

CAECILIA

A Review of Catholic Church Music



Fixed Pitch

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CAECILIA

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Editor Very Rev. Msgr. Francis P. Schmitt

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Editorial and Business Address: 3558 Cass St., Omaha 31, Nebraska

EDITORIALS

How Teach the Chant?

Having just seen a circular advertising 120 “modern” melodies for the hymns of the breviary, one might also ask “why teach the chant?” But allow me to take the chant for granted as long as it is possible to do so, and write about chant education. It is a matter of regret that much in these paragraphs must be cast in the first person, for I can speak only from experience, and a sometimes desultory experimentation.

Why is it that despite our church-supported schools we teach our children almost everything but the music (and language) of our worship? What do we need—text-books, teachers, or attitudes? I should guess that we can use all three, with the order of importance just reversed. Text books should certainly contribute in a controlled situation, one where, let us say, it is possible to set up a complete primary program. But let me say at once that a music series which boasts that students using it will, over a period of several years, learn the minimum suggestions of the 1958 Instruction is pure bunk. We learned far more in the old days from Justine Ward. (No plug here, for she, alas, is no longer a subscriber to *Caecilia*, being angry about you-know-what).

The first and obvious point is that no text book is a substitute for a teacher. If he or she is not informed, the best contrived series in the world will be of no help. This writer and his colleagues do not work in a controlled situation. They have their charges in grammar school for one, two or three years at the outside. Even if we were convinced otherwise, we could not afford the luxury of a protracted series. We have, then, for some years, simply started cold with the *Kyrie* and *Graduale*. This becomes the basis for our music-reading, and of all our music for worship. They learn solfege, they learn tonal patterns, and they learn tonal production. One is not particularly concerned about the intricacies of Gregorian nomenclature (having forgot half of it himself), but the students see the neumatic picture, and they perceive the vocal line. The transition to polyphony is simple. Whether it is Josquin, Palestrina, or Lassus, they must be able to solfa the gentleman first. Because of the limited situation indicated above, we are still riding with the moveable do. We admit its fairly obvious disadvantages, and under some unforeseeable circumstances are liable to change; but we caution nonetheless that anyone who imagines that the fixed do solves all pitch problems is living in a partial dream world, even if he or she is concerned only with conservatory singers.

The usual diversion to chironomy and the placing of the ictus is, in my opinion, a costly one. It is a kind of direction by the initiate for people who never become initiate, and must surely dash its foot upon the stone of congregational singing. This writer has tried to take criticism and compliment astride—from the *New Yorker* to the *Boston Pilot* (some distance!)—but one of the few of either which has ever really meant much was the twin-edged comment of an Iowa nun after a mass which involved some thousand school children: “. . . an idiot could follow you.”

I have indicated that we use no text books because we have been so conditioned. But I suspect that it would be a good idea for many music teachers, granted they are both musical and teachers, to use no text books. For it ought by now to be clear that years of text book teaching has not resulted in the singing of the chant. Oh, I don't mean Mass VIII or XVI or the Requiem which five year old practitioners the country over can whistle, or dabs of “chant prayers” and a half dozen antiphons! I am by now quite sure that you will have to use the *Graduale Romanum* as your text if you want to get the show on the road, that you will have to throw your students in the water if you want them to swim. Let no secondary school teachers say that their high school students cannot be taught to render the propers! Of course not. If they haven't been taught to read. Of course not. If their teachers are willing to give over a semester to *Peg o' My Heart*, or *The Sound of Music*, or *Brigadoon*. Why is who teaching what? One remembers an essay of Father Benedict Ehmman, written for one of the early bulletins of the N.C.M.E.A., and he should dearly love to see it reprinted, in italics, in *Musart*.

Permit me a few further personal remarks. I should like to make it plain that I accept the Neo-Solesmes style as a possible method of singing chant. I also accept as quite possible the methods of Dom Johner (Beuron), Cogniat (Fribourg), and Vyverman (Malignes). And that of Urbanus Bomm, O.S.B. (Marialaach), Msgr. Overath and Dr. Fellerer, which three edited the Schwann *Graduale*. For that matter, one accepts as possible methods the mensuralist publications of Peter Wagner, Dom Jeannin, O.S.B., the Jesuits Bonvin and Vollaerts, and Doms Meuus and Gregory Murray. One is here concerned about the guts of chant, whether Vatican, Neo-Solesmes or Mensuralist. It has been suggested that it is now time to ditch the vertical episema. I suggest that it is past time for all non-mensuralist schools of interpretation to ditch the silly, arbitrary business of enforced binary and ternary rhythm. The Solesmes people persist in counting from the rear—just a turn less

respectable than counting from the front (Johner, Vyverman). Cogniat at least speaks of quatern rhythms. Chant—Gregorian, Roman, even Medecian—cannot be cast in all sorts of classical and romantic concepts without losing its own inner vitality. For it must not be a method. It can only be an experience. This manner of singing partook, from the earliest Christian times and back to the synagogue, of things charismatic. And who can contain the Holy Spirit with artificiality?

F.S.

REVIEW

Records

Chant Samples:

Das Kirchenjahr in Gregorianischen Choralen, St. Rombout-Chor Mechelen, Msgr. Julius Vyverman, Director. Opera 3139, European Record Club, Verlags GMBH, Stuttgart.

Gregorian Chants, sung by the Edmundite novices under the direction of Marie Pierik. Folkways Records FR 8954.

Gregorian Chants for the Feast of Corpus Christi, sung by the monks of St. John's Abbey. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn.

Chants of the Liturgical Year, sung by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, St. Mary's Institute, O'Fallon, Missouri.

These albums probably do not essay the entire field of chant recordings during the past year, but they are the ones which have come this writer's way, and they are an interesting quartette. It is not terribly important that three of the four eschew the neo-Solesmes principles, but it is perhaps important that there are groups singing something more than the ephemera of chant who obviously think it of some moment that the rest of us know about it. And this reviewer avers that it is a point that should be literally bashed into the head of every choirmaster, novice master and mistress who has the temerity to hang on to such a post.

About the offerings of the choir of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Malignes: let it be said at once that the work is expertly defined,

of good tonal body, and that it exhibits an interesting and fairly unusual contrast between male and treble voices. That said, one might question (a) the tempi, which are slow to the point of being languid; (b) the rhythm, which fluctuates into a kind of steady syncopation for which this writer can find no reason other than personal interpretation. It should be pointed out that these criticisms appear to be more apropos to the treble sections of the choir than the male and that the cavernous acoustical properties of the cathedral probably demand some expansion. But this should not lend itself to an overall dreariness which might well characterize the late Archive Recordings of the monks of Beuron, or to the unnecessarily romantic cadential repose. Nonetheless, one must take the recording for what it is: a studied expose of the principles of the conductor's brother's text on the interpretation of the Vatican Edition. And his is as valid as anyone else's. But for the Vyverman record to posterity, I should much prefer the chants interspersed in the previously recorded *Missa Secunda* of De Monte (Lumen, Paris.) The selections include propria from the Advent, Christmas, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost seasons, and they are sung, I am sure, from either the Dessain Graduale (the only true copy of the *Editio Vaticana* on the market) or the same firm's *Liber Cantus*, a sign-free counterpart of the *Liber Usualis*.

The second recording offers an assortment of Ordinaries (11, 9 and 4), Propers, Hymns and Antiphons. To begin with, one suspects, and is quite willing to concede, that the tonal execution is the best possible with the material at hand. But here I am, talking about tone, when the natural yearning for some sort of tonal perfection probably precludes anything approaching a medieval sound. The approach here is also toward a contrived and artificial drabness hardly to be expected of novices—a sound much more akin to that of the old men we are used to hearing on chant records. There is, to be sure, a noticeable lift on the psalm tones. One could quibble about diphthong sounds on straight vowels—like an Irish sort of *Sainctus*—but the most revealing stylistic element of the record is the extent of Miss Pierik's avowed accentualism. This writer has rarely encountered this phenomenon—one which makes of syllabic strengths both a dynamic and an agogic accent. This is not to say that such an element is not implicit in most chant interpretations, even those of neo-Solesmes. But why argue about Mocquereau's episema, if one constantly invents episema of his own? Let me say this about my respected colleague Marie: this is one schola she has not conducted by singing; and if, through the long years, she has lacked money to put her system across, she has certainly not been wanting in apostolicity. I take my hat off to a gracious lady who

once spent winter vacations in the St. Petersburg of the Czars, and still burns with a love for *cantus planus*.

