Tone production, musicianship training, repertoire development, performance practice: A pedagogical overview of selected international children's choirs

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Tone Production, Musicianship Training, Repertoire Development, Performance Practice:
A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs

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A Doctor of Musical Arts document submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

School of Music

May 2019

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I dedicate this document to my choristers: past, present, and future, who continually teach me the joy of collaborative excellence, artistry, and beauty.
Acknowledgements

This project would fail to exist without the care and support shown by significant mentors, colleagues, and loved ones. Thank you, Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy for providing overall vision and advisory assistance as we crafted a satisfying conclusion to my DMA program.

I am indebted to each of the directors who welcomed me into their countries and whose hospitality went well beyond the scope of research. Lyn Williams loaned me her coat in chilly Australia and provided her very own chauffeuring services in and around Sydney; Jiří Skopal and his wife Květa hosted my husband and me in their home for several days and insisted on taking care of our every need while we were with them in both the Czech Republic and in Germany; Zimfira Poloz extended her sincere hand of friendship during my first visit to Canada and requested that I return three months later to spend another week with her and the Hamilton Children’s Choir; and finally, Jude and Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan went out of their way to share Filipino cuisine and culture with my husband and me as they hosted us multiple times in both their home and in Filipino restaurants. The Roldans’ daughters, Sophia and Regina, stole our hearts as they sang, played piano, and danced to music.

My sincere appreciation also goes to Dr. Pedro Aponte, Dr. Jonathan Gibson, and Dr. W. Bryce Hayes who served on my document committee and supported my efforts throughout my doctoral program. I will remember the many lessons you taught me.
Finally, my husband, Eric Hostetter deserves so much recognition for his faithful love and support behind the scenes. Together we succeeded in this program, along with the One Who called us and Who is faithful.
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Abstract

Directors of children’s choirs benefit greatly from understanding the pedagogical processes used in internationally-recognized children’s choirs. The sharing of ideas and resources among children’s choir directors is especially critical in the United States where diverse populations are the norm. Cross-cultural collaboration produces inspiration for new repertoire and exposes developing singers to the established performance practices upheld in choral communities of other nations. The effort to incorporate musical practices across regions builds meaningful relationships as directors and singers learn to understand, respect, and perform music of other lands. Finally, when children’s choir directors understand the pedagogical practices embraced by global choirs, culturally responsible teaching and representative performances of global choral repertoire results.

The purpose of this research project is to study the pedagogical practices of internationally-recognized children’s choirs in order to understand each director’s choral philosophies and educational approaches in regards to vocal tone, musicianship training, repertoire development, and performance practice. This document presents pedagogical practices collected while observing rehearsals, attending concerts and interviewing the leaders of four children’s choirs from around the world: (1) Gondwana Choirs in Australia; (2) Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir in the Philippines; (3) Hamilton Children’s Choir in Ontario, Canada; and (4) Jitro (Daybreak) in the Czech Republic.

This document delineates the vision statements, beliefs, and practices of each of the study choirs, provides tools for increasing global perspectives in choral music education, outlines ideas for ameliorated pedagogical practices, offers new perspectives
in terms of diversity of repertoire, and supports the successful and credible replication of diverse choral repertoire as used by these represented ensembles. Also included are summaries of pedagogical practices gleaned through site visits and interviews, recommendations for culturally representative selections of repertoire from each study choir, and ideas for further research.
Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose

In 2015, Brook Hostetter (now Gonzalez) sent me a YouTube link of an engaging Peruvian children’s choir, Los K’ana Wawakuna (Children of the K’ana), under the direction of Amilcar Soto performing “Ch’aska Ñawi Niñucha” (Child with Big Eyes and Bright as Stars). The choir is nationally recognized, generating YouTube videos annually and performing all over Peru. Questions formed as I watched these youngsters sing and dance for viewers numbering in the hundreds of thousands. How are these children taught? What is behind the creation of these popular Peruvian videos? Would Los K’ana Wawakuna be willing to create a YouTube video with my ensemble, the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir? I determined to find out.

After nearly two years of channeling communications to Director Soto through Hostetter-Gonzalez, the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir traveled to Cusco, Peru in June 2017 to learn from and work with Los K’ana Wawakuna. The collaboration proved to be challenging but also rich and successful. Soto wrote the song, “Kuska Takisun” (Together We Sing) for our choirs to sing and record together. As we worked towards the production of a collaborative YouTube video, I did not observe the types of pedagogical processes in which I had been schooled as a North American choral educator. Neither did I hear the type of choral tone to which many of my colleagues in the United States aspire. Yet, I discovered admirable qualities that make Los K’ana Wawakuna a source of Peruvian national pride.

The most evident qualities contributing to the success of the Peruvian children’s choir were director competencies, colorful uniforms, energetic dances, and large amounts
of rehearsal time. Amilcar Soto skillfully composes Peruvian music and employs indigenous folk instruments to accompany his songs. The tenacity he demonstrates in working to improve his choral product along with his regular demands for the children to sing with strength (fuerte), all contribute to the national reputation his children’s choir enjoys. In addition, colorful, indigenous uniforms swirl festively as choristers sing and dance against a backdrop of Peruvian landmarks, making a pleasing visual effect. Finally, Soto’s rehearsal time is nearly unlimited. Whenever a new project is announced, the work is deemed so important that parents will bring children to participate in daily two-hour rehearsals for several weeks at a time until the choristers are ready to record and film.

As I reflected on the insights gleaned from working with Soto in Peru, I realized that while not everything about his national recognition is replicable for my choral setting, an understanding of Soto’s choral approach enabled me to bring my choristers into that authentic Peruvian music-making experience with sensitivity and respect. Whetted with an appetite for global children’s choir music experiences, I decided to focus my research on specific questions. How do children’s choir directors in other nations develop vocal tone, teach musicianship skills and convey performance expectations to their choristers? What are their sources for repertoire? How does the choir’s organizational structure contribute to their overall success? Would I discover similarities among choirs that are replicable for children’s choirs in my own country? My desire was to discover pedagogical practices utilized by successful international children’s choirs so that children’s choir directors everywhere could have ready access to a refreshing resource filled with choral ideas for children.
After seeking recommendations from community children’s choir directors across the United States, I made connections with internationally-recognized children’s choir directors. Four out of five of the contacted choirs agreed to participate. From August 2017 to August 2018, I made one or two on-site visits with each of these elite choirs, and each of the choir directors participated in a face-to-face interview. The participating directors and their children’s choirs were Lyn Williams of the Gondwana Choirs in Australia; Jude Roldan with Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan of the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir in the Philippines; Zimfira Poloz of the Hamilton Children’s Choir in Canada; and Jiří Skopal of Jitro (“Daybreak”) in the Czech Republic.

**Need for the Study**

Although many performance videos of these respected international children’s choirs are available on YouTube, no resources exist that shed light on the pedagogical processes that contribute to the success of these respected choirs. Facebook and individual organizational websites offer basic structural information, staff biographies, and lists of successes, but one cannot fully comprehend the educational methods, the challenges, or the choral and cultural philosophies that propel each group to a position of world renown by looking solely at websites and social media platforms. One must take time to observe rehearsals and converse with directors to understand the pedagogical processes that contribute to their success.

Additionally, the sharing of choral ideas and resources among children’s choir directors is especially critical in the United States where diverse populations are the norm. Cross-cultural collaboration produces inspiration for new repertoire and exposes
developing singers to the established performance practices upheld in global choral communities. The effort to incorporate musical practices across regions builds meaningful relationships as students learn to understand, respect, and perform music of other lands. Finally, when singers can effectively emulate the vocal tone and language expected from indigenous choirs, a feeling of accomplishment and identification with the people of other cultures can result.¹

**Purpose and Goals**

The purpose of this research is to study the pedagogical practices of internationally-recognized children’s choirs in order to understand each director’s choral philosophies and educational approaches in regards to vocal tone, musicianship training, repertoire development, and performance practice. When children’s choir directors understand the pedagogical practices embraced by global choirs, culturally responsible teaching and replication of global choral repertoire results. Thus, the goal of this study is to produce a document that:

- delineates the beliefs and practices of each of the study choirs;
- provides tools for increasing global perspectives in choral music education;
- outlines ideas for ameliorated pedagogical practices;
- offers new perspectives in terms of diverse repertoire;
- supports the successful and credible replication of diverse repertoire as used by these represented ensembles.

**Definitions**

¹ When embarking on a flight to Taiwan, I sang a Taiwanese folk song, “diu diu dang a” to my shocked and teary-eyed Taiwanese seatmate. The woman remarked, “I understood every word! Most children in Taiwan know that song!”
The following terms occur frequently throughout the study and are defined as follows:

*Children’s Choir:* A group of singers in the age range of seven to eighteen who performs treble repertoire.

*International:* When coupled with the title “children’s choir,” *international* makes reference to the fact that these groups have received significant recognition or awards outside of their own countries.

**Delimitations**

Although modern technology and modes of travel have furthered the ability for global communication, many directors experience limitations related to time, finances, language, and personality. For these people, a written resource describing the successful organizational and pedagogical practices utilized by children’s choir directors in distant places is indispensable, yet no written document can ever replace the benefits of an actual site visit.

Music education professor Carlos Abril reflects that a “performer, arranger, composer, or transcriber should be an individual who understands the culture and musical style. The person can be a culture bearer or an individual with an in-depth understanding.”

2 Although onsite visits have been illuminating to each choir’s philosophies, practices, and choral sound, these brief visits were insufficient for the author to be considered an “expert” with any one of them.

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A language barrier existed most prominently in the Czech Republic. Jiří Skopal, director of Jitro, speaks limited English and I have no facility of the Czech language. A few singers in Skopal’s choir were able to help translate Czech into English during an interview, yet all rehearsals and concerts were held exclusively in Czech or German. The rest of the children’s choirs participating in the study conducted their rehearsals either fully or primarily in English.

The time spent with each choir was disproportionate. The smallest amount of time given to a site visit was five days in the Philippines. The largest amount of time spent in observations was given to the Hamilton Children’s Choir in Ontario. I was able to visit Canada on two separate occasions for a total of ten days. The second trip provided the opportunity for daylong rehearsal observations as part of their annual summer camp.

Additionally, I observed rehearsals of each children’s choir at varied stages in their learning processes. For instance, a weekend choral camp in Australia was organized to solidify learned repertoire in anticipation of the Sydney Children’s Choir concert the following week. In contrast, a weeklong camp designed for the Hamilton Children’s Choir was geared towards the introduction of new repertoire, the building of vocal technique, and the task of generating choral community among choristers.

Finally, I did not attempt to survey in full each country represented or to review the impact of conductor gesture or teacher effectiveness in this study. Attention was given solely to organizational processes realized by each of the children’s choirs and to the pedagogical practices delivered by directors in rehearsals or expressed to the author in conversations.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Relatively little research exists on the subject of children’s choirs outside of the United States, and no studies were discovered that examine the work of the four choirs contained in this study. Many resources do exist that contribute to a bank of knowledge necessary for teaching children to sing with artistry and excellence. Thus, the following literature review highlights those sources that contribute to the following specific areas of research: (1) vocal tone production, (2) musicianship training, (3) repertoire development and (4) performance practice. Of particular interest are the writings presented by four prominent children’s choir directors: Jean Ashworth Bartle, Helen Kemp, Henry Leck, and Doreen Rao. These pedagogues are frequently referenced in books and journal articles, and each of them participated in a comparative study conducted by Heather Williams Potter for her 2005 dissertation.³

Vocal Tone Production

Colorful, descriptive language is often used to describe the tonal possibilities inherent in children’s choirs. Bartle utilized the adjectives, “ethereal, moving, touching, spiritual, buoyant, fluid, resonant, ringing, pure, in-tune, ringing—certainly the ringing” during an interview to explain the ideal choral tone that she seeks from children.⁴ Kemp


⁴ Ibid., 62.
employed the words “clear, vital, buoyant, rather floating” and “pure” to her list of adjectives while adding “lively” and “energetic” as the ideal tone quality. Kemp stated, “‘Lively,’ is important. Many people go for a sound that is too pale. I think children’s voices are not pale. They are alive, bright, energetic and unforced and still, they have clarity and purity.”

In reflecting on her vocal training at Westminster Choir College, Kemp aims to instruct children with the same “pure, lyric and spinning vocal quality” she was taught by her voice teacher, LoRean Hodapp. Kemp also emphasizes Hodapp’s famous saying, “Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice: It takes the whole person to sing and rejoice,” that more than beautiful tone is required to fully educate a singing child.

Rao refers to the child’s voice as a “potentially exquisite and unique instrument of artistic excellence.” She differentiates the sound of the children’s chorus from that of a treble women’s chorus by describing the children’s chorus as “autonomous, compelling in its clarity, magnetic in its purity, and uniquely transparent. It is a beautifully simple

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5 Heather Williams Potter, “Perspectives,” 82, 139.


7 Ibid., 5.


and versatile instrument." In regards to versatility, Rao believes that vocal tone in a children’s choir is not static but one that changes. She also believes that the choir’s sound should primarily be a reflection of its identity rather than any “ideal” tone conceptualized by a conductor. Leck also believes in the versatility of the child’s vocal tone. In an interview with Potter, he coined the term “flexible tone” as his favorite children’s choir sound. He notes that this “ideal” sound can assume a wide variety of timbres as it transfers from genre to genre.

Additional adjectives and phrases used to describe the ideal children’s choir tone include, “ethereal,” “free tone,” “smaller dynamic range,” “more intimate,” and “light,” “pure,” and “supported”—a tone that is in a “higher, lighter register” so that the production of sound is neither “pressed” nor “heavy.” Christiane Wieblitz, in her book *Lively Children’s Choir*, encourages educators to use “objects for stimulating breathing and gentle singing” in children. She points out that children are naturally drawn to


11 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 139.

12 Ibid., 124.

13 Ibid., 100, 139.


“shimmering soap bubbles, brightly colored balloons, light paper balls and soft chiffon scarves.”

These metaphorical props can be used to spark a child’s fascination and ultimately elicit a tone that sounds light and effortless.

The most frequently reported means for attaining the ideal children’s choral tone among choral directors include proper posture, breath support, and vowel formation. Leck himself claims that healthy tone begins first with the posture, then with adequate breath support, and finally with well-formed vowels. Leck states that vowel shaping within the context of a “ringing head voice” is the most important aspect for building beautiful tone.

Rao believes that breathing is the most necessary ingredient for generating a free and natural tone. She encourages singers to focus their energetic attention on inhalation more than on tone quality. Bartle teaches children to “manage their breath, to produce a

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20 Ibid., 121.
supported, relaxed tone with forward resonance.\textsuperscript{21} She emphasizes singers’ posture, a relaxed tongue and jaw, space in the mouth and uniform vowel sounds as important means to which beautiful tone is achieved in children’s choirs.\textsuperscript{22} She uses the hum to generate “open throats” and a sense of “forward resonance.”\textsuperscript{23}

Similarly, Joy Hirokawa notes that “vocal tone is generated in the quality of the breath.” As singers use supported breathing to “explore the outer edges of their ranges,” she suggests asking them to “add or subtract weight” to their voices as they navigate these registers.\textsuperscript{24} Another idea for achieving excellent breath support is the “cool air sip.” Multiple directors describe this exercise as the slow intake of air through an “oo” vowel or pretend straw to give students the feeling of expansion through the rib cage area.\textsuperscript{25}

Imagery and props can encourage young singers to hold their bodies, breathe and shape vowels properly. Excellent singers’ posture can be acquired by playing games such as ‘Simon Says.’ Deep breathing can be effected by pretending to be greatly surprised as if a grand piano fell from the sky, or by opening a pretend umbrella downwards during

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 62-63.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Hirokawa, “Teaching Vocal Technique,” 74, 76.
\end{itemize}
inhalation, or by expanding one’s rib cage with the opening of a Hoberman’s sphere.\footnote{Lana and Westgate, “Children’s Choirs,” 78.}

Similarly, vowel sounds can be manipulated with props modeling the position of the tongue and jaw. For instance, a rubber band or a slinky stretched from high to low, demonstrates the vertical alignment of vowels.\footnote{Chivington,” Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus,” 27; Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 61.} Varying sizes of coins or numbers of fingers contribute to the unification of vowel shape. A dime or one finger can be equated to the size of the “OO” vowel while a half dollar or two fingers can be equated with the size of the “AH” vowel.\footnote{Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 61.}

Other points of vocal tone production deemed as necessary for beauty include relaxation of the tongue and jaw and use of the head voice.\footnote{Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 58; Hirokawa, “Teaching Vocal Technique,” 74.} Amy Chivington encourages the use of the “OO” vowel in descending patterns between C5 and C4 to elicit head tone in children’s voices.\footnote{Chivington, “Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus,” 27.} Joy Hirokawa advocates the use of “OO” and “EE” vowels on long, sustained pitches to gently warm-up the vocal mechanism and to encourage “on-the-breath” singing. She points out that the “AH” vowel is more difficult to unify and focus among young singers.\footnote{Hirokawa, “Teaching Vocal Technique,” 76.}

\textit{Musicianship Training}

\footnote{Lana and Westgate, “Children’s Choirs,” 78.}

\footnote{Chivington,” Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus,” 27; Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 61.}

\footnote{Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 61.}

\footnote{Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 58; Hirokawa, “Teaching Vocal Technique,” 74.}

\footnote{Chivington, “Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus,” 27.}

\footnote{Hirokawa, “Teaching Vocal Technique,” 76.}
In a 1990 study of six North American children’s choir directors, Patricia Ann Smith Bourne discovered that all of the ensembles employed Curwen hand signs to teach music-reading. The Kodály-based approach and associated syllables (“do,” “re,” “mi,” “fa,” “sol,” “la,” and “ti”) were also used in varying degrees by each of them.³² Many directors advocate for incorporating sight-reading and audiation skills right along with vocal pedagogy concepts into warm-ups.³³ Exercises derived from the repertoire to be sung are especially productive.³⁴ Yet “musicianship” is considered to be more than the acquisition of music-reading skills. Musicianship is understood to encompass a broad understanding of the “qualities and meanings of music.”³⁵

Ideas for incorporating musicianship training into rehearsals include reading isolated melodic patterns extracted from the repertoire during warm-ups and asking pertinent questions about the music such as “What makes your voice work?” to “What note makes the second phrase more interesting than the first?”³⁶ Body movement and imagery can also encourage musicianship. Robyn Lana and Kelly Ann Westgate suggest

³² Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 40.
³⁶ Bourne, “Instructional Techniques,” 42-44.
that musical phrasing can coincide with the pretend action of lifting a baby bunny out of singer’s hands and onto a “counter” by the end of the phrase.37

Games, involving body notation, can be utilized to solidify sight-reading and compositional skills. “Touchdown” hands can represent eighth notes while “peace sign” fingers can be added to “touchdown” hands to represent sixteenth notes. Clasped hands can represent quarter notes while hands down can represent a quarter rest. A child “composer” can ask four or more peers to assume one of these notational positions while the rest of the group “reads” the resulting work. Similarly, pitch levels can be assigned to individuals for the larger groups to sing. A student sitting on the floor might be “do” while a student sitting on a chair is “re” and a student standing, “mi”.38

In an interview with Dennis Shrock, Jean Ashworth Bartle explicitly advocated for the use of musical scores whether the music is memorized or not. She states, “They must always relate to the printed page.”39 She goes on to explain that children are highly discriminatory when it comes to quality and can accurately identify when a musical model is exhibiting excellence concerning intonation, phrasing or other musical skills.

Kemp builds musicianship skills through both rote learning and score reading. She believes the ability to read music is built in the transition from “rote to note: from the ear to the eye.” She says, “I tell the children the music ‘sounds like this and looks like

37 Lana and Westgate, “Children’s Choirs,” 78.

38 Ibid., 79.

that." In this way, musical expressivity can flourish while music reading progresses in a slower, more methodical rate.

One of the goals stated by the ACDA National Committee on Children’s Choirs sums up the desire of most choral directors in developing musicianship among young people. They desire, “to promote choral performance in the schools as a way of teaching children vocal skills and music understanding, as a way of delving deeply into expressive musical ideas, as a way of teaching the techniques of singing, reading, and knowledge of musical form and style, and as a way of enjoying music for its own sake.”

**Repertoire Development**

Conductors agree that choosing high-quality repertoire is absolutely essential for building an excellent children’s choir program. Rao stated three repertoire initiatives by the ACDA National Committee on Children’s Choirs: (1) “to encourage high standards in choral repertory;” (2) “to encourage and support the commissioning of new compositions

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40 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 86.


for children’s choirs;” and (3) “to discourage the proliferation of ‘junk’ music, ‘amusement’ music, and music for ‘entertainment’ purposes.”

Choral conductor, Barbara Tagg reported that an initial goal of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Repertoire and Standards Committee for Children’s Choirs was “to promote the performance of the finest choral literature available.” In David Brunner’s 1992 article “Choral Repertoire: A Director’s Checklist,” he identifies the outcomes of choosing quality repertoire:

Quality repertoire encourages young singers to become better at what they do. It stimulates their imaginations, expands their appreciation, and refines their musical skills. It challenges them intellectually, whets their appetite for further challenge, and motivates them to excel. It gives them a cultural perspective and opens new doors of musical awareness. It puts them in touch with the realm of their emotive and creative life and their ability to express themselves artistically. It gives them the pride of accomplishment. It reaches inside them and makes them feel more human, more alive, and part of something extraordinary. Not all choral music for sale in the marketplace accomplishes this. It is our responsibility as teachers and directors to put young singers in touch with music that matters.

When selecting music for children’s choirs, variety is paramount. Choices should include clear variations in style, historical time periods, language, and difficulty

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levels. Textual elements, vocal ranges, and modes of accompaniment need to be carefully considered. In addition, Angela Broeker emphasizes the need for compositions to exhibit clear form, accessible part-writing, and overall sing-ability, while Leck points out that as a director, he must love the music he selects.

Janice Smith and David Brunner raise questions that can help guide the literature selection process. Smith asks, “What can I teach my students by using this piece?” Brunner asks, “What does the text convey?...Is it in any way trite, condescending or clichéd? Is it rich with imagery, or is it mundane? Is it appropriate for the age level?...Is it well constructed?...Is it appropriate for today or dated?”

The ultimate goal in selecting quality repertoire for children’s choirs is to program selections that will “teach, encourage, inspire and create memories for life.” The belief is that when children are exposed to great choral works as youngsters, they will be positioned to experience a lifetime of musical enjoyment. For this reason, Leck says, “I


50 Brunner, “Choral Repertoire: A Director’s Checklist,” 32.


think our students deserve to sing the best music we can find in every possible style and
genre.” Bartle agrees. She states, “It must be excellent music, period!”

**Performance Practice**

Less is written about performance practice regarding stage deportment than in the
areas of vocal tone production, musicianship training, and repertoire development. Yet,
directors affirm the importance of performance in the overall scheme of a child’s total
choral experience. Bartle believes that performances are learning opportunities for her
youngest choristers as they develop stage deportment along with memorization abilities.

Kelsey Menehan reports for Chorus America that the Pacific Chorale Academy places
importance on quietly entering and exiting the stage, watching the conductor and
maintaining a position between “windows” or choristers’ heads. Linda Swears, in her
book *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus*, lists additional desirable skills for children
to exhibit in performance including (1) approaching the stage area from the warm-up
room without talking or goofing off, (2) not adjusting hair or clothes during the
performance, (3) maintaining orderly procedures for moving on and off risers, (4) singing

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54 Ibid., 51.

55 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 140.

56 Ibid., 67.

with correct posture; (5) keeping eyes focused on the director, and (6) remembering to stay professional as they leave the performance area.58

While the rudiments of stage deportment mentioned thus far are critical, many conductors emphasize the artistic necessity of a child’s emotive performance. Kemp seeks to connect a child’s emotions with their musical expressions by highlighting the dramatic aspect of music. For her, the animation of a child’s face reveals the state of their mental connection with the music.59

Leck also advocates for physical expression during a performance. Thus, he makes a point to train singers to think about what the audience members are viewing. During rehearsal, he will back away from the choir and ask them to measure the size of his head between their thumbs and forefingers. When they produce a size that is less than an inch apart, Leck encourages them to emote with their entire head and even upper torso to generate a musical connection with the audience. He asks his singers to be responsible for each song’s expression by “flipping on a switch” which tells a visual story.60

Asking children to raise their cheeks as if a special birthday gift has been received can help generate a positive visual effect to match uplifting songs.61 Other facial expressions can be explored to complement the varied moods contained in song texts.


59 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 84.

60 Ibid., 104-105.

The ability to match facial expressions and subtle body movements with texts should be encouraged among choristers in an effort to breed effective communication with audiences. Without an emotional connection, audience members will be less likely to return to subsequent concerts. The emotive goal is, “have the choir sing to make a difference in a life.”

**Summary**

None of these essential choral factors: vocal tone production, musicianship training, repertoire development, or performance practice operate independently of the others. In *Lifeline for Children’s Choir Directors*, Bartle says, “Conductors cannot separate appropriate repertoire from vocal development. Good repertoire enhances and develops a beautiful tone quality. Bad repertoire undermines choral development.” Remember: You build a choir’s sound on its repertoire.

Leck and Rao also believe that vocal tone is a direct extension of the repertoire or the choir’s unique voice. Rao chooses repertoire to encourage vocal resonance. Angela Broeker and Robyn Lana propose that Baroque repertoire, which is full of

---


64 Ibid., 44.

65 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 139.

66 Ibid., 124.
melismas, tessituras and vowel colors, make Baroque literature ideal for building vocal tone. Chivington says, “The choice of literature cannot be accomplished without consideration given to the choral tone that is ultimately to be produced by the group.”

Goetze’s performance repertoire becomes her vehicle for training children in music reading. She extracts melodic, rhythmic and phrasal elements from her literature choices to serve as the curriculum by which she teaches sight-singing skills. Bartle also uses the repertoire to teach a majority of musicianship concepts. Rao notes that teachers sometimes allow “young students to work from the concrete musical problems in the repertoire to the development of musicianship for the sake of musical enjoyment and self-growth.” She advocates for a “whole-part-whole” approach where students are exposed


70 Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 67.

to a piece of music in its entirety and then led to identify smaller facets contained within it.\textsuperscript{72} Leck also utilizes repertoire to instill musicianship concepts.\textsuperscript{73}

Brunner sums up the need for excellent repertoire to support all other developmental choral areas:

Learning all aspects of the choral art—healthy vocal technique; basic skills of listening and sight-reading; music theory, history, and appreciation; musical sensitivity, expression, and aesthetic response—is facilitated by the selection of high-quality literature that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the singer. This literature provides the foundation for a musical experience of substance and quality.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{72} Potter, “Perspectives on the American Children’s Choir,” 122.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 103.

\textsuperscript{74} David L. Brunner, “Choral Repertoire: A Director’s Checklist,” 29.
Chapter 3: Method

Preparation for the study included identification of recognized international children’s choirs, designing interview questions and IRB protocols, securing dates for onsite visits that enabled both rehearsal and concert observations of each choir, face-to-face conductor interviews, and data collection and analysis. Data was collected via naturalistic research strategies such as photography, videography, audio recordings, and note taking.

Selection of Children’s Choirs

In an attempt to identify internationally-recognized children’s choirs, letters were emailed to ten prominent children’s choir directors in the United States: Angela Broeker, Emily Ellsworth, Janeal Krehbiel, Henry Leck, Josephine Lee, Mary Lynn Lightfoot, Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, Nick Page, Jim Papoulis, and Andrea Ramsey (Appendix 8, p. 305). Responses from three of these directors put me in contact with Jiří Skopal from the Czech Republic, Lyn Williams from Australia, and Zimfira Poloz from Canada. Each of these directors were asked via email if they desired to participate in the study (Appendix 7, p. 284).

Connection with Jude Roldan occurred after a happenstance meeting with Dr. Clement Acevedo, then piano professor at Eastern Mennonite University and doctoral candidate at James Madison University. When asked whether Acevedo was aware of the Roldans’ work in the Philippines, Acevedo responded that he was not only aware of the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir, he had personally studied piano with Jude
Roldan’s mother as a child. Acevedo kindly connected me with Jude Roldan, and Roldan immediately expressed his interest in participation.

I originally planned to include Amilcar Soto from Peru in the study. However, after a trip to Peru in June 2017 yielded only a meager amount of time with Soto in rehearsal, and no opportunity to hear Los K’ana Wawakuna in concert, a decision was made to eliminate this children’s choir from the bulk of the study.

Once affirmative responses were received from Williams, Roldan, Poloz, and Skopal, a “Consent to Participate in Research” form was submitted to each of them (Appendix 7, p. 294-295). These four international children’s choir directors formalized their participation by signing the consent forms, and returning them to me via email or in person. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) initially required that all choristers being observed as part of the research along with their parents sign consent forms (Appendix 7, p. 298-300). Thus, chorister and parent consent forms were obtained from members of Jitro and the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir. However, the Gondwana Choirs and the Hamilton Children’s Choirs stated that general media waiver forms already existed within their organizations and were sufficient to provide consent towards the study. The IRB committee approved the sufficiency of these waiver forms, and thus, chorister and parent consent forms were not secured from these two choirs.

**Interview Questions**

The next step in the research process was to generate interview questions geared toward the procurement of each choir’s history, organizational structures and pedagogical
processes (Appendix 7, p. 301-302). The pedagogical questions centered on four primary areas of research:

1. Vocal tone production
2. Musicianship training
3. Repertoire development
4. Performance practice

The specific interview questions generated are listed here:

1. Give a brief description and history of your children’s choir program.
   a. How long has your program been in existence?
   b. Is there a vision or mission statement for your organization?
   c. Is there a handbook or manual for your organization?
   d. How many performing and training groups exist?
   e. How many children are involved in each group?
   f. How often and for how long do your groups rehearse?
   g. Please provide a sample of your choir’s rehearsal schedule.
   h. Where does your group rehearse?
   i. How many staff members assist in running your organization?
   j. How is your organization funded?
   k. What is the administrative structure of your organization?
   l. How do you recruit for your ensemble?
   m. What is the average length of membership?
   n. Do you have an alumni program? If so, please describe.

2. Please outline your annual performance schedule.
   a. How often do your choirs perform each year?
   b. Are all concerts mandatory?
   c. Do you do outreach or charity performances with your choirs?
   d. Describe the venue or venues where your choirs most often perform.
   e. Do you tour? If so, how often and how far?
   f. If you tour, how are tours funded?

3. Describe your approach to teaching vocal tone production.
   a. What vocal pedagogy concepts form the basis for your teaching of vocal tone production?
   b. How do approach bodywork in terms of singing?
   c. In your words, describe the ideal vocal tone.
   d. What analogies (if any) are used to describe the ideal vocal tone to singers?
e. Do you use audio sources to expose your singers to concepts of vocal tone production?

4. How do you develop musicianship among choristers?
   a. What is the balance in your rehearsal process in teaching by modeling (rote) versus learning music from a printed score?
   b. How do you develop music literacy in your rehearsal process?
   c. Do you dedicate a portion of your rehearsal time to theory training? If so, how much time is dedicated to this pursuit?
   d. If theory is taught separately from the music, who teaches the lesson?
   e. If theory is taught separately from the music, what approach or methodology is used, if any?
   f. Are your students expected to practice concert music outside of rehearsals? If so, how is this practice structured and assessed? Do you provide rehearsal tracks and/or a practice guide to aid choristers in their assignments?
   g. Are your students expected to practice musicianship assignments outside of rehearsals? If so, how is this practice structured and assessed?

5. Describe standard literature for your choir.
   a. How do you find new repertoire for your ensemble?
   b. If you utilize printed octavos for your choir, where do you access these works?
   c. Many choirs regularly sing or become known for, one or two defining works. Does your choir perform any such distinctive pieces? If so, please name them.
   d. Does anyone regularly compose music specifically for your choir? If so, who is the composer?
   e. If someone composes original music for your choir, how regularly are new works generated?

   a. How many pieces do your choirs learn for each concert season?
   b. Does your choir perform from memory? If so, what percentage?
   c. How often do you repeat repertoire?
   d. Do your choirs perform a cappella?
   e. What behavioral expectations do you have for your singers in terms of stage deportment?
   f. What instruments, if any, are used to accompany your choir?
   g. Do your singers utilize choreography during performances? If so:
      i. How often is movement used?
      ii. Who designs the choreography?
      iii. Who teaches the choreography?
   h. Do you generate recordings of your choirs for the public? If so, which of the following media platforms are utilized:
      i. Compact Discs
ii. Online digital downloads
iii. YouTube videos
iv. Concert DVDs
v. Other?
i. Describe your choir’s performing attire.

7. Is there anything about your choral organization that you wish to share that has not yet been asked?

Although all basic questions were asked of each director, variation in responses and a few misunderstandings led to the insertion of additional clarifying questions. Transcriptions of each interview are included in Appendices 2 through 6.

**International Rehearsal and Concert Observation Schedules**

With interview questions and IRB approval secured, I began sending inquiry emails in June 2017 to seek appropriate times for choir visits that would produce maximum amounts of choral observations in the shortest amounts of time. Jiří Skopal of Jitro responded promptly with an invitation for me to visit the Czech Republic on August 22-26, 2017. Coordination of travel and schedules continued with each choir director until all trips, interviews, and observations were finalized and completed by the end of August 2018. Tables 1 through 4 provide details related to each international visit. Additionally, I made a return visit to Canada from August 19-24, 2018 in order to attend the Hamilton Children’s Choir’s (HCC) choir camp held at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. To view the 2018 camp schedule of HCC’s most advanced Ilumini (Brighten) choir, see Appendix 9. Appendix 10 contains a concurrent camp schedule for Esprimas (Express), HCC’s intermediate choir.
Table 1. International Schedule: Czech Republic (August 22-26, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>8-22-17</td>
<td>7–9 pm</td>
<td>Choir House</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Československé armády 335,</td>
<td>Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hradec Králové 50003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>8-23-17</td>
<td>10 am–12 pm</td>
<td>Choir House</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>8-23-17</td>
<td>2–4 pm</td>
<td>Choir House</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jiří Skopal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>8-23-17</td>
<td>5–7 pm</td>
<td>Choir House</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur.</td>
<td>8-24-17</td>
<td>1–9 pm</td>
<td>Camp Budislav</td>
<td>Travel with Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Budislav 72, 569 65 Budislav</td>
<td>Light rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Meals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Campfire singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>8-25-17</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Kirche von (Church of) Langewiesen</td>
<td>Travel with Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haupstraße 42, 98704 Langewiesen, Germany</td>
<td>The Czech Republic to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>8-25-17</td>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Kirche von Langewiesen</td>
<td>Commemorative Concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anniversary of Langewiesen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>8-26-17</td>
<td>2 pm</td>
<td>Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>Travel with Jitro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Germany to Prague, Czech</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Republic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. International Schedule: Canada (May 23-26, 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>5-23-18</td>
<td>12–2 pm</td>
<td>Christ’s Church Cathedral</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>252 James Street North Hamilton, Canada</td>
<td>Zimfira Poloz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>5-23-18</td>
<td>6:30–8:45 pm</td>
<td>The Music Hall (New Vision United Church)</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 Main St. W. Hamilton, Canada</td>
<td>Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>5-25-18</td>
<td>3:30–9 pm</td>
<td>The Music Hall</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hamilton Children’s Choir (HCC) &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toronto Children’s Chorus (TCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>5-26-18</td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>The Music Hall</td>
<td>Concert - HCC &amp; TCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Event</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>6-8-18</td>
<td>7–9 pm</td>
<td>Uniting Venues Conference Centre (UVCC)</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19A Wesley St, Elanora Heights NSW 2101, AU</td>
<td>Group activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Performing Choir</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Young Men’s Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>6-9-18</td>
<td>9–10:30 am</td>
<td>UVCC</td>
<td>Rehearsals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11–12:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Performing Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2–3:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Young Men’s Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4–5 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>6-10-18</td>
<td>9–10:30 am</td>
<td>UVCC</td>
<td>Rehearsals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11–12:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Performing Choir</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Young Men’s Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>6-10-18</td>
<td>1:30–2:25 pm</td>
<td>UVCC</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2:35–3:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4:00–5:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander Technique, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>6-11-18</td>
<td>9–11 am</td>
<td>UVCC</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Performing Choir</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Junior Performing Choir</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Young Men’s Choir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sydney Children’s Choirs
| Day  | Date    | Time             | Place                                                        | Event                                      |
| Mon. | 6-11-18 | 1:00–3:30 pm     | The Wharf
Pier 4 Hickson Rd.
Miller’s Pt.
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia | Joint Rehearsal
Senior Performing Choir
Junior Performing Choir
Young Men’s Choir |
| Wed. | 6-13-18 | 4:30–6:30 pm     | Conservatorium High School
Conservatorium Road
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia | Joint Rehearsal
Senior Performing Choir
Junior Performing Choir
Young Men’s Choir |
| Thur. | 6-14-18 | 4:30 pm          | City Recital Hall
2 Angel Place
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia | Pre-Concert Rehearsal
Senior Performing Choir
Junior Performing Choir
Young Men’s Choir |
| Thur. | 6-14-18 | 7 pm             | City Recital Hall
2 Angel Place | Eternal Voices Concert
Senior Performing |
All directors agreed to be either audiotaped or videotaped during face-to-face interviews conducted in their own countries. They also allowed rehearsals to be recorded or photographed in any manner deemed beneficial. None of the formal concerts were
recorded out of respect for concert etiquette except for a few songs captured with an iPhone during Mass in the Philippines. These video clips were taken with the knowledge and encouragement of the Roldans.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected with audio and visual devices as well as pen and paper. Pictures and video clips were secured on either an iPhone, an iPad or on a handheld video recorder mounted on a tripod. All digital images were then downloaded onto my MacBook Pro and backed up on an external drive. Handwritten notes, containing rehearsal observations, remain in my secure possession.

Upon review of the data, a table was generated that contain lists of pedagogical techniques, musicianship strategies, and repertoire lists for comparison and contrast. Those pedagogical practices that are replicated multiple times are deemed “highly successful.” Performance practices of each group were also noted; these elements were reported in written form as well as sorted into the table (Appendix 1, p. 91).
Chapter 4: Choir History and Organizational Structure

In order to more fully understand the pedagogical practices of each internationally-recognized children’s choir involved in this study, background summaries are essential. The following paragraphs contain each ensemble’s mission statement, the director’s backgrounds, organizational structures, and rehearsal information. Where relevant information about the study choirs exists in journal articles and other sources, this information is also included.

Gondwana Choirs, Sydney, Australia

2018 Mission Statement: To engage in the practice and performance of choral music at the highest level, allowing young people to reach their full potential.

2019 Mission Statement: To collaborate with the most distinguished colleagues across the country, tell our magnificent stories through song and nurture the young voices who make up Gondwana Choirs.

Even though her career as an orchestral conductor was burgeoning in the 1980s, Lyn Williams decided to devote her director energies towards the development of an advanced children’s choir. For a time, Williams divided her efforts between the orchestra and children’s choir worlds, but soon she realized that her true passion existed with the sound of a highly trained and artistically sound children’s choir. In 1989 Williams founded the Sydney Children’s Choir for school-aged children. That single choir has now branched into multiple choirs and music classes serving more than 500 children.

By 1997, Williams had added a second branch to the SCC, the Gondwana Voices. This children’s choir initiative was launched to provide passionate singers from all over the Australian continent with a two-week intensive choral experience. Today those efforts
have developed into the Gondwana National Choral School, which attracts more than 350 children, conductors, composers, and music educators annually.

In 2008, Williams initiated yet another niche for Australian choral singing: the Gondwana Indigenous Children’s Choir (GICC). This unique program caters to Australian indigenous children from various locations around Australia including Cairns, Western Sydney and in-school programs located in inner Sydney. The goal of the GICC is to provide a place where indigenous children can celebrate and express their identity through story, language, and song. As with all of the Gondwana Choirs, GICC is devoted to achieving highest levels of artistry and performance standards.

All three branches of the Gondwana Choir organization boast leading choirs that commission new musical works, collaborate with renowned artists, and tour nationally and internationally. For example, of the 500 voices involved in the Sydney Children’s Choir, only 100-150 children perform in choirs that are secured for private engagements, professional recordings, and concert hall performances. The rest of the participants in the Sydney Children’s Choir develop their skills through graded levels of training choirs and music classes. During the 2018 season, approximately fifty advanced choristers, ages 10 to 16, made up the most advanced Senior Performing Choir; another fifty choristers, ages 8 to 14 made up the Junior Performing Choir; and close to thirty changed and changing male voices made up the Young Men’s Choir. These three choirs perform music together as well as independently from each other.

