessons should begin in or after adolescence, vocal technique can be taught from the earliest ages by knowledgeable teachers.

The Developing Child Voice

As early as infancy, as children begin to discover their vocal capabilities, they are making musical sounds. Playfully, they explore sounds with the vowels and consonants that they have heard before, extending their duration, repeating them rhythmically and in rising and falling pitch passages. Like the babbling that precedes speech, musical babbling is the vocalization that precedes the performance of melodies (Moog, 1976). As they toddle toward two years, children progress in their vocalizations, producing increasingly

Things to Think About:

- Are you comfortable with your singing voice?
- Recall your earliest singing experiences. What did you sing? With whom and for whom? What did you sound like?
- How would you describe your singing voice today in terms of range, tessitura, and quality?
- What songs would you include in a list of "songs all children should know?"
- Describe any observations of, or direct experiences with, children's choirs.

"Having a song in one's heart' means to rejoice, to remember, and to bring solitude to our souls. Songs are one of the essential needs of our being. . . ."

Brycene A. Neaman, Yakama Indian, 1999

longer melodic phrases spontaneously. While young children may seldom use words in their spontaneous songs, they string nonsense syllables together in small intervals of seconds and thirds. By the age of three, children begin to develop the periodic accents of regular rhythmic patterns in their spontaneous songs, and slightly larger intervals may occur. Besides their own invented songs, children reproduce the short songs of nursery rhymes and childhood chants at this age, including the simple movements associated with them. An outline of children's vocal development can be found in Table 4.1. See also Music Example 4.1.

Children four and five years of age begin to discover the difference between their singing and speaking voices. Their singing may shift from a light, airy sound to a playground yell for lively songs. While their spontaneous singing may span nearly two octaves, the range at which they can sing accurately in tune may extend only five pitches, from d to a. As children learn new songs, they progress through five stages, reproducing the words, the rhythm of the words, a general but inaccurate sense of the melody's contour, a more accurate sense of individual pitches within the melody, and the tonality of the song across all its phrases. They learn songs through imitation of a model and require the teacher's step-by-step guidance toward more accurate reproduction.

As children learn to sing a repertoire of songs, they also acquire rhythmic and melodic fragments that spill into their own musical play and invented songs. In many Western cultures, children through the elementary grades may incorporate in their invented songs the descending minor third often accompanied by a fourth.



"Rain, Rain Go Away" and "Little Sally Walker" are examples of Western traditional children's songs that feature this common melodic pattern. However, it may be premature to suggest that, despite its frequent presence, the minor third is the first or most frequent interval to emerge in children's vocalizations, especially before systematic study of children in other world cultures has been undertaken. As children in the West gain exposure to popular music, the songs they strive to sing and create anew may contain the syncopated rhythms and the melodic patterns characteristic of the popular sound. Similarly, children's extended experience with any other musical style is likely to influence their accumulated repertoire and to flavor their musical expressions.

Children in the primary grades are more apt to sing in tune than younger children. Their singing range widens from C to b for six-year-olds; to about an octave by second grade, from C to d'; and from about B' to e' by third grade. Their tessitura, or the average range in which most pitches of a song lie, is somewhat smaller. So although children are capable of a larger vocal range,

TABLE 4.1 *Children's Vocal Development*

AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITY
Less than one	Vocalizes (babbling) vowels and consonants
One to two	Babbles in irregular rhythmic patterns Imitates the contour of songs' melodic phrases, but not discrete pitches
Two	Babbles in extended melodic phrases Babbles in small intervals of seconds, thirds Imitates occasional discrete pitches of songs
Three	Invents spontaneous songs with discrete pitches and recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns Reproduces nursery rhymes and childhood chants
Four to five (kindergarten)	Discovers differences between speaking and singing voices Shifts song qualities from light and airy to the playground yell for lively songs Sings spontaneous songs spanning two octaves Sings in tune within range of five pitches, d to a
Six to seven (grade one)	Sings in tune in range of C to b, with smaller tessitura Can begin to develop head voice, with guidance Begins to have expressive control of voice
Seven to eight (grade two)	Sings in tune in range of octave, about C to c' or d to d', with smaller tessitura
Eight to nine (grade three)	Sings in tune in range of B \flat to e \flat ', with smaller tessitura Can perform fundamental harmony songs such as melody over vocal ostinato or sustained pitch
Nine to ten (grade four)	Sings in tune in range of A to e', with smaller tessitura Sings with increasing resonance (grades four, five, and six) May experience first vocal change (boys, beginning age ten) Can perform canons, rounds, descants, countermelodies Can sing with appropriate phrasing, with guidance
Ten to eleven (grade five)	Sings in tune in range of A \flat to f', with C to c' octave tessitura Is increasingly selective of song repertoire Prefers songs in middle range Prefers songs without sentimental or babyish texts Can perform two-part songs
Eleven to twelve (grade six)	Sings in tune in range of G to g', with C to c' octave tessitura Can perform three-part songs

Note: c = middle c; c' = one octave higher; C = one octave lower than middle c.

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.1

*Range and Tessitura
for Children's Voices,
Ages Six to Twelve*

The image displays six musical staves, each representing a different grade level. Each staff is divided into two sections: 'Range' and 'Tessitura'. The 'Range' section shows a melodic line starting from a low note and ascending to a higher note, with a diagonal line indicating the pitch contour. The 'Tessitura' section shows a similar melodic line, but the notes are positioned higher on the staff, indicating a higher tessitura. The notes are quarter notes. The staves are labeled as follows:

- First grade; ages six to seven
- Second grade; ages seven to eight
- Third grade; ages eight to nine
- Fourth grade; ages nine to ten
- Fifth grade; ages ten to eleven
- Sixth grade; ages eleven to twelve

songs that linger on the lowest to highest pitches should be avoided. Children may continue to sing as they do at play, in their lower chest range, unless their head voice is developed—particularly through pitch-matching exercises. The use of a pure neutral syllable such as “loo” will assist children in concentrating on appropriate vocal production through their ranges.

At eight years (or by second grade), children are likely to be able to maintain the same tonality throughout a song. As their musical memory increases, they are able to learn longer and more complex songs. By the age of nine, children may succeed at performing fundamental harmony songs—those with a recurring vocal ostinato, or sustained sounds overlapped by moving melodies. Their need for socialization with friends may nurture their interest in singing with others, while at the same time their perceptual development offers them greater awareness of blending their voices with the ensemble of singers.

In the intermediate grades, when children are showing signs of rapid physical development, their voices are also affected by the maturation process. Their singing quality is fuller and more resonant in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades than in the primary grades, although some children may feel more self-conscious about singing (especially solos) and thus may sound softer and lighter than their full-volumed capacity. The range of children’s voices before the first changes that accompany adolescence typically

spans from A to e´ for fourth graders, from A^b to f´ for fifth graders, and from G to g´ for sixth graders. The tessitura for children ten through twelve years may be limited to about one octave. Some boys will experience a first vocal change by age ten or eleven, although others will sing well into early adolescence with a robust yet pure quality unmatched by children at any other age.

Children begin to manifest signs of physiological and psychological changes typical of adolescence by the close of their elementary years. Unless they are accustomed to singing, they may lose interest and resist any occasion to sing. While in some societies singing is an act of great pride that brings on admiration by members of the opposite sex, in American schools it is not unusual to find girls who are embarrassed to sing in front of boys and boys who view singing as a feminine or at least a less virile activity. To many children on the brink of adolescence, singing is no longer cool. Maintaining children's interest in singing requires a careful selection of songs with texts that are meaningful to them (and not too sentimental or babyish), with melodic ranges well within the safety of their tessitura.

The changing male voice is a symptom of the hormonal changes that begin to occur at the onset of puberty. When boys show a sudden growth spurt and a physical awkwardness, they may also demonstrate a heavier quality as they speak and sing. Their voices may occasionally crack as they reach beyond their middle range. While experts vary somewhat in their approaches to boys' changing voices, most recommend singing within the middle and most comfortable section of their range and avoiding register extremes.