The disc from St. John's is divided equally between the chant of the Mass and Vespers for the feast of Corpus Christi. Despite fond boyhood memories of this great festival, amid the glories of a new pine-scented Wisconsin spring and the shattering thunder of a civil war cannon during the triple benediction, or for that matter, a very recent Corpus Christi in the incomparable setting of Assisi, this writer is not sure that the prescribed chant is precisely the most worthy of recording. Be that, and it may, Father Gerard, following the neo-Solesmes dictates, follows a more middle-of-the-road approach than is customary. The singing is full bodied, and with the exception of the Offertory, which appears as the *Adagio* of the piece, it moves. As a matter of fact, the principal problem that whelms over this reviewer is that it never stops moving. What, after all, is the matter with breathing now and then? Whatever the faults of present chant editions, only a few of the quarter-bars are not wise phrase indications. And a phrase is a phrase. Their being observed as something more than *morae* would help musical punctuation immeasurably. One simply cannot grant that the old musical trick of *perpetuum mobile* is for singing. Beyond that, one might not be amiss in suspecting that the acoustics of the new Abbey Church help get things off the ground, both vocally and interpretively. The Sequence, although it is said to be a twelfth century tune, is a thing of difficult negotiation even for professionals. Nonetheless, it is, in this record, well organized, and, without having timed it, I should guess that it comes off in the six minutes Dom Johner allowed for it in the old days at Beuron. In any case, one must be grateful for an American Solesmes record that is something more than mere copy.

Of the final record, I can say that I have heard only the tapes from which the record was produced: some five hours of listening to *propria* of the church year—all recorded in a single day, with a break for lunch. This not with a schola, but with a community of thirty, including novices. It was not meant to appear as a record, for the late Dom Ermin Vitry was not at all satisfied with the day's work. Nonetheless, he was not able, before his death, to repeat, select, or revise; and the Sisters of the Precious Blood have decided, wisely I think, to release a part of this prodigious effort—whatever flaws a critic might nail—as a kind of loving bequest. It will come as a shocker to the initiate and not everyone will be expected to greet it as this writer does. Not that he agrees in entirety; he was pretty well finished in his chant formation before he became closely

acquainted with the most dynamic chant exponent he has ever known. But he declares with no fear at all that no foreign or domestic exposition of Gregorian has so captured the contour of the chant line, that never has psalmody been such a string of limpid jewels. This disc, whatever its flaws might be, is both provocative and challenging. Dom Vitry had scant respect for the quilisma or mora, let alone the whole business of horizontal and vertical episema, and he felt with undiminished ardour that the Solesmes approach was lethal to the living chant. So that his manner and method may not be your dish; but none can gainsay that it is *vital* chant, the product of a master. While giving almost total vent to the liturgical innards of the text, he was moved to a greater extent than most of us can comprehend by musical considerations. Besides, who has ever heard a group of women sing chant thus? It is so virile as to be down-right un-lady-like; and one supposes that this is why, over and above the offerings of many scholae of men, it is good chant.

This writer lays no claim to authenticity for any of the above discussed samples of the chant, and least of all to his own, which he has had neither the time or even the courage to record. But he is quite sure that all of us have been conditioned by Solesmes, whether pre- or post-Mocquereau. And that if chant is sung well, regardless of the principles followed, one will be met with: "Well, *you* must have studied at Solesmes!" This is not a comment altogether undeserved, for if one moves the chant and loses legato, he is disturbed. If one keeps the legato and drags, he should be the more disturbed. You remember Brother Petroc? I suspect that if we could do that story in reverse—wake up, that is, during a ninth or tenth century chant service, we should most of us be racked out of our wits for having treated this massive and towering medieval edifice as if it had been built by Mendelssohn.

Francis Schmitt

A METHOD OF TEACHING ELEMENTARY VOCAL MUSIC READING BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF FIXED PITCH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic musical outlook is as simple as it is all-embracing. It means that musical experience is to find in God its all-pervading inspiration and to dedicate itself not partly, but wholly to God . . . that musical dedication alone is justified which brings our soul ultimately to God.

Thus does Dom Vitry, O.S.B., orientate the whole subject of musical training and experience to the ultimate goal of all the arts—the elevation of the human soul to God. Nor is he alone in holding such a primal and comprehensive view of the function of music in the life of man. The Very Reverend Thomas J. Quigley also makes it clear that, for the Christian educator in particular, the aims of formal education must be thought of in terms of the purpose of man's existence—achieving happiness by returning to God. This return to God is conceived of as a search for truth, goodness, and beauty, and it is by its association with beauty that music serves its greatest purpose in general education. Furthermore, Monsignor Quigley adds: "No other subject in the curriculum so completely involves all three human powers of knowing, doing and feeling." Hence music deserves a very definite place in general education, which has for its primary function the development of a sound integrated personality.

Since it is the writer's purpose to explain a method of teaching elementary vocal music reading, the philosophy underlying this study should be kept in mind, lest the discussion of technical aspects of the problem obscure the ultimate end of all musical training. At the same time, it is the writer's hope that this method, based on principles of fixed pitch, will answer the need for a psychologically sound method of teaching reading skills in the elementary school.

The practical and immediate objectives of music in the schools may be reduced to two: (1) to promote the love of good music and (2) to impart knowledge of the factors which contribute to the pleasures derived from music. The first objective seems to be generally approved of by present-day music educators. The extent to which the second objective should be realized is a matter of discussion, as one writer indicates:

In the elementary field, we find many teachers who shy away from any sort of drill or note work for fear of causing the children to dislike music . . . Work in any field can be made interesting, and without it nothing is accomplished.

The discipline required to gain a knowledge of music may be called the price of the joy of achievement.

The early history of music education in America indicates that a knowledge of the elements of music was considered a necessary means to a higher end. The singing schools of New England, founded in 1717, were established for the sake of improving church singing. It is doubtful that one could find mention in these early days of the idea of promoting the love of music for its own sake.

By the end of the nineteenth century there are indications that sight singing was thought of as an end in itself. The 1884 to 1900 Proceedings of the sessions of the Music Division of the National Educational Association give this impression. Methods of music reading were the subject of much animated controversy during these sessions.

The dawn of the twentieth century brought with it the child study movement. The technical aspects of teaching were no longer the center of interest in educational circles, but they took their place as just one of the facets in the education of the child. This movement had its effect on music education. Emphasis on methods declined. The pleasurable aspects of music became more important. As one writer expresses it:

Whether music educators like it or not, the ability to read music at sight is no longer a primary goal of elementary music education. Today, note reading is important only if it contributes to enjoyment and self-expression.

It is possible that this reaction against the technical approach to music reading has led to the belief that fundamentals can be eliminated in the attempt to achieve an educational goal such as the love of good music. However, music educators have been reminded that the music program in the schools of the United States has failed to bring about the desired love of good music. The present state of public musical taste has been cited as an indication of the extent of this failure.

One writer has pointed out the possibility that a distaste for discipline may blind educators to the fact that "learning must start at a beginning and progress gradually and step by step toward the

attainment of specific goals." Without specific goals, teaching is likely to be haphazard in its method of procedure and unorganized in its use of graded materials. That the method presented in this thesis helps the teacher to avoid these weaknesses will be evident in the succeeding chapters in which the elementary singing program is traced from its beginning in the beautiful singing of beautiful songs, through the step-by-step procedure of training in the aural and visual recognition of tones, to the goal—music reading for the purpose of opening up for the child "new musical insights and understanding that will increase his enjoyment of music."

A brief review of the history of note reading or solmization, condensed from the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, will indicate the importance attached to this subject through the years. The custom of naming tones by the use of syllables can be traced to the ancient civilization of the Chinese people. The Greeks, too, employed the syllables: tah, ta, toh, teh, for the descending tetrachord a-g-f-e. It was not, however, until Guido of Arezzo (980-1050) that modern solmization was invented. By a system of mutation, Guido applied the syllables: ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, to the seven hexachords extending from B to e"! These six syllables were taken from a hymn to St. John the Baptist. "Ut Queant Laxis." The seventh syllable, si, added later to complete the octave, was probably derived from the last two words of the same hymn, Sancte Ioannes. French musicians, about the year 1600, began to use these syllables in a fixed position. In 1650, the syllable, do, replaced the less signable ut. Many attempts were made to introduce new sets of syllables like the da, mi, ni, po, tu, la, be, familiar to vocalists, but none were able to replace permanently the earlier set of syllables.

The history of solmization in America goes back to colonial days. Reverend John Tufts is credited as the author of the first American book of musical instruction published about the year 1712. Instead of using notes, Tufts placed the initial letter of each syllable on the appropriate place on the five line staff and employed a series of dots to indicate rhythm. Another popular method of teaching note reading was conceived by Thomas Walter and published in Boston in 1721. Walter used diamond shaped notes and only four syllables: fa, sol, la, mi. The syllable, mi, was used for the leading tone only. The scale would be sung thus: fa, sol, la, fa, sol, la, mi, fa. Another method, based on the same four syllables, made use of differently shaped notes for each syllable. For example, fa, was represented by a triangular shaped note; sol, by a round note; la, by a rectangular note; mi, by a diamond shaped note. While this system was used chiefly for church music and singing schools, it was

also made use of in some public schools during the nineteenth century. George B. Loomis, in 1868, published the first graded vocal music series. Both the seven syllables and numbers were advocated.

At the time of the organization of the Music Division of the National Educational Association in 1884 three systems of solmi- zation were the subject of discussion among music educators, the "Movable Do," the "Fixed Do," and the "Tonic Sol-Fa." The "Movable Do" and the "Tonic Sol-Fa" systems received most of the attention at these meetings.