Williams asserts that an essential key to her extraordinary success is the number of competent individuals who collaborate with her to build and maintain the organization. By June 2018, fourteen people were working as artistic staff members while thirteen
individuals were serving in administrative roles. A few of these staff members had
crossover duties, working in both artistic and administrative roles.

As one can imagine, the budget for Gondwana Choirs is large—over AUD $3.5
million annually (approximately USD $2.48 million) and supported primarily through
tuition in all of the choir programs except GICC. The indigenous children can participate
free of charge due to the support of a major sponsor. Other avenues of revenue include
ticket sales, government funding, sponsorships, foundations, and private donations.
Williams recalls that for some years, the organization was spending more on the salaries
of development personnel than the development staff was bringing in. The seven-member
Gondwana Choirs Board, of which Williams is a part, helped to rectify that situation.

Rehearsals take place an average of once a week for both the Sydney Children’s
Choirs and the GICC for a length of about two hours. Younger groups typically rehearse
for about 90 minutes. The Sydney Children’s Choirs rehearse in either the
Conservatorium High School or at the University of Notre Dame, both located in Sydney.
At the time of the author’s visit to Australia, the Gondwana Choir utilized space at the
Wharf, Pier 4 Hickson Road for both rehearsals and offices. Due to anticipated
renovations, the organization needed to relocate to the University of Notre Dame in July
of 2018.

The National Choral School meets for two weeks at the University of New South
Wales each January and culminates with a four-day Festival of Summer Voices. Choirs
give four performances as part of this event, and some even go on a culminating tour. A
National Choral School (NCS) Symposium runs simultaneously with the Festival of
Summer Voices and exists to provide music teachers with professional development activities related to the National Choral School.

The Gondwana Choirs have achieved world-class status without participating in choral competitions. While Williams asserts that competitions may be good opportunities for some choirs, she prefers to promote music’s function of self-expression and the sharing of joy rather than trying to be “better” than others (Appendix 2, p. 143). Thus, she seeks collaborative learning opportunities with other choirs and musicians. One such event is Songbridge, an international, non-competitive forum for elite children’s choirs where singers of different countries can learn from one another in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual respect.75

**Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir, Quezon City, Philippines**

**Mission Statement:**

*Animate the heart and soul of people from all walks of life with choral singing.*  
*Venerate Mary and worship God through various hymns of praise.*  
*Enrich children’s lives through vocal artistry and musical experience.*

*Motivate the children to utilize their God-given talents fully.*  
*Acquire proper education and training for optimum performance.*  
*Realize the value of family solidarity, generosity, friendship, camaraderie, and teamwork.*  
*Instill discipline and create awareness among the children of their social responsibility.*  
*Achieve excellence in the realm of music.*

In 1999, Ulan and Dinna Sarmiento approached Jude Roldan and Maria Theresa Vizconde about starting a parochial children’s choir that would serve the Immaculate

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Conception Cathedral in Quezon City. The two agreed, and the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir (HMtQCC) was born. The Sarmientos, who had five young children of their own at the time, were delighted to have an avenue for their children to become more involved in the life of the parish as well as to enjoy an improvement in the music offerings during Mass. Vizconde agreed to serve as the choir’s director while Roldan assumed the role of pianist and resident composer. Vizconde and Roldan eventually married and have been a dedicated team ever since. Several years after HMtQCC started, the choir agreed to regularly serve two additional churches: Mary the Queen Parish in Greenhills and Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows.76

The talents and dedicated musicianship of the Roldans have produced extraordinary results for the HMtQCC. The choir has won multiple events and enjoyed honorary performances: a championship of the Bremen Choir Olympic in 2004, the First Children’s Choir of the World in the 67th Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in North Wales, United Kingdom in 2013, and singing for Pope Francis in 2015.77 The choir and directors continue to receive special invitations to perform and provide workshops internationally on a regular basis.

The choir’s organizational structure is straightforward. Dinna Sarmiento coordinates schedules for the choir families, secures bookings and assists with performances. A parent board makes decisions and governs the finances for the group. Children do not pay tuition to participate. A majority of the revenue comes from ticket sales.

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77 Ibid.
sales along with paid engagements such as weddings and government-sponsored summits. The Roldans, both music professors in local universities, receive only a stipend for their dedicated efforts with the HMtQCC. Theresa regularly reminds the children that the work of the choir is for the honor and glory of God. This is the philosophy in which the Roldans administer their dedicated work.

Each week the HMtQCC’s Concert Choir, consisting of twenty to forty singers from the ages of seven to sixteen, meet from 5:30-7:30 pm on both Wednesday and Friday evenings in a small room on the eighth floor of the Obispado de Cubao building. The Immaculate Conception Cathedral provides this rehearsal space to the choir (Appendix 3, p. 146). The Mass Choir, consisting of the Concert Choir plus additional singers-in-training, meets each Saturday to prepare for either a Saturday or Sunday mass. In June 2018, the Concert Choir was made up of thirty-six singers while an additional five children joined to make up the Mass Choir.

The choir tours about an average of every two years. Choristers seek to raise their funds through solicitation. Sometimes invitations come with all lodging and food expenses covered, making it easier for all children to participate. Nevertheless, finances regularly prove to be challenging. Theresa described a time when the HMtQCC finished performing in the middle of the afternoon, and the catered dinner would not be served for three more hours. Choristers were hungry but had no money available for food. Theresa suggested that the choir pass some time by singing for the owners of a café who had allowed her to rest her feet at a table earlier that day. Imagine the choristers’ delight when the owners responded to their song of gratitude with free pastries for all. This story demonstrates the generosity and goodwill regularly experienced by the HMtQCC.
**Hamilton Children’s Choir, Hamilton, Canada**

Mission Statement: The Hamilton Children’s Choir makes a difference in the lives of children and youth within the greater Hamilton community by providing young people with exceptional choral music instruction and performance opportunities that foster creativity, personal development, and social growth.

From 1975 to 2002, the Hamilton Children’s Choir enjoyed the leadership abilities of three different leaders. Founder Donald Kendrick served the choir for three years. John Laing led the choir from 1978 until 1985 and finally, David Davis worked as artistic director for seventeen years from 1985 to 2002. Then, in 2003, a new era dawned for the choir when Zimfira Poloz, a then recent immigrant from Kazakhstan, stepped in as artistic director. With only limited facility of the English language, Poloz undertook the development of the eighty-member children’s choir. She poured her choral passion, her unyielding discipline, and her Russian-trained music director skills into the Hamilton Children’s Choir.

The results have been remarkable. Currently the organization serves more than 200 children in six different choir programs: *Poka “New”* (started for toddlers in 2018); *Kalibro “Hummingbird”* (an introductory choir program for kindergarten and first graders); *Komenci “Begin”* (for readers who are ready to begin learning music theory); *Explori “Explore”* (for singers who can hold their part in a group singing in two and three parts); *Esprimas “Express”* (builds expressive musicians through increased rehearsal time) and *Ilumini “Brighten”* (the most advanced singers who perform and tour regularly). The top two choirs, *Esprimas*, and *Ilumini* both meet twice a week for just under two hours (*Esprimas*) or just over two hours (*Ilumini*) per rehearsal. The rest of the classes meet once a week for 30-90 minutes each, depending on the age group. Poloz
provided numbers of children involved in each group from the last three years. These are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Enrollment Numbers for the Hamilton Children’s Choirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>2017-18 Results</th>
<th>2018-2019 @ Sept 30</th>
<th>2018-2019 @ Nov 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolibro</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komenci</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esplori</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esprimas</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilumini</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lads &amp; Gents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An artistic team of seven currently direct and accompany the six different groups, an additional three people oversee the day-to-day operations of the choir, and a community board of thirteen members complete the team. In the last thirteen years, Poloz has led the choir on more than ten international tours and won the Grand Prize award in five international competitions. The Hamilton Children’s Choir is one of the most sought after, non-auditioned children’s choirs in the world.

Jitra, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

No formal mission statement exists. In an interview with the author, Director Skopal stated his desire for Jitra to sing excellent music by contemporary Czech composers. “To be the motivation for contemporary composers” (Appendix 5, p. 238).

Josef Vrátil founded the Jitra girls’ choir in 1973. In 1977, Professor Jiří Skopal assumed leadership of the group along with the support of his wife Květa and their son, also named Jiří. Professor Skopal has been at the helm, serving as chorus master and
artistic director ever since he assumed responsibility for the choir. From the initial group of twenty to twenty-five children, Jitro now consists of 350 children in seven distinct choirs and classes. A staff of sixteen directors, vocal coaches and accompanists round out the Jitro staff. Květa leads the youngest two choirs while her husband Jiří provides leadership for the most advanced choirs. The names of the seven classes are Broučci “Small Beatles” (preschool); Světlušky “Fireflies” (age 6); Skřivánek A “Meadowlark A” (ages 6-7); Skřivánek B “Meadowlark B” (ages 7-8); Vlčí máky “Poppies” (ages 9-11); Jiřičko “Small Jitro” (ages 12-15); and Jitro “Daybreak” main choir (ages 13-19).

The choirs meet in a retired military building, called the Jitro Choir Building. This building contains multiple rehearsal rooms, vocal coaching, and office spaces. Skopal built backless benches on tiered steps in a number of these rooms to accommodate large groups of singers in their rehearsals. The tiered steps double as storage units for Jitro’s collection of musical scores. Together, Jiří and Květa attend to administrative duties from the office space located on the main floor. Květa, who is detail-oriented, completely undergirds the work of her husband on both the musical and the administrative fronts.

Younger choirs rehearse once or twice a week while the main choir, Jitro, rehearses two or three times a week and again on select weekends, once or twice a month. The choir retains its excellent reputation through these frequent practices as well as in the retention of repertoire from year to year. Although new songs are rehearsed, the most important compositions never fall out of the repertory. A few examples include, “Hoj, hura hoj” (O, Mountain O) by Otmar Mácha, The Moravian Duets by Anton Dvořák, and “Kyrie Eleison” (Lord Have Mercy) by Henk Badings. Singers who aspire to join the main choir, Jitro, must first memorize thirty of these standard songs before they may
achieve membership. Once a singer is accepted into Jitro, they are paired with a vocal coach who meets with them weekly and regularly monitors and assesses progress so that every chorister knows how they “rank” within the choir. Points are assigned by the vocal coaches and lists are posted in the rehearsal space to reveal both the highest and lowest achieving choristers. Motivation to do well is high because not only are the rankings public, but the most highly ranked and responsible students are selected to travel internationally—a privilege that is fully funded by sponsors and governmental agencies.

Jitro has achieved its worldwide recognition by securing multiple victories in international competitions. By 2003, Jitro had already been awarded twenty-one victories including those from notable events such as Llangollen, Nantes, Neerpelt, and Olomouc.78 Since 2003, Jitro has also participated in the Fourth World Choir Games 2006 in Xiamen, China. While competing against 400 other choirs, Jitro received three gold medals and one silver medal.79 As head of the music department at the University of Hradec Králové, Jiří Skopal himself has received recognition and awards such as “Man of the Year” from the American Biographical Institute in 1993 and “Primus Inter Pares” from the city of Hradec Králové for his contributions to local culture.80


80 Ibid.
Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

The purpose of this research is to investigate the pedagogical practices of internationally-recognized children’s choirs with a specific focus on each director’s approach to vocal tone production, musicianship training, repertoire development, and performance practice. The results of the study were compiled by transcribing interviews, reviewing rehearsal footage, organizing notes and sorting by themes. Occasionally supplemental materials provided additional insights and were incorporated into the data. All results were organized and categorized into tables for observation, comparison and further analysis in seeking best pedagogical practices utilized by international children’s choirs.

The documentation of these results delineates the vision statements, beliefs and practices of the study choirs and provides children’s choir directors with a resource for gaining new ideas, ameliorated pedagogical practices, broader global perspectives, and increased diversity in choral repertoire. Most importantly, when directors understand pedagogical practices embraced by the directors of international children’s choirs, more responsible teaching ensues and culturally representative performances of global repertoire results. Both the results and discussions contained in this chapter underscore two divergent facts: 1) multiple approaches and philosophies exist which contribute to success in children’s choirs, and 2) similar effective pedagogical practices are applied all over the world.

Results: Vocal Tone Production
As reported in Chapter 2: Review of Literature, prominent children’s choir directors in the United States state that vocal tone production is built upon proper posture, breath support, and vowel formation. The directors of international children’s choirs seem to agree. Statements made in rehearsals and in response to interview questions emphasize these points. In addition to these concepts, each director supports resonant backspace in the mouth as long as the backspace is not over-extended. For the Roldans, controlled backspace ensures that desirable vocal tone color, diction, and articulation is not inadvertently affected.\textsuperscript{81}

Poloz stresses the importance of body position for producing a beautiful sound, but she prefers not to use the word “posture” in relaying these positions to children. Instead, she encourages them to open the spaces in their bodies like an organ pipe so that the tones they generate vibrate in a column from head to toe (Appendix 4, p. 214). Similarly, the Roldans tell their singers to imagine they are exclamation points rather than question marks (Appendix 3, p. 164). Both the Roldans and members of Jitro mentioned the idea of an imaginary string or wire attached from chest to ceiling or head to ceiling to remind singers to keep their postures tall and open (Appendix 3, p. 164; Appendix 5, p. 252). When choristers from Jitro were asked whether they tire of sitting on backless benches for hours at a time in their rehearsal room, they responded that they are used to it. They fully understand and embrace the connection of sitting in an erect position and generating quality sound (Appendix 5, p. 274).

\textsuperscript{81} Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan, email message to author, February 13, 2019.
Breath management is considered vital to vocal production in each of the study choirs, but for the HMtQCC, the Roldans have assembled a variety of images and exercises to aid in communicating the idea of supported tone. For instance, Theresa asks singers to breathe as if they have 100 noses attached to their waist or to breathe as deeply as if they are smelling fragrant flowers. She has even used a lighted candle to help inexperienced singers understand how to control airflow as they try to bend the flame without blowing the candle out. Jude remarks that children learn bad breathing habits as they experience life events, and he asks the choir to observe the way babies breathe, pointing out that they do not raise their shoulders at all. To help singers understand staggered breathing, Jude wrote “O Lord Hear My Prayer,” a three-minute, sustained, legato selection that demands the lowest alto part to sustain an “E” throughout (Appendix 3, p. 177).

Williams zeroed in on vowels for generating “absolute purity of tone.” Her goal is to get “ringing, clear, vowel sounds.” She states that the ideal tone is “where all the vowels are aligned with each other and where they ring in tune.” She goes on to say that this tuning process is “linear” as well as “vertical” and that when tuning happens vertically as well as horizontally, the vocal tone will “ring” (Appendix 2, p. 122). Although she does not equate vowel sounds with any external gestures, she does emphasize that kids must “feel it and hear it,” and not “get lazy” (Appendix 2, p. 121).

Williams also discussed the importance of managing diphthongs where vowels are concerned. She enjoys using flavorful analogies to emphasize that two vowel sounds should never mix. According to Williams, two vowels that get mixed together as part of one word is as distasteful as putting Vegemite, a salty yeast spread popular in Australia,
on ice cream. She says, “You would never put [Vegemite] on ice cream! Like EUCH! You’ve got to keep them apart. Don’t merge them in the middle” (Appendix 2, p. 123).

Two members of Jitro enthusiastically communicated the mechanics of mouth shape and tongue placement as they relate to vocal tone. To show that the mouth should open downwards like a vertical rubber band, one girl demonstrated by caressing her cheeks with the back of her hands, and with a dropped jaw said, “It should be free! It should be easy for us” (Appendix 5, p. 252). Both of them placed their index fingers in a vertical position on either side of their mouths, and said, “We should have our mouths open like this,” and “we have to have our teeth to be showing” (Appendix 5, p. 250). One also commented that the mouth should be open long enough to accommodate three fingers. With a gleam in his eye, Skopal countered that the best singers use five fingers (Appendix 5, p. 251).

For these two singers in Jitro, the essential part of producing a pleasing tone is tongue placement. One of them brought her tongue forward and said, “Our tongues can’t be in our throats. That is really important.” Then after further discussion of mouth position, she emphasized the point even more strongly, “The most important is the tongue. You can’t have it in our throat. It [is] destroying the tone” (Appendix 5, p. 252-253).

Nearly every choir director mentioned or demonstrated ideas for accessing “head tone” and “resonance.” From her training in the Phonopedic Method,82 Poloz identifies

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82 The Phonopedic Method of Voice Development, designed by Russian Professor V. Yemeljanov, is an educational program with medicinal roots that helps people overcome vocal loss through the development, training, and coordination of the voice.
the ability children have to feel the difference between chest and head voice. If a hand is held on the chest while deep sounds are produced, vibration will be felt in the sternum. Conversely, vibration will not be felt in the sternum when sounds are produced in higher registers. In this way, Poloz claims that children can be taught to access head voice through the feeling of vibrations in their bodies, even if they are unable to hear differences in pitch (Appendix 4, p. 213).

Poloz continues advocating for the exploration of sound with a dinosaur analogy, also borrowed from the Phonopedic Method. As Poloz “draws” the image of a dinosaur in the air with her finger, she demonstrates a variety of vocal tone concepts. She says the head of the dinosaur is small but round, and not squished. She shows two different head shapes with her hands while modeling high tones: a flattened head coincides with flat tone while a rounded head coincides with a resonant tone. Next Poloz draws the dinosaur’s long neck downward, and as she does, she performs a vocal slide from high to low, demonstrating the connection between head voice and chest voice. As her hands extend out from her body demonstrating the breadth and then the front and back legs of the dinosaur, she vocalizes on a rich “oh” and then “ah” in her lower register. Finally, she completes her demonstration with the “dinosaur’s tail,” actually her right hand, wagging beside her. In this vocal placement, Poloz produces vocal fry.83 She is quick to state that vocal fry can be damaging and must be approached in a gentle, massaging way (Appendix 4, p. 216, 237).

83 Vocal fry is the lowest possible register a voice can produce and is characterized by breathiness and creakiness.
In her August 2016 *Choral Journal* article, Poloz describes her vocal tone goals and experience with generating choral sound.

In my Canadian choirs overall, I am looking for a vibrant tone with all different colors mixed and created by unified vowel shapes, allowing the sound to be full-bodied and rich in color. Working with folk music from all countries in their native languages has guided my understanding of how greatly languages influence tone production and a unique pallet of sound. The native language, natural fullness or lightness of the individual voices, and weight of sound all contribute to creating an animated sound spectrum.\(^{84}\)

Directors often help children explore vocal tone possibilities through creative imagery. Williams likes to challenge her singers to sing like a “cockroach,” and then a “three-year-old,” and then a “ten-year-old” and finally a “fifteen-year-old.” When she elicits the rounded, mature sound that she desires, she will say something like, “Can we be fifteen all the time because I like what you are doing with that” (Appendix 2, p. 122). Poloz employs the use of a slinky and color terminology to help students understand how to add resonance “spin” and “ring” to the “meat of the sound.” For every age group, Poloz seeks a “healthy,” “open,” “full” and “natural” sound (Appendix 4, p. 215).

The Roldans utilize imitation of timbres to train singers about the differences between head and chest voice. For instance, the sound of a hooting owl helps children access the head voice while a hearty, Santa-Claus-styled, “ho, ho, ho” assists children in understanding the chest voice. The imitation of animal sounds is another way that children explore various registers of the voice. The Roldans encourage resonance by asking choristers to produce sound through the space that is felt when they are about

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yawn or by pretending they have a “quail egg” in their mouths, but never with a too-large “chicken egg” (Appendix 3, p. 166).

Czech singers concur that egg imagery is helpful for accessing head voice with resonance. Just before presenting that analogy, a singer said, “The tone should be in our head. It should resonate everywhere” (Appendix 5, p. 251). One way that Skopal communicates elements of vocal tone production is to slowly read out of a selected vocal pedagogy book. As he reads and rereads passages up to three times, singers are to write down the most important concepts. Upon initiating this activity every year with singers in Jitro, Skopal says they gradually come to understand how the voice works (Appendix 5, p. 253).

Discussion: Vocal Tone

While all directors consulted for this study universally agree that alignment of vowels is necessary for producing pleasing vocal tone, some pedagogical adjustments may be necessary for transferring vocal tone information from culture to culture. Choir director Simon Carrington, originally from the United Kingdom, says,

I am always working to achieve a certain standard, a certain refinement, a certain elegance of singing, no matter who is standing there, what color they are or how old they are. I aim for the same discipline and teach in the same way. For example, I go regularly to Japan and have conducted the William Byrd Mass in five parts with all Japanese singers. I approached this choir in exactly the way I would any other, given that one has to make slight adjustments for vowel and tone color of course.85

In Australia, Lyn Williams delineates the use of bright versus dark vowels for singing and tuning the choir. She says, “I use it [the “ee” vowel] to tune a lot…Australian children will sing the “ee” vowel in tune the most easily because it’s a brighter vowel and it’s easier to sing bright vowels in tune” (Appendix 2, p. 108). If, for instance, Williams desires to help choristers tune a chord where they are singing the “ah” vowel, she will ask them to change to an “ee” vowel which is brighter and easier to sing vibrantly. By contrast, the “ah” vowel is darker, and if sung “straight” with the same “mechanism” and “expectations” as for the “ee” vowel, Williams notes that the sound will be “flat.” To demonstrate her point, Williams encourages singers to whisper “ee,” “aw,” “oo,” and “ah,” and to notice the variance in pitch. “Ah” is lower than “ee” and thus vocal adjustments need to be made for optimal vocal tone through the variety of sung vowels.

I noted that for young Australians, the “ee” vowel is spoken in a forward and focused manner. This spoken placement of the “ee” vowel automatically counters the problematic tendency North American children have for singing the “ee” vowel in a spread, Midwestern manner. To this observation, Williams remarked that one has to “keep pushing those buttons” to generate desired outcomes (Appendix 2, p. 109). Poloz and other North American choir directors counter the spread “ee” problem by asking singers to place fingertips at the corners of their mouths for a more forward, focused delivery of vocal tone.

Members of Jitro were the only musicians participating in the study who mentioned the need to show their teeth for achieving desired vocal tone (Appendix 3, p. 250). Thus, Amy D. Chivington’s discussion related to the placement of lips and teeth in
her 1998 article, “Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus” is especially informative in relation to this practice.

Choral sound is carried to the audience by the sounds of vowels. Learning to use a relaxed tongue and jaw, covered or uncovered teeth, shaped lips, and energized facial muscles can alter the sound of each vowel. Guide children in producing bright, clear-sounding vowels; dark, heavier-sounding vowels; and covered (lips covering the upper teeth) and uncovered (lips not covering the upper teeth) vowel sounds. Children can experience, understand, evaluate, and correct non-unified vowels if taught to do so. The resulting ensemble sound can be beautiful. 86

A number of times Skopal asked the girls in Jitro to pull out compact mirrors to view the vowel shapes their lips were producing. Poloz also passed out handheld mirrors during a camp rehearsal so that singers could observe both vowel formations and facial affect. This practice of employing mirrors in rehearsals is encouraged by Chivington in the same article mentioned above. She gives specific exercises choristers can do while visually assessing the position of their own teeth, tongue and lips. 87

While every conductor in the study elicits beautifully-blended sound from their children’s choirs, exploration of alternate vocal tones occurred most noticeably in the Hamilton Children’s Choir and in the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir. Poloz taught choristers overtone singing for the Malaysian-inspired arrangement by Tracy Wong “Wau Bulan.” For “Gamelan” by R. Murray Schafer, she elicited an impressive array of tonal colors from different vocal sections within the ensemble as suggested by Schafer in the score: “The short staccato notes should be sung with a dry, wooden quality, and in the long-sustained notes, the nasal quality of the “ng” should be


87 Ibid., 27.
emphasized.” The Roldans add bright, playful vocal tone colors in sections of Theresa’s arrangement of the folk melody “Inday sa Balitaw.” The bright, “horizontally” placed tonal choices clearly deviate from the choir’s “ideal” sound, yet the intentional variation of vocal colors increase interest and inspire cultural and artistic awareness. Directors who teach alternate vocal tones and languages to represent various cultures, time periods, and genres significantly broaden the cultural and musical awareness of their choristers.

**Results: Musicianship Training**

Every choir in the study strategically implements musicianship training, and most of them give music literacy development weekly attention. The Roldans, who are both Kodály-trained, provide intensive musicianship training each summer to help prepare choristers for the upcoming season. For six to eight weeks, a full hour, out of each two-hour summer rehearsal, is dedicated solely to music literacy training. Once the regular season begins, theory training occurs through the repertoire being learned. Children sight-read on neutral syllables and solfege to learn new songs. Jude Roldan will compose a special arrangement for the children to learn when they wish to provide specific musicianship training to their singers. The Roldans seek to develop part-singing skills in the community by utilizing short call-and-response songs, rounds, partner songs, songs with ostinato patterns and songs with simple chord progressions. The Roldans are so passionate about teaching part-singing in the Philippines that they have collected, and written songs that are now published in a resource called, “Groundwork for Part-Singing” (Appendix 3, p. 187-189).

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The rest of the choirs utilize a theory book or sight singing series. Skopal uses a tonal method based on folk songs that he compiled. The nine-page booklet, entitled *Tonální Metoda Píšťová na základní škole* (Tonal Method at the Basic School Level), has been in use by Jitro since 1985. Skopal claims that the method is derived from eleventh-century practices (Appendix 5, p. 257). Directors of each of his graded choirs dedicate at least ten minutes per rehearsal to music literacy training (Appendix 5, p. 255).

Members of the Hamilton Children’s Choir receive musicianship training in a variety of ways. A graded series of six workbooks entitled, “A Young Singer’s Journey,” by Jean Ashworth Bartle, Eileen Baldwin, and Linda Beaupré provide singers with basic music knowledge. These theory books are Kodály-based and include a practice CD, a sight-singing booklet, and graded warm-ups (Appendix 4, p. 227). During their summer choral camp, HCC’s top-level, *Illumini* choir received musicianship lessons and coordinating activities presented by their pianist, Laura Pin. Pin prepared and delivered engaging theory lessons that were always presented with sight-singing exercises and music history tidbits of up to sixty minutes each. Poloz emphasizes that musicianship and theory training occur throughout all rehearsals. When learning new music, students sight-read using solfege; they count-sing rhythms; they make breath markings; they analyze chords; they utilize tuning forks to get starting pitches; and they learn authentic ways to deliver cultural music. Poloz’ view of musicianship training concurs with the assertions of the North American directors quoted in Chapter 2: the aspects of musicianship training are closely connected with the learning of repertoire (Appendix 4, p. 228).

With the diverse range of musical ability levels exhibited by children in the Gondwana Choirs, Williams believes in providing graded theory classes. Her goal is to
keep beginners working toward proficiency while advanced musicians stay challenged.
The organization encourages singers of every level to participate in Mark O’Leary’s Sight Singing Training School; a program O’Leary perfected for use with his Young Voices of Melbourne, but that is now available as an online resource for all. Additionally, the Gondwana Choirs have their own graded theory program containing four or five levels. By the time singers reach top choirs, they have typically finished all formal theory levels and can give attention to topics such as conducting, composition and atonality. Directors and pianists teach theory lessons each week for about thirty minutes (Appendix 2, p. 126).

**Discussion: Musicianship Training**

As discussed in Chapter 2, musicianship training is understood to encompass a broad understanding of the “qualities and meanings of music.” While regular and sequential theory training is a significant part of developing musicianship skills among choristers, the term “musicianship” implies more than theoretical concepts. For choristers to be fully trained musicians, they must continually be led into deeper understandings of the historical and cultural contexts from which the styles of music originate. Such knowledge lends to sensitive and informed musical performances.

Musicianship training existed in the history portions of pianist Laura Pin’s theory lessons with the Hamilton Children’s Choir; in the vocal Phrygian accompaniment conceived by Lyn Williams to accompany a modal chant by Hildegard von Bingen; and

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in culturally-representative choreography taught by regional experts in nearly all of the study choirs. Careful attention to detail in historical and stylistic matters preserves tradition and honors the region from which a style of music originates. Thus, “musicianship training” at its highest level not only includes the fundamentals of music but the cultural and historical practices that inform the styles of music being performed. Where global music is concerned, directors need not feel constrained by Eurocentric practices in developing the musicianship skills necessary for performing music from certain non-Western traditions. If non-traditional scales, unmetered rhythms, unusual vocal timbres, or physical gestures form the basis in a piece of music, the best type of musicianship training night not occur through notation but through rote transfer by individuals who have spent significant time within the culture being represented.90

Results: Repertoire Development

All choirs represented in the study seek to build quality repertoire for children’s choirs through new compositions and commissions. When asked about a mission statement for Jitro, Skopal responded, “To sing the most difficult music and very good music and contemporary music; to be the motivation for contemporary composers” (Appendix 5, p. 238). Although Skopal made the statement somewhat in jest, he is entirely serious about preparing and presenting quality works by Czech composers. Jan Jirásek (b. 1955) is Jitro’s resident composer. 91 The choir has also sung and recorded

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works by Czech composers, Anton Dvořák, Otmar Mácha, Zdeněk Lukáš, and Petr Eben. In a 2003 publication about Jitro, Stanislav Bohadlo explains, “The most important compositions are not put away but taken over by each new generation.”

Both Jude Roldan and his wife, Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan compose and arrange music for the HMtQCC. Vizconde-Roldan specializes in collecting and arranging Filipino folk songs, such as her popular “Orde-e” from the Cordillera Administrative Region. Jude Roldan also arranges folksongs and composes many sacred songs for use in the Mass as well. Two of his popular works include, “Sanctus” and “Pin Pin de Sarapin,” a fingerplay song from the Capiz province. New works total six to eight annually.

Williams passionately commissions Australian works for the Gondwana Choirs with as many as eight to ten pieces per year and “hundreds” over her career (Appendix 2, p. 133). She explains that the “Sydney Children’s Choir’s defining repertoire is different from GICC’s repertoire, which has its basis in indigenous language and stories” (Appendix 2, p. 131). Singer, songwriter, Felix Riebl created a 75-minute song-cycle entitled “Spinifex Gum” especially for the GICC to sing and perform all over Australia. Riebl defines the project as follows:

Spinifex Gum is a project that reaches across the country. Its lyrics are a combination of English and Yindjibarndi, its stories emerged from the Pilbara, and its choir of Aboriginal and Torres Strait teenagers hails from North Queensland. It’s an album none of us could have predicted but one that opened itself up to us. We just followed the music.  


For the Sydney Children’s Choir, Williams has commissioned works by an impressive list of composers including Dan Walker, Sally Whitwell, Paul Stanhope, Paul Jarman, Luke Byrne, Alice Chance, Ella Macens, Ben van Tienen, Stephen Leek, and Ross Edwards to name a few. The updated mission statement included on the Gondwana Choirs’ website highlights the importance of these collaborations: “Our mission is to collaborate with the most distinguished colleagues across the country, tell our magnificent stories through song and nurture the young voices who make up Gondwana Choirs.”

Poloz commissions music for the Hamilton Children’s Choir as frequently as possible. Sometimes she secures grants to pay for works, and sometimes composers write songs out of appreciation for her work. One example of the latter is the 2018 composition, “Spellbound” by Katerina Gimon. Gimon, an alumna of the HCC, holds a master’s degree in composition and is quickly securing her reputation across Canada, the United States, and Europe. Her works have already been featured in venues as impressive as New York’s Carnegie Hall.

Other signature works generated for the HCC include the Malaysian “Wau Bulan” (Moon Kite) arranged by Tracy Wong and the Finnish “Pakkanen” (Cold or Freeze) by the vocal group Rajaton. Poloz welcomes quality arrangements of all styles of choral repertoire. She mentioned that HCC has even done several unpublished pop songs

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arranged by HCC alums. These include “Wavin’ Flag” by K’naan and “Titanium” by David Guetta (Appendix 4, p. 225-227, 230-232).

The four tables that follow contain repertoire that was either performed in concert during site visits or referenced by the study choir directors during interviews. Of particular interest are those selections that showed up in several of the locations. These pieces include “Nigra Sum” by Pablo Casals, “Orde-e” by Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan, “Eternity” by Michael Bojesen, “Stabat Mater” by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and “Las Amarillas” by Stephen Hatfield.

Table 6. Utilized or Recommended Repertoire: Gondwana Choirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>COMPOSER/ARRANGER</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alleluja (Alleluia)</td>
<td>Romuald Twardowski</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amani (A Song of Peace)</td>
<td>Jim Papoulis</td>
<td>3-part treble, descant, percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And So It Goes</td>
<td>Billy Joel, arr. Kirby Shaw</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel’s Whisper, The</td>
<td>Samuel Lover</td>
<td>Treble voices, harp, flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Maria (Hail Mary)</td>
<td>Giulio Caccini, arr. Patrick M. Liebergen</td>
<td>TTBB, keyboard, opt. flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bist Du Bei Mir (If Thou Be Near)</td>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach</td>
<td>Unison, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow, Bugle, Blow</td>
<td>Ruth Elaine Schram</td>
<td>2 or 3-part equal voices, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterflying</td>
<td>Elena Karts-Chernin</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary, The</td>
<td>Eric Whitacre</td>
<td>SATB, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Boy</td>
<td>Old Irish Air, arr. Mark Hayes</td>
<td>TTBB, piano, flute, percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eternity</td>
<td>Michael Bojesen</td>
<td>SSA, SSA, SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece</td>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Arranger/Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Exultate Justi</em> (Exult in the Lord)</td>
<td>Lodovico Grossi da Viadana Ed. Earlene Rentz</td>
<td>TTBB, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Days that Changed the World</td>
<td>Bob Chilcott</td>
<td>SATB, Treble Voices, piano, timpani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Invention of Printing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Abolition of Slavery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The First Powered Flight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Discovery of Penicillin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The First Man in Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Song</td>
<td>Kim André Arnesen</td>
<td>SATB, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymn to the Eternal Flame</td>
<td>Stephen Paulus</td>
<td>SATB, children’s chorus, sop. solo, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Have Not Your Dreaming</td>
<td>Paul Stanhope</td>
<td>TTBB, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Flander’s Fields</td>
<td>Alexander Tilley</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Las Amarillas</em></td>
<td>Mexican Song, Stephen Hatfield</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella, clapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like a Singing Bird</td>
<td>Bob Chilcott</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Magnificat</em> (Canticle of Mary)</td>
<td>Niccola Porpora ed. Ralph Hunter</td>
<td>SSAA, orchestra or piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moments that Shaped Australia</td>
<td>Dan Walker</td>
<td>SA, SSA, TB, piano, cello, tone chimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A New Sky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Trials of a Pioneer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Voyage of Tagai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Port Arthur Memorial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Ether of Infinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nigra Sum</em> (I Am Black)</td>
<td>Pablo Casals</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinifex Gum</td>
<td>Felix Reibl</td>
<td>SSA, accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>O Eterne Deus</em> (O Eternal God)</td>
<td>Hildegard von Bingen</td>
<td>Unison, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orpheus with His Lute</td>
<td>Ralph Vaughan Williams</td>
<td>Unison, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oye la Música</em> (Hear the Music)</td>
<td>Jay Althouse</td>
<td>2-part, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sechs Stücke für Männerchor</em> (Six Pieces for Male Chorus)</td>
<td>Arnold Schönberg</td>
<td>TTBB, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>COMPOSER/ARRANGER</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Me as a Seal</td>
<td>John Leavitt</td>
<td>TTB, opt. piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Noon</td>
<td>Ralph Vaughan Williams</td>
<td>Unison, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairway to Nowhere</td>
<td>Ben van Tienen</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weep No More</td>
<td>David Childs</td>
<td>SSAA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where? (from <em>The Rabbits</em>)</td>
<td>Kate Miller-Heidke, arr. Dan Walker</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Tell Overture</td>
<td>Giocacchino Rossini, arr. Julie Eschliman</td>
<td>SATB, opt. piano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Utilized or Recommended Repertoire: Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>COMPOSER/ARRANGER</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Child’s Prayer</td>
<td>Jude B. Roldan</td>
<td>(In HMtQCC’s repertory since 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Song of Blessing</td>
<td>Jude B. Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ampeu Shelo Heo</em></td>
<td>James Swu</td>
<td>A cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Da Kami Ay Anan-ak</em> (We are Children)</td>
<td>Kankana-ey Folk Song, arr. Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundwork for Part-Singing</td>
<td>Jude B. Roldan and Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan</td>
<td>Musicianship training resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inday sa Balitaw</em> (Maiden of Balitaw)</td>
<td>Tagalog folk song, arr. Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Laudate Dominum</em> (Praise the Lord)</td>
<td>Levente Gyöngyösi</td>
<td>SSSSSAA, a cappella, tambourine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Lord Hear My Prayer</td>
<td>Jude B. Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella (written to teach staggered breathing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>O Sanctissima</em> (O Most Holy)</td>
<td>Jude B. Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Orde-e</em></td>
<td>Madukayan Folk Song, arr. Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Composer/Arranger</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Pater Noster**  
(The Lord’s Prayer) | Alejandro D. Consolacion II        | SSAA, 2 soprano soloists, a cappella  
<https://ajconsolacion.weebly.com/> |
| **Pin Pin de Sarapin**              | Filipino Folk Song arr. Jude B. Roldan | SSA, a cappella (a finger play with no literal meaning)                |
| **Sanctus** (Holy)                  | Jude B. Roldan                     | SSA, piano, Filipino percussion instruments                             |

Table 8. Utilized or Recommended Repertoire: Hamilton Children’s Choir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer/Arranger</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Puppet’s Dream</td>
<td>Darius Lim</td>
<td>SSA, piano, percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abendlied (Evening Song)</td>
<td>Felix Mendelssohn</td>
<td>SA or TB, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abendlied (Evening Song)</td>
<td>J. Rheinberger, arr. N. Averina</td>
<td>SSA, SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Maris Stella (Hail Star of the Sea)</td>
<td>Plainsong Vespers Hymn David Hamilton</td>
<td>SSAA, singing bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blagoslovi Dushe Moja Gospoda (Bless the Lord, O My Soul)</td>
<td>Pavel Chesnokov</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachez, beaux yeux (Hide Then, Beautiful Eyes)</td>
<td>Antoine Boësset, arr. John V. Sinclair</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella (opt, instrumental consort)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Como Tu (Just Like You)</td>
<td>Venezuelan Alberto Grau</td>
<td>SSSSSAAAAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream a Dream</td>
<td>Ed Robertson</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobbin’s Flowery Vale</td>
<td>Traditional Irish, arr. For female voices Sarah Quartel</td>
<td>SSSAAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eternity</td>
<td>Michael Bojesen</td>
<td>SSA, SSA, SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even When He is Silent</td>
<td>Kim André Arnesen</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frobisher Bay</td>
<td>James Gordon arr. Tamarack ed. Linda Beaupré</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Title</td>
<td>Composer(s)</td>
<td>Arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamelan</td>
<td>R. Murray Schafer</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goza Mi Calipso (Enjoy My Calypso)</td>
<td>Albert Hernández</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Himmelin (In Heaven)</td>
<td>Karin Rehnquist</td>
<td>“Soundscape” selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikan Keyek (Pony-fish)</td>
<td>Tracy Wong</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Yat Un Coq Qui Chante (The Singing Rooster)</td>
<td>French-Canadian Folk Song</td>
<td>2-part treble, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indodana (The Son)</td>
<td>South African Song</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juego a que me quemo (A spark, a flame, let’s see if I get burned.)</td>
<td>Colombian Folk Song</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella or accompanied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrie (from Missa Brevis in C Minor)</td>
<td>Imant Raminsh ed. Henry H. Leck</td>
<td>Treble choir, sop. solo, orchestra or piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Belle Se Promène (The beautiful walkways)</td>
<td>Traditional Acadian</td>
<td>SSAA soli, SSAA choir, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Ngu Weko (nonsense syllables)</td>
<td>Steven Webb</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnificat (Canticle of Mary)</td>
<td>Christine Donkin</td>
<td>10-part treble, solo, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maiglöckchen und die Blümelein (The May-bell and the Flowers)</td>
<td>Felix Mendelssohn</td>
<td>SS, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missa de Spiritu Sancto (Mass of the Holy Spirit)</td>
<td>Rihards Dubra</td>
<td>SSSAAA, organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigra Sum (I Am Black)</td>
<td>Pablo Casals</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel des Enfants (Christmas Children)</td>
<td>Claude Debussy</td>
<td>Unison, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Children</td>
<td>Ysaye M. Barnwell</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orde-e</td>
<td>Madukayan Folk Song, arr. Maria Theresa Vizconde Roldan</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakkenen (Cold, Freeze)</td>
<td>Soila Sariola</td>
<td>SSAA (Recorded by Rajaton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pallaanda (For Years and Years)</td>
<td>An Indian Raga arr. Ethan Sperry</td>
<td>SA, SA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasejau Dobila</td>
<td>Lithuanian folk song arr. John E. Govedas</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Life Melodies</td>
<td>Sara Hopkins</td>
<td>“Soundscape” selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>COMPOSER/ARRANGER</td>
<td>NOTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowforms</td>
<td>R. Murray Schafer</td>
<td>Treble voices, non-traditional notation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spellbound</td>
<td>Katerina Gimon</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stabat Mater</em> (Hymn to Mary)</td>
<td>Giovanni Battista Pergolesi</td>
<td>SA, strings, continuo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Ėriks Ėšenvalds</td>
<td>SSSAAA, six tuned water glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titanium</td>
<td>David Guetta</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(unpublished arrangement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank You for the Music</td>
<td>Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Anderson, arr. Jerry Estes</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Turlutte Acadienne Montréalaise</em> (Acadian Montreal Jigging)</td>
<td>Original French-Canadian Mouthreel Marie-Claire Saindon</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uraren Besotik (Through the Water)</td>
<td>Eva Ugalde</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wau Bulan (Moon Kite)</td>
<td>Tracy Wong</td>
<td>Wau Bulan (Moon Kite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavin’ Flag</td>
<td>K˚naan arr. Joel Forth</td>
<td>SSAA, solo unpublished arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Lullaby</td>
<td>Pinkzebra</td>
<td>SSA, piano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Utilized or Recommended Repertoire: Jitro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>COMPOSER/ARRANGER</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascendit Deus (God is Ascended)</td>
<td>Jacobus Gallus</td>
<td>SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Já Tu Uplynu</em> (From Thee Now I Must Go)</td>
<td>Antonín Dvorák</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Maria (Hail Mary)</td>
<td>Franz Biebl</td>
<td>SSA, SSAA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Maria (Hail Mary)</td>
<td>Zoltán Kodály</td>
<td>SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervnová Noc (A Night in June)</td>
<td>Ilja Hurník</td>
<td>SA, piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>O la o che bon echo</em> (The Echo Song)</td>
<td>Orlando di Lasso</td>
<td>SSA, SSA, a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Musica (Glorious Music)</td>
<td>Jan Mišek</td>
<td>SSAA, timpani, piano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Gorale**  
(Hillbillies) | Jan Vicar | SSA, a cappella, percussion instruments, (Two men “fight” over a girl. The composer wrote a choreographed “fight” into the score.) |
| **Hana wa Saku**  
(Flowers Will Bloom) | Yoko Kanno | (See YouTube performance) |
| **Hoj, Hura Hoj**  
(O, Mountain O) | Otmar Mácha | SSA soli, SSAA choir, a cappella |
| **Hotaru Koi**  
(Ho, Firefly) | Rou Ogura | SSA, a cappella |
| **Hymn to Freedom** | Oscar Peterson | SSA, piano |
| **Kyrie Eleison**  
(Lord Have Mercy) | Henk Badings | SSA, a cappella |
| **Largo** (from *The New World Symphony*) | Antonín Dvorák, arr. Evžen Zamečník | SSAA, a cappella |
| **Moravske dvojzpevy**  
(Moravian Duets) | Antonín Dvorák | SA, piano |
| **Sanctus**  
(Holy) | Jan Jiřásek | SSA, a cappella |
| **Stabat Mater**  
(Hymn to Mary) | Giovanni Battista Pergolesi | SA, strings, continuo |
| **Velet, Vtáčku**  
(Sweet Songster) | Antonín Dvorák | SA, piano |

**Discussion: Repertoire Development**

The literature review in Chapter 2 reveals that North American directors believe that choosing high-quality repertoire is critical for sustaining excellent children’s choir programs. What is not mentioned in the literature review is the idea that repertoire should be chosen in order to preserve a single culture. Since diverse populations exist all across North America, a variety of cultural repertoire is deemed vital to provide avenues for representation and inclusion of singers with differing backgrounds.

