

work on centering the sound for resonance and support. Young singers sometimes just need to hear other high school students with great core and resonance to know what is expected.

- **Articulation:** Pair articulation with agility to achieve clarity and accuracy. Kinesthetic motions should be paired with most warm-ups and used while learning repertoire. The more physically involved the singers are, the more measurable their progress. Teach them all the correct terminology: diphthong, syllabic stress, elision, fricatives, voiced consonants, *messa di voce* and so on. Students enjoy learning these terms, which are fun and relevant to their music-making.

When all of these concepts are in play, the result is a free, natural, energized, vibrant sound. The better our singing, the easier it becomes, and the more singers will enjoy their sound, as individuals and an ensemble. Students want to achieve excellence, and conductors need to gain the skills required in order to equip them to meet this goal.

NOTES

1. Holt, Michele and James Jordan, *The School Choral Program*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2008. 113.
2. Conable, Barbara. *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body: The Practical Application of Body Mapping and the Alexander Technique to Making Music*, rev. ed. Portland, OR: Andover Press, 2000.
3. Buchanan, Heather and Matthew Mehaffey. *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir Vol. 2*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2007. 114.

Junior High/ Middle School Choirs

Tom T. Shelton Jr., National Chair

Celebrating the Music of G. F. Handel with Middle School/Junior High Choirs

by

Maribeth Yoder-White
and Tom Shelton

Handel is the greatest composer who ever lived. I would bare my head and kneel at his grave.

—Ludwig van Beethoven

The respect engendered in this quote by Beethoven highlights the impact of George Frederic Handel on the musical world. As one of the most prolific composers of all time, Handel's contributions to the oratorio genre are unrivaled. April 14, 2009, marks the 250th anniversary of Handel's death. His popularity and immense body of work have led many modern composers, and music scholars, to edit and arrange Handel's pieces for multiple voicings. Many of these editions and arrangements are suitable for middle school choral ensembles.

Careful analysis of Handel's repertoire prior to instruction allows choral

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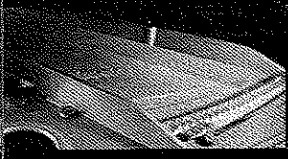
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directors to determine effective instructional techniques that enhance and cultivate stylistic singing. Studying a Handel composition may initially seem daunting for middle school singers, but inclusion of even a single piece of music during the school year offers opportunity for broadening the choral experience. Additionally, a study of Handel's music affords the learner an opportunity to simultaneously explore and develop multiple musical and non-musical skills and understandings.

For example, students might:

- Research Handel's life, including his birth/death dates; country of birth

and life; marriage; children; and culture (clothing, beliefs, struggles, customs, music, etc.). Extend by having students write a biographical sketch; compare/contrast other works by Handel; and create a timeline of Handel's life. Explore various ways of presenting the information uncovered, including interviews (another student interviewing the student portraying Handel); dramatic presentations; creating dramas about Handel's life; writing reports and then having other students read the report for comprehension; and creating timelines of the Baroque period, including events and other people of interest.

- Investigate historical background of compositions (e.g., impetus, influences, etc.).
- Analyze the story—(who, what, where, when, how, etc.; character, plot, theme, style). Have students write about what they imagine might happen next in the story.
- Analyze the lyrics for when were they written, who wrote them, what was the impetus for writing them, what meaning and emotion are expressed, etc.
- Create a vocabulary or word wall that includes words from lyrics and musical terminology.
- Analyze melodic, intervallic, and rhythmic content of each voice part and represent findings via musical terminology (e.g., range, tessitura).

Additionally, many Handel pieces provide opportunity for instrumental accompaniment, thereby adding interest and variety to programming, and offering

further challenge to singers.

The following are suggested works by Handel appropriate for middle school ensembles of various voicings.

Unison

"Art Thou Troubled?" (from *Rodelinda*), Handel/Bartle, Hinshaw HMC1431 (with keyboard or string parts)

"He Shall Feed His Flock" (from *Messiah*), Handel/Burkhardt, Morningstar MSM-50-9404

"How Beautiful are the Feet of Them" (from *Messiah*), Handel/Rao, Boosey & Hawkes M-051-46702-0

O Let the Merry Bells Ring, Handel/Rao, Boosey & Hawkes OCTB6509

"O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion" (from *Messiah*), Handel/Bankson, Morningstar MSM-50-1306

"Where'er You Walk" (from *Semele*), Handel/Cough-Leigher, EC Schirmer 426 (orchestra parts available)

SA

"Ombra Mai Fu" (from *Serse*) and "Lascia Ch'io Pianga" (from *Rinaldo*), Handel/Stroope, Alliance AMP0607 (with Keyboard or Strings)

"Lascia Ch'io Pianga" and "Bel Piacere," Handel/Perry, Shawnee Press E0320

"Let's Imitate Her Note Above" (from *Alexander's Feast*), Handel/Hines, Lawson-Gould LG52612

TB

"Sing for Joy!" (from *Judas Maccabeus*), Handel/Spivecek, Heritage 15/2356H

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Aberdeen International Youth Festival, Scotland
July 31-Aug 10, '09, '10, '11

World Choir Games, China July 15-26, '10	Rome June & July yearly	Budapest April 5-9, '09
	Venice May yearly	

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Three-Part Mixed

"Art Thou Troubled?" (from *Rodelinda*),
Handel/Porterfield, 15/1434H

"Sing for Joy" (from *Judas Maccabeus*),
Handel/Spévacek, Heritage 15/1585H

"Sing Unto God" (from *Judas Maccabeus*),
Handel/Robinson, Alfred 27253

"Swell the Full Chorus" (from *Solomon*),
Handel/Porterfield, Heritage 15/1232H
(with optional trumpets)

"Your Voices Tune" (from *Alexander's Feast*),
Handel/Porterfield, Heritage
15/1308H

SATB

"Awake the Trumpet's Lofty Sound"
(from *Samson*), Handel/Liebergen, Alfred
16207 (with optional trumpets)

"Hallelujah, Amen" (from *Judas Mac-
cabeus*), Handel/Davison, E.C. Schirmer
ECS 304, (orchestra parts available)

"Haste Thee, Nymph" (from *L'Allegro*),
Handel/Mason, Walton Music W7007

"O Praise the Mighty Lord" (from
Joshua), Handel/Liebergen, Carl Fischer
CM8384

"Sing With Joy" (from *Judas Macca-
baeus*), Handel/Liebergen, Carl Fischer
CM8345

"Your Voices Tune" (from *Alexander's
Feast*), Handel/Malin, Warner Bros./
Belwin OCT02408



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