As children come to understand the vocal mechanism, they are better able to use their voices productively. Children in the intermediate grades are also capable of performing with appropriate phrasing, diction, and intonation—all important facets of choral singing. Because they can perceive more than one simultaneously occurring musical line at a time, and because their voices are stronger and more independent than earlier, they can sing in harmony the rounds, partner songs, and part songs that comprise the repertoire of children's choirs. As they mature, children are able to sing expressively

Methodological Suggestions for Early Childhood

- **Sing songs with young children**, guiding them to raise and lower their arms to the rise and fall of the melody while singing.
- **In a circle of young children**, encourage one child at a time to step into the middle, improvising a story in song.
- **Grow a list of familiar songs** that young children can sing together, and add to the list when both melody and words of a new song are learned.
- **So that young children can learn of topics through song**, sing songs of animals, people, weather, and modes of transportation.
- **Lead young children** in swaying, swinging, nodding, and patting as they sing.

and to evaluate their own musical and vocal performance in terms of accuracy and appropriate tone, blend, and style.

Physical Training for the Child Voice

Beyond the natural development that occurs from preschool through the elementary grades, children's voices can be greatly enhanced through training. This is not to say that private singing lessons are advisable for children; lessons may best be reserved for the later years of adolescence and adulthood, when vocal development is complete. The astute teacher, however, who knows and provides occasions for exercising children's voices through songs, vocal games, and drills, will quicken the pace of development and extend the capacity for musical expression. Daily or even twice-weekly "group sings" will undoubtedly create more musical singers at an earlier age.

Perfect singing posture, or PSP, is prerequisite to gaining good breath control, producing a beautiful tone, and phrasing a set of tones expressively (see Box 4.1). Although they are physically active and seldom sedentary, children require regular coordination, conditioning, and postural-development exercises (Phillips 1992). Imagery and exercise (instead of verbal explanations) can lead to the correct stance (or sitting position) for singing.

One of the most complete means for attaining appropriate alignment of the body parts for PSP is the image and imitation of a marionette puppet. Children begin this exercise by standing tall and imagining that there are two strings attached to them—from the ceiling to the bottom of their back and to the top of their head. An invisible puppeteer loosens the string, and the children drop from their waist, with head and arms hanging down past their knees, to the floor. In that position, they gently bounce. When the puppeteer begins to pull at the strings, the marionette children slowly rise and realign themselves: chest, shoulders, neck, head, and arms fall relaxedly into place.

PSP can be achieved in a sitting, as well as standing, position. The alignment of the middle and upper body transfers from standing to sitting positions. Children on chairs should sit on the front half of the seats with their feet flat on the floor. For those whose feet do not touch the floor, they should sit further back on the seats while hooking their feet on the front rung of the chair. Children who sit on the floor can be coaxed to cross their legs, raise themselves out of their hips, and lean slightly forward. No one position should be maintained for too long a time; standing and sitting positions can be taken alternately throughout a singing session.

Breathing for singing is similar to breathing for high-endurance sports such as swimming and long-distance running. Children are intrigued when they discover the physicality of good singing and the parallel of singing to athletic endeavors. With perfect singing posture, their bodies are readied for the deep breathing that must initiate and sustain the vocal sound. The image of filling the feet, the knees, the stomach, and the diaphragm (and the lungs) with air shows how complete and all-encompassing the breathing must be. Children can come to understand that as they fill themselves with

Box 4.1 *Perfect Singing Posture*

Perfect singing posture (PSP) involves bottom-to-top body parts. Here are some suggestions for how to achieve the correct position.

1. Feet should be flat on the floor, about six inches apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other. The weight is on the balls (not the heels) of the feet. Practice in shifting the weight from heels to toes will bring about an awareness of where the weight should be.
2. Knees need to be relaxed and not locked. A light bouncing in place, one knee alternating with the other, and then both knees, can eliminate tightness and tension.
3. The spine is to be lifted up and away from the hips. It should be straight but not stiff. Leading with the arms extended, and hands clasped backward, a spinal stretch can extend down to the toes; outward from the chest to the front, right, and left sides; and then high above the head. A return back to center will move the spine gently into place.
4. The chest should be slightly raised. Movement of the arms in a circular breast-stroke gesture from the middle of the chest to above the head and down to the side can loosen yet also coordinate the musculature of the chest, rib cage, lungs, and sternum.
5. Shoulders are held back slightly and down. Shoulder rolls are helpful: Rotation of the shoulders forward, down, and up will decrease tension; the reverse movement (backward, down, and up again) can also be helpful.
6. The head is held high as it rises up out of the spine and neck and rests level and well aligned. Head rolls achieve this position, by dropping the head to the chest and rolling it to one side and then the other.
7. Arms and hands should hang easily down at the sides. This can be achieved at the end of the spinal stretch or breast-stroke gesture, although attention may need to be called to the position of the arms and hands.

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the air of a very deep breath, their lower rib cage expands along with their lungs. Like a balloon or a bagpipe, they have air within them that can be moved up the windpipe and across the vocal cords, causing vibration to occur and sound to be produced.

Breathing exercises should precede singing activity. Children can take in air as they would sip soda through a straw: With puckered lips, they slowly sip the air in a manner similar to drinking. Because sipping is an easy and gentle action, there should be no tension in the exercise. Taking the image of the balloon, children can compare the expansion of their own lungs to the fullness of a blown balloon. They can imitate the roundness of a balloon as they breathe in through their mouths, their arms curved in front of them, fingers touching. The more air they inhale, the wider the balloon becomes; their arms move out more widely so that their fingers can no longer touch. As air in a balloon is slowly released, they can slowly release air without producing a vocal sound, and their fingers touch again. The inhaling and exhaling process can

Perfect singing posture (PSP)

"If you can talk, you can sing, and if you can walk, you can dance."
Traditional proverb,
Macedonia



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challenge children physically, especially when the appropriate vocal sound to which the exercises lead is demonstrated.

Vocal exercises that combine the inhaling, sustaining, and releasing of air develop control essential to good singing. Lesson 4.1 provides several suggestions for warming up the voice with attention to the breathing mechanism.

Marionette strategy for attaining PSP



Jerry Gay

LESSON 4.1 Vocal Exercises That Develop Breath Control

The Ha-Ha

Imitate the quick, deep breathing of a dog panting at the end of a long and energetic run. Place the hands just under the rib cage at the diaphragm, take a deep breath, and exhale in short “ha-ha’s.” Breathe again, and while exhaling, sing the “ha-ha’s” on one pitch. A third variation is to sing the “ha-ha’s” stepwise from do to sol and back again, and then on a triadic do-mi-sol-mi-do.

ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha - ha

harmony: I I I V(6) I

The Cool “OO”

Because the *u* vowel, as sounded in *new*, resonates well and is a relaxed sound for children to produce, it is commonly used in warm-ups and for tuning voices to one another. Using a descending stepwise pattern that ends in a skip of a fifth up and down, sing an “oo” sound with the letter *l* interspersed. Care should be taken not to form the lips too tightly. A relaxed and slightly dropped jaw will allow maximal air flow without changing the vowel sound.

loo - oo loo - oo loo loo loo

harmony: V V I V I

The “No-ah’s Ark”

The pure *o* as in *cold* requires the jaw to drop more than in the *u*. It should also have little of the “vanishing oo” sound of “no”; that is, “no-oo.” The *a* of *father* is sounded by dropping the jaw to a space long enough to allow the insertion of two fingers vertically. A slight smile contributes to a brighter *a*, not the “uh” sound. By singing “No-ah’s Ark,” children exercise two distinctive

(Continued)

LESSON 4.1 *Vocal Exercises That Develop Breath Control (Continued)*

positions of the mouth and thus two separate vowel and vocal sounds. A smaller- and larger-ranged version of ascending and successive thirds is appropriate for children in the primary and intermediate grades.

harmony: I V I IV iii IV V7 I

The "Mmmm" on the Vowels

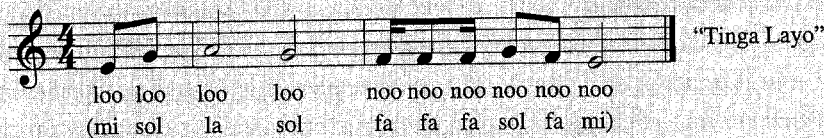
Using the "m" sound to lead easily to vowel sounds, sing on one pitch the vowels *i* sounded as "ee," *e* sounded as "ay," *a*, *o*, and *u*. The *i* is like the sound in "green" and is produced with the lips slightly puckered so that the sound does not spread too widely. The *e* is a diphthong similar to the sound in "play," with an emphasis on "eh" that closes on "ee." In this exercise, five vowels are sounded on a single pitch. The transition from the consonant *m* to each vowel and back to the consonant again should be smooth, connected, and all on one sustained breath. The exercise can be accompanied by I, IV, I, V⁷, I.

I IV⁶/₄ I V⁶/₄ V³/₃ I

The Echo

The modeling of pitches and pitch patterns by a leader is then imitated by the children. In leader-follower fashion, sing patterns and phrases from familiar songs as well as those yet to be learned. Use neutral syllables such

as “loo,” “noo,” “la,” and “bee” for tuning voices, and solfège syllables for building understanding of pitches and their relationships.



“Tinga Layo”

loo loo loo loo noo noo noo noo noo noo
(mi sol la sol fa fa fa sol fa mi)



“Little Sally Walker”

la la la la la la
(sol sol mi la sol mi)



“Music Alone Shall Live”

bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee
(mi mi mi re mi fa sol la ti do)

Toward Accurate Singing

Children who can hear and perceive melody are well equipped for singing accurately. The ability to hear is a physical endowment, but to perceive the melody of a song well enough to sing it requires focused and attentive listening.

The percentage of problem singers is greater now than ever before, and some children will need care and consistent instruction to become proficient singers. In order from having less to more singing skill, presingers do not sing but chant the song text, speaking-range singers sustain tones within the speaking voice range only, limited-range singers typically sing only from d to f, initial-range singers sing within a range of d to a, and full-fledged singers can sing in a range beyond the minimal register (B–d). Individual and small-group instruction via games and activities that combine singing with socializing experiences can camouflage the disciplined exercise that needs to occur to develop children’s voices (Rutkowski, 1996). Patience is key, however, because an entire academic year may be necessary for more effective singing to break through and remain consistent.

Children need the teacher’s direction to attend to the pitches, phrases, and contours of a melody, as well as its rhythm, text, and formal organization. Some learn best through repeated listenings alone, others learn well when visual means (including color-coded shapes, numbers, pictures, and graphs; staff notation; and printed song words) are applied, and still others require the use of their bodies to feel the melody. One means of focusing children’s listening is the use of direct questions, such as “Does the melody

move mostly upward or downward?” or “Which word sounds the highest pitch of the song?”

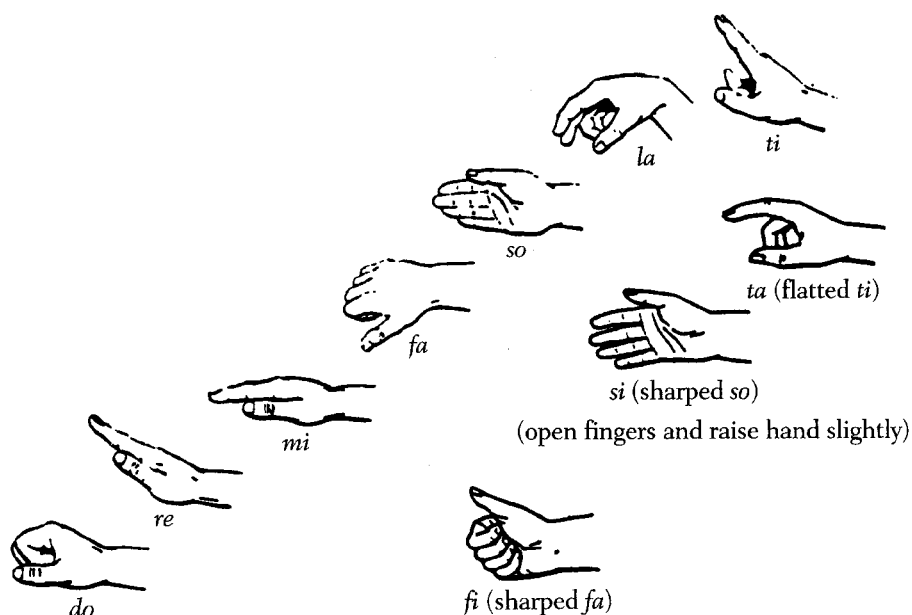
Children can draw the melody’s movement with their fingers, hands, arms, or even torso. This graphing of the melody’s rise and fall is sometimes referred to as mapping. Such mapping can be broad and involve the entire body, or it can be contained within a very small space. Mapping may consist of a line drawing that moves each phrase from left to right with a finger in the air, on chalkboards with chalk, or on large pieces of paper with crayon.

Another means of directing children’s attention to individual pitches and their relationships is through the use of a hand sign system first developed by Sarah Glover and John Curwen in England in the middle of the nineteenth century. The system was later popularized by proponents of the Kodály approach, and it is often referred to as Kodály hand signs (see Figure 4.1). In this system, each pitch of the diatonic scale is associated with a hand sign. Additional signs are used to indicate chromatic pitches, or accidentals outside of the song’s key signature. Children can be taught the hand signs with relative ease as they sing the pitch names of the diatonic scale or as they learn the melodic fragments and tonal phrases of the songs they know. The hand sign system is effective as a technique for teaching melodic direction and shape, and it is enjoyed by children as a game that challenges their listening, critical thinking, moving, and singing skills.

Children are more likely to sing accurately when they can discriminate among higher or lower pitches and when they are presented with occasions for reproducing short melodic phrases. Pitch matching requires not only listening perception and short-term memory skills, but also the skills of vocal production. Through a series of echo-chants built on neutral syllables, solfège syllables, or word-phrases, children can match the pitches of short melodic phrases that are sung to them. These phrases may be embedded in

FIGURE 4.1

Kodály-Curwen Hand Signs



Reproduced with permission from Chosky (1981).

familiar songs, or in songs they will eventually learn to sing, or in a familiar music repertoire. These melodic phrases may also be built into conversational or dialogue phrases, in which the same pitches used for a question may be used by children in their response.

Lesson 4.2 presents a sampling of musical fragments for pitch matching, proceeding from simple to more complex content. When such phrases are accompanied by appropriate gestures to indicate pitch direction and pitch relationships, children may sing them with even greater accuracy.

These and other melodic phrases and fragments can be found intact, too, embedded in songs and instrumental selections. Proponents of the Kodály method offer a sequence for the teaching of melodic patterns that derive logically from traditional songs that children sing. A songful sequence of pitch patterns for songs found within this book is shown in Box 4.2, as demonstration of an approach to organizing songs to sing according to their increasingly sophisticated melodic content. The sequence begins with songs with just s-m, and graduates to songs with tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic, and finally diatonic pitch content. Information on Kodály-inspired sequences for teaching melody may be found in works by Szönyi (1974–79) and Choksy (1981, 1988).

