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*Choral  
Music  
Education*

PAUL F. ROE



**PAUL F. ROE**

*Professor of Music Education  
North Texas State University*

***Choral  
Music  
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## **preface**

This text may be used for a one-semester course or a two-semester course in secondary methods or conducting. If a one-semester course is necessary, the teacher will need to discuss three or four chapters in depth and skim the remainder (see the following paragraph for a suggested procedure). When the student becomes a teacher, he will continue to find the book a source of many usable ideas and solutions to problems. The book should also prove to be very valuable to the in-service teacher who is striving to improve his teaching and directing, since it gives an unusually comprehensive look at the many facets of vocal music education. It is my sincere hope that the reader will find this book a practical and useful tool in accomplishing the *development of skills and musical taste in his students.*

The chapters in this book tend to fall into three natural divisions. Chapters I, II, and III, the functional music program and music manage-

ment procedures, investigate the practical administrative procedures that are necessary both in and out of the classroom. The next four chapters contain the very important areas of vocal fundamentals, sight-reading, general music, and junior high problems. The author has found himself spending a great deal of time in the secondary methods class working with this subject matter. Chapters VIII through XI form the third large area of emphasis. A class in conducting will spend most of its time on the chapter on conducting, with increasing time and attention, as its skill increases, to the other chapters on rehearsal techniques, style, and performances. If these matters are not covered well in conducting classes, they should be in the methods course.

The book begins with a discussion of public relations and student recruitment. Recommendations are made for junior and senior high school music curriculums. Ranges and tessiture, voice testing, and seating arrangements are presented in the chapter on the functional music program. The closely related area of management is treated in Chapter III. The teacher must know how to handle budgets, music, supplies, equipment, records, and reports simply and efficiently. Some help is provided in the use of visual aids, student grading, lesson planning, and music selection.

Chapters IV and V are two of the most important chapters in the book. They discuss in great detail how to obtain sound vocal fundamentals with large groups of students through the employment of various physical and psychological techniques. Time must be taken from each class period to teach sight-reading. Music is a non-verbal language, and living musical experiences with tone and pitch and rhythm are the only means by which sight-reading skills may be built. Chapter VI tells how to investigate and deepen the students' sight-reading ability and how to build upon these abilities through rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and ear training drills that grow from problems presented by interesting literature. A constant effort must be made to have the students gain the capacity to deal with several elements simultaneously and learn musicality in the process. Sight-reading literature and the sight-reading contest are also included. The junior high and middle school age tend to be somewhat neglected in books on the secondary school. Chapter VII provides some basic information on the physical, psychological, and vocal problems of these students plus some suggestions concerning the teaching of the general music class.

Enough information on conducting is included in Chapter VIII to make this text usable for a college conducting class. A presentation is made of the preparatory beat, beat patterns, releases, the use of the left hand, and cueing. Important information is also given on ways to control pitches, vowel sounds and consonant closures, and dynamics. Carrying a phrase and influencing style through flexible beat patterns convey the very essence

of musicianship. Class control in beginning and general classroom activities is attained through enthusiasm, creativity, musicianship, and good student-teacher rapport. A careful look at these processes is taken in Chapter IX. Then, an order of rehearsal and some rehearsal techniques are given. Methods of memorizing, ways of presenting a "whole" concept of a score to a choir, how to drill when necessary so as to use rehearsal time economically, and ways of teaching interpretation are some of the areas discussed. All the important aspects of music may be learned in a meaningful and interesting context when style and musical traditions are taught.

Chapter X gives some general understandings of dynamics, harmony, notation, melody, tempo, and tone quality typical of each period of musical history. Chronological listings of the composers and their large-form choral works are given. The concluding chapter discusses all aspects of performance from choosing and building the program to the final production. A work time-schedule for the performance is set up, with specific suggestions for tasks that should be taken care of during each period of time starting three months before and culminating in the program. The chapter concludes with suggestions for television studio productions and a pro and con discussion of the contest and festival.

The author is grateful to the many people who have encouraged the writing of this book. Great appreciation goes to Dean Kenneth Cuthbert for permitting manuscript copies of the book to be used and improved in secondary methods and conducting classes for six years. Credit must be given to the many classes whose suggestions have helped to adjust the content. Special thanks are due the musicologists Dr. Dika Newlin and Dr. Cecil Adkins for their assistance in checking the accuracy of the chapter on style and musical tradition. The active encouragement of Dr. Robert Ottman and Dr. David McGuire is appreciated. And finally, much appreciation is due Miss Diana Sellers for her help in shaping the final form of the book.

*Paul F. Roe*

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## Introduction

The humanistic, existential philosophy, which is presently affecting the thinking of philosophers and psychologists, places great emphasis on an individual's self-development and self-fulfillment. That is, each person should try to become the best person he can, to become fully human in the finest sense. A prophetic voice proclaiming music as an essential part of "becoming fully human in the finest sense" is that of Abraham H. Maslow,<sup>1</sup> eminent psychologist, who insists that music must be placed at the core of the secondary school curriculum, not at the periphery where educators have been wont to place it. Only the subject that changes life and makes a difference in the attitudes of the learner is truly important. Music possesses the power to move to a unique degree, perhaps to a greater degree than any other subject in the curriculum. Maslow talks about this power to move as a "peak" experience. Many other areas contain some degree of this rare quality; for example, the scientist who combines elements and makes a discovery will undergo a "peak" experience. However, music and dancing and art offer more easily accessible avenues.

