

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE TO THE VIRTUAL CHORAL REHEARSAL

SECTIONALS AND FULL REHEARSALS

PROCESS, METHOD, AND TECHNIQUES
FOR THE VIRTUAL TEACHING
AND LEARNING OF MUSIC

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Developed for
The Westminster Williamson Voices
and the Ensembles
at Westminster Choir College
in Collaboration with
Choral Tracks™ by Matthew Curtis



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James Jordan and Raoul Carlo Angangco

This guide is to be used with:

Inside the Choral Rehearsal:
Harmonic Rehearsal Teaching and Learning
Based on the Music Learning Theory of Edwin E. Gordon
James Jordan

*Explanations, theory and specifics
of the pedagogy are detailed in this volume.*

GIA G-9293

Further specific rehearsal techniques related to principles in this guide
for ensemble teaching can be found in:

Inside the Choral Rehearsal:
Method and Rehearsal Guide for *Lux Aurumque* (Eric Whitacre)
Jason Vodicka
James Jordan

GIA G-9063

I had thought that the director's job would have changed drastically because of the pandemic. Of course, it has, since everything is virtual. But what hasn't changed is the ensemble's need for connection and the director's job/ability to connect us all. Many of us needed to sing, but haven't been able to since the start of the pandemic—and I think what you gave us today was a permission to sing again (and to breathe together again!)—one we didn't really know we needed—one I didn't know I needed. But it was truly cathartic. And I think on a deeper level, most if not all of us experienced entanglement. In spite of us all being in tiny digital boxes together, unable to hear each other, I know I was feeling what others were feeling, and I'm sure many felt what I felt. This won't ever replace in-person singing, but for now it is enough. —MJ

The unifying gesture is one of the most important things for a choir to understand. Being sensitive to yourself, your neighbor, and the conductor is crucial to being successful. Understanding breath and how it impacts everything is an important aspect of the start of a conductor's and singer's career. That split second right before the decision to take a breath must be filled with thought. "What is the style?" "What is everyone around me doing? Is it trustworthy?" "What sound am I supposed to be making?" These are things that must happen every time a breath is taken. From the conductor's point of view, it is important to not be too big and grand with your gestures. This is when over-singing occurs, and the singers are less likely to watch and take creative gestures. The conductor must let the phrase have its natural arch. It is important to breathe with empathy and through empathy. —SS

The breath impulse is where the truth of art lies. It is a silence from both conductor and chorister that must be a complete surrender. This means that when sound is released, so is the utterance of prayer. In this gesture, yes, we are fed many signals about song and voice, but it goes much further. This gesture is the oneness of choir, conductor, audience, and spirit. Everyone in this moment experiences a humble surrender to the sound (or there will be holding that blocks the sound from releasing) and harmonizing. It is, ultimately, letting go of one's ego and entering into a state of receptivity. We, as the conductor or audience, must be available to receive the sound that is to come out, or the choir will not surrender their sound. The choristers must trust the conductor and the audience. They must release their sound through the body, which acts as a medium of sound. This gesture, given by the conductor, is an impulse of affirmation—that each individual is worthy, safe, and in this present moment together. The breath gesture, in its silence, is the birthplace of this meditational mediumship. The fruit of this silence is prayer. The prayer is heard in sound and made through the medium that is the collective body of artists. —AP

The breath impulse is the life-giving source of the ensemble. It truly is a domino effect: if the conductor's breath impulse is out of place, it can affect the ensemble's dynamics, diction, articulation, and more. Working so regularly with Dr. Jordan and then switching to other less-experienced conductors for church/gigs, I am able to see how important breath impulse actually is. The difference in not only the feeling while I sing, but the rate at which I feel my voice getting fatigued with a conductor who is not breathing properly for the choir is astounding. Regardless of how I keep my technique in check, if the conductor's breath impulse and gesture are not aligned, it so largely impacts the quality of breath I take, impacting a plethora of other issues. —NPU

Some would argue that we breathe all the time. It's so easy. Why is it so hard? This question is easy to explain. Just like what we have learned about Audiation in the past two weeks, the Daily Life Hearing is different from the Music hearing or aware hearing. The key is whether it has the subjective will of the individual. On the other hand, breath in life has a different content, but it's common. For example, when we are happy, we breathe very smoothly, and even can smell the sweetness in the air. And when we're depressed, our breathing becomes sluggish, as if the molecules in the air have slowed down and we smell a piece of rusty metal. These breaths with our emotions are often overlooked as part of our lives, but we should realize that our breaths come in many different forms, in many variations, and can act as vehicles for our emotions or thoughts. Then in choral training and performance, could not the meaning and message of music be incorporated into the breath of singing? —RZ

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOOD SINGING: CONSTANT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CORRECTION

There is an inherent danger in all choral rehearsals that could exponentially become worse in this virtual setting. While the conductor can monitor vocal resonance, “on the breath” singing, and other vocal matters when there is “sound in the room,” one’s responsibility to sing with good technique rests on each individual. With each rehearsal, you should be continually reassessing yourself as you sing alone both in sectionals and in full choir rehearsals. Be certain you constantly SELF-MONITOR alignment, breath management, and “on the breath” singing. The body must always be in an appropriate singing alignment to support good singing. Mindless, unaware rehearsing in our virtual rehearsal will create serious vocal technique and vocal health problems down the road.

OVERVIEW

Virtual rehearsals need to have different objectives from the normal “live” rehearsal process. While much can be accomplished via the immediate sounding of scores, if truth be told, many layers of the music learning process are collapsed, creating special challenges in the rehearsal. For all its obvious drawbacks, the virtual choral rehearsal presents many advantages for long-term music learning if we are able to depart mentally and emotionally from the normal rehearsal paradigm and adjust music teaching and learning to a new—and perhaps more efficient—model for online music teaching and learning that has at its core the teaching of AUDIATION.

THE DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF AUDIATION

**Audiation, by definition, is the ability for a musician
to hear sound without it being physically present.**

This multidimensional “hearing” gift should be the end objective of all choral rehearsals. However, in the normal rehearsal process, choirs are forced to decipher music notation at the same time that music is sounded within a harmonic context. A fault of most rehearsal processes is that the sound of a work is not allowed the time to be assimilated and audiated. In an ideal musical world, each piece should be audiated *before* it is read. The virtual choral rehearsal can build powerful audiation skills in singers—skills that are not restricted or impeded by notation. So the first objective of all sectional rehearsals is to begin a methodical listening/audiation process before the work is sung.