Poloz, a native of Kazakhstan and the only director among the study participants working in a North American setting, is the director whose literature seemed to most
broadly represent a global perspective. Her Russian background, world travels, and love of sound motivates her to continually seek varied repertoire from a wide variety of sources. She intentionally programs music of Canadian origins but the repertoire surrounding those selections represents a broad spectrum of cultures. For example, the programming for a collaborative concert with the Toronto Children’s Chorus on Saturday, May 26, 2018 in Hamilton contained three pieces that originated in Canada. The printed program identified the creators of these three selections with the national maple leaf symbol. The rest of the music in the concert represented more than a dozen cultures and languages including Russian, Japanese, Latin, Māori, Spanish, English, Finnish, Basque, and isiXhosa.

The rest of the directors in the study also adhere to repertoire of the highest quality and produce variety in their programming. However, their repertoire more directly reflects a commitment to their own cultures and choral traditions. While Skopal programs music of European classical composers and sensitively teaches folk music of other countries to accompany his choir’s travels, his favorite selections seem to be those written by Czech composers such as Antonín Dvořák, Petr Eben and Otmar Mácha. He also works with contemporary Czech composers such as Jan Jirásek who regularly writes new music for his choir. Skopal has repeated the most important Czech selections for four decades in order to preserve Czech history, culture and choral tradition. Examples of Skopal’s favored Czech works for Jitro include the Moravian Duets by Antonín Dvořák and “Hoj, hura hoj” by Otmar Mácha.

In Australia, Williams programs high-quality repertoire that represents varied cultures and genres but advocates strongly for Australian-inspired creations. Two striking
examples of Australian-inspired commissions include Dan Walker’s *Moments that Shaped Australia* and Felix Riebl’s *Spinifex Gum*. The former work, personally commissioned by Williams contains five selections that detail significant events in Australia’s history. The latter work was produced to give Australian indigenous children a cultural voice and affirmation of their heritage.

For the Roldans in the Philippines, new compositions and arrangements are written for the Mass and for the preservation of Filipino culture and tradition. Jude’s sacred compositions are born out of parochial need, a similar compositional motivation to that of Johann Sebastian Bach (Appendix 3, p. 176). The arrangements of Filipino folk songs that both of the Roldans write for their choir provides cultural identification and pride among them. Although the Roldans are both well-schooled in Western classical traditions, they desire to uphold the musical songs and traditions of Filipino culture.

**Results: Performance Practice**

The HMtQCC performs every weekend either at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Mary the Queen Parish in Greenhills or Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows (Appendix 3, p. 144). The choir takes one weekend off each year at Christmastime. In addition, the choir sings for weddings, gives charity concerts, participates in festivals and competitions, and tours internationally. Songs are nearly always memorized unless a festival situation necessitates reading from a recently learned score.

In formal concerts and competitions, the Filipino singers wear traditional ethnic costumes cut according to national styles. The colors change, but the style typically does
not (Appendix 3, p. 186). Also, choristers must wear black shoes and black socks and eliminate jewelry such as earrings. Long hair must be pulled back into a ponytail. During the Mass, dress is more informal as students may wear regular dresses and pants and even blue jeans.

The Roldans hold choristers to professional standards for all rehearsals and performances. Singers are disciplined both in rehearsals and in performances. Before the directors enter the rehearsal room, singers are to be seated and mentally ready for instructions. Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan insists that all troubles and worries must be left outside the choir experience (Appendix 3, p. 181). Similarly, when in concert settings, choir members are to show preparation by not talking, by exhibiting proper posture, and by keeping their eyes on their conductor (Appendix 3, p. 183). This focused behavior is expected in all performance settings.

The HMtQCC is comfortable singing a cappella as well as accompanied music. Jude Roldan serves as the choir’s regular pianist. Occasionally Filipino percussion instruments are added, such as kiling-kiling (goat horns) (Appendix 3, p. 184).

Although never used in Mass settings, choreography frequently accompanies performances of their Filipino folksongs and other secular selections. Jude Roldan explains that sometimes the kids will generate choreography to go with pop songs that he arranges for them. When it comes to Filipino folksongs, the Roldans seek the help of dancers from provinces to teach authentic movement for the folksong being performed (Appendix 3, p. 185-186).

Where the Gondwana Choirs are concerned, Director Williams insists on an excellent product. She says, “I am very insistent, and I don’t give up on things. All
humans like to do things well. There’s so much mediocrity in the world, so we keep away from that as much as we can” (Appendix 2, p. 121).

Whether her choirs perform classical music with symphony orchestras, pop music, or repertoire requiring choreography, Williams seeks excellence, artistry, and authenticity. She does not do choreography simply for the sake of movement, but carefully considers the overall visual and aural impact. If choreography is necessary for the enhancement and communication of the music, Williams seeks the help of professional dancers and choreographers. The entire 75-minute *Spinifex Gum* show, as performed by the Gondwana Indigenous Children’s Choir, is staged with choreography—”dancing full on, all the time” (Appendix 2, p. 136).

In terms of stage deportment, Williams teaches singers to watch one another to ensure that entrances are together. Unless choreography is being used, singers stand erect with their arms by their sides keeping their eyes on the director. At the end of song sets, singers bow together. In general, the behavior expected of professional musicians is the behavior William expects of all children in the Gondwana Choirs (Appendix 2, p. 110, 136).

Since 2000, performing members of the Sydney Children’s Choir have worn a gender-neutral shirt called a “silky” by the singers. These shirts come in deep shades of blue, black, navy and aqua. Shirt colors are passed out randomly among choristers except that all members of the Young Men’s Choir wear a black “silky.” In addition to the “silky,” members of the Sydney Children’s Performing Choirs wear black pants and black jazz shoes to facilitate movement with their performances.
Williams exposes her choristers to all kinds of instrumentation. Her choirs enjoy performing with piano, symphony orchestra, percussion ensembles, chamber ensembles, didgeridoo, and more. Williams typically employs whatever instrumental accompaniment is indicated in the score. Occasionally, she enhances an existing piece of music by adding an instrumental part out of her own creative vision for the selection (Appendix 2, p. 136).

When the Hamilton Children’s Choir performs, Poloz expects all music to be memorized so that singers can communicate with the audience more effectively. She also expects that the singers’ energies to be wholly directed towards the music and beautiful singing. She states, “It should always be excellent singing—like aiming for really good singing. And then anything [else should] reinforce that” (Appendix 4, p. 219).

With the goal of excellent singing in mind, Poloz prefers to use the term, “soundography” rather than “choreography.” “Soundography” is a word Poloz coins to refer to the way movement and sound should work together without compromising a singer’s desired vocal tone. She notes that most choreographers have not been trained to think about how movement impacts the overall sound that choirs project. As a sound expert herself, Poloz enjoys experimenting with the angles, positions, and choral placements of her singers. When professional dancers choreograph selections that cause singers to compromise their vocal tone, Poloz will offer simplified movement suggestions so that excellent singing can result along with the complementary stage positions (Appendix 4, p. 219-220).

Even when choreography effectively facilitates sound, Poloz emphasizes the need for the faces of choristers to communicate. She exhorts her singers to give “more eyes
and connection with the audience on a deeper level.” She discourages the appearance of “empty body, empty eyes, and crazy choreography” (Appendix 4, p. 220).

To help the members of her choir give an energetic and uniform presentation, Poloz shows YouTube videos where one or two singers in a choir are not exhibiting best behaviors. She finds that showing these clips, complete with their visual distractions, is so enlightening that choristers draw conclusions and make appropriate choices without her having to establish performance rules (Appendix 4, p. 234).

The signature uniform for the girls of the Hamilton Children’s Choir is a silky, gold shirt that drapes over black pants. Boys wear all black. An alternate uniform for girls is a black sleeveless shirt adorned with a brightly colored scarf. Girls may choose the color they wish to wear and may arrange the scarves around their necks in a variety of individual ways. Scarf colors include yellow, orange, green, blue, fuchsia, and purple.

When the choir is not singing a cappella music, Poloz solicits the skilled help of professional instrumentalists to accompany her singers. She regularly works with a professional pianist who attends all rehearsals and plays in concerts as needed. A professional percussionist is also a regular collaborator with the Hamilton Children’s Choir and frequently adds his skills to performances (Appendix 4, p. 201). As is the case with the Gondwana Choirs, Poloz employs whatever instrumentalists are needed for the music being performed.

Jitro makes over 100 appearances annually. The choir sings with other recognized choirs, collaborates with professional orchestras, and appears in prestigious performances.

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96 Jitro, “Czech Children’s Choir Jitro.”
venues worldwide. Pianist Michal Chrobák has skillfully and faithfully accompanied Jitro in performances for more than twenty years.⁹⁷ About half of the repertoire performed each year is a cappella and all music is memorized.

Jitro’s formal uniform has not changed since the choir started. Girls wear red skirts, red vests, white blouses with a floppy necktie, nicknamed a “fishy,” and white shoes. A traditional folk uniform is sometimes worn during the second half of a concert or for less formal events. This folk outfit includes a big white skirt with a dark vest, white blouse with puffy sleeves, and the expectation of braided hair fastened with red ribbons (Appendix 5, p. 271).

Choreography is used minimally in performance. One song in the choir’s repertory, “Gorale” by Jan Vicar is about two men who fight over a girl. Vicar composed a staged fistfight directly into the song. Skopal notes that audiences outside of the Czech Republic are greatly amused by the sight of the girls replicating a fistfight during the song, but for audiences within the Czech Republic, “Gorale” is met with sober expressions (Appendix 5, p. 269).

The Czech girls in Jitro are highly disciplined and rarely talk in rehearsals or in anticipation of a concert. Where performance behaviors are concerned: singers stand erect, keep their arms at their sides and watch the director. All of Skopal’s directions are followed quietly with compliant immediacy. Thus, I was astonished by Skopal’s response when soliciting his opinion about the differences in running a choir before and after the

fall of Communism. Skopal said, “Much more difficult now. With Communism, the girls were afraid and more disciplined.”

One of Jitro’s most memorable performances occurred at the 1993 national American Choral Directors Association convention in San Antonio, Texas in front of thousands of enthusiastic choral music educators. ACDA president Dr. J.B. Haberlen officially lauded the performance as a “major highlight of the conference.” Doreen Rao famously commented, “Are you aware that you have just changed forever, the character and style of all American choral singing?”

**Discussion: Performance Practice**

Just as less writing exists in the area of performance practice among children’s choirs as discussed in the literature review of Chapter 2, so too there seems to be less to discuss about the performance practices exhibited by each of the study choirs. All of them embrace ensemble unity, expect singers to focus on the director, and teach professionalism on and off the stage. Choreography is not used for show with any of the choirs but provides enhancement of music and culture. So strong are each choir’s performing traditions that the choristers themselves tend to relay performance expectations to new members through words and example.

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98 Skopal’s comments were made to me on a bus, transporting members of Jitro from the Czech Republic to Germany for a concert on August 28, 2017.

The point of performance practice that merits some discussion is uniform choice. Uniforms, like each director’s repertoire choices, reflect ensemble purpose and vision. Uniforms for the HMtQCC underscore their Filipino heritage by adhering to national costume designs. The two standard uniforms worn by the girls of Jitro have upheld Czech and choral traditions for more than forty years. Poloz, who enjoys experimenting with lights, colors and fabric types, considers the visual effect more than a traditional standard. The Sydney Children’s Choir is the only choir in the study that provides gender-neutral uniforms for singers. In doing so, Williams affirms her desire for the choir to safely represent diverse populations in regards to gender, socio-economic status, and cultural backgrounds.

**Unanticipated Results and Discussions**

Although not specifically tested for within the design of this study, three areas of commonality appeared as unanticipated results from data collected during rehearsal and performance observations. First, each of the directors possesses a high level of education, are skilled as musicians and educators, and deliver choral instruction with an unwavering tenacity for excellence. Second, each of these directors ensures a nurturing environment that not only encourages the development of student leaders but invites all singers to assume ownership of the ensemble’s product. Third, not only do the study choirs enjoy a healthy amount of rehearsal time for the refinement of music and technique, but their most advanced ensembles perform frequently and participate in both local and international tours. Further, some of the organizations retain repertoire for multiple years and as a result, are incredibly adept at performing these pieces.
Unanticipated Results: Student Leaders and Ensemble Ownership

All directors leading the study choirs seek to develop student leaders as well as generate shared ownership of their ensembles with all choristers:

The Roldans foster leadership development in the singers of the HMtQCC by pairing experienced choristers with less experienced choristers in their Guardian Angel program. Mentorship through this program occurs both in and out of rehearsals. Students call each other during the week, meet before or after rehearsals, or pair up within the rehearsals themselves. Further, the choir’s tradition of global recognition is so valued among choristers that student leaders need few adult reminders to help ensure that rudiments of performance practice and musicianship are understood and adhered to by all choristers. The Roldans explain that because choristers own the rich, choral heritage enjoyed by the HMtQCC, they willingly embrace, maintain, and pass on the learned elements of quality so that succeeding choristers will continue to own and uphold the choir’s cherished reputation (Appendix 3, p. 170-171).

Strategies for leadership development among choristers were never discussed in the Czech Republic, and yet, significant student leadership opportunities were observed. Jiří Skopal relied on student leaders to run sectionals, to ensure a respectful learning environment during rehearsals, and to provide vocal modeling to less experienced singers. Even after choristers graduate from Jitro, Skopal solicits the help of alumni to serve as mentors and role models in rehearsals and in choral camp settings.

Skopal and his choristers state that ownership is realized within the Jitro ensemble the moment that singers embrace the goal of attaining excellence. This moment of “mental decidedness” is crucial because when a singer chooses to be outstanding, the
quality and amount of their practice time increase. A chorister who wishes to excel will
no longer view rehearsal as a daily chore, but as an important exercise toward the
attainment of a desirable goal (Appendix 5, p. 250).

In Canada, Poloz works with student leaders from the Hamilton Children’s Choir
before each new choral season begins. These young leaders meet with Poloz to identify
the rules and procedures that all members of the choir will be expected to observe during
the choir’s week-long, start-up camp. Without the aid of adult chaperones, student leaders
deliver and enforce camp rules. Only their caring director stays with them overnight.
Singers adhere to self-imposed bedtime curfews because they desire to be rested
throughout the week so they can achieve excellence in rehearsals. Poloz’ training
strategies support the idea that children will act with greater maturity if entrusted with the
weight of responsibility.

Ownership among all members of the Hamilton Children’s Choir is fostered
through Poloz’ mutual respect of her choristers’ thoughts and ideas. She chooses not to
speak to her choir from an elevated podium but rather steps down to converse with them.
Poloz has even been known to step aside during performances so that individual
choristers or the entire ensemble can assume full leadership for pre-determined pieces.

In Australia, student leaders are developed organically. For instance, when Lyn Williams sends groups of choristers out of large group rehearsals to work in sectionals,
she intentionally does not place a singer in charge. Instead, she waits for leaders to
emerge. Those who voluntarily step up to ensure the completion of assigned tasks receive
the undesignated honor of “student leader.” On occasion, Williams has even observed
these natural student leaders actively fostering leadership skills in their peers by offering
unconscious “succession planning” activities. Such spontaneous leadership development occurrences are a delight to Williams (Appendix 2 p. 111).

Ownership within the Gondwana Choirs is developed through Williams’ complete trust in her singers. At the beginning of each term, she allows individual vocal sections to set timetables for when songs need to be memorized. Singers do not report memorization goals back to their director. They merely show up to rehearsals in advance of all concerts with music memorized. When asked how Williams holds choristers accountable for their memorization goals, Williams stated, “Well, this all has to be memorized!” When an additional query followed her simplistic response, Williams laughed and said, “They do [memorize] because I trust they will” (Appendix 2 p. 128). These comments are a testament to how Williams builds safe and invested choral ensembles through her mutual respect, care and trust of young singers.

Discussion: Student Leaders and Ensemble Ownership

Each of the study choir directors gives their singers a gift that is a by-product of the musical training: the knowledge that each belongs and contributes to a community that makes a difference in the world. Such knowledge is only extended to choristers through respect and trust. I noted how alums of the study choirs returned to express appreciation, volunteer help with current choristers, and, in three of the choirs, assume paid positions within the organization. These acts by alumni are the ultimate proof of the successful development of leaders and ensemble ownership. When choristers are empowered to recognize their place in the choir and to feel responsible for the end
product, leadership skills are acquired, professional standards are set, and self-esteem soars.

Unanticipated Results: Rehearsal Time, Performances, and Trips

I made no attempts to study average lengths of contact hours scheduled by respected children’s choirs around the world. Yet, the significant investment of hours encumbered through rehearsals, trips, and performances suggests that a correlation may exist between the number of ensemble hours and overall choral achievement. In three out of the four study choirs, week-long, or weekend, overnight choral camps provide additional concentrated amounts of time for bonding and rehearsing. See Table 10 for an overview of contact hours by ensemble.

Table 10. Overview of Contact Hours Employed by Study Choirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Choir</th>
<th>Rehearsals</th>
<th>Performances</th>
<th>Retreats/Camps</th>
<th>Tours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir</td>
<td>Twice a week 2 hours each Wed. and Fri. 5:30-7:30 pm Year Round</td>
<td>Every weekend (One week off at Christmas) Weddings Charitable events</td>
<td>Only for bonding and spiritual development</td>
<td>International tour every other year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
<td>Twice a week 2 hours each Mon. and Wed. 6:30-8:30 pm Summers off</td>
<td>10-30 per year</td>
<td>Over-night for 5-days</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jitro</td>
<td>Twice a week 2 hours each Individual voice lesson - 20 min. weekly</td>
<td>Up to 100 per year</td>
<td>Over-night for 5-days</td>
<td>Annually or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondwana Choirs</td>
<td>Once a week 2 ½ hours each</td>
<td>Frequency determined by collaborations</td>
<td>Some weekends in preparation for concerts</td>
<td>Australian and International tours for all choir branches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A review of Table 10 reveals that the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir rehearses and performs three times a week throughout the entire calendar year; the Hamilton Children’s Choir rehearses twice a week. Before 2005, HCC only rehearsed once a week and were not as well known; Jitro spends a significant amount of time rehearsing and performing each month while ensuring individual achievement through weekly voice lessons; the Gondwana choirs meet as often as is required to deliver superb performances. The dedication to excellence among all of the study choirs is mirrored in the number of contact hours scheduled by the directors.

When describing the challenges of scheduling large blocks of rehearsal time, Williams in Australia and Poloz in Canada made similar comments. They both acknowledged that choristers are busy with many other activities. Yet, Poloz managed to inspire twice-a-week rehearsals after choristers expressed a desire to be as good as the choirs they had heard in the 500 Voices International Festival in Newfoundland. With the Sydney Children’s Choirs, Williams asks for additional rehearsals whenever they are needed to prepare choristers for concerts and important collaborations. Incredulously, I remarked to both Poloz and Williams that I was amazed at their success in securing more rehearsal times despite their acknowledgment that choristers are “so busy.” Poloz simply responded, “Yes.” Williams glanced around the retreat space where choristers were relaxing during camp and said, “Well, they’re here!”

Discussion: Rehearsal Time, Performances, and Trips

Without exception, all of the international children’s choirs involved in the study practice double or triple the amount of time observed by many choirs who adhere to a
two hour, once-a-week rehearsal schedule. Since rehearsal time seems advantageously linked to chorister achievement, why are more choirs not building additional rehearsal time into their schedules? Cultural attitude seems to be a significant factor impacting time decisions.

In a 2012 interview, Rachel Rensink-Hoff asked Poloz to describe the differences she observed between choral music education in North America and her native Kazakhstan. She responded:

It was shocking for me to learn about the commitment level here in Canada. Children are involved in so many activities. They can’t focus, and they spread themselves so thinly. Every day they participate in different activities in all different directions, but nothing with a serious level of commitment. And if you ask a little bit more than the normal level of commitment (beyond just having “fun”) than you can get into some trouble. Everything is too easy and taken too lightly. Children at the age of 7 or 8 can make a decision to quit and parents follow the wishes of the child. As a mother of a 25-year-old girl, I think that a young child doesn’t have enough adult life experience to make such decisions. They need supervision in their decisions. Skipping from one activity to another because it gets harder, starting from scratch with a new activity, stopping with the level requires hard work and commitment – these children need training so that they don’t give up when it gets harder, but instead push to get through to the goal. The easiest thing in a life and the weakest aspect of one’s character is to just give up.

Conversely, Southeast Asian cultures place a high value on the communal act of music-making and as such, embrace large amounts of rehearsal time. In an interview with Eliezer Yanson Jr. for a 2010 article in The Choral Journal, Filipino-bred choir director Joel Navarro makes observations about the differences between attitudes in these two cultures:

In the Philippines, choirs spend an inordinate amount of time rehearsing in order that the music is deeply internalized, and that beauty emanates from a community

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that is in unity with each other. Music and text become deeply personal and a part of your Weltundlebenanschauung (world-and-life view). I have not been as successful with my American choirs about this way of music-making. My experience is that students are not able to allow more time for rehearsing and being together because of the rigors of academic life, the mobility of our youth, the distractions of popular society, and friendships that are becoming increasingly forged through cyberspace instead of real personal contact. In many ways, economic prosperity, work, and study commitments, and the pursuit of high-paying jobs create a poverty of time needed for the pursuit of excellence in music.  

After observing the connections forged among members of the HMtQCC and their confident expressions of thoroughly learned music, I concur with Navarro’s vision for American choirs. He states, “The desire is not for America choirs to duplicate that work ethic, but to invest a little more time. The key is to love the choir and music enough to make the needed sacrifices as appropriate to one’s circumstances.”

Unanticipated Results: Director Competencies and Behaviors

All of the directors leading the study choirs are highly educated, motivated, and celebrated. Worldwide recognition and choral renown are unlikely without advanced degrees or knowledge. Similarly, without passion, tenacity, and drive, delivered in a respectful manner, directors would not likely be able to motivate choristers to a position of global distinction.

Jiří Skopal, director of Jitro, holds a Doctorate in Philosophy and is head of the Department of Music at the University of Hradec Králové. He is a recognized authority in the field of choral education, having published essays and choral education textbooks.

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102 Ibid., 36.
He has received numerous awards for his many outstanding musical accomplishments in the Czech Republic and abroad.103

Zimfira Poloz, director of the Hamilton Children’s Choir, received extensive choral training in the former Soviet Union. She describes her training as intense, thorough, and going beyond that of most North American music conservatories. She established Kazakhstan’s first choir school which grew to serve 450 children and employ 35 music teachers. Under her direction, the Hamilton Children’s Choir has received numerous global awards and invitations to perform abroad.104

Lyn Williams, director of the Gondwana Choirs, is a celebrated orchestra conductor, children’s choir founder and director, and composer in Australia. She has received numerous prestigious awards for her musical innovations and work with children. Her entrepreneurial abilities are evidenced by the organization’s steady growth and the launch of three successful Gondwana Choir Branches: The Sydney Children’s Choir, The National Choral School and the Gondwana Indigenous Children’s Choir.105

Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan, director of the HMtQCC, holds a bachelor’s degree in voice and a master’s degree in choral conducting. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in choral conducting while teaching at the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music and Centro Escolar University Graduate School, and providing direction for the children’s choir.


Jude Roldan, director, pianist, composer, and arranger for the HMtQCC holds degrees in piano and choral conducting from the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music. He is currently a professor at the Centro Escolar Conservatory of Music where he teaches piano, music theory, analysis, arranging, and counterpoint. His compositions are widely published, distributed, and performed all over the world. Under the direction of the Roldans, the Hail Mary the Children’s Choir has received impressive awards in global competitions.

In addition to the educational backgrounds and leadership skills embodied in each director, individual personality traits where noted that aid in producing desired results within their choirs. Jiří Skopal maintains an excellent sense of humor that provides interest and comic relief for choristers. Zimfira Poloz embraces a teachable spirit for herself and her choristers. She demonstrates a will to learn and never gives up. The Roldans care for choristers as if they are their own children. They laugh with them, share with them, and pray for them. The word, “unflappable” describes Lyn Williams. She never appeared to get angry or frustrated when things did not go as planned. When asked, she reflected, “I used to [get angry], but I don’t so much anymore because it actually doesn’t work. It doesn’t get the results you want… I find way more effective than anger is disappointment. Disappointment works a trait. It’s like, ‘I expected this! I was really trusting you to do something’” (Appendix 2, p. 142).

Finally, instructors in each choir relied on pedagogical rhetoric to produce desired behaviors in singers. Their educational sentences engaged minds, stimulated students’ desire for knowledge and offered analogous ideas to help clarify and enforce important concepts. In short, the directors of these study choirs are not just well-educated musicians
and passionate individuals, they are also master teachers. Table 11 contains collective results of inspirational, pedagogical rhetoric and strategies as recorded during rehearsal visits to each of the study choirs. The amount of data collected per choir is proportionate to the amount of time spent in rehearsals with the exception of Jitro. Skopal conducted Jitro’s rehearsals entirely in Czech. Since interpretation services were unavailable, no verbal statements from this choir are included in the table.

Table 11. Pedagogical Rhetoric and Strategies Used by Instructors of Study Choirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing Key</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Vocal Tone Production</th>
<th>Pedagogical Rhetoric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EM Elizabeth McDonald</td>
<td>Guest Vocal Instructor, Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS Jiří Skopal</td>
<td>Director of Jitro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH Lauren Hannay</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Gondwana Indigenous Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP Laura Pin</td>
<td>Pianist and Theory Instructor, Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW Lyn Williams</td>
<td>Director of Gondwana Choirs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT Melanie Tellez</td>
<td>Esprimas Director, Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJR Theresa and Jude Roldan</td>
<td>Directors, Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP Zimfira Poloz</td>
<td>Director, Hamilton Children’s Choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t collapse!” (EM)  
“Give me sensations. How did it feel?” (EM)  
“Keep a barrel in your torso. Try to keep the barrel there as you exhale.” (MT)  
“Crossed arms compress everything. Arms by your side allow you to keep energy!” (MT)  
“Put weight on your big toe. Switch weight to your baby toe. Switch weight to your heels. These three points of contact are your tripod.” (MT)  
“Maintain position of inhalation!” (MT) (ZP) (EM)  
“Relax!” (TJR)  
“Be efficient and mechanical machines.” (ZP)  
“The body is our instrument. If a clarinet isn’t put together correctly, it squeaks. If our bodies aren’t put together correctly, our voices squeak!” (ZP)  
“Find your long body.” (ZP)  
“Open your rib cage.” (ZP)  
“Connect to your core.” (ZP)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breathing</td>
<td>“Connect to your feet.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Imagine you have a glass tube inside you that will crash and break if you slouch!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t accommodate for tricky, just send more air!” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Focusing on breathing:</em> “How far can you stretch?” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Feel expansion at your rib cage.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Expand between each note.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What can you mark into your score that reminds you not to take a breath?” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep a ‘barrel’ in your torso. Try to keep the barrel there as you exhale.” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Open the piano lid to prepare to play every time!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Inhale on EH.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Open like a flower.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t make a breath sound.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Pretend you have 100 noses on your waist as you breathe.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“No matter the style, breathing needs to be automatic.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Smell a flower.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Breathe out tiredness.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Place two fingers (‘V’ shape) in front of your throat to show openness in breathing.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth Position</td>
<td>“Roll tongue forward towards your teeth.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Track your tongue. Is it on the bottom of your teeth?” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Trust your breath, don’t squish the egg in your mouth.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The AH vowel inside the mouth is like an egg.” (TJR) (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Open mouth for pitch and power.” (EM) (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel Formation</td>
<td>“Don’t collapse the EE vowel.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Keep the tongue anchored on the bottom teeth when going from OO to EE.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Look in your mirror to see vowel shapes.” (JS) (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Longer vowels!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Which vowel needs to be lengthened?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Hold the vowels as long as you can!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Vowel sounds have to align!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Think every vowel sound.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s low, so brighten the vowel.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Our vowels are not the right shape!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The vowel sound of one group keeps it from shining.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“R’s distort vowels!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The first vowel shape needs to be set when you start!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sing the vowels!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Keep your AH open. Put your hands behind your neck and relax.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The AH vowel should be more forward and not too far back!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“OO is not in the throat.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused Tone</td>
<td>“Don’t swallow your tongue!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Forward sound! Push your hands forward as you sing.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Points to cheeks</em> (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The tongue going back makes a swallowed sound.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Bring your sound to ‘one o’clock.’ (Points to forehead) (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrancy</td>
<td>Resonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gather sound and send it out!” (EM)</td>
<td>“It says, ‘hushed’ so put more space into it.” (LH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Can you make it more exciting?” (LW)</td>
<td>“Raise your soft palate!” (LH) (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Let vocal music sound like it is building effortlessly.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Shape! The sound is not ringing!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Get into the music more!” (LW)</td>
<td>“Hold your nose as you begin [to phonate] and then pull it out as you go!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ability to control tension is powerful. Tension tends to breed a breathy, unsupported sound.” (MT)</td>
<td>“Put space in your mouth like a high ceiling in a cathedral.” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dance! Dance!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Like a string instrument! Don’t force the sound!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Rich sound!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Give more height.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Engage your ‘core’ and give more energy.” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Put more ring in your sound.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The piano has no possibility of being a string instrument. It always goes, click, click, click. You have to be a string instrument!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Buzz in your head.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Make your whole body buzz with sound.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Demonstrated with Koosh ball in hand</em> (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper Register</th>
<th>Balance and Blend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sopranos, keep a mushy feel, rather than a hard feel, in your mouth.” (EM)</td>
<td>“Stand up when you think you have the most important part.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Either blend or don’t sing. That is the choice!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Choristers bend knees to sing high notes.</em> (JS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make it springy on the top.” (LW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t reach for high notes.” (MT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To sing high, shape AH but sing EE.” (MT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In changing registers [low to high] did you pull a tissue or just jam it up there?” (MT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You must paddle your energy like the feet of a swan or duck below water so that your sound seems effortless above.” (ZP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make a face for the high note!” (ZP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Suck that sound on high note—not forward but backwards.” (ZP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Modify the vowel. The other parts will sing the consonants.” (ZP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants and Diction</th>
<th>Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Which consonants can bring out the conflict?” (LW)</td>
<td>“Gather the sound and send it out.” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Be the last person to put the S on!” (LW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The sound is beautiful. I just can’t understand a single word! More consonants please!” (LW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give more B in bloom.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In familiar, don’t go to the L.” (LW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More F!” (TJR)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To produce a W, prepare your mouth with an OO and get quickly to the W.” (EM) (ZP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intonation</td>
<td>“Why is it not in tune?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Slow down so people can hear!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t give up on the chord until we get all the way to the end of it!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Throw darts to hit the pitch.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Cover one ear. Listen to your sound.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Inner hear!” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Aim for the center of the pitch.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Listen vertically, from the bottom to the top, not just horizontally!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sing up, not down on that descending pitch.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Hear each pitch before you sing it!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>“Snap [fingers] on the rests.” (LP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Some of you are not loving those rests.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How many quavers do you have in that section?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Feel the subdivision before singing!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Do the rhythm with your eyes!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Work cut offs together. Be deliberate.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Who can sing the syncopated rhythm?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When it’s not great, it’s a mess!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What do you notice about great percussionists?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To feel the group beat, tap your neighbor on the shoulder, or the head, or something.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Rests should happen!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s a game! Search and destroy excessive notes!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You sang through the rests. Be absolutely clean.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>“We need someone who can drive the tempo more. Live dangerously!” (LW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Keep a sense of the beat before you set the tempo.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamics</th>
<th>“Circle <em>subito piano</em>. What does that mean?” (LH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Get together. Work on dynamics!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sing softly, like a cotton ball! Now sing like a baseball…a soccer ball…a basketball!” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Imagine feathers!” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Grow more!” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Even softer.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Find color as you <em>spin</em> and get louder!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Theory</th>
<th>“Sing a perfect fifth above that!” (LH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Why do we need different keys?” (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What is a fifth above this note?” (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What do sharps do?” (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What is a fifth below C?” (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How do sharps need to be placed on the line? <em>A: The box needs to around the line.</em>” (LP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Find the key with your tuning fork.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What is the time signature?” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Two minor thirds together are a diminished triad.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What interval are you hearing?” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“This is a harmonic minor scale. Which other piece did we have this scale in today?” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Practice</td>
<td>Phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give it shape.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Give it more dimensionality.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give me phrase!” (LW)</td>
<td>“Longer phrases!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Better to skip a note than to sing without phrasing!” (MT)</td>
<td>“Better to skip a note than to sing without phrasing!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Paint the music!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Give me a seamless string of sound.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Practice</th>
<th>Behavioral Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Stop your very good whispering!” (LW)</td>
<td>“In regards to what we sing and who we want to represent: words speak but actions count!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In regards to what we sing and who we want to represent: words speak but actions count!” (LW)</td>
<td>“Maybe social and rehearsal don’t mix. Be mature!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Maybe social and rehearsal don’t mix. Be mature!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“How do you represent yourself and your country?” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How do you represent yourself and your country?” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Don’t get too comfortable and lazy. Keep your focus every minute!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t get too comfortable and lazy. Keep your focus every minute!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Push yourselves! We get too comfortable in many areas of life.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Practice</th>
<th>Emotional Affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t go on autopilot. Make me cry!” (EM)</td>
<td>“Don’t go on autopilot. Make me cry!” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t go on autopilot. Make me cry!” (EM)</td>
<td>“Make the first note engage with the emotion of the piece.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make the first note engage with the emotion of the piece.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Do cranky with happy.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Do cranky with happy.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Imagine a baby in front of you sleeping.” (TJR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Imagine a baby in front of you sleeping.” (TJR)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Practice</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Walk softly down the stairs.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Walk softly down the stairs.” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Walk softly down the stairs.” (LW)</td>
<td>“Obviously don’t talk but look straight ahead when you are seated [on stage].” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Obviously don’t talk but look straight ahead when you are seated [on stage].” (LW)</td>
<td>“Don’t run but come out as quickly as you can!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t run but come out as quickly as you can!” (LW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>General Questions and Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Lebron James scores points because of boring practice – repetition, repetition, repetition!” (EM)</td>
<td>“Lebron James scores points because of boring practice – repetition, repetition, repetition!” (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What are the things that are hard to achieve?” (LW)</td>
<td>“What are the things that are hard to achieve?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What are the things that are hard to achieve?” (LW)</td>
<td>“What will you watch or listen for?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What will you watch or listen for?” (LW)</td>
<td>“Are there any places where your part needs work?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Are there any places where your part needs work?” (LW)</td>
<td>“You can have it all!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You can have it all!” (LW)</td>
<td>“What inflection would you like?” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What inflection would you like?” (LW)</td>
<td>“There was no difference audibly—maybe in your head. Do something different!” (LW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There was no difference audibly—maybe in your head. Do something different!” (LW)</td>
<td>“You have something to learn and something to teach. Don’t panic if you don’t understand something. Just ask someone around you.” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You have something to learn and something to teach. Don’t panic if you don’t understand something. Just ask someone around you.” (MT)</td>
<td>“Imagine you are very famous. You have a beautiful outfit and people pay $1000 to hear you sing. Now sing!” (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Imagine you are very famous. You have a beautiful outfit and people pay $1000 to hear you sing. Now sing!” (MT)</td>
<td>“Expand your capacity to sing one note perfectly.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Expand your capacity to sing one note perfectly.” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Be proud of what you are doing! Your work will get you places. Learning how to work hard will help you in your future life. It is a good skill to master!” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Be proud of what you are doing! Your work will get you places. Learning how to work hard will help you in your future life. It is a good skill to master!” (ZP)</td>
<td>“Some people your age are doing nothing and get nothing.” (ZP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Some people your age are doing nothing and get nothing.” (ZP)</td>
<td>“We are so excited to work hard!” (ZP and choristers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion: Director Competencies and Behaviors**
The fact that all of the directors in the study are well-trained and that all of them work successfully from unique rather than similar personalities means that anyone with advanced knowledge and a determined work ethic might be poised for success. Further, the pedagogical rhetoric and strategies presented in Table 11 are immediately replicable for use in choral education settings. The verbal statements recorded can be categorized in four distinct types: information, questions, analogies, and directives.

Examples of informative sentences include, “Ability to control tension is powerful. Tension tends to breed a breathy, unsupported sound;” and “Crossed arms compress everything. Arms by your side allow you to keep energy!” Such statements provide a basis for learning but do not ensure that singers fully understand the stated concept. Less than twenty percent of the recorded statements fall into the category of information.

Analogous statements provide information in a comparative way. “Sing softly, like a cotton ball” relates the experience of a common object [cotton ball] to that of a desired but less tangible outcome, a soft dynamic. The sentence, “Imagine you have a glass tube inside you that will crash and break if you slouch,” brings immediate seriousness to the need for maintaining proper body alignment while singing. Analogies carry strong educational potential since singers tend to remember concepts more readily when they are paired with common objects and experiences. Nearly ten percent of the director’s recorded statements contained analogies.

