

# **Mike and Melody in the Middle:**

Motivating, Teaching and Engaging The Vocal Musician During their Middle School Years.



**Presented by**

**Raynard Brown**

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**CHORAL**

**Missouri Music Educators Association**  
*A Federated State Association of the National Association for Music Education*

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Middle school students are motivated by a teacher who is in charge; they enjoy a teacher who creates an atmosphere of “you belong here”, and the assurance of success:

*My core beliefs, thoughts and statements for every student....every single student*

*You are created to be creative*

*I always give my best because I have every confidence that you will be successful at making music*

*Good, Better, Best Never Let it Rest until your Good is Better and Better is Best.*

*Do you have any idea of how wonderfully made you are. You are capable of doing above and beyond anything you can think or imagine..... according to the power that is at work in you.*

*Your choir will only be as awesome as you are. Engage with your Mind, Body, Spirit and Voice ... in that order.*



## Motivating/Engaging

### 1. Step by step plodding with purpose (know your vision)

#### a) **Discipline/Focused/Challenging Rehearsal**

- ◆ *Insist on building and maintaining a sense of community and family*
- ◆ *Practice theme for the day/week (tone, diction, etc.....)*
- ◆ *Remind them often why they are in (THEIR )class.....TO SING*
- ◆ *Randomly pick your best to sing a passage, or sing another sections part then two, etc...*

#### b) **Class Motto (sayings) Build a singing community with purpose**

- ◆ *Mind, body, spirit, voice*
- ◆ *Sing the right pitch or don't sing at all (not as painful as it sounds...lay the ground work)*
- ◆ *It's not about you, it's up to you (not as painful as it sounds...lay the ground work)*
- ◆ *Great music.....better people ( North High School Brian Reeves Director)*
- ◆ *Music doesn't live, you do...the music isn't boring, you are....etc...(painful. But true)*
- ◆ *This room is for singers striving to be musicians*

***Choir is a great reward all by its self.....certificates are like wood hay and stubble they all burn..... but experiences last forever ..... I do love giving out certificate***

2. **Always work to build relationship** (*student to the art, teacher to student and then student to student*)
3. **Striving for excellence means embracing the hard things and making the “boring” exciting**
  - ◆ *Encourage students to perform alone and in small groups OFTEN!! Celebrate their accomplishments.....any accomplishment.....make it a big deal.*
  - ◆ *Keep critiques clear, positive and honest .... they have ears*
  - ◆ *Invite singers to come in to perform for your students...nothing beats a live performance ( only the best....always more male performers or performers that will rally even the guys)*
  - ◆ *Always allow your girls who are driven an opportunity to shine*
  - ◆ *Show videos of singers who look like them and are better than them (documentaries, YouTube)*
  - ◆ *Remind them often why you know they’re the best...or can be the best?*

**Positive and truthful reinforcement goes a long way because the more successful students feel, the more effort they will put into succeeding! !**

**Don't be fooled...kids know when it's bad.....let them know when it's bad and how they can fix it ....or why it can't be fixed.**

4. **Intrinsic motivation is always best but if you must use Extrinsic motivation here is an idea**
  - ◆ *Choir Weekend Retreat*
    - *Find a retreat center closest to you*
    - *Team building courses*
    - *Invite their former/future teachers to come and do workshops*
    - *Have entertainment ( high schools, college level or well-trained community group*
    - *Bring in fellow music educators, drama teachers, performers to do workshops*
5. **Kids take choir to sing.....even if they don't know it yet**
6. **Encourage failure with purpose....students are told.....**
  - ◆ *“fail out loud so you don't make that mistake again”*
  - ◆ *“make loud mistakes in this room so only excellence happens in the other”*
  - ◆ *“this room is a safe room...I will protect you from ridicule with a vengeance”*
  - ◆ *“applaud consistent and true effort”*
7. **Recruiting into your program**

- ◆ *Make a professional HD quality video starring your students discussing the program*
- ◆ *Write personal letters to every 5<sup>th</sup> grader in your feeder (at least with their name on it)*
- ◆ *Have your 6<sup>th</sup> graders write down the names of 5<sup>th</sup> graders they know then ask them to check off the ones they've recruited*
- ◆ *Keep recruiting the students you have...you want (isn't as bad as it sounds)*