As to the complexity and depth of audiation, audiation exists as both TYPES and STAGES:

Types of Audiation:

Table 2. Types of Audiation (Gordon, 2007b, p. 15)

Type 1	listening to	familiar or unfamiliar music
Type 2	reading	familiar or unfamiliar music
Type 3	writing	familiar or unfamiliar music from dictation
Type 4	recalling and performing	familiar music from memory
Type 5	recalling and writing	familiar music from memory
Type 6	creating and improvising	unfamiliar music while performing or in silence
Type 7	creating and improvising	unfamiliar music while reading
Type 8	creating and improvising	unfamiliar music while writing

Stages of Audiation:

The Stages of Audiation suggest a map for virtual rehearsal sectional learning.

NOTE: These are hierarchical.

Table 3. Stages of Audiation (Gordon, 2007b, p. 20).

Stage 1	momentary retention
Stage 2	imitating and audiating tonal patterns and rhythm patterns and recognizing and identifying a tonal center and macrobeats
Stage 3	establishing objective or subjective tonality and meter
Stage 4	retaining in audiation tonal patterns and rhythm patterns that have been organized
Stage 5	recalling tonal patterns and rhythm patterns organized and audiated in other pieces of music
Stage 6	anticipating and predicting tonal patterns and rhythm patterns

In short, all rehearsal goals should center around the teaching of audiation in all its dimensions.

NOTE: It is best for all that during rehearsals, if possible, your computer is hardwired with an ethernet cable to reduce time lag in Zoom rooms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACCOMPANIST AND CONDUCTOR ZOOMING FROM THE SAME ROOM

In all Zoom rehearsals, the conductor and accompanist should be in same room, if possible. The interaction and live music making between conductor and accompanist is central to the success of this approach! Breath and shape of phrase deepen the audial sensitivity of the ensemble in untold ways. The interactions between accompanist and conductor *can* be felt and sensed by the ensemble.

AUDIATION TEACHING THROUGH VIRTUAL SECTIONAL REHEARSALS

Pitch and Rhythm Audiation
Vocal Lift/Passaggio Awareness and Analysis
Phrase Architecture Audiation
Breath Management Space Audiation

The stages presented on the pages that follow should take place in each section rehearsal in STRICT order. Do not progress to the next Stage until the section has fully assimilated the aural information and study in each Stage. The success of this virtual approach to rehearsal rests with the degree of ownership and responsibility for sequential music learning that each singer assumes as a personal and professional commitment to both the ensemble's music making and the artistic goals. Virtual rehearsing requires a higher level of consistent personal engagement than the regular dynamic of the normal in-person choral rehearsal.

A Word on Choral "Blend" and Ensemble Sound – The Singer's Responsibility:

It has always been my belief that great choral ensemble sound is an interaction (alchemy) of the humanity between and among singers and a vocal technique "common ground" that will allow singers to sing with their individual sound being their "contribution" to the resonance of the ensemble. Consequently, for collective ensemble work to be successful, your own self-monitoring and knowledge of our common goals musically and technically is central to a truly magnificent sound when we come together. This process places more responsibility on you and your section leaders. In the end, your sequential testing will be graded vigorously with objective rating scales so we are all bearing equal parts of our musical load. I believe that if we harness what virtual rehearsing can offer us, in the end we will exit as a better ensemble than through more traditional ways.

A Word on Headphones – A NECESSITY!

You will probably need a good set of headphones that are *open-backed/vented* so you will be able to hear yourself well as you sing. Avoid using headphones that entirely block out external sound.

Please consider an investment of \$19.99 (!) for these recommended headphones by Koss for both sectional rehearsals and your voice lessons. There are more expensive versions on the market, but these seem fantastic.



A Word on Using Ear Buds:

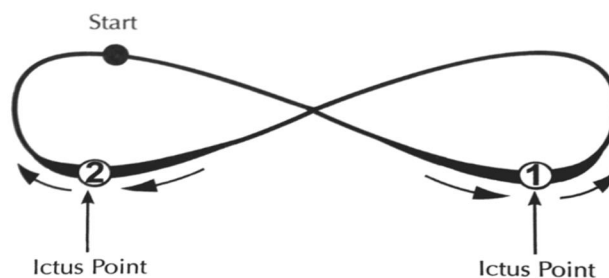
If students are using ear buds, for all testing the RIGHT ear bud should be taken out of the ear. This is based on the extensive research of Tomatis. Students will likely sing out of tune on recorded exams if this rule is not followed.

Moving While Singing:

In this virtual world of ensemble singing, while it is not possible to hear ourselves synchronously, it is possible to assess in a visual way how people are embodying the forward movement of the musical line! Since musical line and breath management are so bound together in our perceptual system, it stands to reason that *if* we move to how the music moves forward, then there is a good probability that our breath as singers will move in the same way, both in speed and intensity.

In our virtual rehearsals, it is important that while you are singing with your sound off, you move in a way that reflects not only the forward movement of the musical line but the SHAPE of the musical line! Singers should only move horizontally, avoiding any temptation to give vertical beats. Also, once singing, the hand should continue moving constantly with slight acceleration and deceleration. You may slow the hand or hover at points of breath, but never stop.

FIGURE 11.8. TWO-BEAT SHAKUI PATTERN AS ADAPTED FROM THE SAITO CONDUCTING METHOD.



The horizontal beat suggested (a horizontal figure 8), is taken from James Jordan, *Evoking Sound*. A detailed explanation of this terminology and physics of the horizontal beat is attributed to the teachings of Hideo Saito, detailed in Chapter 11.

Laban Additions:

Using the text *The Choral Ensemble Movement Warm-Up*, one can get an ensemble to understand how the sound moves forward by using the Laban Efforts in Combination: Dab, Flick, Press, Glide, Slash, Punch, Float, and Wring. This is a way to prepare the Space Audiation (i.e., how the sound moves through space and what WEIGHT it uses or does not use to move forward). Examples are shown in that text on how to mark a score with this information.

LEARNING STAGE ONE

Building Audiation

NOTE: Either Choral Tracks™ (by Matthew Curtis) OR a commercially available performance *approved by the conductor* can be used for this Learning Stage.

First..... Listen at least **5 times** to the work **WITHOUT** the score.