Research on this topic has given the writer a greater apprecia- tion, but, in doing so, have restricted students to a limited field of reading. Some methods, such as the English "Tonic Sol-Fa," have avoided some of the complications of the traditional musical nota- tion, but in doing so, have restricted students to a limited field of music.

Sister Dorothy Hanly, in her study of systems of music reading, quotes a personal letter from Alexander Richter, Chairman of the Music Department at the High School of Music and Art in New York City, in which he refers to the "Movable Do" system as a quick and convenient method of teaching music reading to students who are not concentrating in music. "Movable Do" is said to be less difficult than the "Fixed Do" and the conclusion drawn is that it is therefore more efficient. An experiment has even attempted to prove this conclusion. But so long as the experimental groups involved in the use of the "Fixed Do" system are created just for the purpose of such an experiment and are not the product of methodical training in such a system, this writer questions the val- idity of the conclusions of such an experiment.

One may also reasonably doubt the efficiency of the "Movable Do" method upon reading such statements as the following: "Al- though the public schools in general are devoting time to sight- singing they seem to show a low percentage of music readers by the time pupils leave school."

The idea, referred to above, that the "Movable Do" system of music reading is satisfactory for students who are not concentrating in music study, because it is quick and convenient, is open to ques- tion. Is the foundation given in elementary school music recognized as inadequate for future professional musical development and yet considered satisfactory? This would seem to contradict the ideal of continuity in music education which Gehrken's recommended when he said that the musical experience provided at each level of the music program should articulate with the past, present and future

experiences and needs. With greater emphasis on this point, Maurice Dumesnil, in *Etude*, quotes the distinguished theorist, Charles Lagourgue, as saying:

The Movable Do was originally intended to enable children to sing simple tunes at sight. It was a mechanical device for non-musicians, certainly not intended as a foundation for a musical education. . . .

No one would consider beginning the study of mathematics by a makeshift method which must be forgotten later, should one wish to master real mathematics in order to become an engineer. We do not teach a child to walk a certain way at one year old and another way when he is eight. There is no more reason to change the DO than there is to call a G on the piano "F" because the signature has six sharps.

A similar idea has been expressed by Theodore Thomas, a highly esteemed and long-to-be-remembered conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, whose interest in the musical education of the American people was particularly evidenced in his carefully arranged symphonic programs. Mr. Thomas writes:

It should be considered as necessary to be thorough in the study of music as in that of mathematics. I do not say that it should be carried to the same extent, but that, so far as it is carried, it should be taught understandingly and well-taught so as to pave the way for future study, when desirable, and not so as to block it up.

The "Fixed Do" system of reading music, which is still popular in some places in Europe, has not been used to a great extent in the United States. There is evidence in the 1880 Proceedings of the sessions of the Music Division of the National Education Association that the "Fixed Do" system was used in twenty-two cities and towns in the United States at that time. Research has disclosed the names of these cities and the books used. Among the latter are those by Mason, Loomis, Holt, Jepson and Heath. These books, however, do not necessarily indicate the procedure followed in teaching according to the "Fixed Do" system of reading, just as many of the books published at the present time could be used by teachers of the method proposed in this thesis as well as by teachers employing the "Movable Do" method. To date, no evidence has been found that a well-organized method of using the "Fixed Do" was ever explained in the sessions of the Music Educators National Conference.

It has been the method of this thesis to review all available pertinent previous research in the form of theses in the libraries of the following universities: De Paul, Notre Dame, Chicago, Northwestern, Columbia, New York, Missouri, Washington (St. Louis), The Catholic University of America, and in the St. Louis Institute of Music.

Those state music courses of study which are available at the Chicago Public Library have all been examined, but no particularly important data regarding music reading was obtained from them.

Books available at the De Paul, Newberry, Chicago and St. Louis Public Libraries, dealing with problems of music reading in the United States between the years 1846 to 1956, have been included in the research. Methods by Lowell Mason, George B. Loomis and John Curwen have been examined. The July, 1881 issue of the *Tonic Sol-Fa Reporter*, edited by John Curwen, contained an important reference to a paper on American Music by Theodore Thomas. This paper, entitled: "Musical Possibilities in America," was found in the Appendix to Thomas' *A Musical Autobiography*. Of significant value to the writer of this thesis is the following excerpt:

I consider the system at present followed in this elementary instruction, called the "movable do system," fundamentally wrong, and experience has confirmed me in this opinion. It is a make-shift, invented by amateurs. Pupils should learn something about absolute pitch of tones, instead of merely their relative pitch. The "movable do system" shuts the door against this knowledge. The first tone of the scale in every key is "do" and that term "do" never suggests to one who has thus studied music any fixed, absolute conception of pitch; for example, "do" is sometimes C and sometimes D, while to the musician C and D are as distinct sounds as the vowels a and e.

Two periodicals containing articles related to the thesis problem were thoroughly reviewed: *Music Educators Journal*, 1943-1957, and *Educational Music Magazine*, 1948-1957. Beginning with the April, 1957 issue, the latter magazine merged with the *Music Journal*. The years indicate the copies available for examination at the Chicago Public Library. Research was by no means limited to these two periodicals, but they were selected for thorough examination because they are primarily concerned with the education aspect of music and with the problems of school music.

Research for this thesis has, of course, included a careful study of the "Singing Syllabus" by Dom Ermin Vitry, O.S.B., with a

view to explaining and proposing for use the teaching procedures he has adapted from Maurice Chevais and has applied to the

With these materials as a background, this thesis will undertake first of all to suggest a method of teaching elementary vocal music reading according to principles of fixed pitch. Secondly, it will explain in detail the steps to be followed in using the method and will point out the objective educational value of each phase of the program. Finally, it will offer a possible solution to some of the problems of vocal music reading pointed out by music educators, namely: the need of a sequential well-organized program, and the acquisition of reading skills resulting from a psychologically sound method.

The purpose underlying both the exploration of the research materials listed above and the establishment of the three goals just mentioned is to make possible the answers to questions such as these:

1. Is there a need for better methods of teaching elementary vocal music reading?
2. Is the generally accepted "Movable Do" method achieving satisfactory results?
3. What advantages does the "Fixed Do" method have to offer?
4. Has this "Fixed Do" method been successfully used?
5. What teaching procedures are involved in the use of this method?
6. In what order is tonal material best presented?

The answers to the first two of these questions have already been hinted at in the preceding pages. But it might be well to bring those tentative answers into bold relief by citing two authorities who are well qualified to judge the present status of music education in the United States.

Thus, J. J. Weigand reports on a study of music education in which two hundred and fifty students of high school age were asked to read at sight fifth grade teaching material. He comments on this study as follows:

While it is significant that not one student was able to sight read the material correctly, it is more so that not one of them made an attempt to use syllables "which, for at least five years, they had been taught to use."

It is implied by this study that the present "movable do" system of teaching the reading of vocal music should be replaced by an adequate method.

Unfortunately, efforts to obtain a copy of this study from the University of Kansas and from libraries visited have been to no avail.

Professor Jacob Kwalwasser is equally critical of the "Movable Do" system, especially at the elementary level, and states that its failure to achieve satisfactory results may be explained at least partially by the fact that "we have approached the problem academically, putting symbol *naming* ahead of *hearing* and further confounding the student with many variations in *naming* linked with changes of key-signature." He goes even further in his indictment when he adds: "Reading skill in our schools is, unfortunately, at a very low level . . . We need a new deal in music reading." Such statements by recognized authorities indicate clearly the need for research and experimentation in the teaching of vocal music reading skills.

At the same time, Kwalwasser points out some of the important advantages of the "Fixed Do", thus supplying a classic answer to question three. He writes:

The fixed-do system would stress hearing, I believe. Imagery of sounds in melodic configurations would replace our present pre-occupation with a shifting naming system that definitely detracts from hearing. It would substitute a single for a multiple standard of naming; and would remove the confusion linked with many names attached to the same pitch.

A careful reading of Chapter Three, in particular, will leave no doubt that this method of "Fixed Do" does, indeed, stress hearing and that it simplifies the visual problem by adopting a single standard of naming notes.

An answer to question four is also possible at this stage, since the "Fixed Do" method to be analyzed in succeeding chapters of this study has been used with encouraging success by both the writer and a group of elementary classroom teachers for over ten years. Further encouragement for the use of the "Fixed Do" system of reading has come from another teacher who has recently returned to the United States from Lima, Peru. This teacher had used the "Fixed Do" system during her years of teaching in South America. She has also had the experience of teaching the "Movable Do" method in the United States. Her personal opinion of the two methods is reflected in the following statements: "I did a bit of

experimenting to find out just which method was the easier, and I am firmly convinced that both methods are equal . . . I will admit I liked to teach the 'Fixed Do' method better."