# Teaching

## 1. Literature

### a) Music Choices

- ◆ **What does it teach**
- ◆ **Challenging**
- ◆ **Above grade level**
- ◆ **Does it support your core musical beliefs**
- ◆ **Don't be afraid to dig...search....hunt...scavenge....beg.....shhhh(borrow) great music**
- ◆ **It's not all found on Cd's**
  - *Ask and keep asking others for ideas*
  - *Try something different...stretch ...dare to be different...you don't have follow the crowd*
  - *Search YouTube for performances by choirs singing the style(s) you're looking for*
  - *ACDA website*

### b) Literature we've been successful with at Northeast Middle

- ◆ *What's the difference between SAB and 3 part*
- ◆ *Choose music that's best for your students*
- ◆ *What, Why, or when to choose SATB, SSA, 3 part, 2 Part*
- ◆ *Refer to the choral literature attachment*

## 2. Theory

- ◆ *Most theory concepts are reintroduced and/or taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade*
- ◆ *First 10 minutes of the class (remember they took choir to sing)*
- ◆ *Choose a curriculum that works best for you*
- ◆ *After 6<sup>th</sup> grade concepts are taught within the context of the songs*
- ◆ *A great time to teach or reinforce theory concepts is when your absence and reinforce them on your return.*
- ◆ *Refer to attachment*

## 3. Sightreading

- ◆ *Daily, first 10 minutes*
- ◆ *Daily have someone (or small group) in your choir sight read*
- ◆ *Sight read with in the context of the octavo (this is how we sight read most often)*
- ◆ *Have students write in the music the sol-fege syllables and rhythms*
- ◆ *Refer to attachment*

### a. Sweat the small stuff

- ◆ *Concert Pitch (beginning of the hour)*
- ◆ *Posture Perfect*
- ◆ *Practice walking on and off the risers (sometimes daily)*
- ◆ *Never tire of demanding excellence*
- ◆ *Have them take ownership...it's not your choir, it's **Theirs***

#### 4. How to teach a new piece while creating independence in singing?

- ◆ *Here we go rote down the row...don't hate appreciate*
- ◆ *Speak the rhythms no matter how easy*
- ◆ *Students download parts on the smart device*
- ◆ *Write out solfege in sections and then sing it in solfege*
- ◆ *Hallway practice with Cd/mP3 player*
- ◆ *Have students sing sections that have been rehearsed individually or in a small group*
- ◆ *Sing a cappella often*
- ◆ *Call and response*

#### 5. Other musical supplements to enhance learning

I use the following videos for gaining insight to how to be a better teacher/musician but I also use these video to walk my students through how to become better musicians, inspire them to become better performers and most of all inspire them to imagine.....

- ◆ **Video Resources Helpful in the Classroom**
  - **Vocal Transformation Christine Bass Hal Leonard 2DVD Set**
  - **Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice with Dr. Anton Armstrong and Dr. Andre' Thomas** *featuring The American Boys Choir, The Newark Boys Chorus and the Princeton Girlchoir*
  - **Raising the Bar** Multimedia Resources For Authentic **World Music Performance Music From The Republic of Georgia Volume I** *For Mixed, Youth & Children's Choirs created by Patty Cuyler & Moliie Stone*
  - **Raising the Bar: Traditional Choral Music from South Africa, Volumes 1 & 2. I** *For Mixed, Youth & Children's Choirs created by Patty Cuyler & Moliie Stone*
- ◆ **With the advent of technology at our and our students' finger tips.....**
  - *Google Classroom*
  - *[https://sites.google.com/site/choralimperativeresources/South\\_Africa](https://sites.google.com/site/choralimperativeresources/South_Africa)*
  - **[OneMinuteMusicLesson.com](http://www.oneminutemusiclesson.com)** a site for teaching music theory from the most basic concepts by using short video lessons
  - **<http://www.berkleeshares.com/voice/voicellessonsinging>** very clear explanation of the mechanic of breathing
  - **<http://www.musictheory.net/>** Includes quality theory tutorials, and interactive identification and ear training drills in note reading, key signatures, intervals and triads. AhhhhhhMaaaazzzzzzing!!