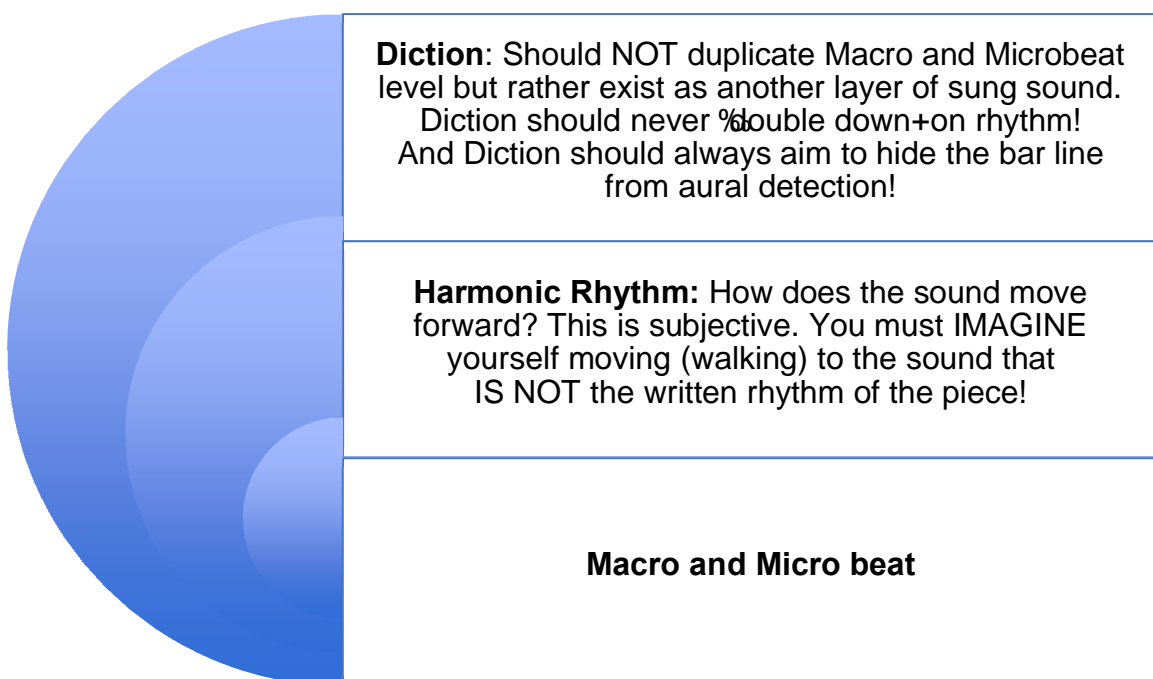
Then..... Listen to the work at least **3 times** all the way through **WITH** the score, but **NOT** singing.

1) **First Listening – Listen to the “big picture” of how the work moves forward.**

This is all about **YOUR** perception of how sound moves forward. Your perception as to the speed of the sound moving forward impacts your decisions as a singer regarding your breath management. It is your subjective opinion on what you hear, **but more importantly on what you feel in your body!** To arrive at some decision on how the sound moves forward, you must imagine what it feels like to walk to the music in a manner that mimics its forward movement in *both* Time and Weight sensations in your body. Yes, this involves a fantasy about what it feels like to move without moving—that is **SPACE AUDIATION!** You can audiate and *feel* the sensation through fantasy of yourself moving without actually moving. Athletes do this all the time.

Do not rush this stage! Hearing how a work “moves forward” involves *slowing* your perceptual skills (also known as **SLOW ART**) to the speed of the harmonic rhythm (the speed that you feel the sound is moving forward). This is important because your perception of the speed of forward motion is directly related to the speed of your air and your breath management. At the same time, you are building your audiation of the **HARMONIC LANGUAGE** of the composer! Remember that vocal mistakes and note mistakes are made because the audiation of the work is not in place!

More importantly, you are establishing the correct perceptual hierarchy of how *you* must perceive the music to make decisions about diction and line.



- 4) Audiate your sectional part's solfege while hearing the Choral Track™ recording or recommended performance.
- 5) Remember that the Harmonic Immersion Solfege™ only works if you use it while hearing all the other parts!

We learn to sing in tune by context! That is, you must audiate and later sing your part with solfege *only* when you hear other parts. DO NOT USE THIS SOLFEGE SYSTEM WITHOUT THE OTHER PARTS SOUNDING!

LEARNING STAGE TWO

1) Lift/Break Analysis

Look through your voice part with section leaders and identify and circle in red ALL register changes/lifts. NOTE: This may be slightly different between individuals even within the same part. Lighter and higher voices might “turn over” a half step higher than their darker-voiced colleagues. Regardless, air speed must be consistent through all passaggio points. A general feeling of spaciousness in the vocal tract with a slight rounding of the lips can be very helpful. Vowels will generally close in the passaggio for men. Vowels will generally round and narrow *before* the passaggio for women and then reopen as pitch ascends.

Our main object is to give the phrase life and yet keep it on as smooth curve as possible. We must both ascend and descend in the most even and musical way possible. The music must remain in constant motion. (p. 537)

–Marc Mostovoy
in *Marcel Tabuteau*

What is usually missing in performance is the establishment of the grandes lignes and, yes, that is the essential thing, it's that which should be most perfect. So, find the great elements of the architecture, give them all their value, and pay attention to the harmonic movement. (p. 59)

–Nadia Boulanger
In *Thoughts on Music*
Jeanice Brooks and Kimberly Francis

2) Phrase Shape Analysis

We will always be guided in phrasing *not* by TEXT STRESS but rather by PHRASE DIRECTIONALITY.

The Cardinal Rule of Phrasing is: Ascend toward the important syllable and upon arrival you never accent unless it is indicated in the music as an accent, and then you carefully descend away from that “stressed” syllable to create a beautiful arched phrase.

Be certain to accurately audiate the shape of each and every phrase.

LEARNING STAGE THREE

1) **Breath Management Space Audiation**

Mirror breath by conducting.