Now that these four questions have been considered there remains for extended consideration a study of the problems proposed in questions five and six of our list. The solution to these problems will become apparent as the method of teaching music reading studied in this thesis is explained and as the following procedure problems are investigated:

1. Preparatory Steps
 - a. Rote Singing
 - b. Informal Reading
2. Method of Teaching Aural and Visual Recognition of Tones in the Key of Do
 - a. Teaching Procedures
 - b. Presentation of Tonal Material
3. Music Reading
 - a. Rhythm
 - b. Reading in the Key of Do
 - c. Introducing Other Keys

CHAPTER II

PREPARATORY STEPS

Fundamental to the elementary singing course under consideration is, to use the words of Dom Vitry, the beautiful singing of beautiful songs. Around this basic activity, all other phases of the primary singing program, such as rhythmic play, listening, and various forms of creative experience revolve, as so many satellites around a planet. To describe each of these primary activities in detail would be beyond the scope of this work. The present discussion, therefore, will be limited to a study of the fundamental concept of music reading-readiness and two of its important phases, namely, rote singing and informal reading.

Music reading-readiness is here considered from a physical as well as a musical point of view. The biological development of the eyes is such that most children are not ready to attempt language reading before the age of six. There is a tendency toward farsightedness until about the age of eight. Furthermore, since music

reading is physically more difficult than language reading due to the vertical as well as horizontal movement of the eyes over the complicated-looking score, most music educators seem to agree that it is preferable to wait until some time in the third grade to begin actual music reading. Normally, this gives the child sufficient time to develop the delicate coordination of the eye muscles required for the task.

Musically speaking, too, the child has much to learn before being given a music score to decipher. Among the many abilities to be acquired in this period of reading-readiness, the correct use of the voice in singing and an alert and spontaneous response to tone and rhythm deserve particular attention. These basic abilities can best be cared for by a long period of rote singing. It is during this period that the child's very important initial contact with music can be made a delightful and easy experience. Rote singing must, however, contribute toward preparation for further development and pave the way for the introduction of the music score. Emphasis on such a sequential well-organized program of reading-readiness is recognized by music educators as an effective means of precluding many of the problems ordinarily associated with the first steps in music reading.

ROTE SINGING

In the first stages of the primary singing program, tone calls, employing a variety of intonations and rhythms, seem to be most suitable for bridging the gap between speaking and singing. The fact that these tone calls may be employed in imaginative games gives them an appeal which stimulates free expression. Variety and intensity of expression are condensed into brief phrases. Rhythmic tone calls, stimulated by gestures, help to awaken the sense of rhythm even in those children whose rhythmic sense is undeveloped. The child is thus informally made familiar with such elements of music as tone and rhythm. Tones are heard as long or short as well as high or low. The child is thus informally made familiar with such elements of music as tone and rhythm. Tones are heard as long or short as well as high or low. The child thus learns through the ear what he will later learn to recognize visually by means of the written symbols. It is frequently necessary to retain some use of tone calls for the benefit of the children who are deficient in certain abilities, that is, those who lack aural perception and those who lack the power of coordinating vocal response with what has been aurally perceived. Individual care and daily attention ordinarily bring about the desired improvement so that these children may successfully join in the ensemble singing of the class.

Needless to say, calls must be appealing to the child, varied, and initiated with interest by the teacher in order to assure an alert and immediate response from the child. It is necessary that the teacher be aware that all these primary musical experiences are a form of aural training, and that this training is a most significant activity in music study. Indeed, as Gehrkins points out:

The subject of ear training is the most important activity included in music study, and my feeling is that it should be strongly emphasized from the first lesson in the first grade through to the very end of the pupil's career as a music student.

This ear training of which Gehrkins speaks, however is not only concerned with the aural perception of tonal relationships. It must be extended to include the attentive listening to pitch, tone quality, rhythm, correct diction, phrasing and expression—necessary elements in the beautiful singing of rote songs.

Rote singing advances from tone calls to sentence songs, then to short folk tunes and other songs of artistic merit. Educators, like Davison and Kraus, seem to be unanimous in their approval of folk songs as excellent material for rote experience. Needless to say, not all folk songs are of equal musical value. In order to insure a wise choice of songs, teachers should ask themselves several questions, for example: (1) Is the tune attractive and easy to remember? (2) Is the melodic range and grade of difficulty suitable to the age-level of the class? (3) Does the text express the true feeling of a child?

A well-organized program of rote singing will supply the child with a rich variety of musical experiences. While engaged in such a program, the child will learn to respond spontaneously to pitch and rhythm and will develop, it is hoped, a beautiful head tone in singing. Through rote singing, the child will become aware of tones ascending or descending in pitch, of the grouping of tones in a phrase, and of the repetition of phrases. Thus rote singing will lead to a felt need for simple easy reading. This felt need will be satisfied, at this time, by a process which the writer terms informal reading.

INFORMAL READING

This informal acquaintance with the musical score is ordinarily begun sometime in the second grade. The child, with book in hand, is encouraged to follow the direction of the notes while learning a song. Gradually, he will be expected to learn new songs by his own initiative. In order to insure the necessary control of the eye at the beginning of this new activity, the child points to the notes while singing them on a neutral syllable (noo, moh), *not* on the

sol-fa syllables. This informal acquaintance with musical notation is a proximate preparation for note reading which is ordinarily begun in the third grade. Informal reading is introduced incidentally at first and only after the child has had a long experience of beautiful rote singing. It continues to be taught simultaneously with rote singing until both are eventually superseded in the intermediate grades by formal music reading. Informal reading is a characteristic feature of the period of transition from rote to note singing. This informal introduction of the score should mean that the ear, in its grasp of tonal poetry, is more and more supported by the eye.

Songs composed of melodic progressions already familiar to the child are to be chosen for this work. Songs already learned by rote may be sung in this manner to give the child the opportunity to grasp with the eye what he has already learned through the ear. It is vitally important that these informal reading experiences be easy enough to assure a reasonable amount of success so that the child may gain confidence through his success and may be eager to acquire greater skill in order to attempt progressively more complicated materials.

The establishment of purpose and need is one of the most critical all-embracing elements in the successful learning of music reading and it is one of the principal objectives of the transition period between rote and note singing. The feeling of need supplies the motivation necessary for the introduction of the next phase of the music program—formal training in the aural and visual recognition of tones.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF TEACHING AURAL AND VISUAL RECOGNITION OF TONES IN THE KEY OF DO

“Method” has been defined as “an orderly process toward a pre-determined end.” Since this thesis is concerned with a method of teaching vocal music reading, the pre-determined end is the acquisition of reading skills. It is the purpose of this chapter to explain the “orderly process” to be followed in teaching this particular method. In order to learn something about right order in the learning process, it is necessary to refer briefly to educational psychology.

Certain features of the learning process, such as the significant role of the senses in learning, are agreed upon by psychologists. Kelly lists the senses in the order of their importance for learning thus: visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory and olfactory. One of the special features of the method explained here is the combined use

of the three senses mentioned first by Kelly. Emphasis is placed on the training of the auditory sense since music study seems to require that this sense be given particular consideration.

Herbert S. Spencer says,

“The mind is the center of perception and as such responds to aural stimuli. The response of the mind to aural (musical) stimuli is the essence of ear training, and as this deals with mental processes it becomes a psychological subject. By applying the same basic psychological principles we can substantiate ear training (mental-aural) as the core of education in music.”

The Dalcroze method of teaching eurhythmics stresses the importance of simultaneous and constant correlation between mental activity and bodily movement. The method proposed here adopts this principle in correlating the aural perception of pitch with mimetic gestures in the initial stages of the aural training.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

Three procedures are involved in the teaching of the aural and visual recognition of tones:

1. Mimetic gestures—a system of locating tones on the body in such a way that the gestures correspond approximately to the ascending and descending appearance of the notes on the staff. The gestures are made by means of the hand (either right or left) which is held in a horizontal position, palm downward. Tones are located on the body thus: Do, at the waist; Re, at the shoulder; Mi, on the chin; Fa, at the ear; Sol, on the forehead; La, at the side of the head; Si, above the side of the head with the hand slanting upward to indicate the tendency of Si to ascend to Do; Do, above the head. See Figure 1.

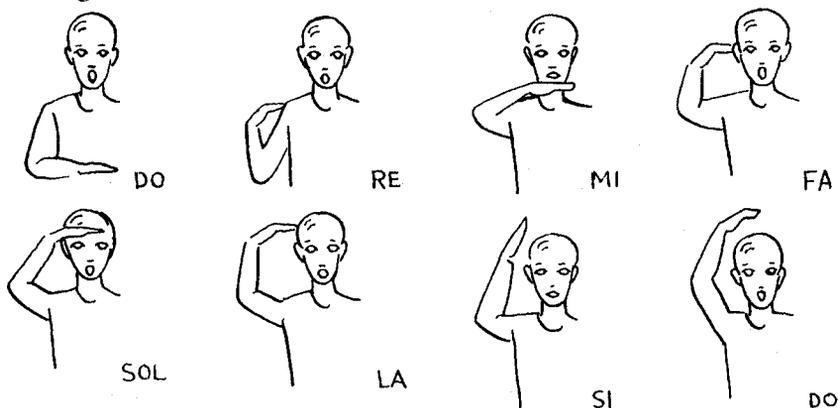


Fig. 1.—Mimetic gestures for the Scale of Do

This combination of sensory and motor experiences is believed by the writer to secure a response of greater educational value. For the child, the physical gestures act as a check on the aural recognition of tones. The gestures enable the teacher to see at a glance the rapidity of the pupil's aural response.