Questions serve multiple functions. They solicit engagement of minds, require responses, and sometimes serve as a tool for assessment. The question, “Why do we need different keys?” stimulates curiosity, and when understanding follows, singers have good
motivation for learning and applying historical practices. The question, “What can you mark into your score that reminds you not to take a breath?” invites singers to think for themselves, to share their ideas with the group, and to embrace the unspoken expectation of marking scores. The use of questions made up slightly more than ten percent of recorded director verbiage.

The largest category of recorded statements were directives. More than sixty percent of instructor statements asked singers to “do” something in response: “Don’t collapse the EE vowel;” “Maintain position of inhalation;” “Raise your soft palate.” Each of these directives called for an action from singers. The amount of kinesthetic energy solicited as a result of directive statements implies that a significant amount of physical engagement occurred during rehearsals.

A number of statements can be recorded in multiple categories. An instructor who says, “Put space in your mouth like a high ceiling in a cathedral” issues a directive with an imbedded analogy. The sequence of directives, “put weight on your big toe; switch weight to your baby toe; switch weight to your heels;” is followed up with an informative statement secured with an analogy: “These three points of contact [big toe, little toe, and heel] are your tripod.” Such skilled mastery of pedagogical language contributes to the success of each internationally-recognized children’s choir.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Relatively little research exists that focuses on the pedagogical practices of recognized children’s choirs located outside of the United States. As such, more research is needed to generate cross-cultural connections, to cultivate new ideas for performance
of repertoire, and to raise greater awareness of the pedagogical practices employed by
global children’s choirs. Many internationally-recognized children’s choirs are worthy of
study including, Ars Nova in Argentine, Tapiola Choir in Finland, Carmina Slovenica, in
Slovenia, Vesna Children’s Choir in Moscow, and the Riga Girls’ Choir in Latvia.
Additional names of international children’s choirs can be located in Kari Ala-Pöllänen’s

Additional studies related to internationally-recognized children’s choirs might
include an investigation into the correlation of rehearsal time to overall choral
achievement; culturally accepted amounts of time for young people to invest in extra-
curricular activities; the sociological implications of concert dress by region; the tracking
of leadership traits exercised by alums beyond their choral involvements; and a
compilation of global choral repertoire utilized by recognized children’s choirs. Audio
and visual aids prepared along with the compilation of global repertoire would provide
choral directors with a wonderful compendium of resources for teaching culturally
representative selections to choristers.

**Conclusion**

The impulse for this year-and-a-half-long study was to discover the approaches
directors of internationally-recognized children’s choirs use to teach vocal tone
production, to provide musicianship training, to develop repertoire, and to inform

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performance practice. Overarching curiosity developed into a study that gleaned best practices from these study choirs. It is my hope that this document will provide choral directors around the world with refreshing ideas, global perspectives, greater repertoire diversity and improved pedagogical practices. The five tables representing repertoire and pedagogical rhetoric are potentially valuable sources of ideas and replicable strategies. Further, the transcriptions of interviews found in appendices 2 through 6 contain a wealth of sociological and cultural information pertaining to each study choir and their music directors. Conductors and music educators who study organizational and instructional strategies of internationally-recognized children’s choirs may enhance their own pedagogical practices, and be better equipped to provide culturally-representative music experiences within choral communities of other regions.
## Appendix 1: Data Summary by Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Williams (Australia)</th>
<th>Roldans (Philippines)</th>
<th>Poloz (Canada)</th>
<th>Skopal (Czech Republic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>To engage in the practice and performance of choral music at the highest level, allowing young people to reach their full potential.</td>
<td>Animate the heart and soul of people from all walks of life with choral singing. Venerate Mary and worship God through various hymns of praise. Enrich children’s lives through vocal artistry and musical experience. Motivate the children to utilize their God-given talents fully. Acquire proper education and training for optimum performance. Realize the value of family solidarity, generosity, friendship, camaraderie, and teamwork. Instill discipline and create awareness among the children of their social responsibility. Achieve excellence in the realm of music.</td>
<td>The Hamilton Children’s Choir makes a difference in the lives of children and youth within the greater Hamilton community by providing young people with exceptional choral music instruction and performance opportunities that foster creativity, personal development, and social growth.</td>
<td>“To sing the most difficult music and very good music and contemporary music. To be the motivation for contemporary composers.”</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Handbook?</td>
<td>Yes, on website</td>
<td>No written rules or</td>
<td>Yes, in a set of separate short documents. Poloz seeks not to make rules, but to work with issues as they arise.</td>
<td>A book exists with ten rules written by a member of the choir and what she experienced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Many groups?</td>
<td>About 12</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Six groups</td>
<td>Seven groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Number of</td>
<td>500+</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>200+</td>
<td>About 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>Sydney Children’s Choir, Senior Performing Choir</td>
<td>Concert Choir</td>
<td>Illumini</td>
<td>Jitro (Daybreak) Main Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Top Group</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in Top Group</td>
<td>Two hours weekly</td>
<td>Six hours in three weekly rehearsals</td>
<td>Four hours total in two weekly rehearsals on Monday and Wednesday evenings</td>
<td>Two or three times per week in two-hour blocks plus one or two Sundays per month in three-hour blocks. Also 20-minute weekly individual voice building with a coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Rehearsal</td>
<td>Conservatorium High School and University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Small room in Obispado de Cubao building</td>
<td>Hillfield Strathallan College.</td>
<td>Jitro Choir Building</td>
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<td>Time for Top Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Staff Members</td>
<td>Fourteen Artistic Staff. Thirteen</td>
<td>Volunteer coordinator plus the Roldans</td>
<td>Four part-time directors, three</td>
<td>Ten full time (21 hours per week)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Administrative Staff</td>
<td>who are part-time.</td>
<td>part-time pianists, rehearsal</td>
<td>staff and five-part-time teachers.</td>
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<td>assistants, three part-time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>administrative staff members</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Funding Sources</td>
<td>Tuition, tickets, federal funding,</td>
<td>Ticket sales,</td>
<td>Tuition, ticket sales, government</td>
<td>Government sources and</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>sponsorships</td>
<td>fundraiser “gigs,” singing engagements,</td>
<td>funding, sponsorships, and grants</td>
<td>concerts support 80% of the budget.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>weddings, National Commission for the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuition is $80 per year for</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Arts, caroling in malls &amp; hotels. The</td>
<td></td>
<td>older kids and $70 for younger ones.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>APEC Summit is the most lucrative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Structure of Organization</td>
<td>Seven-member board with executive and</td>
<td>Parents lead the organization.</td>
<td>Run by executive and artistic</td>
<td>Květa attends to administrative</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>artistic directors pulling equal weight</td>
<td></td>
<td>directors and a ten-member</td>
<td>duties and runs the younger choirs.</td>
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<td>community board</td>
<td>Jiří attends to global connections</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>and ensures that musical structures</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>are stable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment Strategy</td>
<td>Websites, “bring-a-friend” days, word of</td>
<td>Announcement after Mass on a Sunday in</td>
<td>School flyers, word of mouth</td>
<td>Singers hand out flyers in their</td>
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<td>the mouth, social media, school flyers,</td>
<td>March (end of school year) during</td>
<td></td>
<td>schools.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>radio, government support</td>
<td>announcements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Membership Length</td>
<td>Four to six years</td>
<td>Six to seven years</td>
<td>Some for ten years. Some more and</td>
<td>As much as 14 years, but those who</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>some less.</td>
<td>do not want to work leave the choir.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Alumni Program?</td>
<td>Yes, but minimal</td>
<td>Christ the King Youth Choir is made up of alumni</td>
<td>Some give active leadership as board members, rehearsal assistants, composers, and camp assistants.</td>
<td>Alums help with the camp and sing in parts of the concerts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Performances in a Year</td>
<td>Three primary concerts plus collaborations &amp; charity events</td>
<td>Every Sunday at Mass and the <em>Halina ‘t Umawit</em> “Come Let Us Sing to the Lord” festival that was started in 2009.</td>
<td>Training choirs have two concerts each year, and participate in an annual choral festival. <em>Esprimas</em> has two concerts each year plus a mini tour. <em>Illumini</em> has three concerts each year plus other collaborations, charity events, and an international tour.</td>
<td>Seventeen formal concerts scheduled in 2016, but some years have had up to 100 performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Concerts Mandatory?</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Kids want to participate in bigger venues. Kids are allowed to miss during Masses if family events keep them away. For outside events, they check with kids to see who can come before committing.</td>
<td>Choristers are expected to attend.</td>
<td>If kids do not show up, they are less likely to be selected to go on an all-expense-paid international tour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Concerts?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sing at churches to raise money for their cause. (For example, fixing the building or buying a sound system, etc.) 3-4 charity events a year.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Benefits a home for “those who are not well.” (Hospital)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Venues</strong></td>
<td>City Recital Hall, Sydney Opera House, etc.</td>
<td>Cathedral, churches, Cultural Center of the Philippines</td>
<td>Churches and cathedrals</td>
<td>Churches or big halls. When on tour in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tours?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. National school tours annually. GICC tours their show, “Spinifex Gum.” Members of Sydney Children’s Choir tour as finances allow.</td>
<td>With 24-25 choristers usually, but in 2018, thirty-six traveled.</td>
<td>Yes. South Korea, China, Poland, and the USA. Some all-expense-paid invitations. In the summer of 2019, Ilumini tours to Hong Kong.</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touring Frequency</strong></td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>About every other year</td>
<td>At least annually</td>
<td>Depends on invitations, but at least annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touring Distances?</strong></td>
<td>Europe, China, Japan, Baltic States, etc.</td>
<td>Hungary, Denmark, Singapore, Korea, USA</td>
<td>France, Spain, Hong Kong,</td>
<td>France, US, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour Funding</strong></td>
<td>Sponsorship secured for GICC. Tours are optional because “one can’t make people pay AUSS6000.”</td>
<td>Kids solicit their family members for funding.</td>
<td>Sometimes funded by those who give invitations. Funding also by parents and sponsorship. HCC rule: No child stays at home because of financial difficulties.</td>
<td>Fundraising concerts and sponsorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal Vocal Tone Description</strong></td>
<td>Absolute “purity of tone for ringing, clear, vowel sounds.” When “all the vowels are aligned with each other and where they ring in tune. So, it’s a linear as well as a vertical tuning. It has to be tuned vertically and horizontally, and then it [the tone] will ring.”</td>
<td>“Angelic sound, pure, light and relaxed.” The Roldans use owl sounds to emulate a light head voice: hoo, hoo. They use Santa Claus to emulate a rich chest voice: ho, ho.</td>
<td>Poloz is sold on “sound” and different ways to create sound in healthy manners. She asks singers to sing in the middle of the sound—not using high or lowpartials but chiaroscuro (chiaro-bright and scuro-dark). A slinky demonstrates the mixing of vocal colors.</td>
<td>A chorister said, “The tone should be in our head. It should resonate everywhere.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocal Tone Concepts</strong></td>
<td>Like a string quartet. Williams never gives up until the desired tone is achieved</td>
<td>The Roldans let choristers experience rather than tell them what is happening. Breath management is important.</td>
<td>Phonopedic Method for Voice Development—developed by ENT doctors and Vocal Speech Pathologists. Also, with vowel shape and breath.</td>
<td>Develops how to focus their soul, their physical and their mental states. When kids own the process and want to be good, that is the critical moment of “Mental decidedness.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocal Tone Analogies</td>
<td>“Sing it with multiple ages.” “Sing it like a cockroach.” “Sing like a fifteen-year-old.” Can we be fifteen all the time because I like what you are doing with that!” For diphthongs keep vowels apart. Williams says that just like vegemite and ice cream do not work together, keep the vowels of the diphthong apart as these do not work together either!</td>
<td>The Roldans use a bottle with a balloon to demonstrate the diaphragm and a candle with a flame to demonstrate breath control. They ask singers to inhale through several hundred “noses” around their waists and to breathe as if they are smelling fragrant flowers. For posture, they should imagine a wire attached to the ceiling to keep their chests erect. Also, singers are challenged to be “exclamation points” rather than “question marks!”</td>
<td>Poloz uses a slinky and colors to elicit the desired tone. She uses the word “resonance” often and demonstrates varied tone colors while singing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” She also uses a dinosaur exercise from the Russian Phonopedic Method to teach appropriate vocal technique and colors.</td>
<td>To generate appropriate space in the mouth, singers think of an egg shape in the throat and a relaxed, hinged “rubber band” jaw. An imaginary string out of the top of the head helps singers to raise and broaden their chests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is Bodywork Approached in Terms of Singing?</td>
<td>Kids must hear it and feel it and not be lazy. No gestures are used to teach vowels.</td>
<td>Physical exercises, facial massages, large and small muscles, breathing exercises. A Yawn or quail egg (not a chicken egg) in the mouth encourages resonant space.</td>
<td>Kids feel the vibration in their bodies by placing a hand on the chest. They can also feel the difference between chest and head voice. Some kids swallow the sound or overdo when asked for more backspace in the mouth. Individual instruction is provided by the director once a year to understand how singers are doing vocally. Poloz does not like the word, “posture” but prefers “alignment.” She asks students to let the spaces in the body be open like an organ pipe and to vibrate from head to toes in a whole column of sound.</td>
<td>Index fingers, pointing vertically beside the mouth, help singers to drop jaw. They are encouraged to show their teeth when singing. The “most important” concept is that the tongue should be forward and not in the throat. A retracted tongue destroys the tone. The chin should not be jutted up in the air creating tension. Mouths should be open for the span of three fingers or five fingers according to Skopal. The chest should be open. Singers need to take deep breaths. Choristers sit on a backless bench for rehearsals. When singers were asked if this posture gets tiring, one said, “We are used to it! It’s important to sing like this. We can’t sing good unless we sit tall.”</td>
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<td>To generate appropriate space in the mouth, singers think of an egg shape in the throat and a relaxed, hinged “rubber band” jaw. An imaginary string out of the top of the head helps singers to raise and broaden their chests.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audio Resources Used?</strong></td>
<td>In the National Choral School, recordings are used due to the short time frame. Recordings are also used to demonstrate authentic choral sounds and language examples.</td>
<td>The Roldans themselves provide vocal modeling.</td>
<td>Poloz frequently demonstrates the right and wrong way of doing things.</td>
<td>Yes, but only on occasion to demonstrate technique. Teachers do vocal demonstrations most of the time.</td>
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<td>How Much Time is Allotted for Teaching Theory?</td>
<td>Every week for 30 minutes, but many in the advanced choirs have finished the theory program.</td>
<td>One hour out of two during the summer months for six to eight weeks</td>
<td>Training occurs throughout the rehearsal with older groups. Younger groups do 15 minutes.</td>
<td>Directors dedicate at least ten minutes for reading music in every rehearsal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is Literacy Developed?</td>
<td>Graded classes are implemented so that beginners do not give up. Ability groupings are important. Some time is given to literacy training in camps.</td>
<td>Basics are taught intentionally in the summer time. Jude Roldan writes music to instill needed pedagogical principles. “O Lord Hear My Prayer” was written to help children with breath control.</td>
<td>Literacy is developed throughout rehearsal. Choristers do analyses of chords and find key signatures. All rehearsal elements intertwine: voice training, sight-reading, repertoire, socialization, breath markings, and even use of tuning forks.</td>
<td>Skopal reads out of a book as choristers listen. He asks choristers to write down the most important concepts as he reads three times slowly. This process is repeated every year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musicianship</td>
<td>Mostly from the score</td>
<td>Mostly from the score. Rounds are taught by rote.</td>
<td>From the score</td>
<td>Rote learning is done with young choirs.</td>
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<td>Who Teaches Theory?</td>
<td>Director, Amandine listens to recordings that are sent in. Pianists and conductors help teach.</td>
<td>The Roldans, who are mostly Kodály-trained, provide theory training.</td>
<td>In training choirs, conductors, accompanists, and rehearsal assistants teach small group lessons for 15 minutes in each rehearsal. Illumini receives training throughout rehearsals. Theory classes are given at choir camp.</td>
<td>The directors of each choir provide lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Methodology for Teaching Theory is Used?</td>
<td>“Mark O’Leary Sight Singing On-line Training School” is encouraged, plus the Gondwana Choirs have their own graded program of four to five levels. Top levels do conducting as well as atonal and compositional activities.</td>
<td>Kodály, Orff, and Dalcroze but during the season, theory springs out of the music. The Roldans have also compiled “Groundwork for Part-Singing” to help Filipino singers learn to sing in parts. New song selections are learned on neutral syllables.</td>
<td>“Young Journey’s Theory Books” by Bartle, Baldwin, and Beaupre. The series is Kodály-based.</td>
<td>Tonální Metoda Píšťová na základní škole (Tonal Method at Elementary School Level) with Czech folk songs.Compiled by Skopal from eleventh-century practices.</td>
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<td>Is Practice Outside of Rehearsal Expected?</td>
<td>Yes. Specific tasks are requested like, memorization, or learn notes—whatever is needed.</td>
<td>Yes, 30 minutes, four times per week. Sometimes Guardian Angels practice together before or after rehearsals and on the phone. Older kids want to preserve the quality, so they work to ensure the new ones are staying up with the learning.</td>
<td>Yes, practice is expected outside of the rehearsal. Choristers do part work, memory work and theory homework. Also, students sometimes listen to video recordings of their own performance and analyze it.</td>
<td>The building is open for after school rehearsals whenever kids want to come and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Practice Tracks Provided?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, through a password-protected website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is Musicianship Practice Expected Outside of Rehearsal?</td>
<td>Yes, kids do workbooks at home. Theory is mostly on their own but checked by staff and volunteers.</td>
<td>The Guardian Angel mentoring program pairs experienced choristers with newer choristers to assist with musicianship training.</td>
<td>Theory homework is expected.</td>
<td>Practice is chorister initiated but exams occur twice a month to determine chorister “ranking.” Highest ranked singers get to go on tour.</td>
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<td>Where is New Repertoire Located?</td>
<td>Many commissions of composers. Williams also composes or inspires creativity within standard repertoire. Also, from YouTube.</td>
<td>Jude composes new selections. Conducting students from Theresa’s college class (Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music) teach classic works.</td>
<td>From Poloz’ travels to other countries. She looks at every piece good choirsing (i.e., Gondwana Voices, Carmina Slovenica).</td>
<td>Contemporary Czech composers provide music for Jitro all the time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are Printed Octavos Obtained?</td>
<td>Australian Music Centre or directly from the composers</td>
<td>ISMLP and CPDL. The directors compose music with Finale.</td>
<td>Everywhere</td>
<td>Lots of photocopied materials exist because Skopal has composer permissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Composer?</td>
<td>Dan Walker, Sally Whitwell, Paul Stanhope, Paul Jarman, Luke Byrne, Alice Chance, Ella Macens, Ben van Tienen, Stephen Leek, Ross Edwards, Felix Riebl</td>
<td>Jude writes for the choir most often—six to eight new pieces per year. Theresa arranges Filipino folk songs. Jude also arranges pop songs like “One Thing” by One Direction.</td>
<td>Some alums compose.</td>
<td>Jan Jirásek who was a student of Skopal’s and Peter Eben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Regularly Are New Works Done?</td>
<td>About eight commissioned works per year</td>
<td>Six to eight each year</td>
<td>When and if grants are secured</td>
<td>Each year. Some works are as lengthy as 20 to 45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>What Are Distinctive Pieces?</td>
<td>“Spinifex Gum” by Indigenous Choir</td>
<td>Filipino folk songs and sacred works: “Orde-e” and “Da Kami Ay Anan-ak,” “O Sanctissima,” “Ampeu Shelo Heo” by James Swu (a friend from Nagaland, India) is a longtime favorite. “Sanctus,” by Jude Roldan, Pin Pin de Sarapin” by Jude Roldan “A Child’s Prayer” by Jude Roldan has been sung since 1999, and “A Song of Blessing” by Jude Roldan ends the concerts.</td>
<td>“Stabat Mater” by Pergolesi “Geistliches Lied” by Brahms, “Noel des Enfants” by Debussy, “Eternity” by Michael Bojesen, “Dobbin’s Flowery Vale” by Rajaton, “Pakkanen” by Rajaton, “Magnificat” by Christine Donkin, “Wau Bulan” by Tracy Wong, “La Belle Se Promène” by Meghan Quinlan, “Dream a Dream” by Robertson. Also, some good pop arrangements like “Wavin’ Flag,” and “Titanium” by alums</td>
<td>Songs are done from all around the world such as “Hymn to Freedom,” “I’m Goin’ Up a Yonder,” and “The Old Chisholm Trail” for Americans. “Friendship is Like a Golden Gate” is a canon done with young children. “Hoj, Hura, Hoj” by Otmar Mácha is a signature piece.</td>
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**Performance Practice**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Many Pieces Are Learned for Each Season?</th>
<th>GICC learned 75 minutes of music in “Spinifex Gum.”</th>
<th>Maybe 15 new ones along with the old ones</th>
<th>One hour and thirty minutes worth of music</th>
<th>To join Jitro, choristers must have thirty pieces already memorized. New repertoire is added each year.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Memorization Required?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, except for an occasional festival</td>
<td>Yes, because music is a “wall between singers and audience.” Zimfira often does not use music.</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Williams (Australia)</td>
<td>Roldans (Philippines)</td>
<td>Poloz (Canada)</td>
<td>Skopal (Czech Republic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How Often Do You Repeat Repertoire?</td>
<td>GICC will tour the “show.” Every few years new works will repeat with younger choirs when it is good repertoire.</td>
<td>Frequently in the Mass</td>
<td>Newer repertoire is repeated and introduced to younger singers who join.</td>
<td>Some have been in the repertory for as long as 40 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you perform A cappella?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, about half of the repertoire in any season is a cappella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Deportment Expectations</td>
<td>Watch each other that so entrances are together. Singers need to know when to do their part with symphony collaborations.</td>
<td>Proper posture. No talking when getting ready to perform. Maintain eye contact with the conductor.</td>
<td>All energy directed to the music. Poloz shows YouTube clips of choirs where one or two students are not looking or doing the right thing to convince kids of the importance of uniformity.</td>
<td>No scratching. Hair must be pulled back. Walk with confidence—like stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments Used as Accompaniment</td>
<td>Piano, chimes, cello, timpani, symphony orchestra, percussion ensembles, chamber ensembles, etc.</td>
<td>Mostly piano and Filipino percussion instruments</td>
<td>Piano, percussion ensemble, string quartet, orchestra, and brass quintet. Whatever is needed.</td>
<td>Mostly piano played by Michal Chrobák. Also, percussion instruments, orchestra, Orff instruments, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Williams (Australia)</td>
<td>Roldans (Philippines)</td>
<td>Poloz (Canada)</td>
<td>Skopal (Czech Republic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is Choreography Utilized?</td>
<td>GICC does choreography</td>
<td>Not in the Mass, but with the Filipino folksongs.</td>
<td>The face is more important than the choreography. Sincere expressions brings authentic performances. “Soundography” should change the acoustic but not be a movement distraction. Poloz asks for “more eyes and connection with the audience on a deeper level than an empty body, empty eyes, and doing crazy choreography.”</td>
<td>Acting occurs in “Gorale” that is a “fight” between two men over a girl. The composer wrote the action and choreography into the score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is Choreography Used?</td>
<td>When the song calls for it.</td>
<td>When the song calls for it.</td>
<td>When the song calls for it.</td>
<td>When the song calls for it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who Teaches Choreography?</td>
<td>Professional dancers</td>
<td>Sometimes the kids will make up the choreography. Sometimes the directors, but to be authentic, mostly someone from the provinces.</td>
<td>Combination of Polo, YouTube and professionals. Polo helps professionals simplify movements so that the sound is heard from different angles.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Williams (Australia)</th>
<th>Roldans (Philippines)</th>
<th>Poloz (Canada)</th>
<th>Skopal (Czech Republic)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are Recordings Available for the Public?</td>
<td>The Gondwana Choirs used to provide CDs. Now YouTube and livestream recordings are offered to the public for free.</td>
<td>A few CD’s. Some YouTube clips exist as well.</td>
<td>A few CD’s are available and online videos exist</td>
<td>Thirty-six CD’s. Also, <em>Hana wa Saku</em> (Flowers Will Bloom) is on YouTube.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Attire</td>
<td>Gender neutral shirts, nicknamed “silkies,” in rich shades of blue, black, navy and aqua. Black pants with jazz shoes to facilitate movement. The outfit has been utilized since early 2000. Some people criticize the uniform for appearing too “Chinese.”</td>
<td>Black shoes, black socks, hair pulled back in ponytail. No earrings. Uniforms are a design of various ethnic groups, but all are cut according to the national costume design. The style stays mostly the same, but colors change.</td>
<td>Gold shirts with black pants for girls. All black for boys. Alternate uniform for girls a is sleeveless black shirt with colorful scarves for girl. Poloz discourages hair coloring.</td>
<td>Red skirt, red vest, white blouse and white shoes. The necktie is nicknamed a “fishy.” The traditional folk uniform has long skirts, fitted vests, and shirts with puffy sleeves. Hair is to be worn in braids and fastened with red ribbons.</td>
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Appendix 2: Interview with Lyn Williams
Director of the Sydney Children’s Choir
June 16, 2018

Janet Hostetter: I notice that you refer to parts as “A,” “B” and “C” rather than “Part 1,” “Part 2,” and “Part 3.”

Lyn Williams: It’s because to avoid confusion with treble music often in four parts, so we have the usual, “Sop.1,” “Sop. 2,” “Alto 1,” “Alto 2.” But then so that there is not confusion, you know, “You’re Sop. 1 in this one and then Sop. 2 in that one,” so when there are three parts it’s “A,” “B,” “C,” and when it’s four parts we refer to “S1,” “S2,” “Alto 1,” “Alto 2.” And when it’s like eight parts, we still keep those “S1,” “S2,” but when it’s six parts, we’ll keep “A,” “B,” “C,” and subdivisions of that. Does that make sense? So, it depends whether there are subdivisions of three or four.

JH: Okay, right! Well, I would hear that, and I wasn’t sure what that…

LW: It’s to avoid confusion between three and four parts basically.

JH: Very good. Okay! Good! Remember when you were telling me about the tragic [event] with the foster children?

LW: Yes.

JH: What was the song that you said was just beautiful, that you sang, that you can’t do anymore?


JH: “Dreaming in the Sky.” I wanted to look that up.

JH: The use of your “E” vowel is the most striking difference that I hear between our performance practices. Your “E” vowels are beautiful, and I even noticed that you used it to tune at one point.

LW: I use it to tune a lot! Australian children—I don’t know what applies to American children because our vowels are really quite different—but Australian children will sing “E” vowel in tune the most easily and because it’s a brighter vowel and it’s easier to sing bright vowels in tune. So, if the vowel of whatever it is, is on an “AH” it also helps them to hear that when they sing a different vowel, unless they make adjustments to the vowel, it will not be in tune. If they just sing a straight vowel with the same sort of mechanism and the same expectations that they do on an “E,” it will be flat—if it’s a dark vowel. Another way of demonstrating this is, if you whisper “EE, AW, OO, AH” and you get them to whisper that over again, so you go, (whispered) “EE, AW, OO, AH” and they
I can hear that the pitch is changing, so they can understand that “AH” is a lower vowel, so then they know that they need to make adjustments. Does that make sense? So that’s why I use “EE” to tune a lot!

JH: Is that your own discovery?

LW: Yeah!

JH: We tend to use “OO” more. What is your thought about the “OO” vowel for tuning?

LW: Yes, I do that as well, but the contrast is not so stark, because “OO” is darker than “EE,” so, therefore, it is harder. I find it easier to tune on an “EE” —well, for Australians you know! That’s the thing! You’ve just got to keep pushing those buttons until you find the ones that work for you!

JH: Yeah! We bring the lips forward for “EE” because otherwise, we sound like country hicks when we sing “EE” really bright. It’s the most difficult vowel for us to do.

LW: Yep, us as well, which is why I was using the rubber band with the little ones yesterday and that seemed to fix it immediately. They suddenly understood.

JH: You used the rubber band?

LW: To show that they were going “EE” (spread wide) this way rather than giving full space that way (open vertically).

JH: I like the rubber band analogy. That’s great!

JH: Do you voice your choir?

LW: Yes.

JH: Talk about that. How you do it, and when you do it?

LW: It’s a bit mysterious. I keep changing it. It’s so much easier at National Choral School because you have the kids there all day, every day, and you have them there for the whole two weeks, and you know exactly who you’ve got. Whereas you know what’s like in a weekly choir. How often do you have them all together? Virtually never! So, it’s really hard to do. There is no actual principle, except that what I’ll try and do is find a core of the sound. So, there will be some key voices, and I will try and get a sound which really rings with those voices, and then I’ll strategically place the others around. So that’s pretty much the basis of it, but there’s no 100% formula. Sometimes there are just two voices that way that work better than the other way. You don’t really know why. But the kids listen.
JH: I do that as well. I’ve noticed in my work that different directors do it differently. You have such a beautiful blend. I was pretty sure you did do that.

LW: Yes, and I do it. You have probably noticed me changing a few voices around—Will you switch with so-and-so?—that all has to do with that.

JH: Yes. The other thing I was curious about, because they did so well, but I never saw you practice bowing. Is it because they were so far along in their season that they didn’t need that? Like even in the concert hall, they did bow, but I never saw it rehearsed.

LW: We did the one at the end of “Las Amarillas.” We rehearsed that. They have barely done any performance this great this year. Just the way it has worked out, I suppose. We had a couple of concerts that were canceled because the people canceled them. So, we’d barely done any, but they’ve had a lot of performance experience in the past. So, I don’t know, I guess it’s the training of the professionalism from the earliest age all the way through. We are just going to be building that expectation that we are going to stand really still and it just sort of builds from there. And it wasn’t so much in this concert that we did the other day, but you know when we develop a touring program and things, they pretty much—a lot of it they just run it themselves. So, they do all of the bows. They do all the shuffling around. Also, in this program, we tended to be standing a lot in the same places, wherein a normal program, you know, it will be a different position in practically every song. They’ll move around a lot. Yeah, so it’s all part of that.

JH: Oh wow! So, in that space, you would normally move around more?

LW: In that space, we have at times done a lot of different things and sort of multi-media things.

JH: That sounds really cool.

LW: Yeah, for instance, we had one, which actually got made into a video installation base. We’ve done a few different versions of it, but originally as a performance piece. It was a thing about the stories of some of the ancestors of basically the kids in the choir. So, we picked various stories out in the choir. They illustrated them, and then we used these big screens and everything and they sung [sic] them. So, the first one we did—one of them had been a prisoner of war in the Second World War and had escaped. So, there was that story, and you can imagine, a full range of stories that any group would have. But on the floor in front of them, they had these really neat little white boxes, and at a certain point in the piece, they all picked up these white boxes. Well, oh no, the first child picked it up and opened the box and clicked on a little light inside and they had made these dioramas of their own personal story. Then gradually they all went out into the audience, and we chose a mode that they composed all their own pieces. They sang. They showed their little dioramas—like a little theatrical thing—to the audience and sang their own story. So, basically everyone in the audience had a story sung to them and then it all sort of coalesced into one and they sung [sic] it. And we made it into a video thing. So, we recorded the kids all singing their stories, and they had the dioramas, and it was a live
installation where they would go on and off these screens, and eventually it all came into one piece and you could walk in amongst the screens and hear, you know, like the second sopranos singing or the…and they would all sing this thing together after... It is pretty hard to describe.

JH: Brilliance!

LW: Yeah, it was beautiful.

JH: I thought about this at the concert: you do a really fantastic job of connecting with the people. That’s an important element. You can teach your kids all kinds of songs but you also have to make them relevant to your audience, and I think you’re very thoughtful about that and do an extraordinary job.

LW: Oh, thank you!

JH: It was really good. Do you have head choristers?

LW: No.

JH: I saw some kids taking over…

LW: Yep, they do that. As far as I’m concerned, leaders emerge. They don’t get appointed.

JH: Ok! I love that.

LW: So, they work it out amongst themselves. And you know how we send them off to do those sectional rehearsals and things? I never say, “You’re in charge.” So, someone will play the piano and another one will, you know, conduct. Then they just figure it out. And you know, I knew I had it right when we were coming to the end of the season one year, and I walked into a sectional and the kids who had been, sort of, leaders were stepping back and letting… They were doing succession planning without anybody ever telling them there was such a thing. They were teaching the younger ones. They were saying, “Now you do it. We’ll just step in and help you when you need it.” It was just so cute.

JH: (Laughing) That’s wonderful! I love that level of trust.

LW: But it transfers into their performance because it is not my responsibility if they don’t know the notes. It’s theirs, and they know that.

JH: Do you say that to them?

LW: No. I don’t say that. They just know that because they have to learn the notes and they come back, and you know, if there is something wrong, they will say, “Oh I think
we are getting the rhythm wrong. Can we just fix “X” or can we just go over that bit because we haven’t quite all got it?” It’s very different because I grew up as an orchestral conductor as well, and the culture in the orchestra is to catch the conductor out. I was determined that the culture in my organization would be that we are working together. So, therefore, you’re not catching the conductor out. You are saying, “Can we fix that? I am trying to contribute.” And even if they sometimes will say, “Oh I think this rhythm is wrong” or that I might be getting it wrong, they’ll say, “Lyn shouldn’t that rhythm be such and such?” And sometimes they are not right, but that’s okay. I will still say, “Thank you for pointing that out.” And we’ll agree that it is actually meant to be. So, I am not going to say, “How dare you question my musicianship,” because supposedly the child’s purpose is to improve the performance and that’s what matters!

JH: I love that you are all about their development. That comes through, and you’re not threatened. It’s refreshing! I have heard you say to the kids in rehearsals fairly often, “Do you agree? Or “Can we agree with that?” You are including the kids in the artistry as well.

LW: Oh yeah! You have to recognize their artistry, and they are! You let them be!

JH: Now I am going to get to the bulk of the interview. For the first part last night, I went through your website and tried to answer my own questions. So now I will just make sure these are correct.

LW: Okay.

JH: So, the program has been in existence for 30 years in 2019.

LW: Yes.

JH: Your mission statement is “To engage in the practice and performance of choral music at the highest level, allowing young people to reach their full potential.” Still?

LW: Yes.

JH: And you have a handbook. I love your handbook by the way! It’s beautiful! I love the pictures—the one on the website.

LW: I hope! I haven’t looked at that for a while (chuckles) but yep! Good!

JH: Do you update that every year?

LW: Yes.

JH: I copied out of there. You have Mini Singers - year 1 & 2, Junior Training Choirs - year 3, Intermediate Training Choirs which is 4, 5, 6 and it looked like you have three groups in the Junior Training Choirs. You had Paul Jarman…
LW: Yes, so they’re named after Australian composers.

JH: Oh okay! That’s so cool! Okay, so those are not the directors then?

LW: No.

JH: I saw Sally Whitwell in here, so I thought maybe she actually did one of the intermediate groups.

LW: She did it one time, but she doesn’t anymore. But it’s named after her given that she is a composer that we’ve worked with.

JH: Very cool. So, there would be three Junior Choirs and then five Intermediate Training Choirs and then an Advanced Training Choir?

LW: Yes.

JH: Just one of those?

LW: Yes, just one of those.

JH: And do you do that one—the Advanced Training Choir?

LW: No, I just do the Junior Performing Choir. It’s the same age group. So Junior Performing Choir is years 5-8.


LW: Oh, they might suddenly be talking about ages. I think they’re ages as opposed to… suddenly they were years up here, and now they are ages. That’s inconsistent. I will have to make sure they fix that. So yeah, it’s sort of school years 5-8.

JH: Okay. How many children are involved in each group? I saw that overall you have about 500!

LW: Yes.

JH: But you have about 50-ish in the JPC’s, 50-ish in the Sydney Children’s Choir, and then upper 20’s in the Young Men’s Performing Choir. And so, everybody else in your 500 would be in the younger groups.

LW: Yes.

JH: Okay, and so I think this is probably accurate: Your Mini’s rehearse once a week for 45 minutes; your Juniors, once a week for 60; Intermediate, once a week for 90…
LW: Yes, and so on.

JH: You have your choirs’ performance schedule in the handbook. I think that’s good. The thing I noticed, you don’t have policies in there…

LW: We do have policies! I think they are on there because Bernie was talking about them the other day. We have loads and loads of working with children and all that sort of thing. Masses of them!

JH: Okay. Well, in the handbook itself, I didn’t see any policies.

LW: Oh no, it’s not in the handbook, but it’s somewhere on the website. I’m not sure where.

JH: Okay, I will look that up. I saw where you rehearse. I saw that there were about 14 artistic staff and 13 administrative staff with some crossover. We talked about the funding of your organization which I put, “tickets, tuitions, and donations.” Right?

LW: Of the full organization, so not just Sydney Children’s Choir, yeah, there’s tickets, there’s tuition is probably the biggest one for the Sydney Children’s Choir, but not obviously for the Indigenous Children’s Choir. And then we have some government funding. So, we get some state government funding, and for some of our indigenous programs, we get some federal funding. We lost our other federal funding. Then we have a major sponsor, currently have a major sponsor of the Indigenous Choir. And then sort of smaller foundations amounts from various foundations and things and yeah, private philanthropy. So, sort of non-tuition and non-tickets amounts to about a million dollars a year I think. So, the donations and the one million that’s in sponsorship, or in all development I mean.

JH: That’s awesome! How many years did it take you to develop that side of the business?

LW: It took a while, and we didn’t get it quite right initially. We were spending more on development than we were getting for a while, which was not good until I said in the Board meeting one day, “Actually if you look at this, we are spending more on this salary than we are actually making.” (Laughter)….or these salaries because it kept growing. It was like if we get more people in, we’ll be better at this, but that’s not the case. You’ve just got to get the right person.

JH: How did you rectify that then?

LW: Well, you know, getting a good general manager, now executive director. She’s good at that. She’s good at organizing it and getting the people to do it.
JH: I know that’s a dance. All right, so the next question was “What is the administrative structure of your organization?” So, I knew that there was a seven-member Board that would operate over you, but you are on the Board.

LW: No, I am on the Board.

JH: I know you are on the Board. But you are head of the artistic and administrative staff or not?

LW: No, so we are equal. So, myself and the executive director are equal except that I am a little bit more equal. The Board has a view that given that I am the founder, I have a special role. When I leave or get hit by a bus or whatever, and they get another artistic director in, that person may not be on the Board depending on what happens. It’s not a permanent thing that the artistic director will be on the Board but given that I have been there since the start…

JH: Is your executive director—I know I met her, but I cannot remember her name—

LW: Bernie, Bernie Heard.

JH: Bernie. Does she have music background at all?

LW: Yes, she is a trained music teacher and then she’s been working in administration for quite some time now. So, she came to us from the Sydney Youth Orchestra.

JH: Wow. All right, this question I think I asked you, but I don’t have a firm grasp. How do you actually recruit for your ensemble? I also saw your beautiful [clips]! It was so fun to look at the clips that talk about Sydney Children’s Choir. And I was like, “Oh yeah, I saw Sebastian!” and “Oh! There’s Jane!” (Laughter) It was really fun to look at and say, “We know these people! It’s not just something out there.” What else do you do besides website recruitment?

LW: We have bring-a-friend day for the little ones, which you probably do as well.

JH: We do.

LW: So that, and a lot of it is word-of-mouth to tell you the truth. You know, we have those recruitment drives, but I am not sure at the end of the year, because we do most of our auditions in December or late November for the next academic year which starts in February. Yeah, just sort of word of mouth.

JH: What about the National Choirs?

LW: Yes! So, for the National Choirs, we are just preparing all of that at the moment. So, we send out material. So, we do quite a big online thing. So, obviously the online social media thing has grown enormously over the past few years which is why the little
videos, where they come in handy. We send out things to a lot of schools that we’ve had kids from before in the past. And a lot of music teachers around the country and social media and a bit of other media, you know, radio, things around the place. Yeah, that’s pretty much it for those. And then Cairns Choir.

JH: What choir?

LW: The Cairns Choir, the indigenous choir in Cairns. We have workshops where kids can come and give it a go because they often have no idea what it means. Yeah, same sort of thing really.

JH: Do you get word out through the kids that are already in it?

LW: Indigenous media are up there and indigenous radio and local radio. It’s much easier to get radio.

JH: Does the public-school work with you in doing workshops?

LW: The school up there does. So, we have our rehearsals at Cairns State High and the principal there could not be more supportive.

JH: Aw! That’s wonderful!

LW: He’s fantastic, and he just can’t believe…He writes the most…He is our best person for writing support letters, because he writes that, you know, this is what Queens Anne government says needs to be happening and look what these people manage to do with these kids! So, it’s good! Yeah, it’s great! We couldn’t do it without him!

JH: Would you say that the average length of membership is four to six years?

LW: Probably. Yes.

JH: Do you have an alumni program?