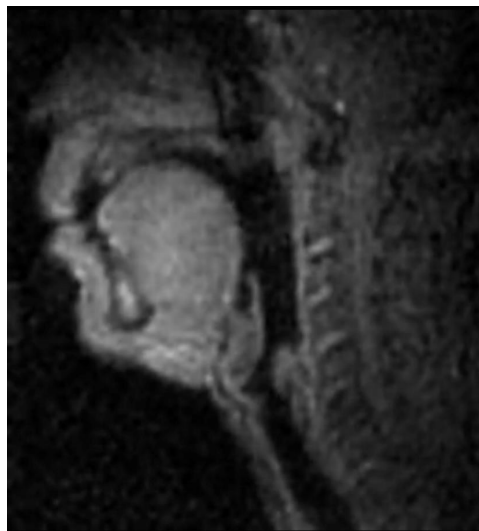
The definition of SPACE AUDIATION is the perceptual sensation of what it feels like to move through a phrase moving sound forward.

Once the above steps are completed, and *only* after they are completed, use the voiced consonant [z] and WITHOUT PITCH perform the organic part of the musical line sounding BREATH MANAGEMENT OF THE PHRASE through the consonant of choice or lip trills. Consider using several different unvoiced consonants, such as [s], [v], and even an unvoiced lip trill. Consider varying the consonants because each has a different pressure/flow ratio and this teaches the body to generalize the process a bit. This step in the process should also rehearse the SECTIONAL QUALITY OF THE BREATH based solely on the amount of air needed to sing the phrase—no more, no less.

Make certain that (1) as musical line ascends, breath speed increases with no excessive “pressure,” and (2) the speed of the air at ends of phrases sustains to the very end of the phrase. You must be sure to keep the space open and the air constant as you do this!

ISOLATE PATTERNS within your part, usually three to five notes based on their context within a chordal structure. The section leader sings the pattern WITH SPACES and WHILE ON MUTE, and the section repeats on a SWEDISH MIXED VOWEL. Stay on this neutral syllable - œ.

MRI OF CORRECT TONGUE “POSTURE.”



LEARNING STAGE FOUR

Adding Your Voice Via Neutral Syllable: Tongue Position Consistency to Aid in Registration

In this stage of the sectional process, you can now add voice as the audiation preparation should be sufficient. You can now move to singing YOUR SECTION’S PART but still *only* on a mixed vowel. Sing through your part ON MUTE, but with the accompaniment or reduction always sounding so you are always singing WITHIN A HARMONIC CONTEXT.

REMINDER: Open-back/vented headphones should be used if you own them so you can hear yourself sing!

- 1) Sing through your part with Choral Tracks™ (by Matthew Curtis) WITH your part in the aural foreground (“predominant”) using only the SWEDISH MIXED VOWEL as discussed in Learning Stage Three. Refer to the MRI of the correct tongue “posture” on the previous page for a visual reference.
- 2) Make certain that at ALL ends of phrases, sound is deposited INTO rests!

LEARNING STAGE FIVE Rehearsing the Visual

Awareness of the Content of the Breath Impulse Gesture:

Because of the challenges presented in the virtual choral rehearsal, and the preparation that is implied for us singing together in the future, it is important that the conductor’s “signal system” via the Breath Impulse Gesture be rehearsed through sessions where the ensemble conductor discusses the parameters of the Breath Impulse Gesture, and singers become sensitized to the amount and quality of breath that is needed as impulsed by the conductor. For the purposes of this teaching stage, this is a stage of becoming aware of and connected with the possibilities of the Breath Impulse Gesture of the conductor.

As a general rule, the Breath Impulse Gesture occupies a **full beat of active breath**, which uploads rhythm, color of the sound, articulation, human intent, and phrase architecture and shaping. This stage is preparatory.

In the context of the sectional rehearsal, the Zoom video recording of the conductor conducting through the score should be refreshed from time to time so each singer can continually revisit the ideas relayed via breath. Breath impulse, while it can be seen, is also a neurological occurrence. When singers become sensitized to the breath impulse of the conductor, they do not necessarily need to see it to sense it not only from the conductor, but from all those around them. Breathing is also contextual in that singers breathe in relationship to how they feel others around them breathing.

Harmonic Immersion Solfege™ and Intonational Solfege™:

You will be provided with Harmonic Immersion Solfege™ by the conductor or the GA. This solfege is an INTONATIONAL SYSTEM; it is not to serve as a literacy system and should only be used with the Choral Tracks™ CD. The system works only when all other parts are sounded.

REMINDER: Whenever possible, use open-back/vented headphones, as they allow you to HEAR the Choral Tracks™ recording AND your own singing simultaneously.

LEARNING STAGE SIX

Individual Testing: Measurement and Evaluation

- 1) People living together in residential bubbles *must* do and submit their hearings together. This makes it possible to develop “pods” of unified sound. Sing testings in these “bubbles” whenever possible, either with your own voice parts or, preferably, with other voice parts.
- 2) For each piece of music, TWO hearings may be required:

First..... Performed on ONLY the Swedish Mixed Vowel.

Then..... Sung with diction, based on guidance to be provided by a diction coach.

RECORDING AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

NOTE: Williamson Voices makes use of the Canvas online educational platform to facilitate the collection and evaluation of these singing tests.

Things you will need:

- Device #1 – to be used for recording your singing video directly into Canvas
- Device #2 + headphones/earphones – which will be used to listen to the Matthew Curtis Choral Tracks™ or approved commercial recording while singing your part
- Score with markings

- 1) The test will be posted as an Assignment on Canvas indicating:
 - The piece assigned and specific measure numbers to be sung
 - Singing instruction: on mixed vowel OR with proper diction
 - Deadline for submission
- 2) Submission should be done INTO THIS CANVAS ASSIGNMENT as a WEBSITE URL or MEDIA FILE UPLOAD:

Recording:

1. With Device #1 (e.g., phone), video record yourself singing your part while using Device #2 + headphones/earphones to listen to the Matthew Curtis Choral Tracks™ or approved commercial recording as your guide.
2. You must be seen facing the camera while singing.
3. Repeat as you wish until you get a take you are satisfied with.

Options for Submitting:

Website URL Option:

1. Upload your video file to YouTube, Google Drive, or Dropbox.
2. Make sure the visibility of the video is set such that it is viewable only by those with the link.
3. Copy the file's URL / link.
4. Click "Submit Assignment" and under "Website URL," paste in the URL.
5. Submit and check that your submission was successful.

Media File Upload Option:

1. Click "Submit Assignment."
2. Under "Upload Media," select the video file you wish to upload for submission.
3. Wait for the video to compress and upload completely (this may take some time depending on your device and internet connection).
4. Submit and check that your submission was successful.

- 3) For any questions about submissions, please send an email to angangcor@rider.edu.