2. Ladder of tones—the large ladder of tones is an approximate duplicate of the mimetic gestures and is the first transfer to the eye of what was heard and acted. See Figure 2. Since the relative size of the intervals is accurately pictured on the ladder, it is a more exact representation of tone relationships than the staff.

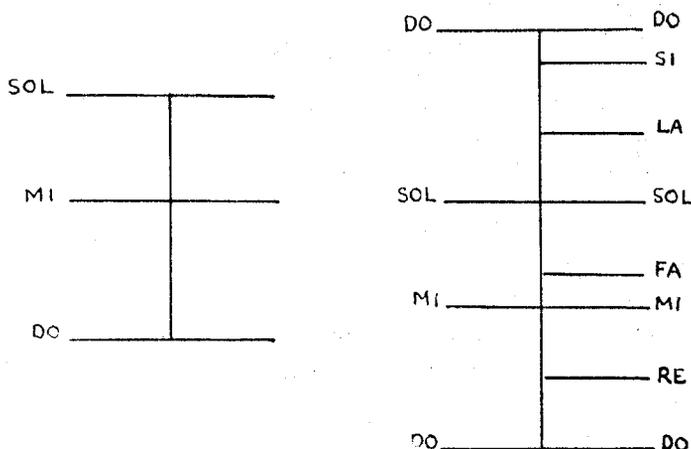


Fig. 2—Charts depicting the ladder of tones

3. Staff—the transfer to the five-line staff is the final step in the aural-visual training procedure.

These three teaching procedures are to be used in sequence in presenting new tonal material. The ladder of tones, being an intermediate visual aid, can be used more or less according to the needs of the class. Eventually, staff experience only will be necessary, but a return to the mimetic gestures will often be found helpful in the solution of tonal difficulties. After the initial presentation of new tonal material, the three teaching procedures may be used interchangeably, according to the needs of the pupils.

PRESENTATION OF TONAL MATERIAL

According to Dom Vitry, the principles to be followed in the teaching of tonality are:

1. The child must become conscious of the relationship existing between the tones of the scale and the organization of these tones into scale patterns.

2. Since this method is based on principles of fixed pitch, the syllable name, Do, is always associated with C, Re with D, Mi with E, Fa with F, Sol with G, La with A, Si with B. the scale of C is used as the basis of tonal training, and it must be thoroughly mastered before introducing other scales.
3. Tone-group exercises must always be presented as part of a musical phrase. Examples of such melodic tone groups can often be found in songs already learned by rote.

In order to provide for a complete experience of all the tone relationships within the scale of C, the following order of presentation is adopted as the most musical and practical:

1. The tonic chord, Do-Mi-Sol-Do.
2. The intermediate tones, Re, Fa, La, Si, in relation to the tonic chord.

The main exercise of this comprehensive training is called dictation. The teacher indicates or provides the tonal material in one of the following ways and the class responds in the manner designated by the teacher.

FORMS OF DICTATION AND RESPONSE

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Class</i>
a. gestures (Do-Mi-Sol)	a. solmizates or vocalizes with or without gestures
b. vocalizes	b. solmizates or gestures or solmizates and gestures
c. points to ladder	c. solmizates or vocalizes with or without gestures
d. points to staff	d. solmizates or vocalizes without or with gestures

Thus, the teacher has a choice of four different ways of dictating tonal groups and the class may respond in five different ways. This variety of procedures is a safeguard against monotony and meaningless repetition. If the class is provided with miniature copies of the ladder of tones and the staff, the children may, in addition, be asked to point to the ladder of tones or the staff as tone groups are dictated. Eventually, the pupils may be asked to write the dictated tones on a blank staff of manuscript paper, using only whole notes at this stage. Ernst stresses the importance of this when he says: "Practice in singing what we see (sight reading) and

writing what we hear (dictation) is essential in the development of reading skill."

Various arrangements of the tones of the tonic chord, Do-Mi-Sol, are used as the material of the first series of melodic patterns to be dictated. The tones of the tonic triad are introduced first because it is believed that once "the chordal structure of the scale has been studied, the mutual relation of the tones is much better understood, and we are prepared to analyze the individual tone perceptions."

The words, "Let us sing," are associated with the ascending tones of the major triad, Do-Mi-Sol. "Yes we sing" are associated with the descending tones, Sol-Mi-Do. These words will later assist in the learning of all the other major triads.

In teaching the three tones, Do-Mi-Sol, all three procedures (gestures, ladder, staff) must be used in sequence but not in too rapid succession. The gestures for Do-Mi-Sol must be well-fixed before proceeding to the use of the ladder. The length of time needed for the first procedure will depend upon the amount of time devoted to this phase of the singing program. All possible forms of dictation and response should be employed. Justifiable repetition through the use of the three senses, hearing, seeing and feeling, insures greater receptivity. Concentration of mind must be expected during this training and, since a child's power to concentrate is limited to a rather short span of time, only a few minutes a day are to be used for this phase of the program. After the aural and visual response to the three tones of the basic triad have been secured, the octave tone, Do, is added to the three basic tones and mastered by the same procedure.

The intermediate tones, Re and Fa, are introduced as passing tones in the scale progression, Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol. The intermediate tones strengthen the melodic meaning of the basic chord, provided that the dictated tone-groups repose preferably on one of the tones of the basic chord. At this stage, only skips between tones of the basic chord are employed in the exercises. In order to insure this orderly and musical presentation of material, teachers are provided with mimeographed copies of exercises, entitled, "Tone Groups and Melodic Patterns." The three teaching procedures are again used in sequence and the various forms of dictation are made use of to secure mastery of the increasing musical vocabulary. The tones, La and Si, are then taught in the progression, Sol-La-Si-Do, following the same procedures. Exercises on the complete scale may now be dictated, employing skips between tones of the basic chord only at the present stage.

The other major chords of the scale are then taught in their relation to the tonic chord. See Figure 3.

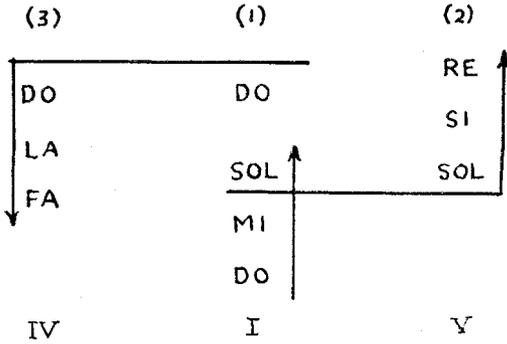


Fig. 3.—Major chords (V and IV) related to the basic chord

The dominant chord, Sol-Si-Re, is learned thus: The children sing Do-Mi-Sol, on the words, "Let us sing;" sustaining the tone, Sol, they are instructed to think and sing another "Let us Sing" beginning on the tone, Sol. After establishing the sound of this new triad by means of the words, "Let us sing" and "Yes we sing", the syllable names are substituted for the words and the new intervals are made secure; they are related to the tonic of the scale by concluding the exercises with a final Do, thus: Sol-Si-Re-Do. The sub-dominant chords, Fa-La-Do, is learned by descending from the octave Do, singing the words: "Yes we sing" which are always associated with a descending major triad. In the musical training book provided for this phase of the program, the tones of all major chords are referred to as bright bells.

The minor chords in the key of C are referred to as somber bells and are also learned in their relation to the tonic chord. See Figure 4.

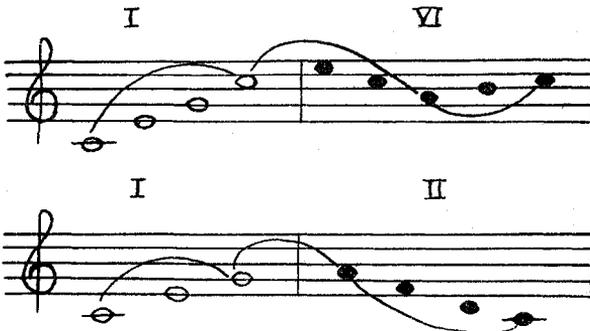


Fig. 4.—Minor chords (VI and II) related to the basic chord

The minor chord, La-Do-Mi, is made up of elements already learned and is taught thus: The children sing the well-known chord, Do-Mi-Sol-Do. From the octave Do, they are instructed to skip to the Mi above, return to Do, skip from Do to La, and return to the tonic tone by a concluding Si-Do. The progression is therefore: Do-Mi-Do-La-Si-Do. The somber chord, Re-Fa-La, is related to the tonic chord thus: Do-Mi-Sol-La-Fa-Re-Do.

Usually, a whole year is devoted to mastering all the above tonal relationships, aurally and visually. Opportunity is given for the children to use newly acquired skills in the reading of songs or parts of songs in which they can be reasonably sure of success, thus building up their confidence in their own ability and motivating them for continued initiative in attempting more complicated reading problems.

CHAPTER IV

MUSIC READING

Motivation is an important factor in fostering the desire to master technical problems at the outset of the reading program. The acquisition of reading skills must seem purposeful to the child. He must feel the need of acquiring the skills that will increase his understanding and enjoyment of music. With each new lesson, he must perceive that he is succeeding, that he is growing in the power to do things for himself. In order that this may be so, music reading must come as a gradual unfolding of previous pleasurable and meaningful experiences.