- [www.creatingmusic.com](http://www.creatingmusic.com)  
Elementary-age students can enjoy exploring, creating and manipulating music.
- <http://www.good-ear.com/>

**Teaching Music through Performance in Middle School Choir:**

***A breakthrough in middle school choral teaching***—seven years in the making!

*Frank Abrahams, Judy Bowers, Paul D. Head, James Jordan, Patrick Liebergen, and Sherri Porterfield compiled and edited by Frank Abrahams and Paul D. Head*

## ❖ 6<sup>TH</sup> Grade

*I have found success with the following songs either at Parkway Northeast middle or directing clinics for 6<sup>th</sup> grade or choirs of unchanged voices.*

Title	Composer	Part	Publisher
Al Shlosha D'Varim	Alan Naplan	2 part	boosey and hawks
Arrow and The Song	Lightfoot	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Bonse Aba	Johnson	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Camino Caminante	Hatfield	2 part	Boosey- Hawkes 480048771
Cerandeio	Green	2 part	Hal-Leonard 8744969
Cantar	Althouse	2 part	Alfred Music Publishing
Child of Tomorrow	Patterson	2 part	brilee
Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel	Emerson	2 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Dreams That Children Dream	Schram	2 part	Celsie Staggers
Everlasting Melody	Dilworth	2 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Exultate Jusiti	Perry	2 part	Alfred publishing
Follow The Drinking Gourd	Dilworth	2 part	Hal leonard
Flight of the Grackles	Gardner	2 part	brilee
Gloria Deo	Lightfoot	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Gratias Deo	Lightfoot	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Greatest Love of All	Chinn	2 part	
Hanerot Halalu	Chass	2 part	Shawnee Press
Hine Ma Tov	Naplan	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes
Hitori	Donnelly	2 part	- Hal Leonard Corporation
I Give You A song	Bernon	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Inscription of Hope	Stroope	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Jambo Karibo Kwa Africa	Simms	2 part	Alfred Music Publishing
J'entends Le Moulin	Crocker	2 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Jubilate Deo	Lightfoot	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Lightning	Gilpin	2 part	Heritage Music Press
Ose Shalom	Leavitt	2 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
The Rhythm of My Soul	Dilworth	2 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
The Silence and the Song	Patterson	2 part	BriLee Music Publishing
Taykovina	Jasperse	2 part	Shawnee Press

When I Close My Eyes	Papoulis	2 part	Boosey & Hawkes
Will You Teach Me	Johnson	2 part	Heritage Music Press
You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch	Funk	2 part	Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.
Yo Le Canto Todo El Dia	Brunner	2 part	

## 7<sup>TH</sup> Grade

*I have found success with the following songs either at Parkway Northeast middle or directing clinics for 7th grade or choirs of changed and unchanged voices.*

Title	Composer	Part	Publisher
Adoramus Te	Crocker	3 part	- Hal Leonard Corporation
All Ye Who Music Loves	Spevacek	3 part	Heritage15/1516
Benedictus and Hosanna	Crocker	3 part	HL8745180
Bist Du Mei Mir	Robinson	3 part	Shawnee
Bless The Lord Oh My Suld	Eilers	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Blue Skies	Emerson	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Bonse Aba	Johnson	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Cantate:Three Lating Settings	Estes	3 part	Alfred 1181
Can You Hear	Papoulis	3 part Treble	Boosey & Hawkes
Come in from the Firefly Darkness	Bernon	3 part	
Dansi Na Kuimba	Perry	3 part	Alfred Music Publishing
Deo Decamus Gratias	Johnson	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Didn't My Lord	Emerson	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Dure, Durme	Snyder	3 part	
Elijah Rock	Emerson	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Et In Terra Pax	Lighfoot	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Everlasting Melody	Dilworth	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Exhilaration Is The Breeze	Ginsberg	3 part	- Heritage Music Press
A Festive Alleluia	Lightfoot	3 part	Heritage
Festival Cantate	Johnson	3 part	Heritage
Fire Fire	Emerson	3 part	
Gaudeamus Hodie	Rentz	3 part	Carl Fischer LLC
Gloria In Excelsis Deo	Portefield	3 part	Heritage 15/1099
Gratias Agimus Tibi	Beery	3 part	BriLee Music
Guardians of a Dream	Estes	3 part	Heritage Music
Inscription of Hope	Stroope	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Je le Vous Dirai	Porterfield	3 part	Heritage Music
Je ne Fu Jamai Si Aise	Estes	3 part	Shawnee
Joshua Fit the Battle	Shaw	3 part	Hal Leonard
A Jubilant Song	Farnell	3 part	Alfred Music
Kyrie Eleison	Rentz	3 part	Heritage Music Press