As children develop the abilities to discriminate pitches and to sing in tune, they should also be developing tonal memory. The teacher can guide children in strengthening their tonal memory by playing “name that tune,” in which they identify the title of a familiar song that is sung by the teacher or selected leader without words on a neutral syllable. Another playful approach to strengthening the memory is to lead children in singing a song, and on a prearranged cue (such as a tap on the drum) to sing silently, only to return to singing aloud when given the cue again. Children must retain a sense of pulse, tempo, and pitch while silently performing the melody so

LESSON 4.2 *Pitch-Matching Samples*

Assorted Phrases

s m l s m l s m r s m r d l s m r d

s m r d s, l s m r d l, l s m r d l, s,





d' l s m r d' s f m r d d' t l s f m r d'

(Continued)

Dialogue Chants

Teacher	Child
	
San - dra, are you here?	Yes, I'm real - ly here.
Teacher	Child
	
What's your name?	Char - lie Green.
Teacher	Child
	
How old are you?	Eight years — old.
Teacher	Child
	
How ma - ny bro - thers do you have?	I have one bro - ther, yes I do.
Teacher	Child
	
Do you like straw - ber - ries?	Yes, I like straw - ber - ries
Teacher	Child
	
Do you like the zoo? —	Yes, I like the zoo. —

Melodic Direction Chants

Ascending	Descending
	
We can sing high.	We can sing low.
Up stepwise	Down stepwise
	
Let's climb to a hill - top.	Let's climb right back down a - gain.

that they can join in together again when the cue is given. Tonal memory, like rhythmic memory, requires children's utmost concentration. With it, their musicianship—and their repertoire of songs—can grow.

For every phrase or song that is sung, the pitch and tempo must be set by the teacher. Children need to know on just what pitch they are to begin

Box 4.2 A Songful Sequence of Pitch Patterns

PITCH SET	SONG	LOCATION
s-m	Rain, Rain, Go Away	Pg. 171
l-s-m	Bounce High	Pg. 171
	Little Sally Walker	Pg. 172
l-s-m-d	Teddy Bear	Pg. 130
	Ring around the Rosy	Pg. 132
s-m-d	Mos', Mos'!	Pg. 389
	Sorida	Pg. 389
m-r-d	Suogan	Pg. 129
s-m-r-d	Singabahambayo	Pg. 174
	Johnny Works with One Hammer	Pg. 129
m-r-d-s,	A la Rueda de San Miguel	Pg. 175
m-r-d-l,	I Got a Letter This Morning	Pg. 173
m-r-d-l-s,	Hey, Betty Martin	Pg. 172
	Bucket of Water	Pg. 184
l-s-m-r-d	Doraji	Pg. 175
	Lak Gei Moli	Pg. 386
	Feng Yang	Pg. 387
s-f-m-r-d	Kye Kye Kule	Pg. 185
l-s-f-m-r-d	Knick-Knack Paddy Whack	Pg. 172
	Oh, How Lovely Is the Evening	Pg. 177
	Kaeru No Uta	Pg. 91
	London Bridge Is Falling Down	Pg. 132
	Gerakina	Pg. 149
	San Serení	Pg. 134
s-f-m-r-d-t-l,	Ah, Poor Bird	Pg. 90
d'-t-l-s-f-m-r-d	With Laughter and Singing	Pg. 4
	Tinga Layo	Pg. 173
	Kookaburra	Pg. 87
	Sansa Kroma	Pg. 185
	Viva la Musica	Pg. 92
	La Raspa	Pg. 146
	Come, Let's Dance	Pg. 91
f'-m'-r'-d'-t-l-s-f-m-r-d	Hava Nashira	Pg. 92

their singing, or all attempts at accurate singing are foiled. Familiar songs can begin with the teacher's sounding of the tonic, or home tone, of the song and then the 1-3-5-3-1 (d-m-s-m-d) of the key. A piano, xylophone, guitar, or other pitched instrument may be more helpful to the teacher than to the children, who may need to hear the vocally produced pitch to match it. Even

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.2

Starting a Song

Here we go, read - y, sing: This old man He played one...

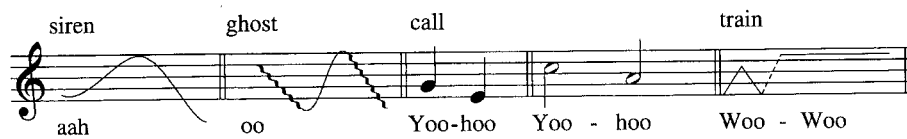
Here we go now, read - y sing: This old man He played one...

in teaching individual song phrases by rote, the teacher should make a practice of sounding the first pitch, vocally, on a neutral syllable such as “loo” or “la,” and then signaling the children to sing that pitch on that syllable before repeating the phrase. The pitch and tempo for familiar and new songs can be set together by conducting the meter while singing an initial phrase on the first pitch of the song. One example for pitch and tempo setting at the same time is shown in Music Example 4.2.

As children listen to song phrases and fragments, they must also strive to learn and retain their components to sing them accurately. They learn the words, rhythm, and melody of a song through repeated listening, and then by imitating the singer who serves as model for them. Young singers require far more repetition of songs and song segments than they typically receive to grasp all the musical details. For example, an eight-measure melody such as “Hey, Betty Martin” may require six or eight repetitions before a group of seven-year-olds can retain and reproduce the song with the words, melody, rhythm, and tonality intact. The teacher can sing alone while the children listen, or the children can sing while following the teacher’s lead. A longer and more complex song such as “Tinga Layo” may necessitate as many (or more) repetitions for a group of ten-year-olds to learn it.

Not all children sing accurately in tune, although the great majority of children are capable of it. Children who sing daily at home or in school develop in-tune singing by the end of the second grade. For those in environments without regular opportunities to listen to music and to sing, vocal troubles may require attention. Instead of labeling the uncertain singers as monotones or nonsingers, teachers may need to devise remedial exercises within class and help sessions before school, after school, or at recess. Some children need coaxing to find their singing voice, and they may need to sing close to the pitch of their speaking voice. Others need to know that it is safe to sing aloud (and possibly solo). This will entail discussing with the group the rules of etiquette while singing alone, so that all children can be helped to become a part of their singing team. A series of siren-like sound effects can be modeled and then imitated to extend the range of children who drone on one or two pitches or who sing below the appropriate pitch (see Music Example 4.3).

The sound of a ghost is another aural image that can assist children in hearing and feeling how their voices can reach registers not usually associated



MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.3

Extending Voice Range

with their own speaking ranges. Likewise, children can imitate the sound of “yoo-hoo” or a train whistle.

These experiences can lead to pitch-matching exercises and to songs with simple rhythms and small melodic ranges. Unless children have physiological conditions (such as damaged vocal cords or severe hearing deficits) or the rare condition known as amusia, they can learn to sing accurately. The patient teacher’s knowledgeable and inventive remedies can ensure success.

The Vocal Model

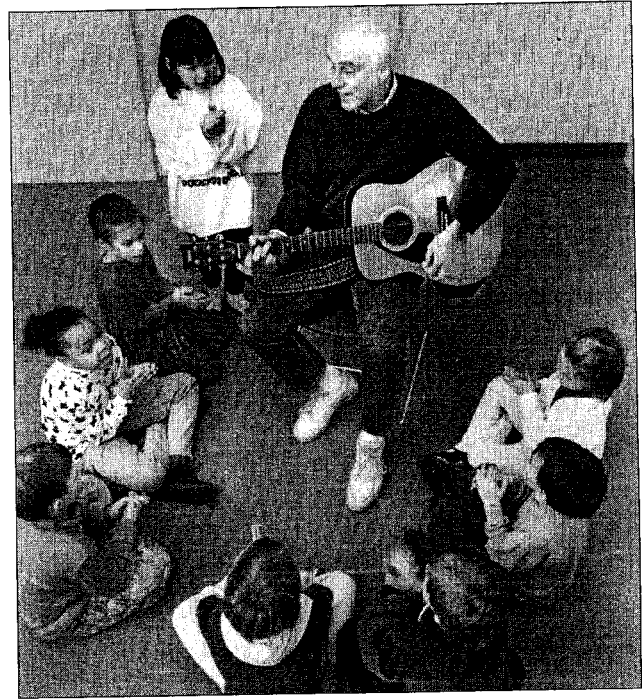
Children tend to sing a song in the manner and style in which it was presented to them. Thus, the presence of an accurate vocal model is critical to the instructional process. Whether the teacher, parent, or other adult seeks to teach a song, attention must be paid to musical style and voice quality as well as to the components of the song itself. If children are to sing in a light head tone, then the song must be sung by the model in that way. If a song is to be sung with vigor at high volume, then that model should be presented. If a song is suited for a softer and slower performance, then children must hear it that way. Children will sing a song presented in legato style in that manner, just as they are likely to sing a song in as many phrases (with as many breaths) and as many accents and dynamic nuances as they hear from the model.