LW: We do, but it’s not fully fledged. Like we know it can improve.

JH: Can you describe what it’s like now?

LW: Well, it isn’t really a program, put it that way, at the moment. It sort of keeps being talked about, but nothing much happens. But every now and again we have the alumni come back and do things like for big concerts and things, but we don’t sort of sustain it. We do something, and then we won’t do anything for another year or so. It’s just not been a focus yet, but we all know it needs to be. (Chuckles)

JH: Because they can be your biggest advocates!

LW: Yes, right!
JH: All right, your performance schedule. I talked to some kids Thursday, and they said you usually do about three main concerts. Christmas is the one you end on, the season before the National Choirs and then you do two more throughout the year.

LW: Yes, and then whatever we are doing with the Symphony or any other collaborations that we are doing.

JH: Okay, plus collaborations. How many would you say you do a year typically?

LW: Um, oh and commercial events. You know, commercial events from time to time, although they seem to be dropping off.

JH: Now what is a commercial event?

LW: So, well, it will be a big conference. Like a conference will come to Sydney, and they will want a children’s choir to perform. But interestingly, that has dropped off in the last couple of years. Children’s choirs were quite fashionable for a while, but they are not “in” at the moment I think. *(Laughs)* So we have to make ourselves more relevant again! So, that’s okay, we’ll get there! So, I don’t know! It’s really up and down with the things with the Symphony. So sometimes we’ll do Mahler 3, and there will be four performances, and then there will be another one during the year that will be like Berlioz’s “Te Deum” or something, and we’ll do that as well, but actually the last couple of years there hasn’t been much of that going on there either, and it’s tricky because they bring us revenue as well as being amazing opportunities, but we have no control over whether they happen or not.

JH: Do parents seem to be flexible and willing to do those things at the last minute? Or maybe not the last minute…

LW: Yes, they do. It can be quite demanding, because obviously if you have four performances then, you know there will be three rehearsal nights beforehand, so it’s big for a small ten-year-old to get in and do all of that.

JH: Do you make that mandatory? How do you do that?

LW: Pretty much. Well, not mandatory. You know, it’s part of being in the choir, so you are expected to do it. It’s such a great experience that they want to do it. They love it. They absolutely love it! And also, we have an association with Opera Australia. So, for instance, two of their operas next year and two of their operas last year, they said, “Can you just provide the children’s chorus?” And we train them, and we do all the judiant (?) care. They pay the kids, but it’s just easier that they all come from our choir. They use it as a guarantee of quality because they can audition kids and they get good kids but they are not used to singing in a choir, so if they want something that sounds really good, they will come to us.

JH: That’s great! How often do the Indigenous Choirs perform?
LW: A lot more. Well, the Cairns one, I’m talking about.

JH: Where is the other one located?

LW: In western Sydney, but it’s more a training sort of group. It operates at a very different level. So, the Indigenous Choir is busier because… I don’t know why. Well, because we are doing “Spinifex Gum” as well as our own program of activities, which doesn’t involve everyone in the choir up there, but also, we do big sort of local government events up there. We sort of get asked to do performances up there on a reasonably regular basis.

JH: So, do you go to all of those?

LW: No, I don’t go to all of them. I go to a lot of them, but I don’t go to all of them. And my fabulous colleague, Lauren, does a lot of that.

JH: That’s wonderful. And the National Choirs, they do an intensive two-week rehearsal.

LW: Yes, and we have a season at the end, a festival season, for Festival of Summer Voices that comes at the end of that intensive two weeks. So, we’ll do a big concert on the Wednesday night and another one on the Thursday night with our sort of elective things, and then we’ll have like a guest, something or other on the Friday, and then on the Saturday, we’ll do another big concert. So, they have a whole season of performances, which is good.

JH: Yeah. All right! So, we use the word, “mandatory.” I inherited that word too. All concerts mandatory! But you’re just saying, “expected.” You don’t have policy language around concerts?

LW: Well, we do. We make it clear when they really don’t have to feel as though they have to do it. So, say have—we had a charity event the other day for a group that picks up food from supermarkets, restaurants, and things that don’t use it anymore. Like sort of out of date.

JH: Leftover food.

LW: Yeah, leftover food. So, they had a big event for one of those things, and the kids were asked if they wanted to do it, and we don’t put any pressure on them to do it, but a lot of them will come along. So, whereas something like last Thursday [concert], there is a heavy expectation that they will be involved because it’s…

JH: It’s your big concert.

LW: Yeah, it’s a big thing for us!

JH: All right, but if somebody misses, would any consequence happen?
LW: No.

JH: They just probably don’t miss very often?

LW: No, but sometimes they go away or, you know, there are all sorts of things that can happen. And especially at the end of the year when we have Voices of Angels, our Christmas Concert, it falls right on the week where… When you leave primary school here, it’s a big deal at the end of year six. And they use six farewells, and that’s the celebration that they hold, end of their primary school. It’s like their graduation from primary school. So, it might fall on one of our concert nights. And we can’t…like we’ll have two concerts, like the other night, only that there’s two in a row.

JH: Sure.

LW: And if it’s their year six farewell or there’s an awards night at school or something, we can’t tell them that they can’t go to that, so well, you know, we work around it. We just deal with it. Yep.

JH: Yeah. So, I am going to just ask, I have a kid, I just found out, that auditioned, who is so excited to be in the choir but can’t come to our Christmas concert, and in the past, the policy I inherited, is that he should not be in for the semester. Would you make that call?

LW: Um.

JH: …if that happened, because that is the main concert for the semester?

LW: I know, but the thing is, it’s as much about training as it is about the actual performance. So, if you want that child next year, and you know, if that child is in but doesn’t do the concert, at least they’ve had six months training that they won’t get if you don’t, you know. If you know now and can work around it, you’re not relying on that child for the balance of the parts and everything. You’re lucky to know, and it’s great that they’ve told you. But you know, obviously it’s preferable if they do perform, but sometimes...

JH: Well, it was a grandparent trip, so what do you do? Now I know that you tour. I saw that you have been to Europe ten times.

LW: (Chuckles)

JH: And China, Japan, the Baltic States. Do you try to plan tours periodically? How often?

LW: We do because they are so valuable in building the skills of the kids. They love them. They absolutely love them, and so you have to do it.
JH: So how often do you try to do it?

LW: Well, it’s really hard. We’ve sort of shot ourselves in the foot by developing all these choirs because we have all these choirs that we need to tour with now.

JH: *(Laughter)* You’ve created a monster!

LW: Yeah that’s right! So, there’s a bit of an overlap. So, last year our Baltic tour was a mixture of Sydney Children’s Choir and Gondwana Voices, the National Choir which worked well. But you know, tricky to negotiate.

JH: Did they learn the same repertoire then and perform together?

LW: Yep.

JH: And is this the type of thing where it is very optional?

LW: Yes, because you cannot make kids pay $6000.

JH: Okay. That’s what I was going to ask, and is it fully funded by the students? The tours?

LW: That is, Indigenous Choir, when we took them to Europe to last year, no. We got funding for the entire thing.

JH: That’s amazing!

LW: So yeah, we raised a lot of money.

JH: How did you do that?

LW: A mixture. You know, the same mix as before but just specifically targeted at making this whole collaborative project [happen]. And we saw it as a complete package of, the tour was a part of it, but then when Vienna Boys—we actually had to pay the Vienna Boys to come out here—and…

JH: That would have been so expensive!

LW: And it was expensive! And then we had to hire the upper half. And it was all part of the whole thing. So, it was hundreds of thousands of dollars.

JH: Oh, my goodness! How do you do it?

LW: Well, I don’t do that part of it.

JH: Okay. Well, I was going to say…
JH: All right. Well, we’re going into pedagogical stuff, which is my passion. So, can you describe your approach to teaching great vocal tone? I feel like I inherited your teaching this week.

LW: Right!

JH: But I didn’t see it so much. They were “baked” already. So, how do you start the process? What do you do?

LW: Oh gosh! I find this question very hard to answer. Because I come from an instrumental background. And, you know, I think I’ve told you about my biggest influence in the early days, being the director of the Tapiola choir, and he was also an instrumentalist. And he said that he used to see the choir as being like a string quartet. He was fine-tuning the string quartet. And I do the same. I’ve just keep testing out new things. And now with Sydney Children’s Choir…you’ll be interested when you go to Cairns, and it will probably be way more chaotic, but you’ve just got to run with it in terms of—and up there I have Lauren who is a singing teacher, so she’s great, but actually you will see how different the sound is, and it’s actually a lot more powerful, but it communicates so well. Unfortunately, if people hear the two choirs on the same program, everyone will say, “I just love listening to the Indigenous Choir.” Which is a bit sad for the Sydney Children’s Choir, because I think they also do sound pretty good! (Laughter)

JH: Do they know that or is that a well-kept secret?

LW: No, don’t tell them! (Laughter) But it’s interesting! But you’ll see it is very different. So, with the Sydney Children’s Choir, I always go for an absolute purity of tone and to get ringing, clear, vowel sounds. As far as I am concerned, that is how tone is created, so that’s what we work towards. And the trick is that they can hear it. If they can’t hear it, well, then it’s a losing battle. If they can feel it and hear it—the same goes for intonation. You know, they sometimes get lazy, and they stop listening, but actually, they can hear intonation, the same way they can hear tone. You will have noticed that I am very insistent, and I don’t give up on things and so then neither do they. It just becomes sort of a self-fulfilling thing in that they jump on board with it because they love it. They know when it’s right and they know it’s good and it’s so much more satisfying when it’s good! You know all kids like to do things well. All humans like to do things well. There’s so much mediocrity in the world, so we keep away from that as much as we can.

JH: You are speaking our language!

LW: But always with joy!

JH: Yeah! It brings joy once you have done that work, but there is a layer of work to get there. So, can you give me some verbiage—I mean I have heard some of it. You gave me
some just now. You said, “ringing.” You said, “purity of tone, clear vowels.” What would you do with a beginning chorister? Do you have any tricks that you use?

LW: Ah, it’s— a lot of it— You see the Junior Performing Choir coming to [sing] with the Senior Performing Choir, and they go… (eyes wide open!)

JH: Yes!

LW: …okay! That’s what I am trying to do! And then they just do it. So, a lot of it’s just hearing it. So, once you’ve got it, it sort of spreads! But I do a lot, just even with simple little things. And you probably do this too, but I will get them to—say Junior Performing Choir is probably a better example because they are still creating that sound, and they haven’t got it consistently that you can keep coming back to it. So, with them I will do things like, I’ll say, “Sing it like a three-year-old,” or “Sing it like a cockroach,” or I’ll use ages. “Now sing it like a ten-year-old. Now sing it like a fifteen-year-old,” and it just does its own thing. They’ll give it more roundness and maturity. And I say actually, “Can we be fifteen all the time because I like what you are doing with that!”

JH: Even if they’re ten, right?

LW: Yeah! They love it! They love being fifteen if they’re ten. I mean, there are little things like that, as well as then, you know, showing them how the vowels would work.

JH: Do you have a certain gesture for each vowel?

LW: No.

JH: Okay I know some directors do.

LW: Yes.

JH: All right, so the ideal vocal tone is…fill in the blank!

LW: Oh, it’s the same thing. It’s one where all the vowels are aligned with each other and where they ring in tune. So, it’s a linear as well as a vertical tuning. So, it has to be tuned vertically and horizontally, and then it will ring.

JH: That’s awesome. I love it. So, you try to get everyone to sing “ee” and “oh” the same way?

LW: Yep. Which is hard in English. We chose a really rotten language.

JH: I didn’t hear you talk about diphthongs at all. Maybe Australians don’t have them like we do.
LW: We do. We do, and we do talk about them but probably haven’t in the last week. It’s very different to when you are doing the beginning of an exact process. And also, I’ll talk about them a lot more with the Junior Performing Choir because they haven’t gotten it yet. And I’ll say to them things like—you know when I’m talking about where you can blend the sound—I’ll say to them, “It’s like you’ve got ice cream here,”—I use flavors quite a lot—“ice cream, and here you’ve got Vegemite. You do not want to mix those!”

JH: And here you have what?

LW: Vegemite. You know that spread that we put on our toast.

JH: Oh, okay. We don’t have that.

LW: It’s like a yeast salty spread thing. You would never put it on ice cream. Like EUCH! You’ve got to keep them apart. Don’t merge them in the middle. So, I’m quite big on flavors when it comes to diphthongs.

JH: (Chuckles) I love that, which was perfect! It [the question] was, “What analogies do you use to describe?” Do you have any other cute stuff like that?

LW: Yeah, you could use colors as well. Like the changing color of the vowel there. I probably have a lot more. I don’t know. I make analogies all the time on the spot.

JH: That’s the problem with you gifted conductors.

LW: Well, I don’t have—I notice that we get clinicians from say, American clinicians and it’s great because they have this whole toolkit. It’s like they bring it out, “Here’s my toolkit. This is what we do!” And people lap it up. They love it! They love being told and given all these warm-ups and all these things. But it’s just not the way I operate. I just operate in the moment, on the spot. So, I don’t necessarily have, “this is what I do for this, and this is what I do for this.” I haven’t worked it out like that. I work it out to, “This is what I am hearing now. What can I bring to this moment right now which is going to fix this problem?”

JH: Do you know Rene Clausen?

LW: Of him.

JH: I went to South Dakota years ago and sat in his rehearsals. It was a teacher training thing, but he decided to have us involved in the Brahms Requiem. That man—it was like you—his analogies just spilled out of him, and I was writing them down. When I got to about 25 of them, I was like, “Does he sit down and think these through? I mean I would have to!” So, I went up to him, and I said, “Rene, do you think these out ahead of time?” He said, “No, they just come to me.” But they were brilliant, and I still remember them probably 20 years later…
LW: Wow.

JH: …because they were so striking, and they did the job. They got the extra emotion, the extra power. So, anyway, that’s been something I aspire to. I don’t know that I am as prolific as he was. He was…

LW: He sounds amazing, yeah!

JH: But he said, “What I DO do, I know my score inside and out. So, that’s what I study.” But then he doesn’t have a plan [for analogies]. Like you, he goes in and what he hears, is what he responds to.

LW: Well, you’ve got to know what you want. And I find that we have a lot of children’s choir conductors, in particular, they think that the sound they get is what they’ve got. They think that’s it already. And I think it’s the difference between accepting what you’ve got and actually hearing what you want in your head. And I’ve noticed it in conducting workshops that I might do. You get a conductor that stands up, and you can tell by the way they conduct that they actually haven’t got a concept of how they want it to sound.

JH: Yeah, that’s critical— ahead of time. So, how much time do you spend—I know it’s a rotten question—how much time do you spend just thinking about this program, the program [concert] you did Thursday?

LW: I spent quite a lot of time thinking about that program from last year and just what—how to build the program and how to make it into something. So, for instance, I had chosen the Chilcott [Five Days that Changed the World], but it just wasn’t enough, which is when I said to Sam, “All right, I’m going to commission Dan [Walker].” He said, “There’s no money.” And I said, “Well, I’ll pay for it.” So, I donated the money to commission that piece because it was just right for the program and I could! I had a tax return, and I just thought, “All right! I’m spending it on commissioning this piece!” And I’m so glad I did! And it’s really started something! It started something!

JH: Beautiful! In fact, I’m jumping ahead. You said that was the piece that you would suggest that we would do on our program for my doctoral recital?

LW: Yeah, like the last movement or something, or whatever you like.

JH: I love the last movement! Oh, my goodness! That “Ether of Infinity!” And I finally got it. It wasn’t until the concert, I’m holding the program, and I went, “Of course! This works so well! It was, The Five Days that Changed the World and the Five Moments that Shaped Australia!” It was a wonderful idea! I loved it! Do you ever use audio sources to expose your kids to a desired sound?

LW: We do more at National Choral School occasionally just because you’ve got a group of kids from all over Australia who are great musicians, but they don’t necessarily—quite often we’ll be playing previous Gondwana recordings. Mark O’Leary,
my colleague from Melbourne will often play others, especially if we are doing—he likes to do Kódaly pieces, and we want to hear a real Hungarian choir singing it and things like that. We very often use language coaches who are specifically trained in or who are fluent in whatever the language is.

JH: So now, musicianship! You just mentioned Mark O’Leary, and I had never heard of this Mark O’Leary until I was looking in your website and I didn’t get to go into his program but is this a program that you purchase for the Gondwana Voices?

LW: Okay, so Mark O’Leary has been doing Gondwana Voices since the very first year with me. He hasn’t done it every year, but he has done it a lot of years. He has his own choral program in Melbourne called Young Voices of Melbourne. So, you might want to look up the website for that, but then he also has evolved the single sight singing school which is an on-line sight singing training thing which we encourage our kids to do.

JH: Is it free?

LW: Oh no, but it’s not expensive for a large—you can sign up the whole group, and it will be—like it’s not very expensive, but people all over the world are using it now.

JH: All right. So, it looks like you can monitor the kids’ progress?

LW: Sort of. What we do is get them—we are not awfully good at it yet—we get them to record and send in recordings of them singing because you can’t—it doesn’t listen back and tell you whether you are right or not.

JH: That’s a lot of staff hours!

LW: Well, we don’t listen to everything. That’s Amandine’s job. And also, we are not doing it with all of the groups at the moment.

JH: That’s whose job?

LW: Amandine.

JH: Okay. So which groups do you use that with?


JH: But not any of your performance choirs?

LW: Yes. All the way up, from Intermediate Training Choir. A lot of the older choruses have finished it. It’s like they are way beyond it. So, you wouldn’t have seen it this week because we didn’t do it this week, but we have generally—everyone does sight singing every week. So, as well as that Mark O’Leary thing we have our own sight singing training program which is progressive as they go through the choirs. For instance, at
Senior Young Men’s level, we have four or five levels, I can’t remember, and they get streamed into these various different levels, and we do half hour a week.

JH: So, do you have five instructors for those levels?

LW: Yes, so we use pianists as well as conductors.

JH: Okay, we’ve done some of that too.

LW: But Junior Performing Choir, I think has three.

JH: And it’s a half hour. I love that! My assistant was saying—and she is our theory guru—but she was saying—“Maybe we should do [away with that!”] Because we only do 15 minutes, but I’m like, “We’re not doing away with that.” [She said,] “Like just incorporate it?” I said, “no,” because otherwise, I get kind of performance focused: “We’ve got to fix that tone, fix…”

LW: Exactly! And also, if you find that if the kids that already know it, they answer all the questions. The ones who don’t know it go, “Well, I’m never going to know that, so I won’t bother.” And it doesn’t work. So, to split them up into their ability groups actually makes everyone improve way more and to have that time which is actually focused on doing that. That has made a big difference to us. And the top level is doing all this atonal stuff. They’re doing conducting. They’re doing, you know—it’s an ambitious thing. It’s really complex stuff that they’re doing. It’s sort of beyond degree level.

JH: So, you mentioned conducting. What else do they do besides conducting? What other skills do you develop in them?

LW: We really do quite a lot of composition things with them. That’s sort of a time-dependent thing as well. So, normally on a weekend camp, if it’s not coming up to a performance we would have done some of that as well, but we didn’t this week. And well, they do, for instance when we do our Torres Strait or Acehnese Indonesian dancing. They’ll do a lot of movement. You’ve seen our Acehnese stuff, haven’t you? No?

JH: I don’t think so. Oh well…on the floor?

LW: Yes, on the floor. Also, we’ve done a lot with the Sydney Children’s Choir as well as we’ve done with Gondwana Voices.

JH: Is there somebody that you bring in to teach that?

LW: So, there is a professional, an incredibly good professional Acehnese dancer, Sally Bright, around the corner from me.

JH: Acehnese?
LW: Acehnese. It’s a province of Indonesia.

JH: Okay. How do you spell that?

LW: A-C-E-H-N-E-S-E.

JH: A-C-E-H-N-E-

LW: “Aceh” is spelled A-C-E-H. I’ve got to write it down. I’ll write it on your piece of paper. I can’t see it in my head. And it’s pronounced, “AH-cheh-nee.”

JH: It looks like the “H” and the “E” should be different. Okay.

LW: Yes, so they do a lot of movement. And we did some at the camp recently.

JH: So, theory is taught by all directors and even pianists.

LW: Yeah, well, they have to do a certain level of music theory. They mostly do it on their own. So, we use a particular textbook. It has all the instructions in there.

JH: Is this something you generated?

LW: No. So, somebody that has got these books that is readily available here. They do it at home because it explains everything and they come, and it’s marked by the admin-staff or volunteers and things. It’s all marked. So, these are the ones that come this afternoon. They will bring their theory books, and they will have done a few pages, and it will get marked and given back to them. We have special days where they can come and ask if they’ve got any specific problems. And we expect them to get to a certain level.

JH: So, you do thirty minutes a week in theory training. So, in one of your rehearsals, it would have the theory aspect and like a Saturday, it wouldn’t?

LW: So, the performing choirs just do half an hour a week, and some of the younger choirs will do twenty minutes or fifteen minutes depending on the length, you know, proportionally, to their rehearsal. So yes, in the performing choirs it will be—So, Junior Performing Choir will do that on a Wednesday and on Saturday. They do an hour and a half straight rehearsal.

JH: That’s what I thought. All right. Great! So, other than theory books is there other practice that you expect outside?

LW: Yes, so with the performing choirs, we’ll just say, “Can you memorize ‘X’ the next week?” Or, “Can you learn the notes of something?”

JH: So, it’s a specific task?
LW: Yes.

JH: And you don’t say, “You are expected this many minutes, just get this task done.”

LW: No, yes, just get the task done. And other times it will be, I’ll say to them for instance for our Voices of Angels concert, they’ll get the music at the beginning of the term and I’ll say—it’s their secret—so say, all the second sopranos will get together and they say, “We’re going to memorize such and such for next week. This is our second soprano program.” And so, I can’t say to them, “But you were supposed to have learned that for this week.” I put complete trust in them. By the time we get to this state, they will know everything, but I don’t know what any individual is supposed to have learned from memory for any one week. It’s complete trust, but by the time we get to this state, they will know everything.

JH: Okay, so let’s say it’s maybe two months out. You have to have all this music memorized. And then they decide what they are going to work on in order to achieve that goal.

LW: Yeah, and sometimes it’s individual and sometimes it’s about a section at a time.

JH: Individual singers?

LW: Yes, individual singers or it works better if it’s the whole section because then they can keep an eye on each other, and I don’t need to know.

JH: So how do you hold them accountable to that stage that this all needs to be memorized?

LW: (Resolutely!) Well, this all needs to be memorized!

JH: Well, so what if they don’t?

LW: Well, they do! (Laughter) Because I trust they will! And it won’t be the day of the concert. It’ll be a week or ten days out from the concert. Because we do our final concert with the orchestra, so there’ll be a few rehearsals. And that’s always time to fill in a few gaps that might be there, but on the whole, they’re good. They’re good! And they love the fact that they have to memorize the parts. It makes life easier for them.

JH: Yes. So, how much time would you give them to memorize an entire program, like the Thursday program?

LW: They’ve had most of the year to work on that repertoire—so since February. But it was a lot of music.

JH: Yes, it was a lot of music. The camp—they seemed to know pretty much what they needed to at the camp.
LW: Yes. They were well on track, but the senior boys are slower, for some reason. I don’t know why. Their brains just work differently. They’re either slacker, or they’re just slower to memorize. And also, normally, they don’t do as much music in a concert. They normally sing a lot less, because it’s harder for them to sort of perfect things. Whereas the younger ones, it just happens—you know, all the trebles and girls. Girls memorize better than boys. Let’s face it! (Chuckles)

JH: Kids are the same all over the world really!

LW: They sure are!

JH: It’s just humorous to me to see the same kind of questions in Hamilton…

LW: And you can see the same kids: Your version of “so and so!” (Laughter) My one of you at home is called, “such and such!”

JH: That’s so funny! ‘Cause I have been saying, “There’s my Jenna!” (Laughter) Now repertoire. You do a lot of commissioned works. Would you say that every concert has commissioned works in it?

LW: Most concerts have commissioned works in them.

JH: And you use Dan Walker a lot. Was that Dan Walker that stood up at the concert?

LW: Yes.

JH: I wanted to go shake his hand, but I couldn’t find him in the crowd.

LW: Yeah, he writes incredibly well for choirs.

JH: That’s awesome. Is he terribly expensive?

LW: No!

JH: Really? Okay. So, where do you go most for new repertoire if you are not commissioning a work? Okay, so if you are just going to build a program…

LW: I don’t know…YouTube.

JH: Just kick around?

LW: Yeah.

JH: Yeah, same.

LW: Surf around YouTube or else just do, you know, like that Hildegarde, like “Eternal.”
JH: I love that one!

LW: I was looking at that “Eternal,” and I was like, “Okay what am I going to do with this? What can I do? How am I going to make this into something magical?”

JH: And it was.

LW: So yeah, you know, I do every now and again compose myself, but if I’m not composing, I’m doing something like that.

JH: Did you ever get my email? I wanted your “Festival Alleluia!”

LW: Oh yeah. No, I don’t...maybe not. Maybe I can’t remember.

JH: I never heard anything back.

LW: Oh, okay. Well, we sell it online.

JH: Oh, okay! I couldn’t find it anywhere, so I ended up doing another “Festival Alleluia,” but it wasn’t as cool as yours! I’ll do it again sometime! So, you have it...it would it be downloadable?

LW: Yeah, so if you contact Lachlan on operations@gondwana.org.au and he will organize it for you.

JH: How do you spell “Lachlan?”


JH: At Gondwana....say that again. Dot...

LW: Org. O-R-G.

JH: Okay, and ask him

LW: Oh yeah, it’s actually—he is not Lachlan@gondwana, he’s operations@gondwana.

JH: Operations@gondwana.

LW: Yeah. And his name is Lachlan. He is Sam’s assistant.

JH: For “Festival…”

LW: Festive!
JH: Festive! Okay, I guess the one I borrowed instead was “Festival.” Yeah, that was really cool. In fact, my advisor was watching it. I said, “Oh look at this one!” She said, “I want that one!” So, it might get you more sells over there! You do use printed octavos, and you access these—you have an Australian publishing company here?

LW: Most of the composers here—we have—there’s a thing called the Australian Music Centre…

JH: I have ordered from them!

LW: But generally, it works better in Australia just to go straight to the composers. That’s how most of them sell their music.

JH: Okay. This is the question about the defining works. Does your choir perform any such distinctive pieces? And you are saying this Dan Walker…

LW: Well, I mean that’s not one. It’s like every concert we do, everything we do is trying to be, sort of do things in a new way. So, that’s why we do so much commissioning—all the time! And I think Australian music defines who we are, more than anything, and sort of new ways of looking at things. So, there isn’t a piece that is really says who… and also, it’s the personalities, as I’ve said of the choirs are quite different. The Sydney Children’s Choir defining repertoire is different from the Indigenous Choir repertoire, which has its basis in indigenous language, and stories, and a very particular color, and so they are a bit different from each other. The Gondwana Voices is more sophisticated.

JH: You seem to be sensitive to the Indigenous people in your work as well, even in the Sydney Choir you seem to honor the indigenous.

LW: Yes. And they do too. It’s really important. I mean, they were here for 60,000 years, and we’ve been here for 200! There’s no…

JH: Same, like the United States! You know, the native American Indians. I love the sensitivity that I see coming out. It’s wonderful! And giving them a voice, it’s powerful!

LW: So, yeah, it’s really important, you know. There’s a lot of not-good stories about what happened to indigenous people, and I think that definitely, the kids in the Sydney Children’s Choir recognize that and they’ve also got friends in the Indigenous Choir and when they come down from Cairns, they stay in Sydney Children’s Choir homes. They perform together.

JH: I love that—bringing community together. So, besides Dan Walker and Sally [Whitwell] who are your go-to composers?
LW: Okay, so in the foyer this morning you would have probably seen, but not known, Paul Stanhope who is a really significant Australian composer. His daughter was in the choir.

JH: Paul?


JH: Okay.

LW: And he has written a lot of great music. And how many years ago? About four years ago, he wrote this thing called, “Jandamarra—Sing for the Country.” And it was for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, all of our choirs, plus a group of indigenous performers down from the Kimberley region—a big, you know, oratorio thing. So, yeah, he’s a really excellent composer. He writes mainly, fairly complex music. Then Paul Jarman, who wrote that “Dreaming in the Sky.” Luke Byrne…

JH: Who?


JH: I saw that! You named one of the choirs after him!

LW: Yep.

JH: We know a Luke Byrne!

LW: Do you?

JH: Yes, that’s crazy!

LW: So, he’s also written a lot for our indigenous choir. Also, young composers coming through: there’s one called Alice Chance we’ve worked with.

JH: Alice what?

LW: Chance! C-H-A-N-C-E. So, she’s written quite a lot for us now. We’ve got another one we’re working with this year, it’s a composer whose name is Ella Macens M-A-C-E-N-S. And who else do we have? Oh, there was a fellow who doesn’t write anymore, but he wrote some really nice things for us early on called, Ben van Tienen. So, van T-I-E-N-E-N. But he now lives in Europe, and we don’t see much of him. He is busy doing other stuff. Gosh, who else? There’s lots! For instance, that “Hooray for Song” CD that you bought the other day, that has a lot of the composers. Oh, Stephen Leek obviously from early on was one that we worked with a lot.

JH: What’s his name again?
LW: Stephen. S-T-E-P-H-E-N. Leek. L-double E-K. We don’t work with him so much anymore, but we did for a long time. He has two pieces that are very popular in the states. Yeah, that’s some of them. Look on “Hooray for Song” you’ll see a lot.

JH: Yeah! How many new works would you say your goal is in a year? It’s probably very specific to your programming…

LW: Newly commissioned works?

JH: Yeah, how many would you say?

LW: Probably eight.

JH: Wow! That’s amazing!

LW: So, this year—I mean that would be songs-ish that combines the ones that we have for our Sydney Children’s Choir residencies plus—It would be at least eight per year, if not ten.

JH: That’s amazing!

LW: Yeah, at least. And we’ve done hundreds over the years.

JH: I believe it! Now, this is performance practice. So, for a season—and I know your seasons are different—how many pieces would you say the Indigenous Choirs need to learn?

LW: The Indigenous Choirs? Oh!

JH: Let’s do each group.

LW: Okay, so that’s tricky, because, for instance, the group doing “Spinifex Gum,” that had…it was 75 minutes non-stop singing.

JH: Wow!

LW: So, that’s a lot. It was like 20 something pieces. You know it was a lot, and it’s all choreographed. It’s absolutely huge!

JH: Now did you choose all that repertoire?

LW: No, it’s done by—the fellow that composed the work, so he’s composed the whole thing, and he’s created the whole show.

JH: What’s his name?

LW: Felix Riebl.
JH: Felix Riebl.

LW: What is it? R-I-E-B-L. And like most of them, he’s composed, and there’s a few pieces in there that they’ve arranged for this special sort of electronic thing.

JH: How did you find him?

LW: Uhm, we were thrown together. I was once music director for the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. You probably haven’t heard of the Commonwealth Games. It’s like the Olympics, but it’s the Commonwealth Countries, and it happens sort of two years after the Olympics in every cycle of four. So, it’s a big thing from all of the Commonwealth Countries, and it’s like one of those big stadium things, and we were doing—I was music director, and he was asked to do something, and that’s where we first met. And then we started doing projects together. We come from such, sort of different—well, you know he’s a rock star, and I’m me. (Laughter) I think I probably speak to him on the phone more than anybody because we are always planning all this stuff, you know. Yeah, it’s just interesting. I’m just glad we got thrown in together. His family comes from very classical music background. His grandfather was the concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic, and he’s got classical music siblings, but you know, he’s not. He’s in another world altogether. So, it’s great! It’s really good! I’m not at all, “We’ve got to sing this type of music” or not. If it’s good music, it doesn’t matter what the genre is.

JH: That’s right. I agree with you. So, will he do another show then?

LW: Well, we will probably be using the one that we are currently doing—do another whole 75 minutes. Also, we need to tour that show. It’s like rock musicians, you know, they go around the world singing the same songs everywhere. So, we think there’s a lot of potential for that show.

JH: For how long will this show…?

LW: Don’t know. We’ll see. He’s going to write new songs to go within it so that we can switch songs in and out depending on who we’ve got: soloists and that sort of thing.

JH: Okay, now talk about the Sydney Children’s Choir.

LW: So, the Sydney Children’s Choir, roughly what we did—in a year, we’ll do probably a little over twice as much music as you heard on Thursday night if that gives you a sense. So, we did two of those major programs, but then we normally do other stuff in two and three. So that’s roughly how much we’d do in a year. So, we’re not like a choir that—we don’t keep repertoire and cycle repertoire in and out—we do programs, and then we’ll ditch that program for a while. And then when we go on tour, we’ll select, sort of mainly the Australian stuff, and we’ll mainly do that. And obviously, when you tour, you choose the pieces that you think are going to go really well for that tour and build a program that way.
JH: That’s kind of how I have been doing stuff because I get bored. I just like to explore.

LW: Well, so do the kids! “Oh, this old one again!” And, I know a lot of choirs just have a repertoire, and they just change two or three pieces a year. That would drive me crazy!

JH: I have heard some phenomenal choirs—as gorgeous as they are—who don’t have a fresh excitement about the music. It seems to be just second nature. So, there are different philosophies out there but...

LW: Whatever works.

JH: And you always have the choir perform from memory correct?

LW: Yes…I’d say, 99.99999 percent of the time.

JH: Same, it comes across better.

LW: Even with the Symphony. You know the adults will be sitting there with the music, and off we go! We know exactly when to stand up. We know when to sit down. We know the whole piece!

JH: How often do you repeat repertoire? Mainly just for tours?

LW: Yeah, although we do repeat. Things will come back every few years. You know that’s the good thing about choral music, if it’s a good piece, it’ll get done again. And especially our little ones, like, the younger groups—if we have pieces that will work pedagogically and we know that it’s gonna teach and we know they’re gonna love it, well, we’ll do it again!

JH: But the group you did it with three years ago maybe is gone.

LW: Yes! Yeah, they don’t know the song.

JH: Yeah, same here! Your choirs do perform a cappella sometimes.

LW: Yep!

JH: Like “Las Amarillas.” And then your expectations for your singers in terms of stage deportment. I think it’s “arms by your sides.” I mean, what would you make sure that they do?

LW: Yes, I expect them to communicate with me and with each other as musicians. The more experience they get as performers—as I said, these guys are not hugely experienced, but they do watch each other a lot to make sure that they’re entrances are together and all of that sort of thing. I suppose that is all part of stage deportment. And also, they learn when they go and do things like working with the Symphony.
JH: This is a loaded question. I think you could go on, on this one. So, what instruments if any are used to accompany your choir? We saw chimes; we saw piano; we saw cello; we saw timpani; you’d have the symphony orchestra…

LW: Yeah, we have chamber ensembles; we have percussion ensembles; we have had…What else have we had in the past?

JH: Your cello player was amazing!

LW: Yeah, he’s great! And he’s worked with us quite a bit. We have had various different—well, anything. There’s not really a limit!

JH: It’s whatever the music asks for!

LW: Yes!

JH: I’m the same way. This is about choreography. How often would you say you use movement? Every concert?

LW: We really didn’t use much movement this concert, but we will always do it on tour because we will always do sort of Torres Strait songs and dances. They are really common and a nice thing to end a program with. You know, it’s the same thing. It’s like when it seems right for the program—well, quite often, especially with a touring program—as I say, there’ll be a sort of a sequence, and there will be sort of simple movements that go with it, but Spinifex Gum is choreographed the whole way through. So, when they perform that, they are just dancing, full on, all the time!

JH: Can you send me that little video that you showed me from Melbourne?

LW: Ah yes. I will.

JH: I would love it. I don’t know that I would use it as part of [my project]. Well, maybe. I don’t know. It would just be interesting because otherwise, people don’t know what we’re talking about, Indigenous Choirs. So, I might show a little bit.

LW: I’ll see what’s the best thing is to send.

JH: That would be great. It was really fun. Who designs the choreography?

LW: It depends. For instance, if it’s the Acehnese dance, it’s Acehnese professional dancers. If it’s Torres Strait, it’s Torres Strait professional dancers. It’s about doing everything you do with integrity—artistic integrity. With Spinifex Gum, it’s a dancer who has just recently retired from being a dancer with the Bangarra Dance Theatre which is the main indigenous dance company that works on the of the world (?). So, she’s an incredible dancer and a very, very clever choreographer. Otherwise, you know, it will be me.
JH: Do you have a dance background?

LW: No! Not at all, but you know in terms of something…

JH: Just simple.

LW: But it’s all part of the whole thing. It’s just about creating a visual and aural experience. I see choirs that do movements to songs that just seems so superfluous. Like if a song is designed to be sung as a song, well, then just get on and sing the song! (Laughter). Don’t try and put another layer of something just to make it interesting because you can’t think of some other way of making it interesting. Just sing it well! That’ll be good!

JH: Exactly!

LW: There’s got to be a reason, in other words! Don’t try and sort of add it into something that…

JH: Right, kind of dumb it down almost!

LW: Well, there’s an awful lot of that goes on. I went to the world symposium last year, and everybody is trying to do fancy stuff: A lot of it just seems ridiculous to me. Sometimes standing there singing a song is actually quite nice! (Laughter)

JH: You do generate recordings for the public?

LW: Now, more we try and concentrate on live video because getting into a studio these days is so time-consuming and also no one buys CDs anymore.

JH: I know!

LW: And so, there’s no point as far as I’m concerned, but I can’t tell you how many people have seen our YouTube sites—like a lot of people have seen what we do on YouTube.

JH: Like me!

LW: And I think that’s probably the way to go.

JH: So, you’re not really then selling your product…

LW: No

JH: …as much as giving it away.

LW: Yes.
JH: So, you hire a professional videographer?

LW: Yes.

JH: Did you have one in the [concert].

LW: Yes.

JH: I saw a lot of clicking beforehand. So, you don’t see yourself ever generating another CD? Because you have stuff on Spotify!

LW: Yes, we do. They’re old-ish CD’s probably, and Spinifex Gum is on Spotify. That is an album that sells as an album because it’s a different world now. But, you know, we might do another CD, but I just—it’s so much effort to record a CD.

JH: We just automatically—every concert is recorded live and then on the backside of it [concert] the next day, we do a closed session, recording.

LW: Right.

JH: And then we weed through those after several years—like we were talking about doing, I’m going to say, “CD” but I don’t think it would be a CD…something that could be downloaded for Christmas, this fall.

LW: Yeah, I think that’s great! I don’t have anything against it. It’s just priorities.

JH: Right, what’s practical.

LW: Yeah.

JH: That is the way things are going. So, you don’t do DVD’s then either? It’s just all YouTube videos at this point?

LW: At the moment, yeah. It used to be, up until a couple of years ago, we did DVDs of National Choral School because so many of the parents live all over Australia, they didn’t get to the concerts. So, we did it for them to see. But now that they’re mostly online and we put stuff online and also, we did live streaming for the first time this January for the people interstate. We live-streamed our concert, and we had people all over the world watching it.

JH: We found the same thing. We did it this year just because I had that influx of kids this year, so we sold out just really early. I could see that it was going to be a problem because even parents were in a panic. We saved seats just because we knew people aren’t going to understand that they need to get their tickets. So, I held a block [of seats] and then we still had people upset, so we live-streamed. We couldn’t make another concert. It wasn’t possible. So, we live-streamed it and—same thing—I mean, it was like, where did
these 5000 people come from? How do you know about us…(*Laughter*)…in Finland and Columbia! So, then your performing attire is basically—you call them “silkies?”

LW: Yeah, that’s just become their nickname.

JH: Those are nice. They’re practical!

LW: We also like that they’re pretty gender neutral and they can dance in them if they have to and…

JH: It looked like your boys though, in the Senior [Performing] Choir, were all in that purply…

LW: Navy. Yeah, it used to be that they all wore those and then the girls who would rather dress as boys would wear those as well, but…

JH: Do they choose what color they want?

LW: No, whichever fits. And the little ones who have never—they were brand new, the ones for the Junior Performing Choir—they used to dress like the training choirs do which is more in like a long-sleeved t-shirt type thing. So, they were just beside themselves. They just thought they were, you know, so fabulous because they got to wear silkies.

JH: And you provide shoes for them now. Is that right?

LW: Yes. All, except the Young Men’s. They wear those jazz shoes things because we move around and they’ll bop their way around. It’s just quieter.

JH: They’re called “jazz shoes?”

LW: Yeah.

JH: That’s a very smart uniform.

LW: Ah good! I’m glad you like it. We’ve had it for a long time now, since early 2000s. JH: How did you choose it?