RATING SCALES

Students are given Continuous Rating Scales so it is clear how they will be measured and then evaluated by the raters who review the recordings.

On the next page are two sample rating scales used by Williamson Voices.

Sample Rating Scale for Singing on Mixed Vowel:

Explanation of 5-Point Rating Scale:

In this 5-Point Rating Scale, a grade of “3” in the criterion is considered AVERAGE, with “1” being low and “5” representing excellent work.

Test Performance Note to Singers:

Please make sure in this Virtual Setting that you are ALWAYS singing “on the breath.”

1. **PITCH ACCURACY** (5 points)
2. **RHYTHM ACCURACY** (5 points)
3. **REGISTER CONSISTENCY** (5 points)
Singer sings work demonstrating even registration of voice throughout while singing on the “Swedish” Mixed Vowel.
4. **PHRASING AND SHAPE OF MUSICAL LINES** (5 points)
Singer sings with a sense of arched phrase with an idea of the overall shape of each phrase.

TOTAL: 20 POINTS

Sample Rating Scale for Singing on Text:

NOTE: Singer MUST achieve a 4 or 5 rating in EACH category or will be asked to re-record the entire examination. Be sure to study this rating scale so you are clear on the criteria on which you will be evaluated. Please do a sound check to make certain you are not too close or too far from your microphone!

Explanation of 5-Point Rating Scale:

In this 5-Point Rating Scale, a grade of “3” in the criterion is considered AVERAGE, with “1” being low and “5” representing excellent work.

Test Performance Note to Singers:

Please make sure in this virtual setting that you are ALWAYS singing “on the breath.”

1. **LEGATO** (5 points)
Student sings with sufficient legato to sustain the musical line and forward movement of sound.
2. **BAR LINE “CAMOUFLAGE”** (5 points)
Accents on EVERY beat 1 are avoided.
3. **“SCHWIH” EXECUTED** (5 points)
Singer distinguishes between sounds that are “schwih” and sounds that are schwa.
4. **SHADOW VOWELS EXECUTED CORRECTLY ON “LET-MY”** (5 points)
5. **TENORS & BASSES ONLY – LONG VOWELS ON “LOVE” CORRECTLY SUSTAINED** (5 points)
6. **“H” SOUND ON “HEARD” CORRECTLY EXECUTED WITH “NASAL ASPIRATE”** (5 points)
7. **RHYTHM ACCURACY** (5 points)
8. **PHRASING AND SHAPE OF MUSICAL LINES** (5 points)
Singer sings with sense of arched phrase with an idea of the overall shape of each phrase.

TOTAL – Sopranos/Altos: 35 POINTS

TOTAL – Tenors/Basses: 40 POINTS

THE SINGER'S GUIDE TO VISUAL CUES: A VIRTUAL CHORAL ENSEMBLE ZOOM REHEARSAL

The Breath Impulse: What Information Is Given?

Corey Everly

The breath impulse is an empathetic and authentic gesture that relays information about the architecture, emotion and artistry of the piece. This includes the text, diction, tuning, meter, phrasing, intensity, emotion, and feeling. The conductor must be mindful of this breath impulse to relay enough information that the singers know what to do, but enough room for freedom for the singers to express artistry. Beyond this, the breath impulse connects the people (and further spirits) in the room towards a common focus of music and art.

The Unifying Breath Gesture: Why We Must “Sing” As Conductors

- Physical mechanics of breath
- Where you believe the breath is placed is what your singers perceive.
- Where you believe you are carrying the sound in your body determines how the singers breathe.
- How you move (or don't move) the breath determines everything about the resultant musical line and the way the choir sings together, and also the way they pronounce text together.
- Think of every breath and its content and be able to sense that content visually.

The “split second”...

Singers make instantaneous decisions about several things:

- Sound
- Dynamic
- Style of diction
- Articulation
- What is my neighbor doing and should I trust it?
- Is the conductor providing content and decisions or do I need to bail him/her out?

Breath gesture must be thought of as *the* point of all informational upload, and singers need to be visually sensitized to “de-coding” the information in the Breath Impulse Gesture! (See *The Musician's Breath*.)

1. INVITE the sound that is to be made (timbre, dynamic, style, vowel).
2. INDICATE tempo and the subdivision of the macrobeat.
3. SHOW the choir where the sound lives in you (has to do with content).
 - Has everything to do with EMOTION
 - Where do you FEEL the sound coming from
4. TAKE ONLY THE AMOUNT OF BREATH NECESSARY
 - Character of the breath must be in context with the phrase about to be sung.
 - Singers tend to take in too much breath because they have not learned to extract the VISUAL information from the conductor's Breath Impulse Gesture.
5. Show EMPATHY.
 - Can be done in an online format. This can be developed by working on our own openness and sense of other.

6. SHOW A FOCAL POINT in which everyone knows where to focus—where you believe you contact the sound with your hands.
 - That “invisible place.”
 - Vowels are in our HANDS.
 - Show how singers are to engage with the sound IN THEIR BODIES – depth and intensity of breath and its release.
 - ALLOW singers to respond!
 - Don’t just start the sound – allow the singers to be empathetic to the onset!
 - Size and speed of beat.
 - The space between the beats.
 - Gestures that are too big might cause over-singing or restricting.
 - Gesture should relate to how you use your breath.

Size and Speed of Beat:

Much information should be relayed by the conductor via the SIZE and SPEED of the beat. In live rehearsals, the power of this gestural information is often bypassed because singers associate with the sound around them rather than getting information from the information being given via gesture. This sensitivity can be developed to a HIGH level via Zoom.

Sensitivity to Consonant Length:

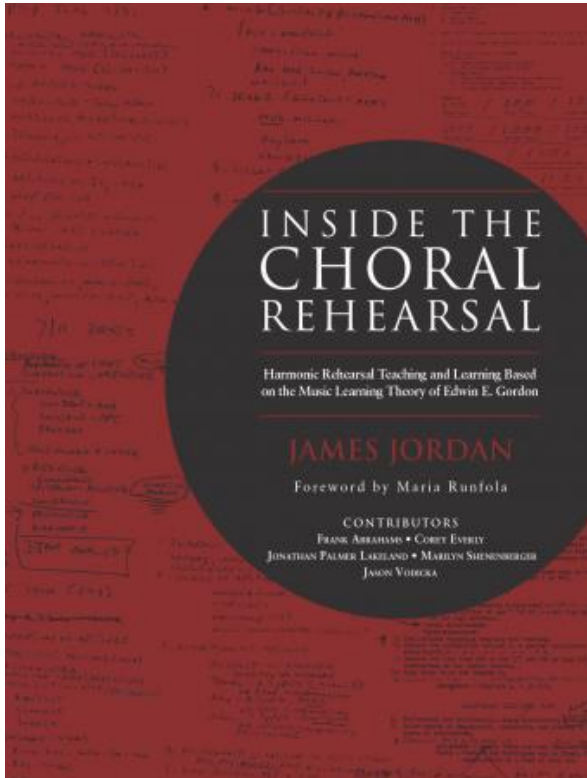
This is also a piece of information that can be given and reinforced by sensitizing the choir to gesture all prepared by careful diction coaching.