The teacher or other singer who models for children should assume a singer’s posture: straight and well aligned, but not stiff. Children need to see and hear what is expected of them. They need to see a singer’s facial expression and gestures reflecting the mood and text of the song and hear the singer’s energy and enthusiasm for the song, because the singer’s performance can convince them that they should learn the song. Most important, the singer who models for children should sing the song musically—in tune, in its correct rhythm, and according to its stylistic nuances.

If the voice quality of the model is in many cases imitated by children, then what can be said about the male singer intent on teaching children to sing? Until the fourth grade, even children who sing regularly may have difficulty matching pitches when they hear the male voice sounding an octave below their own register. Some children attempt to sing at the lower octave, while others target a set of pitches somewhere between the model’s pitch and that of the higher octave. Male singers working with young children or with children inexperienced in singing make more effective models for children when they sing using a falsetto quality. This falsetto sound should not be forced or at the full volume of a countertenor. Instead, the sound should

“ . . . The singer who models for children should sing the song musically—in tune, in its correct rhythm, and according to its stylistic nuances.”

Male singer with children—from light falsetto to characteristic register



Jerry Gay

be light and somewhat softer than the full dynamic intensity of the real voice. As children are able to transfer the sound of a male voice to their own register, often by fourth grade, they can begin to reap the benefit of hearing the male voice in its characteristic register.

Although much of the singing children do can be led by the teacher without the aid of other accompaniment, the use of instruments may enhance the vocal sound. A tasteful accompaniment for recorder, xylophone ensemble, guitar, or piano can add musical interest, particularly for public performance (for the parents' club meeting or a school assembly, for example). A recorder descant played by a small group of children can provide a light contrapuntal line to the voice melody. The percussive quality of xylophone bourdons and ostinatos can provide striking contrast to smooth and well-supported singing. By strumming or plucking a guitar, the teacher can move closer to the children to hear and to help them with singing problems. The piano can provide an excellent support to singing, although it must be played with sensitivity to the vocal balance. However, because school music classrooms are often outfitted with a piano, it is tempting to overuse it in the early stages of learning a song so that children cannot listen to the teacher's (or their own) voice.

Should recordings be used in teaching children to sing? This is an irresistible proposition, and when instruments beyond those of the classroom appear on a recording, there may be greater musical intrigue and possibly greater motivation for children to sing. Some recordings have the advantage of demonstrating to children the ideal aural image of how their own young voices should sound. A recording can make a most acceptable model of a perfected sound and can be used to introduce a song, or to later reinforce it.

Still, it may be largely the task of the teacher to start and stop the song, and to raise and lower the pitch, tempo, and volume of the song, according to the vocal abilities and musical needs of the children. No recording or other electronic apparatus can do this with such ease and immediacy.

Selecting and Teaching Songs

Processes for teaching songs to children range from rote to note, or combinations of the two. Teaching a song by rote is transmitting the song orally, while teaching by note clearly involves children's ability to read music. The process depends on the teacher's perspective, the lesson objectives, and the children's skill levels. Yet even before the teaching process begins, initial steps can be taken to ensure children's successful singing. The critical first step is selecting songs that are musically, textually, and developmentally appropriate. Guidelines for song selection are noted in Box 4.3, along with other preparatory issues. (See also Table 15.1 for a guide to authenticity in the selection of music.)

Song collections are plentiful, with songs of every genre—traditional, patriotic, art and classical, composed, popular, and even songs transmitted and preserved by children. The collections of Erdei and Komlos (1974), Fowke (1969, 1977), Lomax (1960), and Seeger (1948) contain songs from

Box 4.3 *Song Selection and Preparation*

1. Select a song that is age-appropriate.
 - Check the song's range.
 - Check the song's tessitura.
 - Check the text:
 - Is it too babyish?
 - Is it too grown-up or lovey-dovey?
 - Will the subject matter interest children?
 - Does it contain offensive language (perhaps unintended)?
 - If in a foreign language, can you pronounce it?
2. Select a song in a style that you can sing.
 - Check the style: If it is outside your training and experience, can you learn to sing it in its appropriate style?
3. Review the song for its musical and textual highlights.
 - Check the melody: Are there tonal phrases to sing in isolation?
 - Check the rhythm: Are there rhythmic phrases to chant in isolation?
 - Check the text: Are there ideas that relate to a story, poem, or discussion of a historical or cultural issue?

North America. A rich collection of rounds suitable for children has been compiled by Finckel (1993), and a set of British traditional songs is the result of research by Langstaff, Swanson, and Emlen (1999). Songs and chants for young children are found in volumes by Feierabend (1999) and Kleiner (1996). For examples of children's songs from other world cultures, see Adzinyah, Maraire, and Tucker (1986/1996); Campbell, McCullough-Brabson, and Tucker (1994); Campbell with Frega (2001); Kwami (1998); Lavendar (1998); Nguyen and Campbell (1992); and Campbell, Williamson, and Perron (1996); all accompanied by recordings. The music textbook series contain a wide variety of songs appropriate for use with children from kindergarten through the eighth grade.

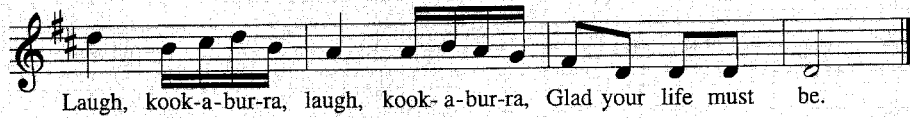
One of the most popular ways for the teacher to present a song is through oral and aural means, or by rote. In the rote approach, children are given numerous opportunities to listen to the complete song. Fragments of the song are then presented sequentially to the children (oral) in small phrases or chunks; children listen (aural) and then echo these fragments. These chunks are sung repeatedly until accuracy is achieved, and then the chunks are combined with other chunks until the whole song is learned. The children's imitation of the model is a necessary strategy in the rote approach, which can nearly guarantee the development of a large repertoire of songs.

Another approach to teaching a song involves children in reading notation. A selected song may contain melodic and rhythmic patterns that were sung, chanted, and played in earlier lessons. Given the great array of songs in series textbooks and in song collections, children can be challenged to seek familiar notated patterns within the new song and to perform them. Rhythms can be chanted according to the preferred system, and melodic patterns can be sung on neutral syllables or with solfège syllables. While there may be unfamiliar patterns to be learned by rote, by trial and error, or by putting to practice the logical and analytical skills required of reading words or notes, children can connect the familiar to the new patterns in learning the song. The teacher may eventually sing the entire song to provide them with a coherent image of the song. Children can feel accomplished in having the ability to decode the notation themselves. Lesson 4.3 presents both rote and note approaches to teaching "Kookaburra."