LW: We did—I’ll tell you how we chose it. For dawn on the year 2000, we did a performance, which was broadcast on TV worldwide from the [Sydney] Opera House. It was prerecorded, but we had a group down at the bottom of the Opera House as the sun was rising and we had a soloist on the top peak of the Opera House. And it was didgeridoo, and it was a beautiful piece by an Australian composer, another composer you can add to your list called, Ross Edwards. “Dawn Mantra” it was called. You can probably find it online actually. They had a uniform for that event which was really similar, and we thought, actually that sort of shape works really well, and so we’ve used
that shape ever since. (*Whispering*) But, we have had criticism. People have written to us. “Why are you dressing like Chinese people?”

JH: It’s a hard thing [to please everyone]. It’s hard! And your uniform is gender neutral!

LW: I feel lucky that in our organization, gender diversity is actually celebrated and actually, very often, the choir is the first place where that we know before the parents basically. Which is awkward at times.

JH: I know that can be very difficult. All right Lyn, is there anything else I should know about your organization?

LW: Well, I think one of the things—well, the only thing, your questions are so comprehensive—is that the professionalism of the choir needs to operate on all levels of the organization. We work really hard—for instance our concert presentations—we try and be really professional with the way we present our concerts.

JH: I saw that. Yeah.

LW: The way we run the organization—we try and make sure that all of our rehearsals are run professionally and that we—it goes right through everything. I think the standard that you try to establish for the choir, needs to go through to every branch/twig of the organization. There needs to be that same commitment to whatever it is that you’re doing in terms of excellence. And then the kids see it and it’s all—yeah. So, you know, even when we do—in a couple weeks’ time, we’ve got our little junior winter concert, but we’ll try and do that just as professionally as we do the other concerts. And I am still very lucky to have very dedicated staff in that regard and you know everyone makes mistakes and doesn’t do things necessarily—you know things go wrong always, but that doesn’t matter so long as they can look at it and learn from it.

JH: With a right attitude.

LW: That’s right! That’s right and I think that’s got a lot to do with, sort of, the success of the organization—that it infiltrates everything. That’s all.

JH: How do you vet your training staff? How do you get them? Do you have a process of audition or is it more on reputation?

LW: It’s more reputation and just having seen them work with other groups. Like this new one that we saw this morning—I’ve known her actually for a long, long time. She works in schools with that age—super experienced with that age group. So, more reputation, you don’t necessarily find what you are looking for by auditioning. It’s a lot of staff we have to keep finding. Yes!

JH: Oh, and you have so much more to be thinking about than what our organization does yet, at this point, but I have been inspired this week!
LW: Oh, why thank you! Thank you for coming! I really hope I get to hear your choir live at some stage!

JH: Please come! And you have an open invitation! Just drop us a line if you come to the States. So, you are coming in what year?

LW: The second half of 2019. I’m just not sure when yet, because it all just depends on when Spinifex Gum is touring, so it’s a bit up in the air.

JH: That will be the whole choir?

LW: No just me this time—maybe planning something for everyone to do down the track. That would be really nice to come and see.

JH: It would be really nice for you to do guest conducting or a little workshop for our choir or something. I would love it!

LW: Yeah, a workshop would be fun!

JH: That would be amazing. They [choir] would love to meet you. I just appreciated so much that you are unflappable. That was the word that kept coming to my mind. This woman is unflappable! It didn’t matter what hit you—whether it was a singing bowl that you couldn’t find at the last minute—I think I picked that up…

LW: (Chuckles) Right!

JH: …or, I don’t know, just different things you would take in stride—figure it out and go on. You just have a refreshing leadership style. I never saw you get angry with kids.

LW: I used to.

JH: I didn’t see that at all.

LW: I used to, but I don’t so much anymore, because it actually doesn’t work. It doesn’t get the results you want. Well, actually I do about once a year.

JH: To let them know you mean business.

LW: But I normally do it by—because I just get suddenly overwhelmed where I just can’t do this anymore and I’ll normally walk out. And, I don’t say anything, I just put my things down and I’ll just walk out and everything goes dead silent.

JH: (Chuckles)
LW: Rather than anger, I find way more effective than anger is disappointment. Disappointment works a trait. It’s like, “I expected this! I was really trusting you to do something and you know…”

JH: They want to please. People want to please.

LW: Yes, that’s right! Whereas if you are angry all of the time or sparks just going off—that’s the end of that.

JH: So, once you walk out, do you come back in ever?

LW: Yeah, normally. Or they’ll come and get me.

JH: So, they have a little conversation probably?

LW: Yeah, they’ll do it and similarly if some of them in the choir feel that maybe not everyone in the choir has the right attitude, they’ll ask for a conversation with no adults present and we’ll give them that. They did that at the camp. Which night was it? Saturday night? Yeah, Saturday night! They had a good 45 minutes of just talking amongst themselves and it actually made a big difference the next day. They did it on tour last year too.

JH: So, some of your natural leaders?

LW: Yeah. [They asked,] “Do you mind if we just, you know, had some time?”

JH: [They said,]”We have to address some things.”

LW: Yeah.

JH: They wouldn’t do that if they didn’t feel like they were given the opportunity to make those kinds of decisions and they weren’t trusted to do that.

LW: They have a role. Everyone in the choir has a role.

JH: You’re teaching a community a sense of what it means to be community and to hold each other accountable. It’s a cultural quality that you’re teaching them. When I think about the ripples that you are making in the world, it’s striking.

LW: It’s hard to know isn’t it? You just do your thing and you never know. But the world works like that doesn’t it? Everyone does their thing and all the ripples combine to create the society that we are. It’s cool actually isn’t it?

JH: It’s very cool. You know your [choir’s] tone and blend are just outstanding. It’s just great. I think we’re pretty good, but I think we can step it up.
LW: Well, that’s the great thing, is that we can all learn so much from each other. And it’s one of the reasons that I never do competitions. I am anti-competition because I don’t believe that we sing to be “better.” I think we sing to express ourselves, but also to bring joy to other people and that I say to the kids—well, they don’t ask to do competitions, because they know it’s something that we don’t do, but it’s unfortunately one of the big ways to sort of get known around the world, is this or that Choral Olympics or this World Choir Games and everything and I just won’t go near it, because I don’t believe that’s why we do it. I must say it is a lovely opportunity for other choirs and I’m not anti-them happening, I just don’t do it myself.

JH: Yeah, we’ve changed the focus a lot to be competitive as opposed to just spreading the love and the joy.

LW: Yeah, I think so, but each to his own.
Appendix 3: Interview with Jude and Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan
Directors of the Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir
June 21, 2018

Janet Hostetter: It’s two parts. The first part is more, how your choir is set up. The second part is more the musical aspect.

Theresa Roldan: Closer. Closer to me!

Janet Hostetter: So, I just cut and paste right now the things that were on the internet.

Jude Roldan: What part of the internet?

JH: Facebook page.

JR: Facebook page! I don’t mind if it’s still updated about the choir.

JH: It says in 1999 that Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir was conceived by founders Ulan and Dinna, primarily as a parish choir, at Immaculate Conception Cathedral. In 2001, [it] turned trans-parochial and you have added—now are these like cathedrals too like, the Mary the Queen

JR: They are like parish churches.

JH: So, when you perform there, it’s not a cathedral space that you are singing in? Or it is?

JR: It’s a small church.

JH: And the Christ the King Parish. So, you continue to serve in these parishes grounded on these core values of excellence, commitment, discipline, service, and prayer. Through the expert choral musicianship of professor Maria Theresa Visconde Roldan and music director, Jude Roldan the choir has evolved into a world-class concert chorale, spanning sixteen years but now it would be…

TR: Nineteen years.

JR: So that’s maybe three years ago.

JH: I will need to change that to nineteen.

JR: So, if you want something like that we can email it.

JH: Oh sure! If you want to update it and send it to me…
JR: An update to the uh…

JH: Technology is wonderful when it works! *(Laughter)*

JH: All right, so I had that your program has been for nineteen years. Do you have a vision or mission statement?

JR: Yes, I think we have, but I have to get the files from—yeah. We can send them to you also.

JH: That would be great! And do you have a handbook for the organization?

JR: No.

JH: All right! And then the next question is, “How many training and performing groups exist?” But I think you said, “Mass Choir [and] Concert Choir” and then you had, kind of, an alumni group.

JR: Yeah, but it’s not part of the organization anymore.

JH: Okay. All right. I didn’t really put it in there. Am I correct—there’s about thirty-six in your Concert Choir?

JR: No. No.

JH: How many in the Mass Choir?

JR: In the Mass [Choir]—because last summer we decided to bring them all up, so they’re all ready, but we still have new members—like four kids.

TR: Five! Five!

JR: Five kids.

JH: That are in addition to the thirty-six?

JR: Yes! So, like we are forty-one in all in all. So, you can see that because these ones are really new so only five kids—only five kids really belong to the Mass Chorale.

JH: Very good. And then, how often and for how long do your groups rehearse? I picked out two times per week for two hours, Wednesday and Friday. And then, Saturday, for how long?

JR: Maybe also, maybe two hours also. Because one hour for the Mass and one hour for preparation before the Mass.
TR: Yes.

JH: Okay, but if you have a Sunday performance, would it still be two hours on Saturday?

TR: Yes! I think so.

JR: Yes, yes. You can consider it two hours.

JH: Okay. So, I put plus Saturday for two hours and then a Saturday or Sunday performance.

TR: Yes.

JH: Um, we were trying to remember—we saw the rehearsal space, but it’s owned by the church? What would I call the room that you were in?

JR: Oh. The room is owned by the church. The space…

JH: By the Immaculate Conception Church

JR: Yeah, yeah, the Immaculate Conception.

TR: Cathedral!

JR: So, you can call the building Obispado de Cubao. That’s the chancellery office of the bishop of Cubao.

JH: And then how many staff members assist in running the organization? So, I’m thinking it’s you two, plus your founders, Ulan and Dinna.

JR: It’s a bit complicated because Dinna would be there if we have performances. So, there is no such thing as staff.

JH: So, what does she do at performances?

JR: Because we don’t really want to deal with money.

TR: So, for the gigs, she serves as the coordinator. She’s the one talking to the client.

JH: Okay, like she sets up if people want to book the choir?

TR: Yes, in terms of the fee—professional fee, she’s the one talking to the client.

JH: So, she doesn’t have a title?
JR: Coordinator.

JH: Coordinator!

JR: So, she coordinates with the parents…

JH: Okay.

JR: For schedules of the choir, especially when we have gigs and singing engagement [sic] outside the church.

JH: So, if you have a need to line up a tour, do you do that or does Dinna do that?

JR: You mean line up the tour?

JH: Yeah, like if you are going to go to the United States or you’re going to go to Hungary, who’s taking care of the details?

JR: Oh, Dinna.

JH: Dinna will. Okay. Does she go on your tours?

TR: Yes. Yes.

JH: Does she have kids in the choir?

JR: Before.

TR: Five kids!

JH: Wow!

TR: Actually, that’s why they wanted to have a choir because they wanted to see their children serving in the parish.

JH: That’s really great! And, with five kids, they almost had a choir. Right? How is the organization funded? I put, “ticket sales” and “fundraisers,” and is there anything else?

JR: Gigs. Performances.

JH: That would be the “ticket sales.”

TR: Weddings.

JR: Yeah, weddings, performances…
TR: That’s right. Fundraising!

JH: So, your fundraisers are mostly gigs.

TR and JR: Yes.

JH: Yeah okay. No national or government funding?

JR: Sometimes, if we go to competition…

TR: The national commission for cultural arts will help…

JR: Allocate [to] us—like, maybe [they will] help for the airfare of two or three kids or something like that.

TR: At least a small portion from the government.

JH: National Commission for the Arts?

JR: Not only for—when we have competition or…

TR: Only for a competition.

JR: Only for going out of the country, but the operation of expenses of the group— they are all taken from the gigs and some donations but very seldom. It’s mostly the singing engagement of the choir.

JH: Okay. I like how you said that. I’m going to take those words, “singing engagement.” Would you say weddings are the most lucrative for the choir?

JR: The most lucrative for the choir are—I think are—for example, if we have guests abroad like the APEC Summit—the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation thing. I think members there are like the US—US is a member of APEC Summit right? So, it’s like, uh, an organization of—like, for example, CN countries and the US. (To Theresa) Can you check? So, if they invite us to perform, a sort of a cultural show.

JH: And that’s the most lucrative for you?

JR: Yes. Yes. But it only happens, like…

TR: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

JH: Okay got it!

TR: Members are China, United States of America, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Peru.
JH: How many times have you done something for them?

JR: Well, the past three years—one. And last year at ASEAN Summit—it’s something like this also, but within Asia only. So, it’s like this. It’s a government-sponsored event.

JH: Right. Okay!

JR: So, I think that’s the biggest um…

TR: We recorded the ASEAN theme song.

JR: But, it just happen [sic] once in a blue moon. So, for consistency, it would really be the Christmas carols in the hotels or in malls.

JH: Every year you do Christmas caroling in hotels and malls?

TR: Yes.

JH: And they pay you for that?

JR: Yes.

JH: Who pays for that? The hotels?

JR: The hotels.

JH: That’s nice! All right!

TR: And, for us, another contribution of the choir in our society—our involvement in the different activities of the nation like ASEAN…

JR: ASEAN, the APEC.

JH: So, they paid you to do that? So, what do I call that?

TR: ASEAN theme song. ASEAN Spirit

JH: For YouTube?

TR: Yes, YouTube. ASEAN Spirit.

JH: That’s cool!

JR and TR: (Chuckle)

JH: That would have been fun! When did you do that?
TR:  2017

JR:  Just last year.

JH:  That’s really neat! Now we talked a little bit about recruitment for your ensemble. And you said that’s something you’re going to have to work on. What do you do in terms of recruitment now for the choir? How do you get new members?

TR:  Actually, we announce after the Sunday Mass—after [the] Sunday service. So, we sometimes announce it over in…

JR:  Yeah—during the announcement time.

JH:  And, is that at a certain time of the year or every Sunday?

TR:  No, not every Sunday.

JR:  Usually, we do that [in] March, because March is the end of the school year. So, we usually get a lot of new members during the summer break. And, it’s a good thing. So, we can train them for like, six to eight weeks. And, once we see that they are ready and ready to commit, we can bring them up and educate [them in] the concert chorale.

JH:  So, during the summer you offer sessions just for them.

JR:  Yes, but that’s also with the old members.

JH:  Oh, okay. So, you put them into the regular season, or the regular choir—which they don’t take a break in the summer then—your Concert Choir?

JR:  We don’t even have a season here.

JH:  You just go all year round.

JR:  All year round!

JH:  But you’re saying that over the summer you get to train them for eight weeks before what happens?

TR:  The new ones—before they join the concert chorale.

JH:  Okay. So they’re considered, “Mass Choir?”

JR:  Yes! Because, sometimes we have parents and children who really can’t commit with the weekday rehearsal [sic], so they stay on the Mass Choir.

JH: Oh! That’s—okay! The Mass Choir is not the performing choir. They don’t perform too much.

JR: They don’t, but they sing for the Mass.

JH: So, in other words, like, your paid gigs—the kids that are in Mass Choir only, do not do those.

JR and TR: Yes!

JH: But, Sunday morning, they are welcome to sing for the Mass.

JR and TR: Yes!

JR: And, you know [in] the Mass Chorale, the number of members—I mean the number of the group varies really. Because, just like now—before preparing for this trip, there were like actually twenty members. But, we decided that [we would] like sixteen of them to join the Concert Chorale.

JH: Okay. Are you recording this? Oh good! All right! What is the average length of membership? Once a child is in the Concert Choir, how long do they typically stay?

JR: Well if they start at nine or ten…

TR: Depends. If they have sisters or a brother…

JR: Okay. Yes. Usually, we invite kids nine-years—eight or nine-years-old. From eight—yeah, you can put, “eight.” So, eight-years-old up to, usually, fifteen. But sometimes if we have a tour, they can still join the tour. Maybe they extend up to sixteen-years-old—sixteen or seventeen, but usually, those kids, you can count with one hand maybe—just two or three kids.

TR: Because we want to give them [the] opportunity.

JR: Especially if they haven’t joined any tours. So, we would say, “Why don’t you extend your years with the choir so you can join the tour?”

JH: So, would you say that if an eight or nine-year-old joins, then do they typically stay until they are fifteen?

TR: Yes!

JH: Do you have kids join when they are eleven?

JR: Yes. There are also kids who join when they are twelve.
JH: How about fifteen? Do you have any that join that late?

TR: Ah, fifteen? One girl, she joined the choir, but [that is] very rare.

JR: Yeah, very rare.

JH: So once a child joins, they are very committed to staying until they graduate?

JR: Yes. They don’t want even to leave.

TR: Yes. That’s right.

JH: Aw!

JR: So sometimes it’s really hard to—we don’t know sometimes, how to deal with it. How we could...

TR: But, the boys, they already knew that uh...

JR: The boys, once they started to change, they know that it’s time.

JH: So, you let them go then.

JR: Yes. So [for] the boys, it’s earlier, even like, fourteen [or] thirteen.

TR: But they are prepared because, when they start joining the choir, we already explained it.

JR: That’s why as early as eleven or twelve, we will tell them, “You just make sure you are always there.”

TR: “Always attend the practice. You vocalize every day because ah, the voice changes.”

JR: “You cannot stop, once it’s there.”

TR: “Or if you want to be castrated…”

(Laughter)

JH: Blast from the past!

TR: Yes!

JH: All right. So then, about the alumni program— I put that your alumni program is Christ the King Choir.
JR: Christ the King Youth Choir.

JH: Youth Choir! Okay. And, how often do they perform?

JR: Just once.

TR: For Mass. Sunday Mass!

JR: They rehearse just once.

JH: A week?

JR: They rehearse just before the Mass.

JH: So, they rehearse on Saturday and perform on Sunday. Correct?

JR: No. They rehearse before…

JH: Okay, they rehearse before the Mass.

JR: Yes, an hour before the Mass.

JH: One hour before the Mass.

JR: Yes.

TR: Because [it’s] very hectic scheduling.

JR: Yes, because some of them are in college some of them are working.

JH: Is this a weekly performance then?

JR and TR: Yes.

JH: And all year long because you don’t take a break!

TR: Yes.

JH: All right. So, the performance schedule is the next part here. So, your choirs perform all year round for the Mass, every week. How often do you do other types of concerts, would you say?

JR: So, the most regular thing that we do is the *Halina’t Umawit.*

JH: That’s wonderful! You started this?

JR and TR: Yes.

TR: We started it in 2009.

JR: Here’s the spelling. So, our official theme song was already published by Pavane and Hal Leonard.

JH: OOOOOHHHHH!

JR: So, this is the *Halina’t Umawit*.

TR: That’s the title.

JH: All right! Say it again really slow so we can hear this! (24:00)

JR: *Halina’t Umawit*.

JH: Keep going. Read the whole thing.

JR: So *Halina’t Umawit sa Panginoon* means, “Come let us sing to the Lord.” Now, the purpose of the festival is for the choirs outside Metro Manila to be able to sing in our cultural center of the Philippines because that’s the only concert hall we have. So, it gives opportunity for choirs outside the provinces [to show] that they’re really good. Also, for other choirs within Metro Manila [this is] an opportunity to perform—to showcase their…

JH: What’s the venue?

JR: The Cultural Center of the Philippines.

TR: And, our festival, unlike the other festival—the performers have to pay. But our festival…

JR: We even share some [of the] proceeds to them.

JH: Oh really? Wow.

JR: So, that we can help their choir also.

JH: With each choir—you pay them to do this?
TR: Not pay but…

JR: Not pay, but it’s like an honorarium for them.

JH: Okay!

JR: To help, maybe also for their…

TR: Expenses!

JR: Expenses.

JH: That’s really nice. So, these are indigenous, traditional choirs?

JR: No, not really, because some of them are also taught by um…

TR: Professionals!

JR: Professional conductors. Because it’s so expensive to perform at the Cultural Center. Choristers dream to perform in that place. So, it’s like your Carnegie Hall.

JH: Yes!

JR: But this one is the uh, premiere hall in the Philippines.

JH: Ah! That’s really wonderful! How many choirs are in the…

JR: The festival? We usually have four or five.

TR: Including the Hail Mary Choir.

JH: So how many kids would that be total?

JR: Let’s check. You can see some videos on YouTube.

JH: Oh, that’s good. I’ll have to look that up. Do you direct it?

TR: Yes! One hundred fifty!

JR: And the last three years, she will give workshops for the choirs and the conductors of those participating members.

JH: You give workshops for the conductors or the children?

JR: Both! The conductors and the [children].
JH: That’s nice. I bet that’s fun!

TR: Yes!

JR: Here! They have a new YouTube, ninth, eighth and—here’s an example.

JH: Okay, I see! How many have you done so far? Is that nine?

TR: This is our tenth, this year.

JH: And when will you do it?

TR: October.

JR: This is like a promotion of the Cultural Center.

JH: Wow! Aw! That’s all of them together?

JR: Yes. So, this is the latest right?

TR: That’s the latest.

JH: And it’s only for children, right?

JR: Yes.

JH: Is this you?

TR: Yes, and I don’t like my gown!

(laughter)

JH: You don’t like your gown? It’s beautiful!

TR: Actually, that’s a free gown. So, I have to wear it!

JH: You look tall there!

TR: Yeah!

JH: That was one of the biggest surprises I had. Your stature—because on all of the YouTube [videos] you look taller [than you are]!

TR: Yes, yes! Many people say that! Oo! I thought you were tall!
JR: I think two or three years ago, we invited a Danish choir to join us because they wanted some cultural exchange. So, they were able to join.

TR: This is the ninth.

JH: And this was five or six choirs?

JR: How many choirs was this one?

TR: The Chinese choir, two, three, four…

JR: Four!

TR: Yeah, four plus us. Five!

JH: So wonderful! So, all right, you choose all the music for it then?

TR: Yes. For…

JR: For only [the] tutti pieces—for the festival pieces.

JH: So how many pieces do they all do together?

JR: Four—ah, only three.

TR: Three!

JH: And then each choir performs how many by themselves?

JR: Five.

TR: Fifteen to twenty minutes, right?

JR: Yes.

JH: That’s so neat! Sounds well organized! It’s beautiful!

TR: My conducting and the music isn’t…(chuckling).

JH: Is the music all sacred or not necessarily?

JR: Yes, this is sacred, but the choirs in the repertoire on their own they can have the folk songs and the popular songs.

JH: But, the three that you do collectively are sacred?
JR: Yes, sacred most of the time.

JH: Ah, that’s really great!

TR: And, we will be celebrating our tenth year this year.

JH: That’s so wonderful! How many choirs are lined up for that?

JR: I think [for] this edition, the parents—those who are in the executive committee—they wanted it to be different because it’s the tenth year. So they are planning to invite, not a Philippine Children’s Choir Festival, but to invite those who won the Choir of the World competition. Because there are two other Filipino choirs, but they are adult choirs—university choirs who won the Pavarotti trophy at the Llangollen also, in the United Kingdom. So, in that case, they said the theme will be, “Choir of the World.”

JH: Wow! In October.

TR: In October.

JR: So hopefully—we are still waiting for the response of the choir, from one choir—from the UST Choir.

TR: Singers!

JR: UST Singers.

JH: Okay, UST…

TR: Yes, UST Singers—the University of Santo Tomas Singers.

JH: Oh, that’s very interesting. I had no idea about that! All right. Are the concerts that you have for your choir now—we talked about this a little bit, and I can’t remember what you said—are [they] mandatory? I mean, you said they are very committed. They show up, but in your culture, I guess, it would be unthinkable for somebody just not to show up because they are going to go on a vacation on a Sunday? I mean—it’s probably just very different. We have to be very clear about what our expectation are.

JR: Ooh, okay! Well, you know, of course, they will show up because that’s the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

JH: Well, for that—yes. But I am just saying for your regular season, not for the festival anymore.

JR: For example, Sunday?

JH: Yes.
JR: Oh, they can – if they have a family gathering.

TR: We will allow them [to go].

JH: How about if you have a wedding gig?

TR: We have to ask their parents first.

JR: So, it’s a collective thing. So, if we see that we don’t have enough numbers of singers, we turn it down.

JH: Okay, so you have thirty-six [singers], what would be your lowest—”We can’t do it if we don’t have this amount?” Would you go more by which singers you have, or I don’t know?

JR: Yeah, it’s more of which singers we have. Remember, this is actually the biggest group that will be going out of the country.

JH: To Hungary.

JR: First time. Because we would usually take twenty-four or twenty-five kids.

JH: Yes.

JR: Only twenty-four or twenty-five.

JH: And this time you have how many?

JR: Thirty-six.

JH: All of them are going?

JR: Yes. So, it’s like plus eleven—plus twelve.

JH: That’s wonderful! All right! And, you do outreach and charity performances, right? I heard you talk about…

TR: Yes! Outreach programs. Yes!

JR: Sometimes. That happens most of the time. It’s more charity.

TR: I remember, we went to Cavite to help the parish.

JR: You can say that we help a lot of churches around Metro Manila. We do concerts for their cause.
JH: To help churches around Manila.

JR: Even outside Manila. Yes, you are correct. For example, they want their church repainted, build an altar. Even in my province, we went there because the nuns would like their church to have a bell tower [or] something like that.

JH: So, people will come to see the concert and pay money, and the money will go towards…

TR: Yes, all the proceeds will go to the sisters.

JH: That’s nice. That’s so great. How often do you do a charity concert to help a church? How often do they come up?

JR: Well, the people will just watch the concert and pay for the tickets.

JH: So, yeah, how often do you do a concert like that?

JR: Oh, how often!

JH: Yeah, how often do you do a concert like that per year?

JR: Per year, an average of three [or] four. Because, especially at Christmas time, it’s a good way to raise funds. So, a lot of churches will ask us. Just like the past Christmas—like two or three? Cavite, Help Parish…

JH: Does the choir keep a percentage of the cost or does a hundred percent go towards the cause?

JR: One hundred percent.

TR: They will just feed us.

JR: And, of course, the transportation.

JH: They pay transportation and food while you are there? That is so generous! Good! All right, the venues where your choirs most often perform—so, the Immaculate Conception—that’s a cathedral.

TR: Yeah.

JH: But the other two are more just…

TR: Parish.

JH: Parishes. And when you do a charity concert, where do you perform those?
JR: Church. In the church.

JH: So that’s your main performing venue—is a church.

TR: Is the church, yes.

JR: Even in our concert tour, in the US, it’s mostly in the churches.

JH: And mostly in the Catholic Church or not necessarily?

TR: Not necessarily.

JR: Not necessarily, because I remember in LA that’s Adventist there.

JH: Okay. It’s says, “Do you tour? If so, how often [and] how far?” So, you probably tour once-a-year maybe?

JR: Once-a-year? Not really. Maybe every other year.

TR: Every two years?

JR: Every two years.

TR: But it depends…

JH: It depends on the invitation.

TR: Yes, that’s right.

JR: Because like in 2016, I think we had like three tours! Singapore, Korea…

JH: When?

TR: 2015.

JR: No 2015 was US.

TR: Ah, 2015 was US, then 2016.

JR: Singapore and Korea. But last year we didn’t do any tours because we know we are going out—That’s why it’s usually every other year.

JH: So you have more time to raise money.

TR: Yes.
JH: Okay, so yeah, I have, “fundraisers.” If you tour, how are tours funded? The kids, they don’t pay anything.

JR: They solicit on their own.

JH: They solicit?

JR: On their own.

JH: How do they solicit?

JR: Ah, like family, friends…

JH: Grandpa and cousins…

JR: Yeah, grandpa…

TR: The parents!

JH: Our most successful fundraiser—I don’t know if it would translate to the Philippines—but since you say that. It was our easiest fundraiser. We raised $11,000 America dollars this year. All we did was--we generated a postcard—this big—that one of our alums, who does these cute caricatures. I have a little sample at the hotel. She made about five little paper cutouts of choristers, and they are very cute. And it said, “Join our chorus of support.” And then, on the back, it said, “You can have a place in our choir.” And then the kids wrote notes. We gave them a template that said something like, “Dear Grandpa, I’m in this great choir. We need to raise money for… Would you consider giving a gift?”

JR: Yeah!

JH: And, then we mailed them, and it was amazing how the gifts came in.

TR: Oh wow.

JH: It was really amazing. Each student was given seven cards. So they addressed them to aunts, uncles, friends or whatever and brought them back to us. We put postage on them and recorded—we keep records of it so that the money didn’t go back to them, it came to the organization. But, that was for our operating expenses, but it was really easy. We have some families that have multiple children.

JR and TR: Yes.

JH: So, we have several with four kids. So, for those families, we only asked for twelve postcards total. So, each kid could do three [postcards]. If they have three kids, it was four [postcards] for each kid. And if it was just two kids, then it was six [postcards] and
then seven [postcards] per kid if there is just one kid in the family. Yeah, it was a very successful [fundraiser].

TR: Actually, last year, before Christmas, I told the kids to ask their parents to support them for the trip, “Don’t ask them for material things! Tell them to support in terms of the international need for the trip.” Some did that. So, no Christmas gift, but ah, money!

JR: I think Regina wrote to her uncles and aunties with a personal letter.

JH: That’s wonderful! All right! Now, into pedagogical categories. Okay? That was the business side. So vocal tone—can you describe what your goal is when it comes to vocal tone production in your words?


JR: Light and relaxed sound.

JH: So, what vocal pedagogy concepts form the basis [of sound]? What things do you do to generate your angelic sound?

JR: Well, we didn’t catch it because we arrived a little late, but some of the older kids already started the physical warm up—the vocal warm up—the physical massage of the face muscles. We usually start with the physical warm up.

TR: Large muscles, small muscles.

JR: Of course, the vocalizes, the vocal exercises.

TR: Then after that, we have the part-singing.

JR: Vocal technique?

TR: Ah, what else? Breathing exercises!

JR: More to activate to the vocal mechanism. Vocal activities.

JH: Is there anything that you do to show them? I mean, because it’s really hard when they can’t see their instrument—to understand how it works. I mean your diaphragm…

JR: Oh, she has this uh, thing sometimes—more of an analogy—but sometimes she has all the material.

JH: That’s the stuff I want.

JR: Sometimes she creates this bottle thing with a balloon.
TR: So, it’s more visual so that they will see the inhalation and exhalation process, where the air goes. And also using their imaginations, we use the metaphor.

JH: I’d like to know what they are. What are your metaphors?

JR: For example, for breath support, we have the candle, flame-bending exercise. Sometimes we will really bring real candles in the rehearsal, especially for the new ones…

TR: So, they will understand.

JR: So, they will be able to control the breath support for the diaphragm to the air flow—the control. So, we would say, “Try to blow it off—the candles.” So that’s not what they are going to do. So, our aim is just to let it move. So, just by that, I think it’s better for kids than to say, “This is how it works” or something like that. But then, they are like, “Oh something is happening here, below.” So, without telling them what really transpired, so, they were now able to control the breath. The management...

TR: And also, imagination. Imagine that you have several noses. For example, you have one hundred noses. So, now inhale using the one hundred noses. And they expand.

JH: The noses are here (on the stomach).

TR: Yes. The noses are here. And, what else? Imagine for posture. Imagine that you have a wire connecting your chest to the ceiling.

JR: An exclamation point! No question mark please!

TR: An exclamation point, like, sit properly, to say, “Stand! Stand Tall!” So, instead of saying that, I will say, “Exclamation point.” Imagine that you smell fragrant flowers—blossoms.

JR: We will initially say that they can—if they have baby brothers or baby sisters, I think because we want it as natural as possible—we want them to observe how their baby brothers or baby sisters breathe. Okay? Because you know what? In the Philippines, the PE—you know, physical education—so, sometimes the kids are really naturally—they breathe correctly. But once they go to school, because of the activities, sometimes the process will change. For example, in PE, they are asked to inhale and hhhhhaaaaaaa.

JH: They use their chest.

JR: So, their shoulders will go up.

TR: We must train the physical education teacher how to breathe in

JR: Sometimes we got the bad habits really from the outside world.
JH: Yeah, it’s all over the world.

JR: So, we will just remind them the natural way and, of course, breath management and support, because…

JH: Do you do anything for like, the tone up here? Do you have any analogies for how the throat should look or how the vowels should be?

TR: Actually, for the light voice first—developing the light voice. I want them to—when you were talking about the owl—(high voice) hoo, hoo, hoo hoot! Or imagine Santa Claus—so, the sound of Santa Claus, (rich voice) Ho Ho Ho, Merry Christmas!

JH: Right!

TR: Oh, what else?

JR: Remember one time you had this script?

TR: That’s right! I have in my workshop—where is that thing? Yeah, I have in my workshop, I have a story, and it’s about the treasure hunt. My characters are different animals—different animals.

JH: Who is?

TR: The characters of the story.

JH: Oh, I thought you said, “doctors!”

TR: So, every time I say, “the dog” for example. And the dog will say, “Ow, Ow, Ow, Ow!”

JR: In America, it’s arf, arf, or woof.

TR: In the Philippines, it’s “Ow, Ow, Ow, Ow, Ow!” It’s different! And, the sound of the monkey (varying high and low tones) oo, oo, oo, ah, ah, oh, ah, oh, ah. So, different sounds of the animals, because these are children. So, I wanted to produce the sound of the birds (high voice) wee, wee, wee, wee! Or even an ambulance (high to low and repeat) oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo. That’s why when you enter the rehearsal room every time, they greet, (chesty) “Good afternoon!” That’s not the way! I want it—(singing on sol, la, mi) “Jesus loves you!” So that they will develop the head voice—not shouting. Because remember I am a teacher at a grade school. So, sometimes it’s so hard for me to say, “Hey keep quiet!” All voice! “Get quiet!” So, sometimes what I do is—I will clap (claps ta, ta-ti, ta, ta) and everybody will clap the same—imitate, and it means, “get quiet.” So, I don’t have to shout. I don’t have to use my voice. Or, sometimes I will give a pitch. They are so noisy and then I will (sings a Bb) loooo! So, it means, get quiet.
JH: Yes.

TR: So, we use that also in our choir.

JH: So, is there any other analogies [sic], that you can think of that you do?

TR: Ah, imagine that you have a quail egg in your mouth for the space.

JH: A whale?

JR: Quail!

JH: Quail

TR: Quail egg.

JR: Because we have some street food here—the boiled quail egg. So, it’s better for them. They can easily understand.

TR: So, if sometimes they will do this (larger space in mouth). That’s a chicken egg! It must be the quail egg!

JR: Now also for the larynx and the open space, she will initially say, “About the yawn feeling…”

TR: About the yawn. Sigh and yawn! Yawn and sigh!


TR: So, we use also, movements.

JH: Yeah, tell me!

TR: Movements, like the air—imagine this is the air. It goes to your lungs, so the lungs will expand.

JH: Okay, hold on! Since you are doing something with your hands. I will let you take a little video. Okay, imagine…make sure you can see all her hands.

TR: So, using the imagination. Imagine that this is the air. So, [it] will enter your mouth. The lungs will expand, and it will drop the diaphragm—push down—push down the abdominal muscles. The abdominal muscles will expand.

JH: Is it too light behind her? Why don’t you record her again?

TR: So, we do movements so that they will understand.
JH: Yes. Any other movements that go along with that? Or other types of movements while we have this [camera] on?

(Laughter)

JR: Oh, we have this for the raising of the soft palate, right, for this piece.

JH: Oh, yeah!

JR: So, we just say, “the teeth.” For example, we say, “ring!” Because the top of your tongue matching the soft palate and then release. Ring-Aw! It’s just open. Ring-Aw! Because most of the time it’s [tongue] here in the front, not in the back.

JH: Oh, I like that! Okay! Oh, this is good! Anything else you can think of? All right! Do you ever use audio sources to give the ideal tone to your students or do you just model it yourselves?

TR: Vocal model.

JH: You model it yourself.

JR: What’s so nice now, is that because we have been there for the past nineteen years, so, I mean, the vocal modeling is already—because somebody will catch the last batch. So, it’s easier for them.

JH: They learn from each other.

JR and TR: Yes. Yes.

JH: You know, that’s exactly what about every choir has said. And, it’s true for our choir too. The kids come in and go, “Oh my goodness! Okay! I guess this is how I need to do it!” All right! Musicianship! How do you develop musicianship in your organization? So, do you dedicate a certain portion of your rehearsal to just musicianship training? And, how do you do that?

JR: Okay. You mean theory. Okay! So, we usually do that in summer.

JH: In the summertime.

JR: Summertime. So, different concept by using Kodály’s method.

JH: You use Kodály?

JR: Kodály, Orff and uh Dalcroze.

JH: Are you all Kodály, Orff, and Dalcroze trained?
TR: Kodály more.

JR: No! But more of Kodály.

TR: I am a member of Kodály society for thirteen years. He was a board member.

JR: Because in the school where I teach for four years we have a full Kodály curriculum, but we’re not um—most of our teachers were trained in Hungary, Kecskemét.

JH: Most of them WERE trained in Hungary?

JR: Yeah, WERE trained in Hungary. We have one from Holy Names.

TR: Yeah, from Holy Names.

JR: One of my mentors—from Holy Names.

JH: Holy Names?

JR: Holy Names in the US.

JH: Holy Names. Oh, okay!

JR: I think it’s in Oakland.

JH: I’m not sure. Okay. So, can you talk about how you incorporate this training into the rehearsals?

JR: Okay. Again, just like [the] Kodály thing. So, basically, it’s sound first before sight—before we show the actual symbols in music. It’s more of a song-based thing.

JH: So, what I am digging for is—do you set aside, like fifteen minutes, where you’re not thinking about your repertoire? You’re thinking only of musicianship training.

JR: Of just the theory!

JH: Yes.

JR: Oh!

JH: Or do you just incorporate it as you are teaching repertoire?

JR: Yes. That’s the one, but before that, the basics are taught during the summer—those six to eight weeks. So, for example, we rehearse—like, we add one more day. Right?

TR: Yeah, yeah!
JR: We would add a day during summer breaks so that we can teach theory and aural training.

JH: Ear training?

JR: Ear training.

JH: You do that on a day, like, a two-hour rehearsal? How much time do you give to that?

JR: An hour. An hour, but during only on summer [sic].

JH: Okay, an hour of your two-hour rehearsal?

JR: Yes.

JH: So, it’s weekly then?

TR: Yes.

JR: Yeah, weekly. Correct!

JH: So, it would be accurate to say that during your six to eight…

JR: Weeks.

JH: Weeks of your summer, you would do one hour of theory training per week.

JR: Correct!

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: That’s good! But then, if you pull out a new piece of music, that they’ve never seen, would you have them read that with solfege or how do you introduce a brand-new work?

JR: Oh, first, we would use neutral syllables. Okay?

JH: Na, na, na or…

JR: Or la, la, la, loo, loo, loo. And, then after that—especially for those who have been with the choir for more than two years, so, basically their sight-reading skills were actually developed as they go on. So, some are really good at reading and doing solfege of course and—but, the young ones would just, uh…

TR: Listen and observe!
JR: Listen and observe.

JH: Okay.

JR: Aside from their six, uh—because summer is really short to learn theory. But of course, sometimes we really start that early—especially once the pieces are complicated. So, you really have to stop and dissect how to do it—the parts.

JH: So, you do some of that explaining as you are going through.

JR: Yes. Correct.

JH: Okay!

TR: And also, we have a guardian-mentoring program. Guardian ANGEL!

JR: Guardian angel—like a mentoring—so, they have their partners.

JH: I like that. So, it’s other kids? Yeah. You match them with the new kids?

TR: Yes.

JH: So, the older ones, will you teach them some sight-reading skills?

TR: Yes. Even the pieces that they need.

JH: Uh huh!

TR: They will tell them. Because uh, for our Sunday Mass, they have to learn the Mass songs.

JR: Because of course, the others—they have sung it before. Right?

JH: Okay. So, is that a part of the rehearsal to say, “Okay, now, go with your guardian angels?” Or how does that work?

JR: Sometimes. Sometimes. But, sometimes—I don’t know—maybe over the phone—maybe they would see each other—they practice with each other. Maybe, before the rehearsal, they would see each other!

JH: What’s their motivation to do that—like the older ones?

JR: Older ones? Well, they don’t want the quality of the choir to go down. I think that’s their motivation. Because, of course, they themselves got to serve—I mean—because the invitations we get from outside—the opportunity—because of those kids before them—so, for them to continue—for the tradition and for those invitations to continue. So, I
think that’s their motivation. They have to train the new ones! So, that it’s what we taught them. It’s like paying it forward.

JH: Yes!

JR: So, something like that. So, that’s what we train them to do.

JH: They take ownership of the quality.

TR: Yes, that’s right!

JH: That’s good. All right. And you all would be the theory teachers. You don’t have anybody else that comes in to do that?