Reinforcing Maslow's convictions are the pronouncements of the Tanglewood Symposium and such men as Delmas F. Miller, 1968 president of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In the March 18, 1968,

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, "Music Education and Peak Experience," Copyright © *Music Educators Journal* (February 1968), pp. 73-75, 163-64, 167-69, 171. Reprinted with permission.

issue of *The Seattle Times*, Miller was quoted as saying that the two most important subjects taught in American high schools are physical education and the fine arts. These subjects, he said, help students “physically and emotionally” to withstand modern pressures. Miller warned music educators that they face a hard battle in convincing secondary school principals that music courses deserve a key place in curricula, but he pledged the assistance of his organization.

The great task of education is to assist every person to know more about himself and his universe. All the major academic disciplines contribute to this knowledge. Music may take its rightful place as one of the major disciplines only when the main teaching emphasis is placed upon increasing the student’s knowledge of the innate qualities and subtle values of music.

Music cannot be taught for aesthetic insight unless the instructor carefully and regularly plans his lessons with that goal in mind. The music he selects must be well-constructed and expressive (see Chapter III). It must be of a suitable difficulty for the age and experience of his students, spanning a gamut of complexity *from* some music that can be almost completely comprehended, *through* much music that will require a length of time to understand and master, *to* some numbers that are unreachable but stretch musical imaginations. The sequence of learning advocated by Reimer<sup>2</sup> should be observed. Reimer says that all levels of classes should start with an *experience* with the music; then *study* should be pursued so that the students will *re-experience* the music with increased understanding and better technique.

The teacher of general music has an opportunity to teach the entire range of things musical to a class that is not bound by performance pressures. Singing, playing, composing, listening to, and sight-reading music are effective means for making clear how music operates. Bodily movements, analysis, discussion, evaluation, and reading are some other means for obtaining growing insight. Students must be constantly exposed to the musical elements (melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tone color, form, and style) in a variety of carefully chosen music in a manner that will help develop musical sensitivity and understanding.

In the performance class, it is quite possible for a member of a fine choir to experience a thrill in a well-executed number, even when little insight has been provided. The modern music educator is increasingly being made aware that teaching for performance alone is not enough. Students who are involved in a cooperative analysis and improvement of interpretation, tone balance, and quality are creatively evolving higher standards of musicianship. Encourage these young singers to adjudicate their own performance;

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<sup>2</sup> Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970).

to decide whether the song was sung and interpreted as it should be; and to constructively criticize the spots that require attention. Students will be more excited about an interpretation or tone quality they have helped to create than about one produced by the teacher alone. Don't allow monotony in technical details to put out the fire of interest. Music that is taught so that the learner is given opportunities to taste and feel and obtain an intelligent grasp of style, texture, form, and all other musical elements provides numerous additional opportunities for the "peak" experience to occur.



# ***Part One***



# **Chapter I**

## **promotional activities and recommendations for scheduling and curriculum**

A vocal teacher's unusually good musicianship and personality may result in a fine reputation in spite of piled-high desks and inattention to details. This accomplishment does not excuse the choral musician from providing the proper teaching-learning environment. His efforts will be enhanced by quick and efficient ways of keeping records and getting things done.

The experienced teacher has at his command a good plan for the organization of classes, music files, student reports, programs, the class roll, seating arrangements, the appearance of the classroom, and fee collection. Since many of these details are routine procedures, the inexperienced teacher will need to plan ways to do them and should include them in his lesson plan until he becomes familiar with them.

From recommendations of the nineteen state chairmen of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 123 public high schools recommended for their music departments were contacted in an



attempt to discover some excellent practices. Responses to questionnaires were received from 105 schools, fairly evenly distributed between schools of under 400 students, 400 to 700 and over 700. Part of the first three chapters is based upon interpretations of this research project<sup>1</sup> and also based upon *Music and Art in the Public Schools*, a research publication of the National Education Association (NEA), 1963. The study of the functional music program consists of three major parts: promotional activities, recommendations for scheduling and curriculum, and student activities. The first two will be discussed in this chapter. Some ways to organize singers will be examined in Chapter II.

## PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Student Recruitment

Recruit constantly. There are many subjects and activities vying for the students' time.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, each student with potential must receive assurance that he has ability and that the music teacher wants him as a student.

#### *Personal contact*

Wherever music is a required subject, a stimulating and knowledgeable teacher will influence students to register for elective classes, and no real recruitment problem will exist. Personal contact with students, brought about through team-teaching of all the music from sixth grade through high school, has resulted in superior choral departments. Students in your church choir may be persuaded to join school groups. Close friends of school choir members should be invited to join, if they have musical ability. Recruit students from study halls. Audition students who have been recommended by music teachers. Also open the auditions to *anyone* who wishes to try out. Include at least a few of the most intelligent and most popular in the next year's music classes if they are qualified.

#### *Guidance counselors*

Make friends with the guidance counselors. They can make or break the music program. Make sure they are fully informed. Give the lists of recom-

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<sup>1</sup> Paul F. Roe, *The Internal Administrative Organization in High School Music Education* (Unpublished dissertation, The University of Nebraska, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> See "Scheduling Difficulties," p. 21, for a detailed listing of these problems.