Rote and note are two approaches, although combinations of these approaches are also possible. The immersion process is another means for learning a song, in which children hear the song sung by the teacher, parent, or another child to the extent they individually require before joining in. When a song is learned, children can then be led to related activities, including playing body percussion on ♩, ♪♪, and ♪♪♪♪; creating a dance to reflect its phrases and form; accompanying the song with ostinati on classroom instruments; improvising a variation on recorder; or including it in a performance of other songs and chanted poems on similar subjects. However, any possibilities to extend their capabilities for singing expressively require their full knowledge and skills in performing the song. With this accomplished and with the vocal production capacity in good working order, children can then be taught to sing musically.

Kookaburra



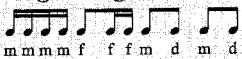

(Australia)



By Rote

1. "Can you keep the steady pulse?" Teacher sings the song while children accompany by patting and clapping.
2. "Can you draw the melody's rises and falls?" Teacher sings the song again while children draw in space the melodic contour.
3. "What word is sung on the highest pitch of the song?" Teacher sings the song again, followed by children's answer.
4. "Listen and then sing after me: 'Kookaburra sits on an old gum tree.'" Teacher sings first phrase; children imitate.
5. Repeat first phrase as necessary.
6. "Listen and then sing after me: 'Merry, merry king of the bush is he.'" Teacher sings second phrase; children imitate.
7. Repeat second phrase as necessary.
8. "Listen and then sing after me: 'Laugh, Kookaburra, laugh, Kookaburra.'" Teacher sings third phrase; children imitate.

By Note

1. Teacher presents notated rhythm patterns: 
"Take a minute to practice. Silently chant and clap the familiar patterns."
2. "Let's chant and clap as I point to the individual patterns." Teacher and children perform them, using favored chant system (for example, ti-ri-ti-ri, ti-ti-ri, ti-ti ti-ti).
3. Repeat as necessary.
4. "Sing with me": 
Teacher and children sing together.
5. Repeat as necessary.
6. "Now, what would happen if we sang that phrase beginning on mi? Shall we try it?" 
Teacher and children sing together.
7. "Let's try singing these phrases with our hand signals and our musical syllables." Teacher and children sing and signal the two phrases.
8. "Look at two new rhythm patterns": 
"Let's clap and chant them." Teacher and children clap and rhythmically chant.


(Continued)

LESSON 4.3 *Role and Note Approaches to Teaching "Kookaburra" (Continued)*

By Rote

9. Repeat third phrase as necessary.
10. "Listen and then sing after me: 'Glad your life must be.'" Teacher sings final phrase; children imitate.
11. Repeat final phrase as necessary.
12. "Let's sing the first two phrases, first me and then you." Teacher sings phrase one and two; children imitate.
13. Repeat as necessary.
14. "Let's sing the last two phrases, first me and then you." Teacher sings phrases three and four; children imitate.
15. Repeat as necessary.
16. "Now we're ready to sing the whole song." Teacher and children sing together.
17. "Can you sing the song without me? I'll get you started." Teacher sets pitch and tempo; children sing.

By Note

9. "What if we added pitches to those rhythms? Could you sing them?" Teacher presents notation for last two phrases.
10. "What's the highest pitch?" (Do.) Listen and follow with your hand signs: 

d l t d l s s l s f m d d d
11. "Now sing with me." Teacher and children sing last two phrases with syllables and hand signals.
12. Repeat as necessary.
13. Teacher presents the notated song. "Can you clap and chant the whole song?" Teacher and children clap and chant together.
14. "Can you, slowly, sing the melody with our musical syllables and hand signals? Watch me when you get lost." Teacher and children sing and signal together.
15. Repeat as necessary.
16. "Let's read the words to this song in rhythm."
17. "Let's sing the song with the words."
18. Repeat as necessary.
19. "Can you sing the song without me? I'll get you started." Teacher sets pitch and tempo; children sing.

How to Teach Singing in Parts

When children have developed the perceptual and productive skills that come with singing in tune, the next natural stage is to sing in harmony. Children in the third grade can be successful in singing songs in two-part arrangements: melodies with drones and ostinati. Fourth-grade children perform canons (or rounds), descants, partner songs, and countermelodies well in two independent groups; three-part canons can be reserved for children in fifth and sixth grades. When music instruction has been consistent and strong, bona fide two-part choral pieces can be read, rehearsed, and perfected for performance in the last years of elementary school.

In testing children's ability to sing in independent groups, songs such as "Old Texas," with active melodies sung over the sustained pitch of a second group, can be selected (see Music Example 4.4). The teacher can lead the singing, sustaining as children sing in imitation. Eventually, two groups can perform this fundamental form of part-singing.

Among the first attempts at singing in parts is the use of a repeated melodic pattern, or ostinato, to accompany the melody, as in "Hey, Ho, Nobody Home" or "Ah, Poor Bird" (see Music Examples 4.5 and 4.6). Ostinato parts are created by examining the melody for its harmonic possibilities and sampling on a pitched instrument one- or two-measure segments that jell harmonically with each measure of the song. While seconds or sevenths occasionally may sound together in passing, so long as they are resolved to thirds, fourths, or fifths on the strong beats, the ostinato will probably be satisfying.

Canons and rounds comprise some of the most fulfilling musical experiences for children in their elementary years. Critical to that fulfillment,

Old Texas
(United States)

Melody over Sustained Pitch

The musical score for "Old Texas" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the melody and a sustained pitch accompaniment. The melody is in 2/4 time, starting on a G4 note and moving through A4, B4, C5, and D5. The sustained pitch accompaniment is a single G4 note. The lyrics are: "I'm goin' to leave Old Tex-as now". The second system shows the melody and a sustained pitch accompaniment. The melody is in 2/4 time, starting on a G4 note and moving through A4, B4, C5, and D5. The sustained pitch accompaniment is a single G4 note. The lyrics are: "They've got no use for the long-horn cow. now They've got no use for the long-horn cow."

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.4

*Melody over Sustained
Pitch*

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.5

Melody with Ostinato
(Also, Round)

Hey, Ho, Nobody Home
(England)

Melody with Ostinato (also, Round)

Hey, Ho! No - bo-dy home, meat nor drink nor mon-ey have I none,
still, will I be mer - ry, ve-ry mer-ry.

ostinato:
Hey, ho, Hey, ho

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.6

Melody with Ostinato
(Also, Round)

Ah, Poor Bird
(England)

Melody with Ostinato (also, Round)

Ah, poor bird, take your flight, Far a - bove the sor - rows of
this sad night.

ostinato:
Poor bird, poor bird

however, is the process by which they are taught. First, the teacher should be certain that the children are secure in singing the song's melody as a larger group, and then in smaller groups. Second, the teacher can cue the class to begin singing and then can begin softly singing the second part at the canon. The number 2 on the scores signifies the point at which the group must be when the teacher begins singing. Third, a small group of children can be selected to sing with the teacher at the canon. Finally, the class can be divided equally, so that the two groups can maintain their independent parts while performing. (see Music Example 4.7).

A descant is an independent melody that can be added above a first and usually more familiar melody. It is higher in pitch than the main melody. Conversely, a countermelody can be added below a familiar main melody. Using some of the procedures for teaching a round, children can sing the melody while the teacher softly adds a descant or countermelody; the class can gradually be divided into two groups. The songs "Skye Boat Song" and "Yo Mamana, Yo!" illustrate the use of the countermelody and descant (see Music Examples 4.8 and 4.9).

Some musical traditions of the world are best sung in unison if a culturally authentic sound is to be rendered. Still, harmony is an important

Scotland's Burning

(England)

① Scot-land's burn - ing Scot-land's burn - ing Look out Look out

②

③ Fi - re Fi - re Fi - re Fi - re pour on wat - er pour on wat - er

Detailed description: The musical score for 'Scotland's Burning' is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first two phrases of the melody, with circled numbers 1 and 2 above the notes. The second staff contains the final two phrases, with circled number 3 above the notes. The lyrics are: 'Scot-land's burn - ing Scot-land's burn - ing Look out Look out' and 'Fi - re Fi - re Fi - re Fi - re pour on wat - er pour on wat - er'.