Music reading must not become a drudgery without artistic aim; hence teachers "should exclude all direct approach which just accumulates theoretical knowledge without developing a practical ability to read the score and all waste of time on endless drills not related to the actual experience of reading." Neither is it necessary that all songs learned at this stage be mastered through the technique of reading. Songs which exceed the reading ability of the pupils may be selected by the teacher for performance by the class. The child should be given the opportunity to approach such music by just using his former experience, without the discipline imposed by a technical approach. Reading activities must be a part of a gradual process so that participation in singing becomes a real joy and many new avenues of musical experience are opened to the child little by little.

By the time the child reaches the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, part singing involves a more acute need for reading skills.

Without adequate reading skills, the learning of part-songs becomes a drudgery. Much time is consumed by drilling each part by rote and, during such procedure, the attention of the rest of the class is likely to wander to undesirable channels.

RHYTHM

Thus far in this work, attention has been concentrated on the aural and visual perception of sounds in relation to pitch. The subject of music reading, however, requires that the human organism be trained to a conception of sound in relation to duration and dynamic stress also. This organization of tones in relation to duration and accent is termed rhythm. Rhythm is an integral part of all musical experience. It is impossible to sing or play even the simplest melody without rhythm. So, from the very beginning of musical training, the child is given the opportunity for rhythmic experience. This experience involves a cycle of activities as Dom Vitry points out:

Bodily gestures perceive the rhythmic beauty and respond to it; the mind associates them with the picture of the phrase or form; and this picture the soul transforms into deep enjoyment, thus enhancing much more thereby the movements of the body themselves.

The actual elements of music that the bodily response tries to express are the pulse and the phrase. The pulse is defined as "the regular movement of tones in an even swing. There is the small pulse, and the large pulse or measure which groups a conventional number of small pulses together."

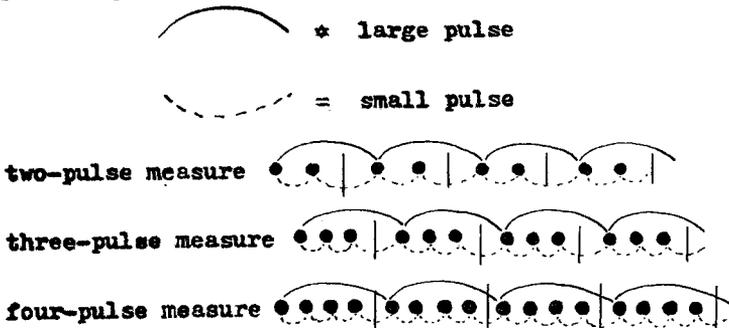


Fig. 5.—Grouping of large and small pulses in a phrase

The phrase is "the unit of tones which contains enough musical meaning to be complete in itself and to satisfy." The elements which make rhythm in any music are thus summarized in the "Singing Syllabus":

The phrase and its components: the thing to sense first and last is the movement of the phrase. Within the phrase, pupils

gain the rhythmic experience of the elements which make up the musical phrase:

- the pulse, (smaller or greater)
- the rhythm pattern

The freedom of the phrase: . . . Flexibility and freedom are evidenced in the following manner:

- The phrase as a sequence of tone
- Its rise and its fall
- The recurrence of the same elements in the phrase
- The phrase can be expanded, transformed, or developed
- Phrases may be repeated
- Phrases may contrast each other
- Phrases have their individual expression
- Phrases unite for a single total expression.

This complex rhythmic work begins as a simple activity in the primary grades. At this level, children are given ample opportunity to respond freely to the rhythm of songs through bodily movement.

Formal work of coordinating physical movement with music is begun in the third grade in conjunction with the singing of simple chants in free rhythm. Physical movement at this stage is usually confined to the use of the arm together with a flexible rotation of the wrist. The term "pulsing" is preferred to "beating" time.

The pulsing of measured music is usually learned in the latter half of the third grade. A quarter note is termed a one-pulse tone; a half note, a two-pulse tone; a dotted half note, a three-pulse tone; a whole note, a four-pulse tone. Exercises for developing accurate rhythmic response to these four note values may be taken from songs already learned by rote. Other rhythmic patterns, like



are taught in succeeding grades when they are met in actual reading.

READING IN THE KEY OF DO

If the tonal material designated for the third grade has been adequately presented by the teacher and grasped by the pupils, the children of the fourth grade should be well-equipped to read songs in the key of C major which employ only firmly-established rhythmic patterns. It is important that such songs be simple so that these first experiences of the children may be reasonably sure of success. Success is a worthwhile experience in any endeavor and success in music reading is, to a great extent, dependent upon a wise choice of progressively graded materials. Indeed, as Mursell says: "In the

teaching of reading, no trick or device can be one-tenth as effective as the use of well-chosen material which seems worth while to the learner."

In order to widen the experience of the students beyond the confines of the C major scale before introducing other major and minor scales, simple untransposed selections from the plainsong repertoire are used in this method to strengthen the aural and visual perception of such secondary intervals as Re-Fa and La-Do. These melodies are modal, but they are not composed of any tones foreign to the scale of Do, except an occasional Si-flat. Such early experience outside the modern major and minor scales is encouraged by some writers, as the following excerpt makes evident.

When commencing the teaching of sol-fa, it is important to use only those scales on which folk music is based, and to avoid the modern scales (major and, in particular, minor, harmonic and melodic scales), which are unknown in the folk music of most peoples.

Sir Richard R. Terry has collected and edited a number of these folk melodies which are based upon the medieval modes. Some of these tunes, together with simple chant melodies from the Gregorian repertoire are suggested for use in this method as excellent ones with which to enrich the reading program.

With reference to the musical value of the Gregorian chant, the Harvard Dictionary of Music points out that:

Whereas formerly musicians looked disdainfully on Gregorian chant, particularly because it "lacks" harmony, it is now becoming more and more fully recognized as an unsurpassed treasure of purely melodic music. In particular, its freely flowing rhythm, far from being chaotic, shows subtleties of structure and organization which are doubtless superior to the comparatively platitudinous devices of rhythm in harmonized music, with its meter, measures, beats, regular phrases.

The well-known music scholar, Reese, also claims for the chant an important place in music study.

A practical reason for including the reading of modal melodies in the elementary music program is the dearth of songs in the key of C major in many music series. To supplement reading experience in this key, however, it is possible for the teacher to transpose songs in other keys to the key of C by means of the mimetic gestures or by pointing out the melody on the ladder of tones. For example, a

song in the key of D major, with two sharps, could be transposed by the teacher to the key of C major with no sharps or flats. The teacher would have to think (or write it out for herself beforehand) each tone of the song a whole step lower than written and indicate the transposed version on the ladder of tones or with mimetic gestures. The children do not look at the book during the learning of a transposed song. After the melody has been learned, the book is resumed and the text is sung to the melody in the original key.

The learning of a new song from the book may proceed as follows: the song having been selected, the children are asked to sing the first tone of the song, without the help of an instrument, if possible. This is done to develop the pitch memory of the pupils, and it should not be too difficult if the song has been preceded by a few preparatory tuning up exercises on the ladder or staff or gestures. The children also determine the number of pulses to a measure. One measure is pulsed before beginning the reading in order to establish the tempo. Throughout the reading, the rhythm must not be sacrificed to pitch-naming and the tempo must not be allowed to drag. Rather, there must remain in the reading experience of rhythm that freedom essential to artistic feeling. Because the pulse and the measure are only the support of the phrase, more attention should always be given to swing the phrase with freedom rather than to keep a mathematically correct pulse.

The sight reading of songs requires the simultaneous perception of tone and rhythm. Tones are not sung as isolated pitches but are perceived as belonging to a particular rhythmic grouping, hence, children are encouraged to read phrase-wise.

Sufficient time should be allowed for the children to master the reading of a great variety of songs in the key of Do. However, it is not to be expected that all children will be able to read equally well, and it is strongly recommended by this writer that the children be grouped according to their level of achievement at this stage of the program.

INTRODUCING OTHER KEYS

After the techniques of reading in the key of Do have been well established, the reading program is enriched by the study of the other keys. By way of introduction, reference is made to the arrangement of large and small steps on the ladder of tones. An understanding of the major scale pattern, two large steps, one small step, three large steps and one small step, is the basic knowledge required for the construction of the other major scales. The order of introducing other scales is left to the option of the teacher. If the teacher

decides to teach the scale of Re, he refers to the original ladder of tones in order to have the children visualize the adjustments that must be made to follow the pattern of large and small steps when the scale is begun on Re. The necessity of raising Fa and Do is readily apparent.

The three procedures (gestures, ladder, staff) are now applied to the teaching of the new scale. Modifications in the gestures are shown in Figure 6. The hand is held in a vertical position, with the palm forward, to indicate a raised tone, a sharp. A closed hand indicates a lowered tone, a flat.