Final Releases and Endings:

How notes end, and how phrases end can be rehearsed virtually. In *Evoking Sound*, a section of the text is devoted to how sounds end and how to apply Laban Efforts to the ending of sounds.

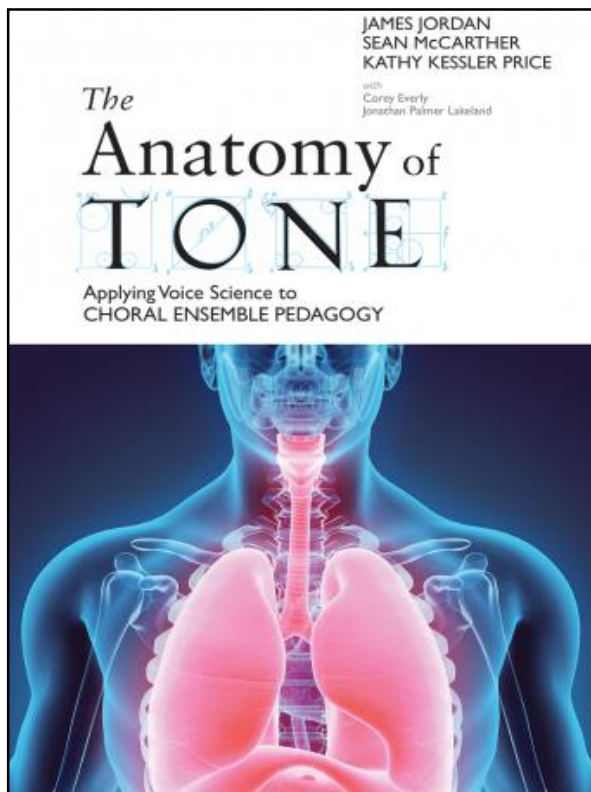
TEXTS USED THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF PRINCIPLES PRESENTED

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Inside the Choral Rehearsal

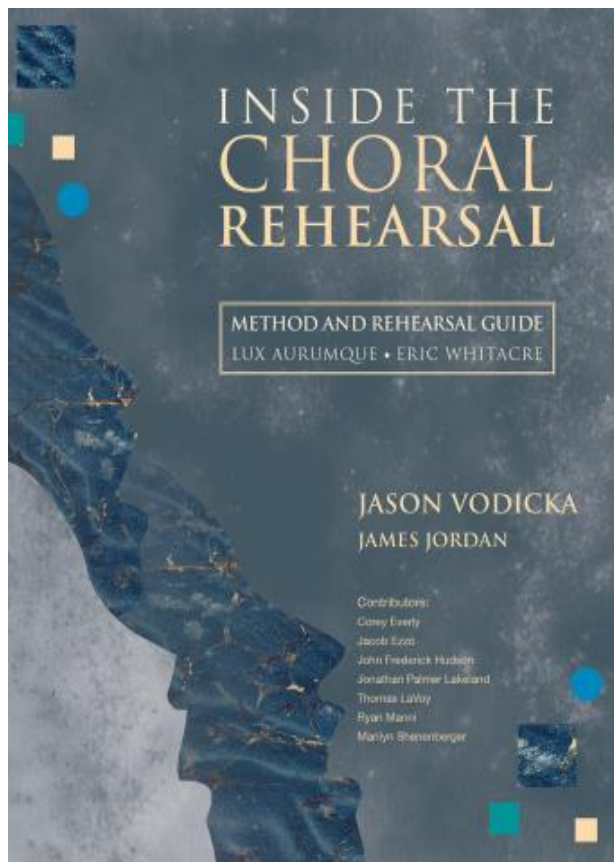
Harmonic Rehearsal Teaching and Learning
Based on the Music Learning Theory of Edwin E. Gordon



The Anatomy of Tone

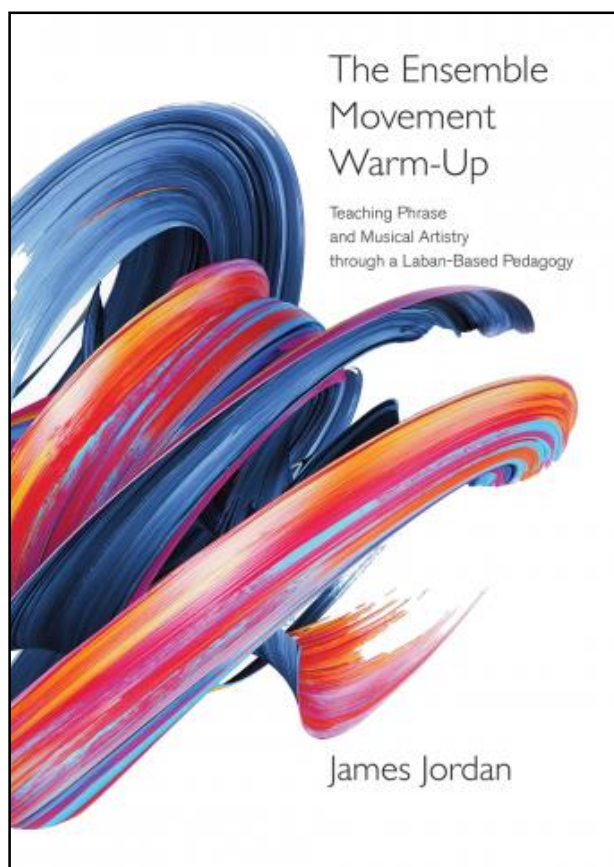
Applying Voice Science to Choral Ensemble Pedagogy

TEXTS USED THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF PRINCIPLES PRESENTED
(cont.)