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.7

Canons

Kaeru No Uta

(Japan)

① Ka - e - ru no u - ta ga ki - ko - e - te ku - ru - yo

②

gwa gwa gwa gwa ge-ro ge-ro ge-ro ge-ro gwa gwa gwa

Detailed description: The musical score for 'Kaeru No Uta' is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first two phrases of the melody, with circled numbers 1 and 2 above the notes. The second staff contains the final two phrases, with circled number 3 above the notes. The lyrics are: 'Ka - e - ru no u - ta ga ki - ko - e - te ku - ru - yo' and 'gwa gwa gwa gwa ge-ro ge-ro ge-ro ge-ro gwa gwa gwa'.

Autumn's Here

(Composed by Lajos Bardos)

Canon

① Au - tumn's here the leaves are tum - bl - ing

②

③

down Sum - mer is gone Win - ter is near.

Detailed description: The musical score for 'Autumn's Here' is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first two phrases of the melody, with circled numbers 1 and 2 above the notes. The second staff contains the final two phrases, with circled number 3 above the notes. The lyrics are: 'Au - tumn's here the leaves are tum - bl - ing' and 'down Sum - mer is gone Win - ter is near.'.

Come, Let's Dance

(England)

① Come, let's dance and sing a song to - geth - er,

②

Come, we'll laugh and have a jol - ly time.

Detailed description: The musical score for 'Come, Let's Dance' is in 6/8 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first two phrases of the melody, with circled numbers 1 and 2 above the notes. The second staff contains the final two phrases, with circled number 3 above the notes. The lyrics are: 'Come, let's dance and sing a song to - geth - er,' and 'Come, we'll laugh and have a jol - ly time.'.

(Continued)

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.7

Canons
(Continued)

Viva la Musica
(Germany)

Canon

Vi - va vi - va la mu - si - ca, Vi - va vi - va la
mu - si - ca, Vi - va la mu - si - ca.

Hava Nashira
(Israel)

Canon

Hah - vah nah - she - rah she - rah lay - loo - yah.
Sing and be joy - ful. sing ah lay - loo - yah.
Hah - vah nah - she - rah she - rah lay - loo - yah.
Sing and be joy - ful. sing ah lay - loo - yah.
Hah - vah nah - she - rah she - rah lay - loo - yah.
Sing and be joy - ful. sing ah lay - loo - yah.

feature of many songs from Anglo-American and African American traditions, as well as from parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific Islands, and much of the Hispanic world. Excerpts from three pieces appear in Music Example 4.10: "Savalivalah," from Samoa, "Ambozado," from Puerto Rico, and "Mbube," from South Africa.

Two- and three-part songs for children in the intermediate grades are increasingly available from publishing companies that specialize in choral music. Children's ability to sing in tune, to sing in harmony, and to render songs with musical sensitivity makes singing a pleasure for them as well as for their listeners.

Skye Boat Song

(Scotland)

Counter melody

melody: Speed, bon-ny boat, like a bird on a wing, On-ward the sail - ors

counter melody:

cry. Car - ry the lad that's born to be king o - ver the sea to

Fine
Skye. Loud the winds howl! Loud the waves roar! Thun-der clouds rend the

air! Baf-fled, our foes stand on the shore. Fol-low they will not dare. *D.C.*

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.8

Counter melody

Yo Mamana, Yo!

(Mozambique)

Descant

descant: Yo ma - ma - na, yo! Yo ma - ma - na, yo!

melody: Yo ma - ma - na, yo! Yo ma - ma - na, yo!

Un-ga fun-ba u - ni si - ya, U - ni si - ya la vu si-wa-na

Un-ga fun-ba u - ni si - ya, U - ni si - ya la vu si-wa-na

Source: As sung by Salamao Manhica. From *Roots and Branches*. © 1994 World Music Press. Used by permission.

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.9

Descant

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.10

Songs with Harmony

Savalivalah

(Samoa)

Three-Part Song

Three-part musical notation in 12/8 time, key of B-flat. The first system consists of three staves. The lyrics are: "Sa - va - li - va - lah" means "Go for a walk." "Tau - ta - la - ta - la" means "Sa - va - li - va - lah" means "Go for a walk." "Tau - ta - la - ta - la" means

Three-part musical notation in 12/8 time, key of B-flat. The lyrics are: "Too much talk." "A - lo - fa iā te oe" means "Too much talk." "A - lo - fa iā te oe" means "Too much talk." "A - lo - fa iā te oe" means

Three-part musical notation in 12/8 time, key of B-flat. The lyrics are: "I love you." "Take it ea - sy," Fai Fai - le - mu. "I love you." "Take it ea - sy," Fai Fai - le - mu. "I love you." "Take it ea - sy," Fai Fai - le - mu.

Ambozado

(Puerto Rico)

Three-Part Song

1. Am - bo - za - do, ma - ta - ri - le, ri - le, ri - le. Am -
 2. ¿Que quie - re us - ted? ¿Que

1. Am - bo - za - do, ma - ta - ri - le, ri - le, ri - le. Am -
 2. ¿Que quie - re us - ted? ¿Que

bo - za - do ma - ta - ri - le re - le ron.
 quie - re us - ted?

bo - za - do ma - ta - ri - le re - le ron.
 quie - re us - ted?

3. Yo qui-ro un pa-je.
4. Ella dice que-lo quie-re.
(El)

MUSIC
EXAMPLE 4.10

(Continued)

Mbube

(South Africa)

Four-Part Song

(1) In the jun - gle the qui - et jun - gle the li - on sleeps to - night.
 (2) In the jun - gle the might - y jun - gle the li - on sleeps to - night.

M - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be

M - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be

M - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be m - bu - be

Children's Choirs

When children have been raised to enjoy singing, they may be eager for the additional musical experiences that membership in a choir provides. Children's choirs in schools, churches, and communities are a growing phenomenon. When viewed as an educational entity as much as a performance one, the choir can extend the musical goals as well as the vocal development of children. Aural skills can be refined, pitch matching can be improved, and children can become exposed to a variety of the historical and cultural repertoire. Within the framework of the school curriculum, a twice-weekly choir meeting of forty-five minutes to an hour can greatly enhance children's vocal and musical development.

School choirs often open membership to children of mixed ages beginning in the third or fourth grade, although two or three choirs can be formed according to age and experience. A public performance for parents or at a school assembly may be one of the choir's targeted goals, so that children can know the joy of performing for others. Seasonal, holiday, and graduation programs that feature children from all classes and grade levels can be capped off with a set of songs performed by the school choir. Citywide or districtwide festivals of elementary school choirs are other occasions for sharing with an audience the results of children's efforts in their rehearsals.

An audition is useful if only to emphasize the commitment of children to singing in a choir, and so that there is an understanding that each child's voice is important in its contribution to the group sound. This is not to say that the choir should be exclusive in its acceptance of only the most talented children. All children who express interest in singing in a school choir should be given a fair chance to become a member of the singing team. An audition allows the director to know the vocal quality and musicianship of each child and helps to guide the type of vocal exercises and repertoire to be used in rehearsal. Children who need remedial work can also be identified through the audition process.

Auditions can take place before or after school or at recess, but preferably not during the music class. To determine range and pitch accuracy, each child can be asked to sing a familiar song such as "America" or "Are You Sleeping?" first in a comfortable middle-range key, and then in higher and lower keys. Vocal quality and range can also be assessed by singing a descending major scale on a neutral syllable, starting first at c' (c above middle C), then at d' , e' , and so forth. Another test of pitch accuracy is having each child sing a set of short melodic patterns that are first sung or played by the teacher. Tonal memory can be tested by lengthening the melodic patterns to be imitated from four to six to eight beats. Finally, vocal independence can be evaluated by asking the student to sing a familiar song ("Are You Sleeping?" "Row Your Boat," "Music Alone Shall Live") while the teacher sings it in canon. These tasks offer the information teachers require in selecting and arranging music for the choir, while they challenge children musically and vocally.