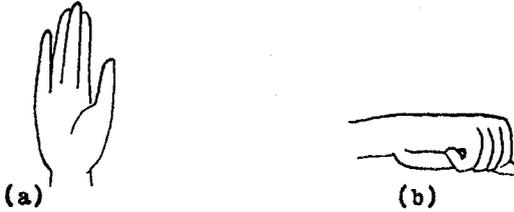


Fig. 6.—Mimetic gesture for (a) a raised tone, (b) a lowered tone

The same ladder of tones may be used in teaching all the scales. The raised tones are indicated by pointing higher than the original level of the tone on the chart. The lowered tones are indicated by pointing lower. If each new scale is notated on a separate chart, the raised tones are colored red, the lowered tones, blue. See Figure 7.

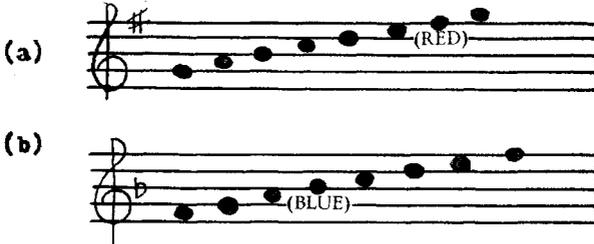


Fig. 7—(a) The scale of Sol Major, (b) The scale of Fa Major

Tonal material is presented in the same order as in the key of Do. The basic chord of the new key, for example, Re-Fa sharp-La-Re, is dictated in a series of tone groups until mastered in all the forms of dictation and response. Then the intermediate tones and related chords (dominant, sub-dominant and minor) are introduced in the same order and with the same procedure as in the key of Do.

The learning of each succeeding scale is usually accomplished in a much shorter time than was allotted for the original scale of Do. As the tonal material of each new scale is mastered, the newly acquired musical vocabulary is immediately applied in the reading of songs.

This method of teaching reading should enable the child to grasp the meaning of key signatures; and consistent reference to the key signature before reading songs should keep its significance always fresh in the memory.

Before concluding this explanation, it seems advisable to mention an adjustment that is required in the teaching of scales which extend beyond the comfortable range of the children. For example, instead of singing the scale of La as extending from the tone located on the second place of the treble staff to the tone on the first ledger line above the staff, the first five tones of the scale are sung in succession thus: La-Si-Do sharp-Re-Mi. Then Mi is repeated an octave lower and the scale is concluded in the lower range, Mi-Fa sharp-Sol sharp-La.

With the foregoing consideration of the basic problems involved in music reading, namely, tonality and rhythm, the explanation of the method suggested in these pages is brought to a close. Since this thesis has been concerned with the presentation of an elementary vocal music reading method, a discussion of the possibility of continuing music study according to this method is outside the scope of this work. However, it is this writer's belief that the method explained in these pages satisfies Theodore Thomas' specifications that elementary music study be thorough, that it be well taught, and that it prepare the way for future study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Before bringing the present work to its conclusion, it seems desirable to summarize briefly the results of this rather thorough study of the elementary vocal music reading method.

In the first place, the research undertaken preparatory to the actual study has made it evident that present vocal music reading methods used in the United States have not been generally successful in making the people of this country musically literate. While the "Movable Do" system has enjoyed a relatively long period of trial, there have been few, if any, well-organized systems of teaching music reading according to the "Fixed Do" system. This writer believes that the need for better methods of teaching elementary vocal music reading has been sufficiently established in the introduction to this study.

Music educators sometimes dismiss the very thought of using the "Fixed Do" method by some such notion as the following:

The movable Do is difficult; the fixed Do is, to the average human mind, impossible . . . Nothing less than an inborn musical genius will enable one to grapple successfully with the problems of music through the unnatural fixed Do process.

Educators of this opinion seem to concede that the "Fixed Do" method is musically and intellectually superior to the "Movable Do" method, but they seem to doubt the ability of the average classroom teacher to teach it. Adequate teacher training is required for the teaching of all subjects and, given the necessary normal physical requirements of voice and ear, experience has proved that persons intelligent enough to be teachers can be trained to be successful in this elementary vocal music reading method. In fact, it may well be that teachers will find this method simpler to explain than the so-called "Movable Do" system. The preference of the teacher referred to in Chapter One seems to lend weight to this opinion."

An objection has been raised to the practice of singing the same name for three different pitches, for example, the syllable name, Sol, is sung for G, G sharp, and G^b. This writer is of the opinion that the singing of sharps or flats which are part of the scale pattern presents little or no real difficulty, and that the singing of a major scale requires little conscious thought since the repeated experience on the part of most students in the elementary singing classes of the United States has made response to this arrangement of tones almost automatic. The same could be said of major triads, too, which "have the same relative effect on both the eye and the ear and, given the fundamental tone, one is as easy to sing as the other." The singing of accidentals requires some conscious effort in any method; however, this writer contends that it is easier to make the adjustment in pitch without changing the name of the tone. The "Movable Do" system requires the same mental effort plus the additional effort of changing the name of the tone.

The above is a matter that can best be tested by experimentation; it could well be the subject of another study. For it has been pointed out that "there has been no experiment conducted on a broad scale, covering hundreds of groups of children of various grade levels and varying abilities, utilizing several approaches to sight singing and comparing results."

In summarizing the chief advantage of the method which has been presented in this thesis, the writer wishes to emphasize the fact that the approach to music reading is made through a relatively long period of reading-readiness. The beautiful singing of beautiful songs is at the foundation of the program. By this means, the child is

equipped with a rich vocabulary of attractive melodic and rhythmic patterns. The early development of the sense of the beautiful is a matter of prime importance. As Davison puts it, "It is infinitely harder to create in children a sense of the beautiful in music when once they have associated with mediocrity.

Then, with reference to this first phase of the singing program discussed in Chapter Two, it may be well to stress that the premature introduction of note reading often involves the use of texts in which material of questionable musical value is organized for the purpose of teaching problems in note reading. Kwalwasser warns of this danger when he says: "The new material invariably lacks attraction and is musically rather sterile. This inferiority in the music accompanying the change from rote to note is likely to condition the child's attitude unfavorably toward music."

The wise choice of materials is recognized as a decisive factor in the development of good musical taste, an objective which Davison avers to be of greater educational importance than the development of technical proficiency. From the very beginning, this method stresses the importance of providing children with a large repertory of songs of artistic excellence, for only by experience with such can discrimination be exercised and trained. Hence it follows, too, that only music that is worth learning is to be given consideration as a motivating factor in the acquisition of reading skills.

Chapter Three has clearly shown that the method of teaching the aural and visual recognition of tones under study is organized according to accepted educational principles. Ear training and sight singing are complementary, the sound is presented before its symbol. But even in the presentation of the sound, other senses are brought into play as auxiliaries. The eye sees the motion of the hand in the mimetic process and the arm is brought into action to help recall the memory of the pitch as well as to indicate melodic direction and the relative size of intervals.

The combined use of these three senses (hearing, seeing, feeling) serves to fix the impression of the tonal pattern more securely in the mind. Thus, as one writer expresses it, "the reading program in music is not basically an intellectual process but a sensori-motor process."

Ordinarily, a whole year is devoted to the teaching of the aural and visual recognition of tones in the key of Do. Still, this phase of musical training is not expected to absorb the greater part of each day's singing lesson. Beautiful rote singing, development of tone, phrasing and diction continue to be important phases of each

lesson. The time devoted to ear and eye training as such is relatively short but it must be well-planned to insure concentration of mind and an alert response. Monotony here, as in all branches of learning, "kills interest and puts the mind to sleep." Individual response on the part of the pupils is important to the success of the program.

Educators have pointed out the futility of trying "to get all children of an age group to perform exactly to the same degree of mastery." For this reason, in Chapter Four this writer agrees with the recommendation that the grade basis of music teaching be discontinued wherever possible and the stage basis of teaching be substituted. By such reorganization of classes, the writer believes that the needs of the superior as well as the slower pupils can better be fulfilled.

Again, Chapter Four has demonstrated that Dom Vitry's method has the advantage of imparting to pupils a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of music, thus laying an adequate foundation for future professional study should such be desirable. Because the construction of scales is correctly understood, key signatures are recognized in their true significance. Simple modulations can be read more easily in the "Movable Do" system, since there is no need for changing pitch names at an arbitrary point in the melody. Furthermore, reading materials need not be restricted to the major and minor scales. Gregorian chant, modal folk songs, and, for advanced groups, modal polyphony are so many more avenues of enrichment.

The experience of teachers who have successfully used this method is perhaps the best incentive to inquiry on the part of those who are looking for better means of unlocking music's treasures to future generations.

This work would be incomplete without some word to acknowledge gratefully the assistance of all who have contributed to the completion of this study. The writer is particularly indebted to Dom Ermin Vitry, O.S.B., for his personal instruction and direction as well as his work of adapting the teaching procedures of Maurice Chevais to the method presented in this thesis.

Sister Alphonse Marie
O'Fallon, Mo.

REVIEW

Organ Music

Organ music by Corbinian Gindele (Germany), published in the series: "Musica Divina" by Fr. Pustet, Regensburg, Germany.