Laudate Dominum	Mozart/Rentz	3 part	Heritage
Laus Deo	Leavitt	3 part	Shawnee Press
Let Me Ride	Emerson	3 part	Hal Leonard Corporation
Lightning	Gilpin	3 part	Heritage Music Press
Mon Coeur Se Recommande A Vous	Russell	3 part	Alfred
Shenandoah	Printz	3 part	- Alfred Music Publishing
Sing Jubilate Deo	Estes	3 part	Alfred Music Publishing
Three Contemporary Latin Settings	Estes	3 part	

## 8<sup>TH</sup> Grade

*I have found success with the following songs either at Parkway Northeast middle or directing clinics for 7th grade or choirs of changed and unchanged voices.*

Title	Composer	Part	Publisher
And The Glory of The Lord	Pugh		
Benedicamus Domino	Printz	SSATB	Heritage Difficult
Benedicamus Domino	Gilpin	SATB	Heritage
Cantate Domino	Brunner	SATB	- Boosey & Hawkes
Carol of The Bells	Wilhousky	SATB	Carl Fischer LLC
Dies Irae	Liebergen	SATB	Alfred Music Publishing
The Epitaph	Martin	SATB	Shawnee Press
Exultate	Lightfoot	SATB and 3 Part	Heritage
Fanfare and March on Gloria	Drennan	SATB	Hal Leonard Corporation
Festival Sanctus	Leavitt	SATB	Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.
Festival Jubilater	Rentz	SATB	Shawnee
Gabi Gabi	Powell	SATB	Hal Leonard Corporation
Gaudeamus	Lightfoot	SATB	Heritage Music Press
Give us Hope	Papoulis	SATB	Boosey & Hawkes
Gloria In Excelsis Deo	Martens/Vivaldi	SATB	Alfred Music Publishing
Je Le Vous Dirai	Leavitt	SATB	Hal Leonard Corporation
Jubilant Gloria	Lighfoot	SATB	Heritage Music Press
A Jubilant Psalms	Crocker	SATB	Hal Leonard Corporation
Ka Hia Manu	Hatfield	SATB	Boosey & Hawkes
Kyrie	Leavitt	SATB	Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.
Laus Deo	Leavitt	SATB	Shawnee Press
Lebenslust	Gordan	SATB	Tetra/Continuo Music Corp.
Lux Aeterna	Porter	SATB	Heritage Music Press
My Song Goes On	Rentz	SATB	Carl Fischer LLC
Niska Banja	Page	SATB	Boosey & Hawkes
O Nata Lux	Porter	SATB	Heritage Music Press
Oh Yini	Nyber	SATB	Walton Music
Open Thou Mine Eyes	Harlan	SATB	Shawnee Press
Ose Shalom	Leavitt	SATB	Hal Leonard Corporation
Oye	Papoulis	SATB	Boosey & Hawkes
Prayer	Gordon	SATB	Carl Fischer LLC



Psalm 100	Clausen	SATB	Shawnee Press
Sing Jubilate Deo	Riley	SATB	Southern Music
Somewhere I Have Never Traveled	Foster	SATB	Santa Barbara Music
Stars I Shall Find	Johnson	SATB	Heritage Music Press
Tatkovina	Jasperse	SATB	Shawnee Press
Voces Lucis	Ramsey	SATB	Santa Barbara Music
Who See's	Porterfield	SATB	Heritage Music Press