A choir rehearsal may progress in several stages, beginning with physical warm-ups and vocal exercises. To maintain attention, a rehearsal should contain a variety of musical selections and approaches to them. One rule of thumb is to efficiently rehearse each song, or song section, for a maximum of seven minutes before proceeding to a new piece. In the case of a part song, those who are not singing should be silently following their part, which they may be directed to sing on cue at any given moment. When children show signs of distraction or inattention, a physical exercise or rhythmic pattern can be introduced to restore focus and energy. All rehearsals, regardless of how soon a performance may be, should close with a familiar song that is guaranteed to send children on their way with good sounds and feelings about themselves and their membership in the choir. For further advice on organizing a children's choir, see McRae (1991).

Assessment of Singing

Children's singing skills grow through use and the concentrated effort it takes to develop (1) musical (tonal and rhythmic) accuracy, (2) the physical capacity to support a clear and focused vocal quality, and (3) the expressive nuance that flows from understanding the intent of the composer, the poet, and the cultural tradition. The teacher's own vocal training provides not only a model for children to emulate in their process of learning to sing, but also the musical intelligence to be able to distinguish when children's vocal skills are keeping pace with their potential at given ages and stages. Children can also be drawn into understanding what is, and is not, musical, vocally balanced, and expressive singing. Just as a listening ear is vital to the growth of singing skills, listening is key in children's assessment of their own vocal development.

The following questions are useful to have at hand as children sing alone or together, and as they listen to themselves in the act of singing or as they play back a recording of their singing for later critique.

1. Was the singing in tune? Was it flat or sharp? (Could you have filled yourself with deeper breaths and greater energy to support your singing?)
2. Was the singing in time? Was it rhythmically alive? (Could you have been more aware of the music and text ahead of you, and more prepared to sing each pitch, word and syllable, and phrase?)
3. Was the singing relaxed and open, or tense and tight? (Could you have stood taller and with better alignment of your feet, spine, chest, shoulders, and head? Could you have opened yourself up to fuller breaths?)
4. Was the singing expressive of the text? (Could you have put more into making the song meaningful, to charge the listener and give him or her goose bumps in receiving the musical message?)

As children practice singing and hear good singers perform live and on recordings, they will naturally be drawn into grasping the components of singing well. They will come to recognize different vocal styles and the spectrum of expressive qualities of which the voice is capable for conveying various meanings. The teacher may wish to record children's singing progress by arranging for periodic tape-recording sessions of students on a given song or exercise. Such a procedure can happen at the end of a scholastic term, or following a study unit or a concert program, or on a bimonthly basis, when children can file one by one to a closet or out to the hall to sing a song or several phrases into a tape recorder. Such recordings can become a part of student portfolios, tracing the development of children's vocal range and tessitura, vocal strength, musical accuracy, and expressivity. Children can be given these tapes at the end of the year as documentation of their growth as young singers, to be shared with their families. Assessment of children's singing, however, occurs naturally in the daily process of a class singing activity, when a teacher may ask children in rapid-fire succession to sing a phrase or a song segment in small groups, duos, and even individually. He or she is in effect providing assessment at every step of the instructional process.

Reasons to Sing

Children are still singing despite rumors that the media-rich world in which they live has turned them to passive listeners and lip-syncers. The voice is the one musical instrument that all possess and for which no rental fee or elaborate arrangement for private instruction is necessary. For many children, singing is the path that they will choose to experience as participants and performers the great joy of music. Teachers who enjoy singing will further kindle the interests of children, because enjoyment is irresistible; it is contagious.

Scenario

It is September, and Ms. Patterson has begun the school year with a plan for her fourth-grade children at Thompson Elementary School: to learn to sing in parts. Her students arrive, settling in at the outer rim of a large braided carpet of many colors, three girls here, a couple of girls there, and the eleven boys packed in shoulder to shoulder within about one-third of the rim. Ms. Patterson stands by the piano, just outside the circle, plays a few chords to bring children to attention, and announces the plan: "Because you have all had four years of experience in our music program, and your voices have developed such strength, we will be learning to sing harmony this year—in parts." She shares the sequence of the day's lesson with them: "We'll begin with some vocal warm-ups, and then we'll be ready to learn our first real part song, 'Old Texas.'" With a flourish of several more chords to set the key, she directs them to sing a major scale on a neutral syllable and then on solfège

syllables, accompanying them chordally on each pitch they sing. Most of the girls are with her, and a few of the boys, while others are chanting and half-shouting the syllables (but in a very rhythmic manner). She proceeds to pitch-matching exercises, playing a brief melodic phrase at the piano to which they respond in imitation on a neutral syllable. “Pretty good,” she says, in part to balance her remarks to a group of both in-tune singers and others who seem uncertain, uninterested, or unable to match pitches.

As promised, Ms. Patterson proceeds to introduce the children to “Old Texas.” She steps into the middle of the circle and sings the melody to the children in a light voice. To connect to the children, she moves from child to child, making eye contact as she sings the song four times through. Most of the children are attentive, and two or three children are already singing along with her. Having introduced the song, she then breaks the song into two-measure phrases, singing and then cueing the children to sing after her. There is a sequence: first she (and then the children) sings the phrase with the song’s words, then on neutral syllables, and lastly with solfège syllables. Phrase by phrase, most of the children are coming to grips with the song’s melody (five or six of the boys are singing with a cowboy twang and swaying left to right, but Ms. Patterson finds their performance otherwise acceptable—and amusing).

Ms. Patterson directs the children to sing the song in unison from start to finish, and they do so with gusto, so she announces that they will now sing in parts. “I’ll sing first, and then you follow, on cue, in imitation of what I just sang. Listen to me, watch, and sing when I signal you.” She sings with her strong and clear voice, and as she sustains the pitch, she cues the children, who stagger in after her. She acknowledges their efforts, and they try it again. About half of the class is entering on cue, while the others are rapidly losing interest. Ms. Patterson continues to walk around the circle, trying to make eye contact as she sings, and then signaling the children in. She then divides the class into the girls as leaders and the boys as followers, and she directs the two groups in their performance of “Old Texas” four times through. The attempt is a shaky one, as the girls outsing the boys by twice as much strength, and the girls are singing head tones while the boys continue to twang. “It’s a start, and you’re on your way to singing in harmony,” Ms. Patterson concludes in a cheerful voice, knowing that they will take up the song again in the next class.

Questions

1. Were Ms. Patterson’s exercises appropriate in warming up the young singers? Why or why not?
2. How was Ms. Patterson effective in her teaching of the melody of the song and the elementary part-singing? What might she have added or deleted to make for a more effective lesson?
3. How might Ms. Patterson extend and develop this beginning lesson in part-singing in the next class?

REVIEW

1. Trace the development of children's voices from early childhood through the intermediate grades, with special attention to changes in range and quality.
2. What is PSP? How is it attained?
3. What is a developmental sequence for children's part-song singing?
4. What are the components of an audition for membership in a children's choir?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Cite evidence to support the view of singing as a physical as well as mental endeavor.
2. Choose a traditional song and write a vocal ostinato for it that suits second graders and fourth graders.

PROJECTS

1. Prepare a song to teach by rote and by note. How do the approaches differ? How might aspects of each be combined over several lessons?
2. Collect ten songs that you feel all children in preschool or elementary school should know. Analyze the songs for their melodic and rhythmic content, order them from less to more complex, and determine the grade level at which you would teach these songs.
3. Visit a music store specializing in choral scores, and begin a card file of the song title, composer and arranger, publisher, and range and tessitura for songs and part songs useful in music class and in the school choir. Select a set of songs that could conceivably comprise an autumn, winter, or spring program.