Inside the Choral Rehearsal

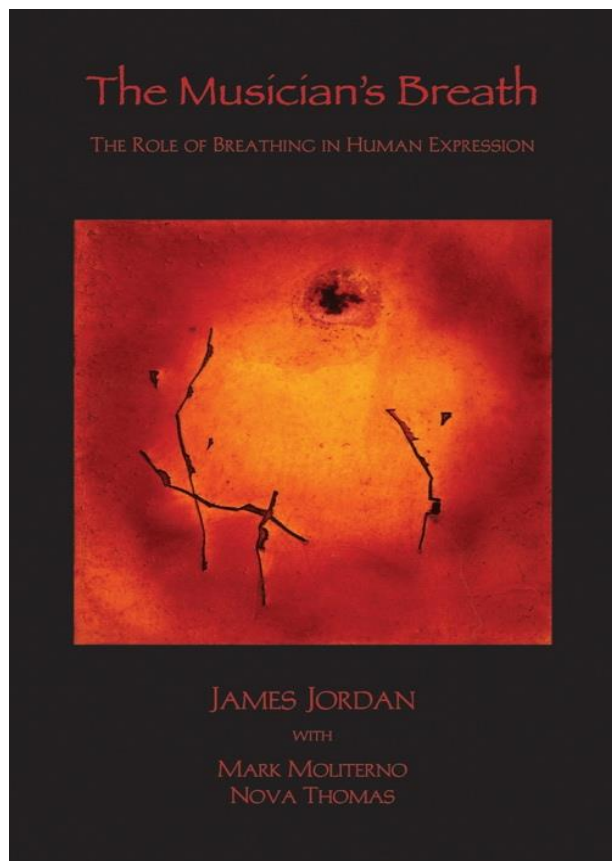
Method and Rehearsal Guide for *Lux Aurumque*
by Eric Whitacre



The Ensemble Movement Warm-Up

Teaching Phrase and Musical Artistry through a
Laban-Based Pedagogy

TEXTS USED THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF PRINCIPLES PRESENTED
(cont.)



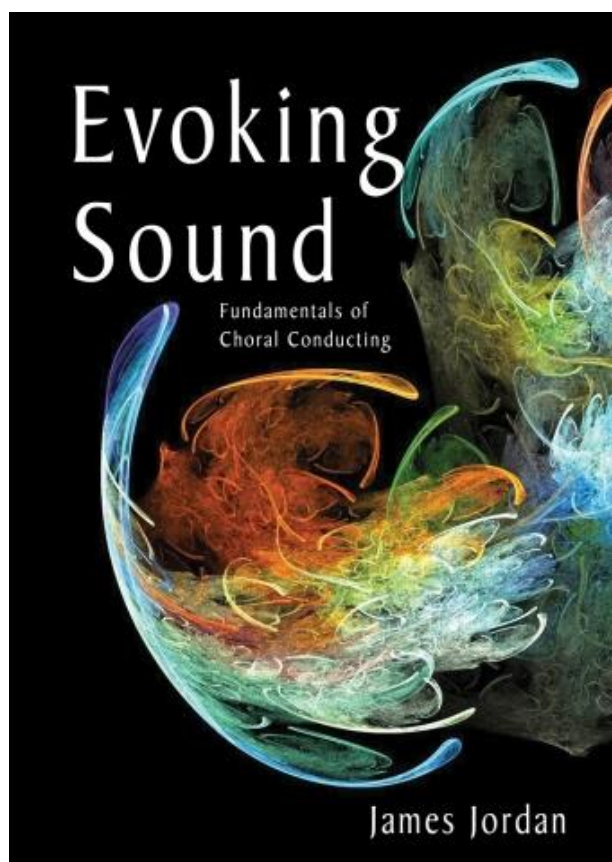
The Musician's Breath

The Role of Breathing in Human Expression

The Musician's Breath DVD

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Fundamentals of Choral Conducting

THE WESTMINSTER WILLIAMSON VOICES

“We would call Williamson Voices a Rolls-Royce of choirs....”

from video for
The Choral Institute at Oxford

Daniel Hyde
Conductor
King’s College Choir, Cambridge

The GRAMMY-nominated Westminster Williamson Voices, named for the founder of Westminster Choir College, John Finley Williamson, is praised by reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic. Williamson Voices is the resident choir of The Choral Institute at Oxford (CIO), now in its eighth year. The CIO is one of the leading institutes in the world for the training of conductors that emphasizes artistry in performance. Founded by James Jordan, the ensemble has quickly distinguished itself in the choral world for its distinctive artistry, recordings, educational outreach, and its mission to perform new music. The choir has additionally distinguished itself as a living choral laboratory. It is one of the few ensembles in the world that use chant as the center of their musicianship study and performance. This emphasis has grown out of its residencies and study at The Choral Institute at Oxford. Beginning in 2014, the choir embarked on a three-year project studying the performance practice and spirituality surrounding the works of Arvo Pärt in conjunction with the Arvo Pärt Project. This project culminated in the performance of his monumental *Kanon Pokajanen* as part of the prestigious METLIVE series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Temple of Dendur at the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. Williamson Voices is the first college ensemble to be a part of The Metropolitan Museum of Arts LIVEArts series and to have performed in museum’s Temple of Dendur in collaboration with the Arvo Pärt Project.

Reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic are of one voice in praising the ensemble for its world premiere recordings on the Naxos label. *Gramophone* magazine has described the Westminster Williamson Voices as an ensemble of “intimate and forceful choral artistry,” with a tone that is “controlled and silken in sustained phrases as they are vibrantly sonorous in extroverted material.” The *American Record Guide* praised the ensemble as “without peer.” The *Choral Journal* has described the Westminster Williamson Voices as an ensemble of “supreme artistry” and a choir that performs with “truth and precision.” And from the publication of the Arvo Pärt Project: “The Westminster Williamson Voices under his (Jordan’s) direction “are coming into their own in the American choral scene both here and abroad.”

In July 2013, The Williamson Voices performed as part of the world-wide Britten 100 celebration: the 50th anniversary re-enactment performance of the premiere of *St. Nicolas* in the Lancing College Chapel in Sussex, where the work was premiered with the composer conducting. In 2013, the choir also gave its UK debut performance at Oxford as part of the Westminster Choral Institute at Oxford and the SJE Artist series. In 2015, the choir performed Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* under the baton of the newly appointed Director of King’s College, Cambridge, Daniel Hyde, on the day of the 50th Anniversary of the work’s premiere.