JR and TR: (Chuckle)

JH: It’s you all. Okay. Um, and--you just mentioned that the guardian angel program—they would maybe do that before rehearsals—do you expect outside rehearsal practice though on a regular basis or is most of the learning done in your rehearsals?

JR: Recently we—because sometimes the pieces—the new ones [singers]—they have to learn the old pieces. So, sometimes they gather like thirty minutes before the rehearsal, or an hour before the rehearsal. It depends where they live. Right? So, the old ones will teach them.

JH: Okay. We actually expect our kids to practice on their own. It depends on their age, but at the most, like thirty minutes, four-times-a-week, outside. We talk about, you know, developing their voice and try to give them the tools, but since we only see them once-a-week—you have much more time each week.

JR: Yeah, correct.

JH: So, we have to rely—if they didn’t practice outside, we would not be as good as we are.

JR: And sometimes we are really very careful, of course, of allowing—especially the new ones to practice by themselves. Ah, different technique might be—or some bad habits would be developed just to reach those…

JH: Yes, you don’t want to damage anything. All right. Let’s see. So, now about literature, okay? How do you find new repertoire for your ensemble? I think the answer is probably that you just compose it. Right? (Chuckle)

JR: Not all the time.

JH: Not all the time? So where do you go for your repertoire if you don’t compose it?
TR: It depends on the needs.

JR: It depends on the needs. Hey, by the way, we also have some activities like her conducting students getting the choir as a laboratory choir for their recitals.

JH: Ah! That’s from your college?

JR: Yes, that’s where we get our, like, period music, Renaissance, Baroque and uh…

TR: It’s a requirement of the university.

JR: Requirement of the university. So, since it’s an academic exercise, the repertoire there, it has to be from…

TR: The historical periods.

JH: That’s so wonderful! That’s a win-win situation! Everybody learns!

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: But, your kids already know—like, the Hail Queen…

JR: The choir?

JH: Yeah. Hail Mary…

TR: Mary the Queen.

JH: Do they have to learn these [songs] or do they have a bank of period music, they already know, for your conducting students?

TR: Ah, they have to learn a new one.

JH: Okay.

JR: At least every student, at least, a new two or three songs.

TR: I don’t want all the old pieces because I want my student to learn how to handle the children’s choir.

JH: Right.

TR: Because if I will allow them to sing what we were singing before, so I am not teaching them.

JH: Right!
JR: The choir will—the choir can run—can sing on its own (laughter)!

JH: So, oh, I get it! It’s not just conducting; it’s also teaching the pieces.

JR: Yeah.

JH: I see. Okay. That’s really wonderful.

JR: So, but it’s supervised of course. We have to be there.

JH: Yes, right.

JR: So, how many usually? Two or three for the whole repertoire, out of the recital list—two or three new songs.

JH: Each year?

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: Okay. What’s the name of your university where you teach?

TR: University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music.

JH: Of San…


JH: And what’s your university?

JR: Centro Escolar University.

JR and TR: C-E-N-T-R-O


JH: Escolar.

TR: Yes.

JH: Okay.

JR and TR: University.

JH: Okay. So, the students come from the University of Santo Tomas.

JR: Mm-hm. Yes.
TR: They also come from Centro Escolar. My…

JH: They come from Centro…

TR: I also teach in their graduate school program.

JH: Okay, so, both of you are there?

JR and TR: Yes.

JH: But the ones that mentor or teach conducting to you choir come from Santo Tomas?

TR: Yes.

JH: Okay. So, um, where do you purchase works—octavos? Where do you get them from mostly? Do you use public domain? Do you have a publishing company you work with?

JR: For the period music, I think, it’s usually when we…

TR: Online.

JR: Online, but for those early music, mostly IMSLP.

JH: Mm-hm. Yes.

JR: And uh, CPDL.

TR: CPDL.

JH: Yes. Very familiar. And, then, I guess, do you have Finale that you compose on?

JR: Ah, yes, yes.

JH: It’s Finale, and then you just print your own off for them?

JR: Mm-hm.

JH: All right. So, choirs often do become known for one or two defining works. Is there anything like that that you all have become known for?

JR: Your work, I think and…

JH: Folksongs?

JR: Yes, the folksongs. Filipino folk songs and the sacred works by Filipino composers.
JH: Sacred--what did you say?

JR: Sacred works of Filipino composers.

JH: Oh, of Filipino composers.

JR: Because every time we travel, we will usually…

JH: Sure! So which ones did you think about—I said this was coming—so, what would you enjoy knowing that our choir is doing on your behalf? Like, when I do my doctoral recital, what piece would you be like, “Oh we’d love for you this one to show who we are?”

JR: For you, “Orde-e?”

TR: “Da Kami.” “Da Kami.” The one that you heard last night.

JH: Can you spell that again?


JH: A-N-A-N.

TR: So, I will repeat that. D-A space. Da

JR: (Clucking like a chicken in imitation of the spelling.)

(Laughter)

JH: There it is! [Viewing copy of “Da Kami Ay Anan-ak”] Actually, I almost did it [spelling] right! I have it! Yeah. Oh, but my spell checker changed it [spelling] at the last—okay. That’s great! So, this one! All right. I was hoping you would say that! It’s a beautiful piece.

TR: And yours?

JH: I would like to do some of your sacred stuff. Yeah, do you have one?

JR: Would you like a cappella?

JH: Either.

TR: Sacred, a cappella.

JR: I think you can try the “O Sanctissima.”
TR: Yeah, “O Sanctissima!”

JR: O Sanctissima.

TR: O Sanctissima.

JH: Spell that. Is that published as well?

JR: Yes, it’s published as well by this one—Henry Leck.

JH: Oh, oh, good! Yes! That’s where I became aware of your work—with Henry Leck at a workshop.

JR and TR: Oh.

JH: That’s where I got “Orde-e.”

TR: “Orde-e?”

JH: Yes. Oh, this looks great! My choir tends to do three and four parts, but I tend to like the balance better with three parts than four sometimes. Yeah. Okay. Great!

JH: This question. Does anyone regularly compose music for your choir, if so who is the composer? So, I put you two down. (Addressing Jude Roldan) You do more often?

JR: Yes. Yes.

JH: And, how regularly? How many new works per year do you generate for the choir?

JR: Ah, for the choir?

JH: Yes.

JR: Because, you know, sometimes if we have a Mass where we cannot get any music at all, then I will just write for them.

TR: Yeah, that’s right.

JH: Wow! So, how often does that happen? How many times…

JR: Okay, so you can say—this combination of composition and arrangement especially for them—so, maybe six [or] eight a year.

JH: You’re kind of like Bach to Leipzig! Roldan to …

JR: But Bach was doing it every week!
JH: I know, but still!

JR: Because we cannot also do that because this is a children’s choir. They can only, like, learn something.

JH: But the thing is, the need brought forth the creativity. So, you have the same thing. You have a need that’s bringing out your creativity!

JR: And of course, also, sometimes we write music for pedagogical purposes.

JH: Uh huh.

JR: Just like I told you. Just like— I remember, you [Theresa] wanted to develop the breathing, so I decided to write that “O Lord Hear My Prayer,” the Psalm.

JH: Is that one published?

JR: Yes, it’s published! And, it was even used in the festival. And, I think a lot of American choirs are doing that now—Japanese and Korean choirs.

TR: Korean.

JH: Really?

JR: Because there’s just…

JH: I know Moses Hogan’s “O Lord Hear My Prayer.” No. Yeah. This is Roldan.

JR: So, if you will look at the piece. So, you have the alto part there. This all throughout…

JH: Oooo! Yeeeeeaahhh!

JR: To the end.

JH: It’s all “E” to the end! That’s amazing!

TR: It’s for staggered breathing exercise! Haha!

JH: That’s so fun! I bet it creates a real atmosphere. It’s an atmospheric piece. That looks fun!

JR: The melody came up when I brought my mom to a convent.

JH: I love this! Yeah!
JR: So, while I was waiting for her, the melody just went…

JH: This is great! That’s amazing! So, then you have a cantor type person or small group chants?

JR: Yeah, small group—like, three [or] four kids doing it. I think we have that on the internet.

JH: Awesome! Cool. That one has good possibilities too! All right. Now, performance practice—this is the last big category. Oh, some of these questions are for a traditional children’s choir. Yours is different. How many pieces do your choirs learn each year—would you say—new pieces? Or do you just keep a revolving bank for the Mass?

JR: Yeah, we also have that.

JH: So, how many new pieces would you introduce to your repertoire each year would you say?

TR: Because we sing every Sunday, we have new—maybe fifteen?

JH: Maybe fifteen new pieces along with a bank of…

JR: Yeah, along with a bank of—especially Christmas time we would always add something like a new one.

TR: Because we are thinking they might have heard it before. We are singing the same repertoire, so we have to change it!

JH: Of course!

JR: But of course, we have that [sic] songs that are really constantly [enjoyed]—that they would [like to hear again]—some of those who have invited us before [will say], “Oh can you sing this again?”

JH: Yes!

TR: Like, for example, the “Orde-e.” The “Orde-e” ah, the children are actually still enjoying it, but the conductor is not enjoying it anymore! (Laughter) So, if the [audience] demands, “We want to hear the “Orde-e” though—we have this chorus, so we have to sing it. We have some parents request us to sing it again. So okay!

JH: It’s common for artists. When you get an art piece out there, everybody wants to hear it.

TR: That’s right.
JR: Actually, this batch—some of them still don’t know “Orde-e” right? They are just learning it. The batch from last night—some of them are just learning the piece.

JH: And do they always perform from memory? Right? You don’t ever have them stand up with music, do you?

JR and TR: We want them to memorize.

JH: Same. Same [for my choir].

JR: But for [the] festival, sometimes…

TR: They still memorize, but the organizer want [sic] them to hold the piece. Like, for example, in our festival, it’s required that you have to memorize it because it has a stamp and a clap.

JH: You can’t be holding music!

TR: Yes! So, what sometimes other choirs don’t follow [sic]. They cannot memorize it. So…

JH: Really?

TR: But I have to tell them, “You know, the clapping and stomping are part of the repertoire.”

JH: You have to drop it in!

TR: Yeah it is. You have to memorize it. So, we have to explain it to them. So, they follow me.

JR: Unless the performance of a new piece is the next day—sometimes it [holding music] happens.

TR: But, you know, children—they can easily memorize. Even my kids in school—they have a poem that they have to memorize. So, I told them, “Put music into it like, ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.’” So, they easily memorize it.

JH: That’s great! All right! So, your choir performs a cappella obviously. Um, you do repeat repertoire. How long do you hang on to a piece once it’s well-learned? [It] probably depends on how well you like it, you know. Do you have any—one of the choirs in this study—there as actually a piece I absolutely loved that they did. He said it had been in the repertoire for almost forty years.

JR: Wow!
JH: And he requires his girls to memorize thirty pieces before they can be in his top choir. So, they come in with a bank [of songs] already. But some [songs] fall out, but then there are some [songs] stay in—like he’s [the conductor’s] been there [for forty years]—I think that was his first year or something. He still kept it [the song] because it’s such a great piece. What’s the longest surviving piece that you wouldn’t let go [in your choir] because it’s so good?

TR: A-M-P-E-U S-H-E-L-O.

JH: What does that mean?

JR: Praise. Uh, children singing praise to God. But that was a composition by our friend who studied music here in the Philippines, but he’s from Nagaland, India and of course…

JH: Is that published? It’s not published.


JH: Who is that by?

TR: Jude!

JH: So, how long has that been in your repertoire?

JR: 1999 also, because of the Feast of the Guardian Angels.

TR: He composed it for the Feast of the Guardian Angels.

JR: I think that was the first piece I wrote for them.

JH: Ah!

TR: “A Child’s Prayer.”

JH: For Guardian Angels.

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: That’s great! So, you were asking me about discipline. I thought, “My goodness! Your kids are so disciplined! They are so beautiful!” You know, they seem like they want to do really well! They listen very well. Were they exceptionally good yesterday because we were there?

TR: Actually, they are well disciplined. We are so grateful and proud of them because they are well-behaved children. Because of the culture actually…
JR: Of the choir.

TR: We have that culture. Every time that we enter, they are all sitting down ready for instructions. Because when we were starting [the choir] we have—of course, they come from different families, different personalities—so we imposed already the discipline, like, “When we enter the room, make sure everyone settle [sic] down. All troubles and worries must be left outside the rehearsal room.

JR: So, whether they get low grades…

TR: Low grades in school or they have problems in school—leave it outside!

JH: Problems, stay away! I like that!

TR: Yes!

JR: But because of the culture of the choir, it’s already—for us in the past eight to ten years—because if you have some new kids that are rowdy or high energy, then, they will just realize they’re different here. So, if they what to stay, they will have to behave like them [well-behaved choristers.]

JH: So, it [behavior] rubs off on them.

TR: Modeling.

JH: But somewhere along the line, you set the culture. You developed it.

JR: Yeah, maybe like eight years before.

JH: Yeah, well, I didn’t see hardly any talking while you were instructing, which that doesn’t happen everywhere in the world! In some places it does. So that’s an expectation you have. They don’t talk during rehearsal.

TR: Yeah. They have to keep quiet. We’re actually strict. We’re strict, but…

JH: So, what do you when—before you got the culture, what did you do to instill that [behavior]?

TR: Actually, I was talking a lot before, because they were quite rowdy before.

JR: But that was like…

TR: Two months!

JR: I cannot even remember. I don’t know. I cannot even remember how…
JH: They just respect you.

TR: Yeah, that’s right.

JH: It seems like it’s not a fear. They don’t seem to fear you.

TR: Because if they are afraid of us, they will not return!

JH: Right. So, you do it in such a way—you set the culture in such a way that it’s not scary to them. They still feel free!

JR: Yeah, but those things—those are relative things depending on who sees it and who’s the person. For example, when I say, “Where’s your piece?” It’s just a normal question. “If you’ve brought your piece or have it with you.” [sic] So, it depends on the children now, whether it’s a scary thing when they say this.

JH: Yeah.

JR: That’s why. Also, it’s changing times also. So, I don’t know if it’s scary to other kids when you do this way. And, maybe, also, we’re just really honest about what we hear and what we observe. And, from the very start, we would say, “Whatever you hear from us—especially when it’s critiquing time—it’s more of the sound [we’re critiquing] than you as a person.”

JH: Uh huh! You explain that to them?

JR: Yeah, we explain that to them.

JH: All right. So, how about stage deportment? What do you expect from them and how do you teach that [expectation for] when they are performers? I haven’t seen them perform yet—but as far as walking up to perform or bowing—stage deportment. What do you expect?

JR: Well, before, we were really into it. We ourselves would teach them how to do it on stage. But now…

JH: You don’t have to so much!

JR: Because of the, again, the tradition already—maybe the old ones will tell them already what to do.

TR: Yes.

JR: Ah, “Teacher Theresa, doesn’t want it this way. She likes it this way!”

JH: So what are those ways? Be specific.
JR: Ah, for example, you cannot just—the stance—the proper posture really, is needed. And, you cannot talk while waiting for your time to perform. What else?

TR: Even telling them the right shoes, the right color, the hair…

JH: Yes!

JR: The costumes.

TR: Before, it was done by us, like, “You have to ponytail your hair! Fix your hair. No earrings when performing. Black shoes. Black socks.” But right now, the Guardian Angel will inform the uniforms. Costumes.

JH: Uh huh.

JR: *(Chuckles)* That’s why I cannot remember what we...On the stage, of course, always [use] eye contact with the conductor. Of course, that’s a must for them.

TR: What else?

JH: You do what?

TR: Eye contact.

JH: Eye contact!

JR: But, unless we have pieces like, where they have to communicate, she will not conduct.

JH: With the congregation?

TR: Yes. Yes! Because the special part of our concert, we have…

JR: We usually end our concerts with “A Blessing Song.”

TR: So, this is a time when they go near the audience, and we will bless the audience with a special blessing song.

JH: So, they’re to generally stand for this or go up to an individual?

JR: Yeah, they can do that as well!

JH: That’s neat! I’ve seen that. Do you use other instruments besides piano to accompany the choir? Organ? Do you use percussion?

TR: Your “Sanctus!”
JR: It depends on the piece. For example, I wrote a piece for them in the US concerts to be able to show some Filipino instruments. So, I wrote pieces for bamboo instruments, kiling-kiling (goat horns), like, small gongs. So, mostly percussion.

TR: The djembe!

JH: Um Hm. All right. And, like, choreography—you utilize choreography?


JR: Why choreography before?

TR: No, no, no. What I mean is ah…

JR: You did the choreography…

TR: Before! But ah, choreography—it depends on the song.

JH: Same with us! Do you ever use choreography in the Mass?

JR: No. No!

JH: I didn’t think so. Okay. I just want to verify. So, it’s used with your indigenous folk songs mostly?

JR: Yes. And, when we’re asked to sing the commercial popular music. And, sometimes the kids will do the choreography!

TR: Yeah!

JH: They make it up?

TR: Yes!

JH: That’s really cool!

TR: We also give them a chance to choose a popular song that they want to perform. So, we will just screen the words—the text. The message must be a good—it mustn’t have a bad news or message.

JR: Maybe tomorrow we can show them—instead of doing the rehearsal—maybe we can show them the choreography for that song that the kids made. What do you think? Even for those who just know the songs—something like that so they can see.

JH: And, you arrange it then?
JR: Yeah, yeah. Every time they ask for—for example—[do] you know One Direction—the group, One Direction?

JH: Yes, I do!

JR: So, I have to arrange…

TR: Because they like it. Because they have to choose!

JH: Is it One Direction that did (singing) “That’s What Makes You Beautiful?”

JR: The one I arranged was “One Thing.”

TR: (Singing) “One Thing…”

JH: But you know what I think is so funny, is that the pop songs are typically a range of three to four notes! (Chuckles)

JR: Yes. Yes!

JH: So, I’m not what I would call an arranger, but I did a few Orff arrangements of some pop songs because they’re simple chord structures—just a couple of notes and the kids were saying “Why can’t we do this more?” And, I said, “Because I would not be developing your vocal range!” We happened to be doing “Foot Loose.” Do you know “Foot Loose?”

TR: Ah yes!

JH: So, I just held up two fingers and said, “If I didn’t teach you other stuff, you would have this many notes” (Sings the two-note chorus to “Foot Loose”).

JR and TR: (Chuckling)

JH: And I just kept singing, and their eyes were getting big, and then some of the guys just started cracking up when they realized, it was true! So, then I didn’t have much problem selling the other stuff that I was trying to teach, because they don’t want to be locked in. They want to be excellent! You know, so then I would say, “Pop music is fine! It’s just limiting sometime!” So, sometimes the choristers do the choreography. Sometimes you do choreography?

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: Anybody else or is that it?

JR: We invite—for example, for the folk songs—we would invite really from…
JH: From the provinces?

TR: To make it more authentic.

JR: Because sometimes, even just [a] small movement of the hands means something already.

JH: Yeah. Right! All right. And, that person would actually teach the kids or teach you, and you would teach the kids?

TR: [They would] teach the kids.

JR: Also, we had a parent before.

JH: Okay, we are getting down to, almost the end! You told me yesterday that your YouTube videos are the most accessible way to get your choir [out there]. You don’t have CD’s available or DVD’s? No? Okay. And then the final question—well, there’s, kind of, two questions. One is a wrap-up question, but the final question is specific, [which is] to describe your choir’s performing attire. So, you have indigenous uniforms that match the province from which you are performing? Is that correct?

TR: Yeah, but not…

JR: Sometimes they are collective design from the various ethnic groups.

JH: Okay.

JR: But the cut are usually according to the cut of our national costumes.

JH: So, it’s [that] the colors change, but the cut doesn’t—the style.

JR: Yeah, the style—something like that. So, that’s why they look the same, but the color will change—different patterns and colors.

JH: Tell me again about the one you said you bought—it was from a beauty queen from Belgium?

JR: *(Laughter)*

JH: I think that’s really fun!

TR: *(Laughs)*

JR: Yes, because the candidate’s actually for the Ms. Earth Pageant—so since they are in the Philippines all of them have to wear varieties of [the] Philippian national costume. So, Ms. Belgium, at that time, wore that dress for it. Right?
TR: Yes!

JR: Because that’s a Philippine national costume for ladies.

JH: Okay. I want to know which one that is. It’s not the one we were watching when you said, “I don’t like that dress.”

TR: The one is in…(looking on YouTube.)

JH: Okay, yes, that one is beautiful! Is there anything else about your organization that I should know—about your choir?

JR: Well, pedagogically this is what our rehearsal—first from the warm-up, we really give time for the part singing. Okay, so we collected songs. We arrange part songs compose short songs to develop their part-singing skills. So, just like the song last night…

TR: The “Pilly, Pilly Ping Pong.”

JH: Yes!

JR: It’s our round songs. So, we also have songs with just ostinato. Songs with chord movement—progression, partner songs. So, we decided to insert that into our rehearsal because Filipino—a common problem for Filipino choirs is that part-singing skills, which for us is important so that we can easily teach pieces. So, that’s why—even if we have difficult pieces—the arrangements are somewhat used, pedagogically, to improve their part-singing skills.

TR: It’s sequential. We collect them. We compose. It’s a collection of—we have western. We have Filipino folk songs. We have a bunch!

JH: That’s great!

JR: Because we have good singers—Filipinos. We naturally have good singers because maybe of the language—because of the Filipino language. But, problems sometimes [sic] is really more of the independence—the inability to sing in parts before we teach them.

JH: Ah!

TR: A gift for you! (Gives Hostetter “Groundwork for Part-Singing.”)

JH: Oh, thank you! So, this you give to every kid? Every kid has one of these?

JR: Ah, they know all the songs there.

JH: Okay.
JR: So, that’s just book one, because these are the collection from the last eighteen years.

JH: That’s amazing! How many books do you have?

JR: Right now?

JH: This is book one…

JR: Oh, so, we will release this year, the other one, because we release [sic] it last year.

JH: Oh, thank you so much! This is a treasure! Is this, like, published in the United States?

TR: No.

JH: So, this is a real treasure! I’m never letting it go!

JR: There’s already an Indonesian and Singaporean edition. This one is more of a Philippian edition because [there are] lots of Filipino folk songs—for the Indonesian edition, a lot of Indonesian folk songs.

TR: So, every time we go somewhere, we also collect their folk songs. So, we will arrange it.

JH: That’s really neat!

JR: And use it pedagogically.

TR: Yes.

JH: That is such a strength of your program! That is so wonderful!

JR: So, you can open it, so you’ll see…

TR: “Pilly, Pilly, Ping Pong.”

JH: You did that song last night didn’t you?

TR: Yeah! “Pilly, Pilly, Ping Pong.”

TR: So, we give workshops in different parts of the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

JH: That’s great! That’s great!

JR: That call and response thing is really good for the new ones.
JH: This one you have arranged.

TR: Yes.

JH: You are saying this is one we should do.

TR: Mm-hm.

JH: (Gasps) This is wonderful!

TR: Simple songs.

JH: Yes!

TR: They will also enjoy. Like, yesterday—I told you—I saw that they were quite nervous. That’s why I put “Pilly, Pilly, Ping Pong” so that they would relax.

JH: Do you teach these by rote then?

JR: At first, because some of the pieces at the end are…

TR: More experiential at first. So, it’s sound before sight.

JR: So, these are our collections for eighteen years.

JH: Ah! This is a fantastic resource. You guys are amazing! I just have to say, “I’m so impressed!”

TR: Thank you!

JH: You have Mozart in here…

TR: Yes.

JH: London Bridge…

TR: Yeah, but we put…

JR: Some round songs and canon songs. But, the particular part there—developing more of a homophonic—the feeling of a chord.

TR: And also, the music teachers from other provinces, they use that so that they have songs for the classroom. For example, the concept is for “ti-ti” and “ti-ri-ti-ri” so they can get some songs there.

JH: There are lots of languages in here!
TR: I am also teaching Asian music as well. So, when I was teaching Asian music for the first time, I had a hard time of looking for materials from other countries. So, [it was a] good thing that Facebook and YouTube has [sic] some foreign choirs—Japan. They performed “Orde-e” without asking permission. They won in a competition because of “Orde-e.”

JR: Because it was not published at that time. So, “How did you get the piece?”

TR: So, when I saw them on Facebook that they won in a competition using the music of “Orde-e,” so I congratulated the conductor. I said, “Congratulations for winning!” But, I need his help because I have to—he’s from Thailand—and I have to teach my students a Tai song. So, we exchanged messages. He said, “Thank you for allowing us to sing ‘Orde-e.’” So, I thought, “He didn’t even ask me!” So, I said, “I need their help.” That’s the way you ask for help! “Can you help me with your Tai folk songs?” So, yes! He recorded it. He gave me a piece. Okay, so I had a piece for my students. So even though Indonesian song—I have friends from Indonesia, friends from Thailand, friends from different Asian countries!

JH: (Pointing to words in songbook) So, that’s your province?

JR: That’s my language.

JH: Your language!

TR: Last night? (Singing) Pin pin salo pin pin.

JH: Neat! All right, so, how would I know which ones these are? Oh, that says, “Tagalog folksongs.”

TR: Tagalog.

JR: So, Tagalog or Filipino?

JH: Tagalog.

JR: That’s the national language that we use.

JH: I’m going to write little notes. Thank you so much!
Appendix 4: Interview with Zimfira Poloz  
Director of the Hamilton Children’s Choir  
May 23, 2018

Zimfira Poloz: So, some years you get bigger number of older singers who really produce mature sound, but when they graduated all together as happens some years, in all children’s choirs, it’s really a young choir and [a] young sound. It’s different. So, it takes a couple of years to build—to get back to that big, full, free sound.

Janet Hostetter: Yeah, I will have that next year. I’m going to have about fourteen or fifteen graduate. It’s going to be hard.

ZP: So, we accept kids—like everybody. So, we didn’t turn away—I am working with [this] organization for fifteen years? It’s my fifteenth year.

JH: Oh, my goodness!

ZP: We didn’t turn away one child.

JH: Wow.

ZP: So, I was one of those [not-matching-pitch singers.] My parents was [sic] told, “Do something else!” Like she can’t…

JH: You were turned away from this organization?

ZP: No, from when I was a child. I was auditioning for music school. I was rejected. My parents was [sic] told, “Nope.”

JH: Oh, my goodness!

ZP: And I did this twice. On the third time I was accepted. So, I do not say, “no” to any child who wants to sing.

JH: So, you do have an audition process though?

ZP: Yeah, it’s not [called an] audition. It’s [called a] voice placement.

JH: Okay.

ZP: Or, “Come sing with us.”

JH: Okay.
ZP: Even [the] word audition—this requires certain pressure on the child.

JH: Okay, wow. I like that—voice placement. How often do you do that throughout the year? How often do you open that up?

ZP: Like, once in winter and once in spring and [at the] beginning of the season. All of the parents suddenly start looking [for] something for their kids, right? So, in September December, and May or June.

JH: Yeah, okay. Well actually, I am getting off of my written code. So, I should get back to it. Can you say your name, so I can say it correctly?


JH: Poloz.

ZP: I am from Kazakhstan. It’s um—I say I’m from former Soviet Union. That’s where I was learning and studying and growing up, and [I] opened [the] first choir school in Kazakhstan. It is about fourteen hours a week. It’s a professional choir school for young people. So, you have to be seven years old—grade one. You can’t join when you are grade two or three or four. It’s a mandatory program and they get [a] certificate—diploma—finishing this choir school. So, then this diploma allowed you to apply for the next level of music education, which is music college…

JH: Okay.

ZP: Four years, full-time mandatory program and only then you can apply for conservatory. That’s what I had. That’s my music education. And it’s a choral department so from grade eight going to grade nine, I already knew that I want [sic] to be [a] conductor, so I went to music college after music school, directly to [the] choral department. So, then five years [in] conservatory. It’s all mandatory programs. It’s not like you can choose and pick subjects. [Training occurs] Monday to Saturday, and September to June [with] exams in July. It’s intense! Many hours for [the] subjects.

JH: So, you started into the school at what age?

ZP: Seven

JH: Age seven. Okay. But you tried from the time you were four? Is that right?

ZP: Most of the kids in Soviet Union attend kindergarten – which has all different specialists including music teachers. Professional music school accept kids only by audition. So, you have to really have a good ear—like, repeat all this [sic] rhythm clapping and sing back—and I knew that I can [sic] do it, but I just was so scared and shy.
JH: Oh, okay.

ZP: So, then after university, I did researches [sic], and my choir school was also open to any children. So, and I did a lot of experiments: [I wondered] why [some] children get in such a condition when they can’t physically demonstrate their skills. It’s almost like a paralyzed function of the muscles.

JH: Speaking of—you sent me that wonderful list of studies that you’ve been a part of and I’m afraid I’m going to forget, so I’ll ask you now. The one that um—it said, “Germany” afterward—it was like a study of international choirs?

ZP: Yes, yes. It’s just in a process right now. Astryd Cottet from Germany—she’s traveling right now—observing children’s choirs right in Japan.

JH: Oh okay. I couldn’t find it!

ZP: I can put you in touch!

JH: I would love to!

ZP: She traveled to a number of countries for this year.

JH: Isn’t that [interesting]? I mean because that is essentially what I am doing as well!

ZP: Yeah, I found it’s very similar. It is interesting [sic] to see similar research—similar interest in a different part of the world. So, it might be [a] good connection for you. She asked me for [a] list of choirs to observe in different parts on the world and what I recommend: DVDs and useful books I like. And then she did a list asking [a] number of conductors who can recommend the best choirs—like, of different countries. And she created that list which will be interesting for me to have also because it was [a] number of people in her research. And then another one I was participating [in], “Clap Your Hands: Body Movements in Performance and Education,” Master research in Choral Conducting from Conservatory in Amsterdam [2015] the researcher did choreography and all this staging.

JH: Yeah, you do that very well.

ZP: And she did that research survey with very good choirs like Basilio Astulez—Kantika Choir in Spain and Carmina Slovenica from Slovenia and other fabulous choirs.

JH: So, what is the name of the person from Germany that is doing the international children’s choirs?

ZP: Astryd Cottet from Germany.

JH: Oh, okay.
ZP: I will put you in touch [with her].

JH: That would be wonderful!

ZP: That would be good for you to meet each other because it’s—maybe you can even exchange by [sic] some information.

JH: Yeah! That would be fantastic!

ZP: Because you have [a] different part of the world. And she gets [sic] Asia and she went also like [to] observe some European Choir [sic]. And then if you can share all your researches information that would be cool!

JH: That would be very cool! Yeah, I did Czech Republic last summer with Jitro and Australia is next month with the Gondwana Voices, Sydney Children’s Choir. Have you worked with Lyn Williams?

ZP: We met at the IFCM World Symposums regularly and then 500 Voices Choral festival in NF. I have such a deep respect for Lyn’s work!

JH: And then the Hail the Queen Mary Children’s Choir in the Philippines.

ZP: Ah it’s fantastic, of course. I gave Astryd these choirs to visit too.

JH: And then an interesting one was [in] Peru, which you probably haven’t heard. It’s called Los K’ana Wawakuna, and they are very indigenous to the community.

ZP: Ah, okay! Interesting! No, I have never heard of this group.

JH: Yeah, they are very colorful. Their training is more grassroots. The director is a folk musician teaching children how to sing the songs. I don’t think he has formal music training, but he has produced a nationally-recognized product.

ZP: Okay, nice! So, you see the Gondwana, or like, I even spoke with Basilio Austulez [when] we were working [in] Cyprus just a month ago. Like what the program we have here, it’s not really auditioned. I spent a lot of time with kids—almost like [a] social worker.

JH: That’s great!

ZP: I don’t just like—concentrating [sic] on a product. My philosophy—the children are most important! I try [to] make sure each child feels comfortable and safe and create [a] situation where they succeed.

JH: That’s wonderful!
ZP: It’s a lot of work, non-musical work! Music goes along with it in helping, because they love to sing, but it’s a lot of hours we spend on non-musical things like leadership skills.

JH: Yeah! All right, well, let me go through these questions. Some of them are basic, so I am not looking for big answers. If you have a one-word answer, that’s fine. So, the two parts: it will be your organizational structure and then after that, your pedagogical processes—which I am most interested in. So, this is just kind of setting up the first part. But, the program here has been in existence—you said, “fifteen years” for you, but…

ZP: Yeah, in two thousand nineteen, HCC will celebrate forty-fifth anniversary.

JH: Two thousand what?

ZP: Twenty nineteen! It will be forty-fifth anniversary. So, it is forty-four years.

JH: Forty-four years old.

ZP: At this moment!

JH: And you have been here fifteen years.

ZP: Hm-hm.

JH: That’s great. Do you have a mission/vision statement? It sounds like it’s a little atypical from the standpoint—you said that it’s almost a…

ZP: I believe that every child can sing, and deserves to be part of a warm, openhearted community of singers. The HCC strives to give young people a strong foundation in vocal technique, music theory, and expressive communication. We seek to create exciting performance opportunities, grow and learn something about their role in the world around them—aiming for good music education and artistry. My goal’s also [to] grow [a] new generation of young conductors [by] sharing expertise with others. Our rehearsals are open to public. We have a lot of students, teachers, [and] traveling conductors attending at all choir levels.

JH: Yeah, yeah!

ZP: And we give [the singers] this chance. This is like really [a] life experience for them to strive for excellence. And we try to do this on every choir level. If we invite guest artists, we will share them with younger groups [so] that they have [the] quality experience of working with professional guest artists.

JH: That’s good! Do you also have a mission statement in place on your website?

ZP: Yeah, yeah, we have it.
JH: Okay, I’ll look that up. And you have a handbook or manual for your organization?

ZP: We have a number of documents, yes.

JH: And do you give those documents out to each parent when they join the organization?

ZP: Yes. We really try to be face-to-face and to have this [sic] meetings in person.

JH: Individually?

ZP: And its take [sic] like, two weeks—just for Ilumini choir!

JH: Oh, my goodness! But is it worth it?

ZP: I guess, yes! Because it is—you know—you make [a] connection. You make a direct connection with the family and I think it’s also like, they appreciate that personal contact.

JH: Wow! That’s, that’s…I can see that paying nice dividends. They get to know you as a person…

ZP: Yes, yes! You can just talk. You know it’s very different when you sent [sic] emails.

JH: Yes. And then they get to know your [personality and philosophy]—oh yeah—I love that! But it would be time intensive. How much time would you say that you spend with each family?

ZP: For training choirs we have parent educational meetings explaining—and the top choir, Ilumini also has educational parent meetings. They are invited as a children’s choir in residence for [the] Hong Kong International Festival along with [the] King Singers from UK and Utopia from Sweden, but parents don’t realize the high caliber of such paid invitations and need always some educational sessions.

JH: Uh-huh! (Laughs)Yes!

ZP: So, you have to explain all this. And every time we go to world symposium or similar events, they don’t realize that choirs who comes to this events [are] professional choir schools with huge number of hours for training, and we [who] are just a community children’s choir—that we walk on the same stage, and expectations [are] very high for both.

JH: Yeah, right! Oh wow. That’s true! So, tell me about the number of choirs that you have. I know you have different levels of groups. How many do you have?
ZP: So, we have a kinder program which is really for 3, 4, 5, 6-years-old kids \textit{sic}. And, we [are] building that. So, it’s growing. And then [the] next level is \textit{Komenci} which is grades…

JH: What level is that?

ZP: \textit{Komenci}. You can find [them] on our website. It’s actually [a] description on the website—each word, what the meaning of each [group’s] name [is]. We call all choirs by the Esperanto language, because kids comes \textit{sic} from all different backgrounds and different—it’s [Esperanto] not certain like English or Latin or something.

JH: Sure. Okay. So, how many are in your kinder program? How many would you say [you] average? I know it’s different every year.

ZP: Well it’s three groups we have—three groups at this moment. We are trying to grow this program because it’s \textit{sic} big interest. But \textit{Komenci} group, it’s grade 2, 3, something like this—like around this age group. And they have once-a-week rehearsals. And then next group, \textit{Explori}, [is] grades 3, 4, 5. And next level, \textit{Esprimas} which is 5, 7, and up to high school—like it’s twice-a-week rehearsals, and an overnight tour, but not international tour. And the next group, \textit{Ilumini}—is grades 7-12. So, right now, if you have young choirs, it takes years to get them to grade twelve. Right?

JH: Yeah, right. So, you just direct the top—the oldest group. Correct?

ZP: Yes. When I came fifteen years ago, it was only one group!

JH: Really? So, you have just…

ZP: It was one group and it was fifty-five kids and they’ve \textit{sic} had a little training group, which was very small—like seventeen kids in it. It just started. So, the growth is this multiple program.

JH: Wow.

ZP: We also add \textit{sic} subgroup in \textit{Ilumini} choir—boys only. It’s called, “Lads and Gents” and it consist \textit{sic} 12 boys in it, and all with changing voices.

JH: Yes, yeah! We have similar voicings! So, now you call your [top] group—I mean, is it just under the Hamilton Children’s Choir [name] or do you have, like, one of these special names for your [group]?

ZP: Yeah, it’s called \textit{Ilumini} in Esperanto. It means, “brighten.”

JH: Oh, okay! The concert is—I saw [advertised], “\textit{Ilumini} Concert!” Yeah!
ZP: Our choir names are very unique. Poka means “new;” Kolibro means “hummingbird;” Komenci means “begin;” Explori means “explore;” Esprimas means “express;” and Ilumini means “brighten.” All the names describe the level of each choir.

JH: I like that. I can tell you have thought so much about this.

ZP: Whenever we go to the concerts—when a younger group perform [sic], they have their own personal name. Explori…

JH: Then they probably take pride in that.

ZP: Yeah, yeah.

JH: So, you said you have—like the numbers of kids—how many would you have now in your Ilumini group?

ZP: Forty-eight singers.

JH: Yeah.

JH: And your Esprimas group? How many would be in there?


JH: Forty? And how about your…

ZP: And Explori is 37 singers.

JH: Do you cap [the numbers]? Do you limit the number that you can take in these groups? You said you accept everybody.

ZP: No, we don’t. Despite all publicity, there are always new parents who say, “I never heard about Hamilton Children’s Choir.” And it’s Hamilton!

JH: We understand! We do! We did a fundraiser last year, and this barbershop chorus that’s been in our area for twenty-five years—Harrisonburg—we’re small! We did a SingOff fundraiser and invited them to participate. And they were like, “Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir?” [We are the] same age of organization! Same town! They had never heard of us! Yeah, I understand!

ZP: Yes, yes. (Laughter)

JH: Great.
ZP: So, I immigrated to Canada 20 years ago. So, I didn’t speak one word in English and I didn’t know one person in the country. For three years, I cried every day. I thought I would never be able to conduct any choir again.

JH: Aw, yeah…

ZP: So, I don’t take for granted, the second to it.

JH: The what?

ZP: I will not take for granted, a second [chance] of it. I am so thankful, for all these opportunities I have. I am thankful to all [the] people I met in this wonderful country who gave me this second chance. I really love kids. For me, they have to feel safe and happy and…

JH: Yeah! That’s good. They are very fortunate to have you, for sure! Kids can read that—when a director cares about them or just cares about the product—or you know.

ZP: You know who told me that? Erkki Pohjola, founder of Tapiola Choir from Finland and he said, “There is [sic] two types of choir’s culture: one is when a director is part of the team, and the second is when [the] director built a machine for its own career.” He taught me so much [about] children’s choirs beyond voice training…

JH: Yeah, that’s neat. I like that. I wrote it down. So, how often, and for how long do your groups rehearse?

ZP: It is actually—historically, it was once a week, but now, twice a week.

JH: Yes.

ZP: In my second year, I think, we went to Newfoundland 500 Voices Festival, which is international. And I knew that they [my singers] will [sic] see some really fine choirs from Europe. So, at the end of the festival, they [the older girls] came to me and they asked me, “How we can [sic] be as good as those choirs?” And I said, “Well, practicing! Like practicing twice a week!” And by the end of the trip, they wrote a letter and they sign [sic] it.

JH: (Laughs)

ZP: And that’s how we started [the] second rehearsal a week. It was [an] initiative from the children’s side. They came to the solution. And when we came back home—so I have [sic] to convince parents. The children wants [sic] to do it; I want to do it; how we can [sic] make this happen?

JH: That’s amazing! So, you practice on what night?
ZP: Monday and Wednesday. Twice a week! So unfortunately, the days [are] not the best because [of the] long weekends.

JH: Wow. And so, you practice for how long each time?

ZP: Two hours. Normally like two hours, twice a week—four hours like standard time.

JH: Now, this would be your choir, but the younger choirs maybe not so much?

ZP: No, no, it’s once a week for training choirs. Only Esprimas and Ilumini practice twice a week.

JH: Yeah, okay. And then how—do your groups always rehearse here (Christ’s Church Cathedral)? I saw today that you were at that college (Hillfield Strathallan College).