VOL. 6—"ORGELINTONATIONEN"

These are eight short organ pieces, 3 to 4 lines each, in the eight gregorian modes. Very practical for anyone looking for easy contemporary material of that sort.

VOL. 7—"GREGORIANISCHE CHORALVORSPIELE" I.

Short preludes to the Introitus and Communion, and 4 interludes between the Offertorium and Preface of the most important Sundays and Holydays of the "Proprium de tempore."

VOL. 8—"GREGORIANISCHE CHORALVORSPIELE" II.

Contains about the same for the important feasts of Saints.

VOL. 14—"KLEINE ORGELSTÜCKE"

Twenty short pieces, intended to be used during religious services. Some of them on choraltunes.

As a general remark to the four mentioned volumes, one should realize, although all these pieces are "easy" to play, that they require nevertheless a very accurate rhythmic performance and a more than occasional acquaintance with modern music.

E. L.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

"To be or not to be, — that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them."

The opening words of Hamlet's famous soliloquy have often been interpreted as the outburst of a tortured mind contemplating suicide. However, not everyone agrees with this. With a premonition of impending disaster and of his own possible death, Hamlet asks himself these soul-searching questions: Is my project to resist actively the evil which surrounds me—to be or not to be? Is it perhaps nobler for me to accept things as they are, or by resistance to put an end to them?

To be or not to be a *Catholic Music Educator's* Convention: that too seems to be the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to bear the burdens of the day by accepting things as they are, or to take arms and a firm stand against them, and by this means perhaps to end them!

I have paraphrased Hamlet's words, not intending of course to imply evil or impending disaster, but rather to draw attention to a problem and source of tension which sooner or later must be resolved. After thirteen annual conventions it seems entirely in order to examine our position and direction, like the seaman who checks his compass and takes soundings in order to keep his ship away from dangerous reefs.

It is in a spirit of self-analysis that we ask ourselves the following important questions: What is it precisely that makes our convention a *Catholic Music Educators' Convention*? Or to put it another way: Is the program for the next convention—to be or not to be uniquely the program of the National *Catholic Music Educators Association*? Aware that there are many who could plead this case far more eloquently than I, I have written the following paragraphs out of a sincere desire that the NCMEA may (in the words of one of our associates) "keep up with the Church", yes, even flourish as never before in these privileged days of a great awakening, days which the late Pope Pius XII once called the Church's "second springtime."

Wherein lies the uniqueness of our annual *Catholic Music Educators' Convention*? Certainly not in the mere presence of a large number of sisters and priests. It is not difficult to understand the astonishment of the local citizenry and of the press at the sight of so many Catholics,—priests, sisters, and laymen. We cannot rightfully find fault with their willingness to label as Catholic any convention or meeting which calls itself such. But one shudders at the implications of such a superficial observation.

Secondly, the exhibits, despite their impressive number and quality, do not make our convention unique. Granted that a handful of the exhibits is devoted entirely to Catholic church music, this fact does not put a unique stamp upon the convention. It only hints at the presence of church musicians. As a whole, the exhibits are at the very most just one of the reasons for having a convention.

Finally, the various sessions that make up the convention program fail to reveal the "uniqueness" we are looking for. After all—it has been said over and over again—there is no particularly "Catholic" way of playing a Chopin Etude, of achieving choral blend, or of solving a musicological problem. Some will argue that these sessions are presented against the background or within the framework of a Catholic philosophy of education. However, most of us have attended sessions in which the religious garb of the delegates and the opening and closing prayers gave the only hint of a "Catholic" meeting. Furthermore, in most cases the delegates already bring a Catholic philosophy of education with them to the convention.

* Submitted to but not printed in Muzart by Father Elmer Pfeil.

It seems, then, that it is necessary to look beyond the mere presence of priests and sisters, beyond the exhibits, even beyond the sessions themselves, for that uniqueness which is able to identify and also justify a Catholic Music Educators' Convention. The one thing exalted and powerful enough to make our convention essentially different from all similar conventions is its orientation towards the inner, sacramental life of the Church. In fact, this is one of the express purposes of the National Catholic Music Educators Association. In the little brochure which describes the "History, Purposes and Plans" of the NCMEA we find this significant sentence: "Its purpose is to promote a closer integration between music taught in the schools and the life of worship in the Church."

It does not seem possible that this integration can be achieved by the mere existence of a liturgical department, except perhaps in a very limited manner. Neither can it be accomplished by allotting more convention time to the liturgical department. Even if the liturgical department were to be eliminated or become separated from the NCMEA, this integration with the life of worship in the Church would be no less necessary, but possibly a little more difficult. The Church's worship, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is the crowning glory of all education, of all associations, of all human activity and daily living,—of people calling themselves Christians.

For some time many members of the liturgical department have felt that the convention Mass each day should be at an hour when it can be attended by all the delegates. The convention program seems to take for granted that this is the case. The Preview of the 1960 Convention (in Musart) declared: "Each day of the convention will open with Holy Mass sung by the delegates." *De facto*, this is not accurate. This daily Mass has never been an act of worship by the entire convention. Separated from the convention in time (7:00 o'clock A.M.) and place, this so-called convention Mass has never had a chance to be what it has a right to be, the crowning glory of each convention day.

We strongly feel that a shift of this daily Mass to an hour when it can be an act of worship by the entire convention will neither interfere with the contour of the convention program nor will it prove detrimental to other convention purposes and interests. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that such a change could possibly turn the NCMEA into some kind of a pious association or extension of the National Liturgical Conference.

Even from a purely psychological point of view such a genuine convention Mass would be a worthwhile experience. But there are better and deeper reasons. Where, for example, can one find a better means of expressing and achieving unity than in and through our union with Christ? How can the activities of all departments be more effectively directed towards achieving the goals of the NCMEA than in the offertory of a daily convention Mass when all these activities are placed upon a single paten to be joined to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself? Thus, the raised paten and chalice become a beautiful expression of the uniquely Catholic Music Educators' Convention. Furthermore, gathered around a common table to be nourished by the same Eucharistic food, all the delegates are fortified to take up with courage and joy the challenge common to all departments of the NCMEA: the integration of music education with the inner, sacramental life of the Church.

The late Pope Pius XII told the delegates to the First International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy at Assisi in 1956 that the riches of Christ's grace and the riches of His truth are dispensed by the Church through her sacred liturgy. "It is for the faithful, on their part, to accept these whole-heartedly, and to translate them into living realities." This is actually an echo of a famous sentence in the same Pope's encyclical *Mediator Dei* (written nine years earlier) that "the most pressing duty of Christians is to live the liturgical life, and increase and cherish its supernatural spirit." (No. 201) Is not this also our goal as educators,—to translate the values of the inner, sacramental life of the Church into living realities in the "Christian" lives of our students?

This integration must be understood and lived before it can be communicated to others. It is not enough to talk about it. In his penetrating study of the true nature of the liturgy Dom Cyprian Vagaggini, O.S.B., calls the liturgy the present stage in the whole history of the divine plan for our salvation. But, he hastens to remind us, the liturgy "must make that history and not only tell it. It must apply the mystery of Christ to men." (Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy, p. 54.)

The integration of Christian life and worship is also outlined in detail in paragraphs 104-110 of the 1958 Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on Sacred

Music and the Sacred Liturgy. Liturgical formation is to begin in the Christian family, "the primary school of Christian education." It is to be broadened in the elementary schools so as to include not only more thorough instruction, but also the initial steps towards participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. On the secondary level, such formation takes on greater urgency, "in order that the youth many acquire the maturity necessary to lead a sound social and religious life." Finally, on the university level, this liturgical formation should work towards a deeper understanding of the sacred liturgy and a fuller participation in it. The goal of this gradually unfolding liturgical formation is the "total Christian life," i. e., the integration of life and worship.

It is in this manner that the sacred liturgy becomes a powerful weapon for the Christianization of the social order, "the instrument for conquest," as Cardinal Lercaro once called it.

A few months ago Pope John XXIII addressed the following words to a group of French pilgrims. They could just as well have been spoken to us. "Dear children, it is for you, it is for your fine movement, on its part, to prevent the darkness from covering the earth. You are the little lamp that shines before the altar, recalling to those who are distracted, misled, bewildered, the great and consoling truth of the presence of Christ in the Church and in the world; of the whole Christ, His body, His blood, His soul, and His divinity, the spiritual food of our souls and of our bodies, the faithful companion of our journeying, the pledge of glory that awaits us in Heaven. Strengthened by the presence of Christ, we have nothing to fear; taught by Him nothing remains obscure, guided by Him, even if it is by precipitous paths, there is no danger of falling into the abyss . . ." (April 16, 1960)

Is the program for our next convention—to be or not to be uniquely the program of the National Catholic Music Educators Association?.. It will be if the activities of the convention are integrated fully with the life of worship in the Church. For the sacred liturgy, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is our crowning-glory, the very "treasure house of Christ",—an act of divine worship in which our combined efforts are lifted heavenwards; a common table from which we receive the nourishment necessary to teach and also live the "full Christian life;" and, finally, a genuine and official rule of spirituality, containing the eternal truths of Christ, truths "to live by."

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