The ensemble has established itself as a voice of composers of our time, and it has been acclaimed for its creative programming and collaborations with other art forms. Most notable were the ensemble’s performance at The Philadelphia Cathedral of Eric Whitacre’s *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* with the renowned Spiral Q Puppet Theater and the premiere of James Whitbourn’s *Luminosity* with The ArcheDream Blacklight Dance Theater Company of Philadelphia.

The choir has premiered more than forty choral works and presented several early performances and premieres by noted composers Jackson Hill, William Duckworth, Paul Mealer, Tarik O’Regan, Roger Ames, Robert Moran, Blake Henson, Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, Ugis Praulins, Gerald Custer, James Whitbourn, Thomas

LaVoy, Cortlandt Matthews, Kile Smith, Thomas LaVoy, Anthony Bernaducci, Anthony Maglione, Sam Scheibe, Dan Forrest, Sarah Rimkus, and John Hudson. The choir has premiered three major works by British composer James Whitbourn that have attracted international attention. In 2007, the choir performed the world premiere of the chamber version of *Annelies*, the first major choral setting of the diary of Anne Frank. In 2008, the choir shared in a commission of *Luminosity*, a work for triple choir, dancers, viola solo, organ, and tanpura. In 2010, the choir premiered Whitbourn's *Requiem Canticorum*. Past seasons have also included performances of Debussy's *Nocturnes* with The Princeton Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rossen Milanov. In 2013, the choir performed the US premiere in New York of Paul Mealor's *Crucifixus* for choir, orchestra, and baritone soloist. In April 2014, the choir made its Lincoln Center debut at Alice Tully Hall performing James Whitbourn's *Annelies*.

The choir has also assembled an impressive recorded discography, with over twelve discs. Releases the past five years have topped all major charts, including Billboard and Apple Music. The choir has recorded more than fifty choral masterworks on the *Teaching Music through Performance* CD box sets that are used by conductors around the world. The ensemble can also be seen and heard in the DVD *The Empowered Choral Rehearsal: Choral Masterclasses with Simon Carrington*. The choir has seven world premiere recordings to its credit, including its 2011 recording on the Naxos label, *Living Voices: The Music of James Whitbourn*. James Whitbourn's *Annelies*, performed with The Lincoln Trio, Arianna Zukerman (soprano), and Bharat Chandra (clarinet) was released by Naxos in 2013 and was the CD that received a GRAMMY nomination in 2013 for "Best Choral Performance." London's *Guardian* newspaper wrote about the recording, "The performance as a whole...is well prepared and palpably committed as befits a premiere recording." *Gramophone* lauded Williamson Voices on the *Annelies* recording as "exhilarating" and described the ensemble as singing "with a precision and finesse normally found in the best of the UK's large chamber choirs."

In 2016, the choir released its third recording on the Naxos label, *Carolae*. The choir also released another recording, *A Hole in the Sky*, on the GIA ChoralWorks label late that summer. Both CDs charted on Billboard, iTunes, and Amazon Classical List. The *Guardian* in the UK listed *Carolae* as one of the five best Christmas CD releases for 2016, calling the performance a "knockout." In 2017, the choir released *Silence to Light*. That disc includes movements from the Arvo Pärt *Kanon Pokajänen* along with definitive performances of Whitaker: *Lux Aurumque*, Jackson Hill: *When Spring Is Born at Last*, and Whitbourn: *Pater Noster*.

In February 2019, Williamson Voices released *Ola Gjeilo: Sunrise Mass*. This disc features the new string orchestra version of the *Sunrise Mass* with a string orchestra of twenty-four players from The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Opera Orchestra of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra. The disc also has other works by Gjeilo in addition to Mendelssohn and Durufle motets and Gregorian chant. In 2020 will be the release of *Aurora* featuring a monumental ten-minute choral improvisation.

Since 2013, Williamson Voices has served as the resident choir for the acclaimed Choral Institute at Oxford (rider.edu/oxford) and will return there in 2019 for their eighth year. This choir has inspired and taught over 200 conductors since the inauguration of the program. In addition to serving as the ensemble in residence, for the past two years the choir has been a part of the Oxford Festival of the Arts and has shared the stage of that series with Tenebrae and Voces8. Last summer, the choir performed *Annelies*, conducted by the composer, James Whitbourn.

REFERENCE RECORDINGS
by
The Westminster Williamson Voices
and
The Same Stream

To hear the vowel concepts discussed as a vital part of building a choral sound in addition to the diction concepts being shared in this approach, it may be helpful to listen to recordings that have employed these pedagogical principles.

All recordings are available at:
www.giamusic.com

• LUX AURUMQUE (ERIC WHITACRE) •

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1zIHjp0aZyXpCvDMUNnBR4?si=mfdx159Rd27mGONUREtRA>

• SILENCE INTO LIGHT •

https://open.spotify.com/album/4eJfckyXrzhhnyhBhvL71op?si=xt_CndgASVKG_ek7PEyBjA

• OLA GJEILO: SUNRISE MASS •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/04WjMDGTs5ORgtsbIqtnuQ?si=HnSgwb8IRSaPWYvYyKl3aBA>

GRAMMY-Nominated Recording (Naxos)

• ANNELIES •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/6yJevk3inoSwXxlbCWbBvf?si=9T9MaooUSY2YXR1pVba72g>

• AURORA •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/7fViGb7fHME48v3XDgsjQc?si=5-dreXL9T6qAgLanvHWwIQ>

• CAROLAE (Naxos) •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/5FQaP3lkpARGMISZ3oRuPD?si=0jZLFDY6SqWhEJRAYwlQOg>

• SILENCE INTO LIGHT •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/0lVHOYYGd2fua6LTdC3YY4?si=uZPPczNtQ7uZ8ubzMzwvxQ>

• LIVING VOICES (Naxos) •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/13PiJxtzxwKd1DNvTNsPhD?si=re-hjfulTniFC2l2BA7OZw>

• HOLE IN THE SKY •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/5IWEyoaZsrsktjEwD7MYE?si=2udb1gdSQUuQ6qHIAYLbWg>

THE SAME STREAM
(www.thesamestreamchoir.com)

• Serenity: The Music of Paul Mealor •

<https://open.spotify.com/album/0x3kcANE2RUD29qcRbapIA?si=INsbHOhES1O62o-aYpRyXA>