



Chorister Curriculum Expectations

Seattle Girls' Choir

February 2009

This document describes theory and sight singing classes and clarifies the SGC curriculum expectations. Additionally, it clarifies the expectations and process for promotion to the next choir level. The February 2009 version includes communication clarifications based on learning from our use in the 07/08 season.

Overall Goals

The overall goal is to equip the girls with the knowledge that enables them musically to be secure and confident. Theory is the language necessary for the creation of music. Sight singing competency is critical to chorister success – it will be included as an expectation at each level of promotion, and incorporated into all rehearsals. Knowledge of intervals is particularly important. The website www.teoria.com is a good practice tool.

Promotion to the Next Choir Level

The primary criterion for promotion to the next choir level is judgment of the current conductor regarding chorister readiness.

The conductor develops that judgment through observation of chorister behavior in rehearsal:

- Consistent attendance and timeliness
- Age, maturity and readiness
- Attentiveness and focus
- Participation
- Musical growth: music memorization, accuracy, sound

In addition, girls should be at the music theory levels described below, or motivated to work hard at camp to get to that level. Girls should also have a sight singing competency appropriate to their theory level.

In about mid-May, conductors work with theory and sight singing instructors to identify those girls whom they believe are ready for promotion. The current conductor will talk to the girls, and the parents will also be notified about the promotion opportunity.

In the weeks of choir in June between the Spring Concert and summer break, girls will meet with their new conductor to discuss promotion and do some sight singing, which assists the new conductor with “voicing” the choir. Girls advancing to Cantamus and Prime Voci prepare a solo song to sing as an audition piece. Girls who are promoted begin in their new choir levels at camp (or in September for the younger choirs).

It is important to emphasize that although this document defines the general expectations, the judgment of the conductor is most important.

In addition, there will be some flexibility in these initial years following clarification of the curriculum expectations, since much of this information is new to the girls with the 07/08 season.

Promotion from Dolcine to Vivissimi

- Promotion is based on age and readiness as determined by Miss Tess
- Formal music theory and sight singing instruction begins at the start of Vivissimi, although Miss Tess introduces solfege and rhythm in Dolcine.

Thursday Theory and Sight Singing Classes

- Vivissimi and Allegra have music theory and sight singing classes on alternate weeks, from 6:00 to 6:30 on Thursdays. Each class meets once every two weeks.
- Miss Tess and Mr. de Leon teach theory with assistance from Mr. Oliver, Ms. Bartolome and Ms. Draper.
- Ms. Braund teaches sight singing.
- The girls are divided into three groups: “Pre-1”, “Group 1” and “Group 2” as described below.

Thursday - “Pre-1”

Who They Are and Who Teaches Them

- First year Vivissimis entering from Dolcine, and also any girls auditioning directly into Vivissimi or Allegra
- Mr. de Leon teaches these girls.
- There are not separate theory and sight singing lessons for these girls, they work with Mr. de Leon on combined theory and sight singing.

Curriculum and Expectations

- Completion of Book 1 – Parts 1 and 2
- Letter Name test for pitches, some rhythm and solfege
- When they have completed this competency, Mr. de Leon moves them to Thursday Group 1, and they begin separate theory and sight singing classes.

Thursday - “Group 1”

Who They Are and Who Teaches Them

- 2nd year Vivissimi, Allegras
- Theory with Miss Tess, with assistance from Mr. Oliver and Miss Bartolome
- Sight Singing with Ms. Braund

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Completion of Book 1 (Parts 3, 4, 5, test in the book)
- Sharps & Flats - Time signatures, counting – Solfege
- Approximately 1.5 years in Group 1 is expected.

Sight Singing Curriculum and Expectations

- Hand signals and solfege, note names,
- Rounds and canons, intervals, clapping rhythm

Promotion from Vivissimi to Allegra

- Promotion is based on age and readiness as determined by Ms. Braund
- Girls should be progressing well in Group 1 Theory, with a minimum of one part per semester completed in theory books
- An individual meeting with Ms. Bartolome will be held in June to discuss promotion, do some sight singing, and help with voicing.

Thursday - "Group 2"

Who They Are and Who Teaches Them

- Allegras primarily
- Theory with Miss Tess, with assistance from Mr. Oliver and Miss Bartolome
- Sight Singing with Ms. Braund

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Working in Book 2, Part 1, although some advanced Allegras are in more advanced parts of Book 2.

Sight Singing Curriculum and Expectations

- Chromatic scale
- Work with songs, Key signatures
- Individual ability to identify and sing intervals

Promotion from Allegra to Cantamus

- Promotion is based on age, maturity, focus and readiness as determined by Ms. Bartolome. Generally choristers progressing through the SGC choirs spend at least two years in Allegra before moving up.
- Cantamus is primarily a middle-school choir, with girls in grades 6-8
- Girls should be working at least in Theory Book 2 Part 1
- An individual meeting with Mr. Gagiù will be held in June to discuss promotion, do some sight singing, and help with voicing.
- A solo audition will be sung in front of Allegra, with both Mr. Gagiù and Ms. Bartolome attending.

Monday Theory, Sight Singing and Voice Classes

- Cantamus and PV have sight singing every week, with theory and voice classes on alternate weeks.
- Miss Tess teaches the theory groups, Mr. Gagiù and Ms. Shariff teach sight singing, and Lois White teaches voice.
- The girls are divided into four groups, as described below.

Monday - "Group 1"

Who They Are

- When girls move to Cantamus they enter Monday Group 1

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Working in Book 2 Part 2
- Oral Key Signature Test, all 15 Major Scales ascending and descending

Monday - "Group 2"

Who They Are

- Primarily Cantamus

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Focus on Interval Test
- Book 2 Part 3 – Interval worksheet

Promotion from Cantamus to Prime Voci

- Promotion is based on age, maturity, focus and readiness as determined by Mr. Gagliu. Generally choristers progressing through the SGC choirs spend at least two years in Cantamus before moving up, but there can be exceptions.
- Prime Voci is primarily a high-school choir, with girls in grades 9-12. Prime Voci is a rigorous program with significant time and work commitment.
- Girls should be working in Theory Book 2 Part 4 or higher, and should have completed of the interval test
- Girls complete a Prime Voci Application form with behavior and attendance commitments. The form is signed by both the candidate and a parent.
- An individual meeting with Dr. Wright will be held in June to discuss promotion, do some sight singing, and help with voicing.
- A solo audition will be sung for Cantamus followed immediately by an audition and critique with PV.
- The candidate is notified in writing of the outcome via a letter sent to her home. The letter notification is a process being brought back into usage spring 2009.

Monday – “Group 3”

Who They Are

- PV and some Cantamus

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Relative minor
- Oral minor key signature test
- Book 2 Part 4

Monday – “Group 4”

Who They Are

- Primarily PV

Theory Curriculum and Expectations

- Most advanced
- Working in Book 3 and above