ZP: Our regular rehearsals [are head] at the Hillfiled Strahalien College.

JH: Which? Where?

ZP: We had a big concert on Tuesday and it was really [an] interesting concert. We sang one hour for National Music Fest for finals. It was full! One thousand, five hundred kids who want to get to finals—who really understand music. That was incredible, how they—you know—how it flows for kids. The audience was so attentive as all these young musicians appreciate music. It was so wonderful! And then at the end, for the last song—we performed a pop song. And they all jump [sic] their feet and they start running in the aisles and joining us and all start singing—and the person who premiered [sic] “Wavin’ Flag” was actually present at this concert. He won originally at Juno Awards! He was present at this concert, and we didn’t know! He join [sic] us on stage, and start [sic] singing with all of these children!

JH: Oh, my goodness!

ZP: And he jump [sic] on stage, and it was like firework! [sic]

JH: Oh, my goodness! I bet the kids were so excited!

ZP: And then after [the] concert, there was a National Canada Youth Choir. And they sung [sic] three songs as Comeo (to open the concert) After this performance was over—both choirs continue [sic] singing outside, talking to each other, laughing. It was [a] wonderful feeling! We also had a special magic happen to one of our singers at this performance. This singer tried for solos so many times, but because she is so shy she never were [sic] able to sing it at the front of other singers. She worked on it, and tried many times, and it was her first performance as a soloist, and she did it! She sang at the front of the full house and make [sic] all of us so proud! What a big step in her life, and I think it was possible only because of the support she felt from each singer in Ilumini
Choir. The whole choir was supporting her so much, and they all knew how difficult this step was for this young singer.

JH: Aw! Changed her life!

ZP: For me that’s the magic moment.

JH: Changed her life!

ZP: Not to get medals.

JH: Now I’m going to cry! (laughs) That’s beautiful! Oh wow!

ZP: That’s our mission and statement: life-changing experiences and great music education.

JH: I’ll look it up. I meant to do that this morning, but…

ZP: You cannot describe this in words.

JH: Yeah! All right. So, your groups normally rehearse—you said tonight it’s at the college without keyboard and piano.

ZP: It’s Hillfield Strathallan College. And they give us space for a really affordable cost. But, tonight because we are performing on Saturday in this church, it will not be like a regular place and [a] regular rehearsal. It will give you [a] chance to see also [the] Toronto Children’s Chorus a little bit and hear [our] choirs together.

JH: Oh, they’ll be here tonight too?

ZP: No, Friday.

JH: Friday, yeah!

ZP: And this is also [a] fabulous, collaborative project. It’s more than [a] one-hour program. It is [the] first time two choirs will get together before our combined tour to National Conference PODIUM in Newfoundland this summer.

JH: Oh wow. That’s great! So, how many staff do you have total in this organization?

ZP: Conductors? Leslie Kent works with *Poka* and *Kolibro*; Melanie Tellez directs *Komenci* and *Esprimas*; *Esplori* is directed by Kate Boose; and I work with *Ilumini*. We also have two fabulous collaborative pianists: Brent Fifield and Laura Pin, and [a] collaborative percussionist, Jamie Drake. We have also rehearsal assistants for each choir: music students, young teachers, alums—keen young people who want to learn more about [the] choral craft.
JH: Yeah, I’m going to do that [have rehearsal assistants] next year. So, you have four assistants? Like, one for each group?

ZP: Yes, one for each group. It’s really helpful.

JH: Right! Yeah, and when somebody is sick, it’s always a panic if you don’t have somebody in an emergency situation. We’ve had several of those [situations] and it creates last minute stress, but if there’s an intern or somebody around that’s assisting—and, you have four office people then?

ZP: Yes, it’s Tricia LeClair, executive director and her team, Anjanette Bailey, choir manager, and Gillian Alexandra, operations manager.

JH: Three office people. Okay. She [LeClair] said you were getting ready to hire somebody.

ZP: Yes, she’s thinking to hire the fourth person.

JH: There’s nobody full-time on staff?

ZP: Only Tricia LeClair is full time. All of us, [sic] part time.

JH: Okay. All right. And she told me [that] your organization is funded by tuition plus fundraisers?

ZP: Yeah, and she is applying for a number of grants and working very hard.

JH: And grants?

ZP: So, like tuition really did not cover the cost of the choir of course.

JH: Yeah. So, you have a board?

ZP: It’s a board, which is really unique I think. It’s not parent-based but it is [a] community board.

JH: Yeah, that’s good. All right. And you said, not everyone knows about the Hamilton Children’s Choir here. So, how do you get the word out to recruit for more choristers? Or is that not an issue?

ZP: Oh, like I said, we try different ways. And I think [the] choir [is] more known abroad than locally, but it’s getting there. We have a lot of interest. We had, for example, conductors from different countries coming to visit rehearsals.

JH: But to get new children in the choir…
ZP: The most effective way [is] when parent and children share their experiences.

JH: Word of mouth?

ZP: Yeah, when parents [are] talking about it! And like, it’s all those flyers—you send.

JH: So, you send them home with families and say, “Here are flyers about the choir?”

ZP: Yes. And just like posting videos and—about auditions—kids talking—what experience they have.

JH: Yeah, yeah! So, what would you say is the average length of membership that a chorister—if you asked me that question, I would be, “I don’t [know]!” Some people stay one year and some stay twelve!

ZP: In Ilumini, we have very dedicated singers. I have most of the singers that stay until grade twelve. Some of them [stay] in [the] Hamilton Children’s Choir program for ten years! Ten years and sometimes it’s just like even more. Like we have one winner who stayed even [for] thirteen years as an assistant and helping [sic] for another few years.

JH: We have that too! Do you ever take kids that have not come through the ranks? So, they can go straight into your program—straight into Ilumini?

ZP: That’s what I have. I have one boy who joined in January, just this January and one girl who joined just somewhere also, in October.

JH: You said you don’t turn anyone away, so if this boy would have come and been a non-pitch matcher, what would you do with an older child who doesn’t have their voice yet? What would you do with them?

ZP: Oh, well we will place them in an intermediate group—even if they are grade eleven.

JH: Okay, I see, so it’s not really grade specific.

ZP: No, it is ability, and skill level, and approximate grade. Oh, we tried, because Ilumini gets such a big invitations [sic]. I promised that I would not accept anybody to this group anymore, because they need—it’s just like to sing eight-part, a cappella music, you have to have some skills!

JH: Yes, okay. And do you have an alumni program of any kind?

ZP: Yeah, we’re starting—we had [an] alumni choir performing and like just project. But we tried to start in term of preparation for anniversary in 2019. Next year, we will call [an] alumni choir and maybe we will practice every second week to start.
JH: Okay. Very good.

ZP: And we hope that [the] alumni choir will bring some male singers back for our small boys’ ensemble.

JH: So, you can pull them back into the...

ZP: Yeah.

JH: Oh, that’s great! So, you do take changed voices because you said, “TTB.” And do you mostly have them sing in their falsetto then?

ZP: You know, like it’s—they’re all in a different stage of changing voice—cambiata voices. They still have some upper register notes and [sic] have some lower notes some of them nothing in the middle.

JH: Some people can’t sing—yeah—can’t sing at all! All right.

ZP: So, they’re not really tenor or bass yet, their voices are still changing. Right? But, we work to give our boys variety for the program. We get this fantastic idea (sic) to have all dads joining our boys and then they can sing at the concerts.

JH: Yeah!

ZP: It’s some (sic) creative process, like you have to just create what will work, and what will make that excitement and community, right? Like, bring brothers and fathers, for example.

JH: That’s really neat. So, how often would you say your choirs—I know it probably depends on group by group—but let’s take your group for instance, how often do they perform in a year, would you say?

ZP: It varies from year to year. The invitations and all this [sic] opportunities and—we actually make this year really pulling down, because it was really overload [sic] the program. Few years ago, and it was too many projects, it was too much for families. It was almost like every weekend performance.

JH: And kids would do that? Are they involved in anything else? I would have an outcry if we did that.

ZP: It is—it was like a—it affected us in a certain way. And so, opportunities that year was [sic] incredible. Apocalypses by Murray Schafer—project by Soundstreams with a one million budget project. The stage producer was from New Zealand. It was [an] incredible visual production, and three concerts was [sic] sold out in Toronto. Then we were just called for closing ceremony for PanAm Games, only one choir was invited to sing with all pop celebrities, and we couldn’t say, “no.”
JH: Yeah, right! Oh, wow! Such an honor!

ZP: And it such an honor [sic]. It was such a combination of these kinds of events and still you have to say, “no” sometimes—like, it’s overloading the program even [with] all these opportunities—amazing experiences!

JH: What’s your ideal number—concerts a year?

ZP: For me personally? For me, I will do as many as possible.

JH: For your organization?

ZP: Yeah, so, because it is really like—I will say—one concert equal to [sic] ten rehearsals.

JH: Yeah, okay. What would you think would be the most healthy number for your ensemble?

ZP: Ten to twelve concerts.

JH: Per year?

ZP: A good concerts [sic], but this year we had very—we were trying to accommodate parents, at the meetings. What I told you—like when we met, they also talked to us, and what they want [sic] to see—the changes. And that was [a] big command that, if we can reduce—like we can’t sing concerts, because it was too much. And we did, and I don’t find it’s [sic] helpful because we lost stamina. We lost that performance experience. They’re not confident. They’re not. It’s [sic] all comes with practicing, performance. So, it should be [a] balance. It was too many. It was not many at all this season and I feel like it’s dropped.

JH: The pendulum swinging. You have to find that balance.

ZP: And I think kids also figure out that [sic] because we added a couple of times extra rehearsals because they [are] still suffering—like for example, for national conference in January—before January—we agreed to do certain program and then with Elise Bradley [of the Toronto Children’s Choir] we came with a fantastic idea. We have also Indonesian choir—from Indonesia will be with us—a three-choir project. “What if we do ‘Ring of Fire’—Elise Bradley’s idea, you know—all these countries [are] on the—geographically on the Ring of Fire circle? Indonesia [is] on it, and Russia [is] on it, and New Zealand [is on it]. So, the three of us [are] kind of connected through the circle. So, we changed all [of] our repertoire in January.

JH: Oh, my goodness!
ZP: And then, from January, I will tell you—like we have to sing [all] three choirs together. This massive project—it’s one hour of music! You have to sing one hour.

JH: That’s huge.

ZP: How many pieces? Just think about it! But at [the] end of January, the organizers of [the] National Conference committee, called us and they said, “Well, we don’t have, like, many children’s choirs, so you have to also perform your solo programs for 30 minutes without repeating repertoire.

JH: Wow.

ZP: So, what we are dealing [with] right now, [is considering] how we can get all this music in the heads of kids who joined in September.

JH: Wow. When is this event happening?

ZP: End of June. We are flying [on the] 29th. And then we have three weeks to really work on pieces what has [sic] to be solidly prepared.

JH: What is the percentage of invitations that you receive versus events that you just dream up and produce? What would you say? When you participate in events like this, is it mostly by invitation or is it 50/50 that some of them, you go, “Hey, this would be a cool idea,” and you inspire it?

ZP: Mostly it’s invitations.

JH: Did it start that way?

ZP: No. We were trying to perform. The first year I was with [the] organization, we had two concerts like everybody else—one for spring and one for winter and one highlight concert.

JH: Right. So. how did you break out of that?

ZP: Oh, just like, um—the quality grow [sic] and then you get—people start paying attention. The first step—it was 500 Voices International Festival. It was [an] eye opening event for Hamilton Children’s Choir singers; [an] introduction to the world of high caliber choral singing, and we got [an] invitation to very important International Choral Competition in Tolosa, Spain right on the stage! Then it all started—CBC National Choral Competition; European Broadcast Choral Competition in Oslo, Norway—Let the People Sing; IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music) World Symposium; ACDA (American Choral Director’s Association) National Symposium and many others.

JH: Wow!
ZP: Then the National CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Choral Competition—for example, you have [a] little choir in [a] little village, and you have no money to go anywhere and pay any expenses. So, you just send in your recording. The jury members don’t know which choir they listen [sic] to—they don’t know [the] name of the choir or [the] name of the conductor. They just listen [to the] sound.


ZP: And we won in Ontario. Each province has to do that. And then it’s ten categories: children, female, male, and then you do this Canadian final competition. And there is another jury. They also don’t know the names of any conductors and choirs, and they listen. And we won [the] next level. And then we won the main prize of the radio competition. And then CBC radio sent us to Norway. And after European Broadcast Competition in Norway we were invited to the next event and the next event.

JH: So, it sounds like you did put your groups out there in competitive ways to become more known and visible.

ZP: Yeah. We have been to these competitions because they are paid. We can’t pay for everything. But also, the Tolosa competition is all a cappella music and they are very selective. They don’t invite [just] any choir. When you get this kind of invitation, you have to really raise your standards—what is expected.

JH: That is motivating to the kids, to work hard for this. Okay, let’s bring it back to here, more locally. How do you deal with attendance? What kind of standards do you have in terms of either rehearsal or concert attendance?

ZP: It’s very difficult. I know—like working with Elise [Bradley]—and I’ve worked with Toronto Children’s Choirs three years and Jean Bartle was still [the] artistic director. So, I know the rules: If you don’t show up for dress rehearsal, [there is] no way you will be on stage.

JH: Uh-huh.

ZP: It’s not easy. I was at the ACDA (American Choral Director’s Association) round table for children’s choirs, and the first thing, [as] people start talking, is about attendance. And I was in France conducting this summer, and the first thing conductors [said] when asked, “what [are] challenges?” They were saying, “attendance.” Kids [are] involved in so many things. And when it gets to school theater performance, [that] does take priority and they can disappear for a month. I think it is challenge for all community organizations, as young people [are] involved in many activities. We plan to outline the expectations with parents and hold individual meetings with families this next season.

JH: Yeah. That’s good!
ZP: When you go to Gondwana Voices, I am sure that you will be amazed by [their] professional level [and] rehearsal space. I was founder of [a] choir school, and it is totally different type of program. So, I had 450 singers and 35 music teachers full-time.

JH: Wow. Where’s that?

ZP: In Kazakhstan. And it was fully covered by [the] government.

JH: So, you didn’t question it there.

ZP: Yeah—it’s just like, I have to turn my head around [to figure out] how to make this work and still have high level of quality.

JH: So, if you have a chorister that doesn’t show up to the dress rehearsal before a concert here locally, what do you do?

ZP: In a normal way, you have to say “no,” right?

JH: So, you say they can’t perform then?

ZP: (Laughing) So, I mean, if it’s [a] grade twelve singer—a lot of kids [are] also working. It’s a balance to understand what their other responsibilities [are], and how challenging their life is.

JH: It sounds like you kind of take individual cases….

ZP: Each individual case, yeah. I have kids who, you know, [their] parents think it’s [sic] no value in a choir, singing in a choir, and they’re on scholarship to participate, because they [the chorister] still think it’s valued. And then one girl was on a bicycle [was] late getting to rehearsals. Or it can be sometimes even [be] punishment—I will not try this, but I will tell you—so because this [choir] is [the] favorite thing for [the] child, and then parents, to punish for school marks, they withdraw [their child] from the choir until improvement happens with school marks.

JH: Yeah, I have seen some of that stuff too. If something else happens, then they took away the children’s choir. Yeah, that happened to us, too.

ZP: Unbelievable. Shocking decision for me.

JH: They take away the thing that they [kids] could be very good at and known for—and, yeah…

ZP: But, it’s also a totally different, um, sense of developing a person. So, it tells me that parents have no idea what their child [is] getting.
JH: Yeah, yeah. It’s true. It’s very true. It has to be education at all levels. Do you do outreach or charity performances with your choirs? Do you ask for payment when you go out? How do you?

ZP: Yes. It’s um—Tricia has some numbers—what it is. And when people ask, and if they can’t afford it of course we figure out what can be done.

JH: So, you try to respond to those requests even if they can’t afford to pay?

ZP: Yes, and sometimes we could just perform for free. It depends on what it is—what the event is.

JH: So, most often your choirs perform for regular concerts in this community, here—at the Christ Church Cathedral?

ZP: Um, we have so many invitations. But yes, we have our regular concerts. Now we divide [sic] my group from training choirs because it’s growing so big. For example, last December, we created, a few years ago, a “Home Alone” rendition.

JH: Oh, did you?

ZP: And we hired new young composers, emerging composers, to write in this style and [make] something like suitable, and [use] a slide show. It’s like acting and choirs. And its sort of training choirs, and then my group Ilumini should perform as well, [in a] separate concert, on their own. And for the December concert, Ilumini will share stage with professional guest artists – this time partnering with quartet of Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Also, here in Hamilton, we have professional guest artists for half of the concert. For example, partnering with Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the last one was a string quartet.

JH: Wow. As far as the venue, where do you perform?

ZP: In Christ’s Church Cathedral—Hamilton Children’s Choir home or New Vision United Church or Hamilton Place or Theatre Aquarius.

JH: Hamilton Place?

ZP: Hamilton Place. It’s Hamilton Theater.

JH: So, you usually pay to perform wherever you go? You pay for the venue.

ZP: Yes, we pay for the venue.

JH: You said $10,000?

ZP: The professional concert hall? About [that much], maybe more now. I don’t know.
JH: Wow.

ZP: So, we might do that for [an] anniversary but not for [our] regular concerts.

JH: That’s the Hamilton Place?

ZP: Yeah. So, the church we are going to be [at], they are planning to restructure this church for the concert hall.

JH: When? Which church?

ZP: Tonight’s rehearsal.

JH: Oh, tonight, okay. It’s not here? [Christ Church Cathedral]

ZP: No.

JH: All right. So, yeah. I have that question too - ‘cause I wrote down that it’s on a college campus? Is that right?

ZP: Um, we [were] supposed to be there, but I will type your address and information for tonight.

JH: Oh, okay.

ZP: So, we get this space because we are performing there on Saturday. So, they give us [the] space and we thought it’s better to just adjust [to the] acoustic [sic] and see the place, right?

JH: Sure. Absolutely!

ZP: So, we moved [the] rehearsal to this church…

JH: Okay, all right.

ZP: …where we will perform with TCC, Toronto Children’s Chorus.

JH: Okay, that will be fun! I’m so excited! This has been a dream come true. I stumbled onto your choir when I first started with the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir, four years ago. I was looking for repertoire, and I was watching [YouTube]. You won a competition. I can’t remember which one it was, but it was on your website. It was about an eleven, thirteen, [or] fifteen-minute video clip. And I think that you did about three songs. It [the clip] was pieced together, and they announced that you were the winner, and…

ZP: Oh, it was the CBC National Choral competition.
JH: Oh, is that the one? And then you had them [choristers] go out, and it was kind of this simple song but I think—Robertson was the [composer]?

ZP: Yes, Robertson - “Dream A Dream.”

JH: “Dream A Dream.” And you had them go out and hold the hands [with audience members], and I was sitting there crying, watching this.

ZP: It is so—that’s how I also teach kids through this piece, like, that connection, right?

JH: Yeah!

ZP: On a deeper level.

JH: Do you do that piece [often]? Is it part of your standard repertoire?

ZP: Not anymore, but it was for quite a while.

JH: Yeah, all right. So, you tour every year with your choir?

ZP: It depends on…

JH: Invitations?

ZP: Yeah, special invitations to be guest artist [or] choir in residence.

JH: I don’t know when your season starts and ends, but does it start in September?

ZP: Yes, starting in September with [a] five-day camp in August. Every season is different and challenging and unique. It is always hard when [a] bigger number of experienced singers graduate at once. The core of sound needs [to be] developed.

JH: Yeah, right.

ZP: Next year will be better, but this year is really challenging. It is always harder to lose [that] core of sound—some years [is] easier than others.

JH: Yeah! I understand. Oh, my goodness! And then tours are funded either by the organization that invites you or…

ZP: Yes. Like it’s sometimes stressful for us because it can be so short notice, right?

JH: Oh, okay.

ZP: And sometimes you know in two years, like Hong Kong with King Singers, we know now. But I don’t know what choir I will have, in two years, right?
JH: Yeah!

ZP: You have to agree now…

JH: Yeah!

ZP: …in October…

JH: Yeah!

ZP: …for the next season!

JH: Yeah. Yeah!

ZP: And they are already on the website.

JH: Yes!

ZP: And, they expect what they see. Like, for example, when we were at the ACDA…

JH: Yeah.

ZP: And then you don’t have [the] same choir!

JH: But you make ‘em that way, Zimfira! You’re good at that. I saw you at ACDA in Minneapolis. It was wonderful! I really enjoyed it. All right, now here’s what I’m passionate about: the pedagogical stuff. So, um, now just listening this morning—tone production. I would love for you to talk to me about how you determine what tone quality you want.

ZP: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah….

JH: Describe the ideal vocal tone. I know for you—it’s not just one answer—it depends on the piece.

ZP: It’s…um…like my background is Russian, Soviet Union education. So, I was part of practical research—Phonopedic Method for Voice Development.

JH: Say that again?

ZP: I called myself the name because it’s not translated in English.

JH: Oh, ok. All right.

ZP: In Russian it’s called, “Phonopedicheskij metod,” “Phonopedic” method. So, I called [it] the same way [in English]. It derives from medicine for people who lost [their] voice.
JH: Oh, okay.

ZP: And two doctors [are] involved in it—one who is in charge of vocal chords and the other doctor who is in charge of speech therapy.

JH: Hm-hmm.

ZP: So, it is a super unique system, which is [the] background in my techniques. This method emerged through rigorous scientific study aimed at successful recovery from voice disorders, and eventually the exercises was [sic] applied to vocal development to produce [a] healthy sound. For example, you can teach children who doesn’t [sic] match pitch through vibration in the body. So, like [here’s a] simple example: If you hold [a] hand on your chest and do this, (deep voice) “OOOOOOH,” you feel vibration in your chest, right? Or, (high voice) “OOOOOH, OOOOOH.” That’s how they figure out [that] this is high pitch and this is low pitch. The sensation is very different, but if you tell them sing higher or lower, they have no clue what it is. (High pitched) “OOOH,” that kind of siren, what everybody do [sic], but through vibration of the body, and also some similar exercises will be [what you do], if you go to [a] voice clinic when you lose [your] voice.

JH: Yeah.

ZP: That kind of like—all kind of sounds, that’s what I do for getting the sound, but also through vibration of the body. Then I teach voice, as I will teach private voice lessons.

JH: Uh-hm. You teach that in the context of the choir?

ZP: Yeah, but I try to find time to listen individual voices during, prior and after rehearsal—hear them individually for ten minutes because if you ask them to open space, some kids will overdo it and they will swallow the sound and it is not in resonance at all.

JH: So, how do you get them, how do you spend time with all these kids? One-on-one?

ZP: I just look in my free time (laughs). And during rehearsal you can ask singers sing row by row in each section or small ensembles.

JH: So, you say, “Can you come in [early]?”

ZP: Yeah. Yeah, like even a little touch there and there—like it’s even five to ten minutes will help. You will hear right away where the sound sits.

JH: How often do you do that?

ZP: Through the year I help. Like—we have also camp, before the year starts. So, that’s a good place to get to know voices. It’s really like, as conductors, we should know the voices, like [an] ‘instrument.’
JH: Yes.

ZP: Ideally, to have [a] voice coach as part of your team—but not every choir can afford this.

JH: So, if I’m in your choir, and I…

ZP: No, not often—it’s because of the numbers of kids, right?

JH: Yes, that’s what I was going to say.

ZP: And also, they can come like any extra time, so that’s the difficulty—before rehearsal and after rehearsal. I’m lucky if somebody can come a little bit early and just sit and wait ’til rehearsal.

JH: So, if I’m in your choir and I want to have an individual time with you, or you want to have individual time with me, I would just schedule it as we can?

ZP: Yeah, yeah, like it is very flexible. And sometimes I have a group, like it’s two or three together and it’s also works [sic]. So, you can ask them individual, and actually they listen to each other and they hear what is not working.

JH: So, would I probably see you and part of your choir once a year? Twice-a-year? Individually?

ZP: Once a year at least—as an individual voice lesson, but often in a rehearsal time.

JH: Okay.

ZP: At least, right? But if you have a good “on the same page” vocal person, I will just let them go from the rehearsal, to another room, even ten minutes and I will rotate them.

JH: Now I love this! What else do you do in terms of bodywork with the kids—that’s very tangible, hands-on, to get them to understand their voice?

ZP: Um…really, like to work on tone production, breath and include a lot of movements to free up the resonance and alignment of the body. I don’t like the word “posture.” but alignment.

JH: Um-hm.

ZP: So, open all spaces in a body, like in a way, like organ pipe, when you vibrate from your head to the toes, that whole column of the sounds.

JH: Hm. Yeah.
ZP: And that what—um—I use a lot of visual things, like all kinds of toys to teach.

JH: Name some.

ZP: I have [a] suitcase in my car. (Laughs)

JH: I’d love to see them! (Laughs)

ZP: For example, [a] slinky to play with the color of the sound. The way I use it, you have to sing just like [in the] middle of the sound—not using any high partials or low partials—(high pitch) “EEEEEEE” which is quite poor sound, you never will be able to do much dynamic on it. “eeeeEEEEEE” then you pull slinky up and open all this ring. “Chiaroscuro” right? Chiaro-bright, and oscuro-dark—it’s like in painting, to mix these colors together. “Chiaroscuro” is a voice-pedagogy term that is used universally to refer to the balancing of the light or clear, “chiaro” and dark, “oscuro” aspects of timbre, or balancing tonal brilliance and depth of the resonance.

JH: Uh-hm.

ZP: So, and then you bring [it] back and it’s no color again. Then you open “EEEEEEE” to the bottom of the sounds, to the feet of your body. And then you open slinky, like just all the way down to the floor and there. And you have to listen, that you have enough spin and ring, but also “meat” of the sound. So, I’m really for [a] full sound, [a] full body sound at any age. It’s not—I’m not speaking about chest voice—it is just [an] open, natural sound. So, and, yes head voice is important and bringing [the] head voice down, but each age group, to me, is different. So, if it’s grade one to three, of course, it’s all this siren and head voice going down, but when the transition from that should happen, to get [them] really [to] explore the full sound? Maybe grades four to seven have more body in sound and grades seven to twelve have full body sound with wide diapason.

JH: Diapason? Range.

ZP: Yes. Like full organ pipe sound.

JH: Okay. Yeah.

ZP: So, and then [the] next step is already like [the] difference between [the] speaking and singing chest voice. So, (singing in a squished, chesty voice) “Twinkle, twinkle little star” or you say, “This is my—you’re speaking on the pitch, you’re not singing, it’s my speaking chambers.” But “this is my singing chambers” (using normal speaking voice). “This is my speak,” (using speaking voice with resonance). “This is my singing chambers.” (Singing with resonance) “Twinkle, twinkle…” And when we practice speaking the text of the songs it is important to speak the text in a singing manner.

JH: Yeah.
ZP: *(Using high pitched voice)* “Twinkle, twinkle.” You can speak the text of the song in a normal speaking range but speak in a singing manner. Compare speaking ‘chambers’ to singing ‘chambers.’ To get that fat voice, I will speak actually on the bottom range of the voice, too, but teach them… where it sits, the sounds. *(Speaking with resonance)* “Twinkle, twinkle little star.” *(Speaking without resonance)* “Twinkle, twinkle little star.” Ask children, “Is this is my speaking way or singing way?” And ask them to choose after you demonstrate twice. “So, which is right? One or two?” And they figure out this so fast!

JH: Yes.

ZP: Just doing wrong/right, and how you feel.


ZP: But exploring what it is—all registers. I will show you one exercise, its dinosaur from [the] Phonopedic Method and it is [a] voice game. Dinosaur has a small round head, not this head - (little shriek with no resonance). No! Round head! (longer shriek with resonance) Long neck! (long shriek, high to low) And it connect [sic] head voice to chest voice, right? (long shriek, high to low) No, this is a speaking voice, not a chest voice (high shriek, then low growl)—big body, and you have to be expressive. You have to paint that dinosaur with your voice and with your eyes and hands and body. And then trunk flex (various sounds). My feet [are] bigger than yours. So, singers have fun. They explore bringing head voice down to healthy low voice.

JH: *(Laughs)*

ZP: And then, back leg (various sounds) and even tail…(guttural sound).

JH: *(Laughs)*

ZP: And actually, vocal fry—it’s a very dangerous thing, but in [the] voice clinic when you will go to [the] doctor [from] losing your voice, they will use it a lot, and it’s definitely—you have to do it right. So, -(pinched sound) ehhhh—this is not what it will be, but if you do this sound (makes gentle guttural sound), it’s actually massaging [the] vocal chords. The air can’t escape – similar to lip trills action. Any medical instrument can’t do that. So, I do a lot of researches in teaching healthy techniques and different approach [sic] for different age group—building voice step by step.

JH: I love that. Oh, my goodness.

ZP: I can speak about sound forever, I really [love to] play with the sound.

JH: It’s really cool. Yeah.
ZP: And then, um, I, because of my background, like we do a lot of experimenting also—exploring Kulning singing, which is ancient Swedish herding call used in *I Himmelen* by Karin Rehnquist.

JH: Neat.

ZP: It comes from folk music, when they shout [to] animals outside, and the piece is amazing. Like, it’s in four corners, four soloists, who is [sic] actually shouting to each other and then [the] choir [is] singing in the middle—in the middle aisle. It’s a bell choir and just [a] simple folk, Swedish song, in a normal vocal production. So, it’s something like this *(sings loudly)*—and the other person, and they start calling out on top of each other, and then *(sings softly)* “da-da-ti-fa-be-ba-buh” underneath of all this. And imagine if it’s good acoustic.

JH: *(Gasp)*

ZP: It’s insane!

JH: That sounds amazing!

ZP: But then, in other piece, “Past Life Melodies,” by Sarah Hopkins then we have to learn how to produce overtones “Mmmmmmmmmmeooowww”—that, I get to the overtones because I want kids to understand when they are singing one note, it’s not one note, it is actually a musical tone that is a part of the harmonic series above a fundamental note and may be heard with it.

JH: What’s the piece?

ZP: “Past Life Melodies” by Sara Hopkins from Australia. So—or, any Bulgarian songs, like I was working with a fantastic choir in New Jersey, right? Youth choir. And they were singing [a] song, a Bulgarian song. And a lot of time people think it is [a] very pressed and yelling kind of sound—shouting. But it’s not. The throat is open: *(in low register)* “huh! huh!” You have to really stay open. And you can sing [for] hours. You will be never tired. *(In high register with open throat)* “Heh!! Heeeeh!!” *(With closed throat)* “Hay!” It’s very different! It’s stressing your vocal chords. And imagine the push of the air—how physically it’s damaging, right? – if you go to this kind of push [sic] sound. But, if you open [your throat] and just use resonance, then it’s [okay]. That’s how they’re singing. [The] Bulgarian choirs—they’re not shouting. But the range of their songs [is] also limited.

JH: Uh-hmm. Oh, wow. And what was the name of the piece that you said from the Swedish choir?

ZP: *I Himmelen*.

JH: Can you spell that?
ZP: Um…I, and then [a] separate word, H-I-M-M-E-L-E-N.

JH: Okay, very good.

ZP: So, that kind of repertoire, even [the] Norwegian song we did—it’s [a] different placement for the sound. So, to me, like it’s very often [that] you hear choirs and [their] song number seven still sounds like song number one. So, I’m really looking for authentic sound, a color. Even in a children’s choir—sound has so many colors and different weight and move in the space. As Pablo Casals said, “The music happen [sic] between the notes—not on the notes.”

JH: Hmmm...

ZP: And then you have to really—from point A to B, from one note to the next—you have to really carry that sound. It’s moving in that space, it’s not stale.

JH: I love that!

ZP: That flow, right? Then it’s phrasing happening. Then you come to singing, like legato happens.

JH: How much of this knowledge is just your own, like assimilation and ideas, or did you get this in your Russian training, or…?

ZP: I will say, I was—despite all my challenges [the] first few years, and not speaking even English—I’m so lucky because I had these two different schools, different approach. What I learned back home in [an] intense way and I was already [a] mature musician when I came. And then in North America, it was like eye opening—like “wow” factor for me—show choirs, barbershop choirs, choral theatre productions! I never saw one show choir in my life before I came here, and I learned Christmas Carols first time in my life, here in Canada.

JH: (Laughs) Yeah.

ZP: So, and combined [sic] these two things together? I find it’s fascinating. Since immigrating to Canada, I have learned to merge these two approaches from my Soviet Union background and everything I am learning now while in North America. To become a choral conductor in former Soviet Union required strong commitment from the time I was eight years old and applied to music school. [The] next step is to apply for four-year college degree after grade eight if you want this occupation. After college then [you go to] university or like conservatory for five years to learn child voice, health of the voice, choral music, and conducting. I use all my knowledge I got in former Soviet Union System of education with new creativity approaches of North America and try to build my own vision. The Hamilton Children’s Choir is open to all children. I started teaching theory and solfeggio as part of rehearsals. It is amazing that Canadian kids can have such high standards with much less rehearsal time than in former Soviet Union.
JH: Okay, next I’m going to talk about—I’m going to ask you some questions about choreography too, but….

ZP: Choreography is new skill for my background’s music education. It is [a] fascinating journey for me! I spent a lot of time on movement and sound effect—Dalcroze techniques! We were one of the first choirs using choreography and now many choirs [are] moving in Ontario. At this part of my journey, I try to find the balance and have meaningful movements connected to the music and acoustic of the hall. Sound-ography! I love working with acoustic of the performance hall and every time it is different.

JH: Yes! Yes! I like that—sound…ography…?

ZP: Sound-ography: working with [the] acoustic of the whole, but it’s hard to find a person who really…

JH: …understands that.

ZP: If you work—there’s no actually [sic] occupation like this. It’s [a] very new [concept to have a] choral choreographer.

JH: Would you say that you use movement [in] every concert?

ZP: No, we don’t move [in] every concert, but we use space in interesting way [sic] in term of sound, and different formations. It should always be excellent singing—like aiming for really good singing. And then anything [else should] reinforce that. Like, to me, it’s more faces than like, movements.

JH: Hmm.

ZP: More eyes and connection with the audience on a deeper level than empty body, empty eyes, and doing a lot of movements.

JH: You are fantastic! It’s just exciting. You just are! I—I just want you to pour, like, all your knowledge right in here. Yeah! So, now, you said you did work with a professional choreographer.

ZP: Right now, for example, tonight we worked with Joanne Chow who is [a] fantastic choreographer. She assist [sic]—with us to clean up the movements, transitions between songs, stage presence, and connecting with audience.

JH: Yeah.

ZP: So, I have no luxury like this. So, I have to figure out how I can incorporate my vision (Laughs) with no [sic] much resources, in [a] short time.

JH: So, do you do your own choreography sometimes?
ZP: Some, yes. Sometimes I create choreography and then a professional person helping me to clean up that and maybe add a few things. Some choreography [sic] created by our own singers.

JH: Uh-hm.

ZP: We can see our choreography, for many pieces, performed by other choirs around the world on YouTube.

JH: *(Laughs)* That’s crazy! That’s not plagiarizing?

ZP: Sometimes people ask permission.

JH: Yeah. So, do you normally teach the choreography then? Or, like you said you work with a professional maybe if you’re the one who teaches it actually?

ZP: It is important to meet with choreographer and have some sessions and samples to share about your vision and goals for the choral performance. For example, we had several choral theatre productions and light design but the acoustic of the hall is fascinating when people sound from different angles, and it will reflect from different wall [sic].

JH: You know, I guess it is really important to get the choreographer to understand the position of the voice in regards to sound and placement in the room.

ZP: I think it is time for a new occupation—choral choreographer, someone who can read music, understand singing and match all this sound with movement, and see overall staging of the whole set.

JH: All right, so let’s talk about repertoire. So…

ZP: I spent a lot of time on repertoire research. I look mostly for a cappella repertoire for HCC to sing. Like at ACDA National Conference in Minneapolis, we sang everything a cappella.

JH: Yeah. I noticed that. And you had a train too!

ZP: We had that song arranged specially for HCC for the conference by Canadian composer Stephen Chatman from his SATB version. It was written for a professional SATB choir.

JH: That’s right, I remember reading about that.

ZP: Um, for professional choir and for chamber choir. And I called the composer and he said, “Well, think it’s for adult professional choir. Are you sure you have to do it?” *(Laughs)* And I thought, we will try. *(Laughs)*
JH: Yeah. So where do you go—where, what resources [do you use]? You have probably the most diverse repertoire of anybody’s choirs I’ve ever seen. So—or at least as much. Where do you go for all this repertoire?

ZP: My travelling helps—going to different countries, like hearing what people [are] singing, right? And of course, like even online, YouTube and Facebook, like I—all the time, any minute I have—I’m digging through all these piles of music and finding something, and [I] contact people to write songs and it’s like, non-stop.

JH: Uh-huh. Do you enjoy it? Do you enjoy looking for music?

ZP: Yes, I do. I prefer diverse programming as opposed to theme concerts.

JH: Theme?

ZP: Yes, like [a] program about water. To me, its limited. I love diverse, innovative programming, which explores work from the contemporary to Baroque, as well as progressive and innovative—vocal music in creative freedom.

JH: Yeah, okay! Yeah. When I got my master’s degree, themed concerts were absolutely expected. So…

ZP: I agree but this is the direction I chose for choral theater production.

JH: (Laughs)

ZP: I mean, I can do it—of course, you can find in thematical way, concerts. But to me, like it would be opposite to what you just sang.

JH: Yeah.

ZP: Then it’s good. It’s interesting for the audience, but it’s like everything, uh, connected to spirits or something, like, it’s become suddenly [sic] like you hear all these slow pieces in the same color.

JH: Yeah. Yeah. Wow. So, yeah, so you just get it [music] here, there and everywhere, like everybody else. But I didn’t know if you have a go-to place that you like more [than others]. Probably your travels are very, um, prescriptive.

ZP: A good choirs. I check every single piece they singing [sic]. Like Vesna Children’s Choir, Gondwana Voices, Kantika – Spain, many fantastic choirs! European Choirs, USA

JH: Okay. Can you name some more of them, that you go and look at?

ZP: Yes, [a] very interesting direction is Carmina Slovenica in Slovenia—it’s a choral theater. Girls’ Choir – Pro Musica (Hungary), Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir (Philippines). This is Hamilton Children’s choir YouTube links. “Magnificat” by
Christina Donkin, “Stars” by Erik Esenvalds, “Gamelan” by Murray Schafer and “Wau Bulan” by Tracy Wong. They post it on uh, Hamilton Children’s Choir Facebook. That was a thematical—that’s [the] kind of thematical concert I like, um, which connect [sic] all the songs with a light design, for example. But then, um, kids were reading texts, which is relate [sic] to them, like it might be from their emails, or like their personal things. Or, something like, um, that’s a story to me.


ZP: And then this concert was really so different. It’s more like a choral theater.

JH: That’s what—I actually saw that and I was going to ask you about your lighting, ‘cause I’ve noticed you’ve done some really cool stuff. My cogs are turning as you are speaking, so…yeah, this is great. Um, and then, you work with a—you get your octavos just through regular publishers?

ZP: Yeah, like it’s—we [are] also working—for example, “La Belle”—it was written for Hamilton Children’s Choir by our alumni, Meghan Quinlan.

JH: Which one?

ZP: “La Belle”, the French piece. We sung [it] at ACDA when the girls were in four corners and [the] sound travel [sic] from one side to the other.

JH: Beautiful.

ZP: Meghan Quinlan just finished her doctorate in Oxford, and she was conducting [a] choir in Sweden, so Meghan arranged the song in European choral style using her new experiences.

JH: And she was one of your choristers?

ZP: Yeah. Also, I have to mention Katerina Gimon. She [was] named one of Canada’s emerging composers. She is [an] alumni who write [sic] for us too.

JH: Yeah!

ZP: So, they create something like unique and different and get inspired by their experience in children’s choir.

JH: Right, wow. That’s great. So….

ZP: Working directly with a composer can be a good asset too. You, you kind of co-compose together, right? Children’s choir can act as a lab choir!
JH: Yes. We did a commissioned work with um—she’s from Texas—it’ll come to me, Laura Farnell! But I know this is something I want to get more into. So…so you commission works often?

ZP: No, not often, only if the grant will come.

JH: Aw. Okay, um, this is probably one of the most important questions I’ll ask, because in my doctoral recital, I need to perform one piece from each of the choirs that I visit.

ZP: Yes, that was similar for Sofia Gioldasi in Holland. She get [sic] one piece from each choir and she did [a] performance. Her thesis [is] called, “Clap Your Hands! Body Movement in Choral Performance and Education.” She also visited choirs from different parts of the world.

JH: Yeah, so what would you say would be the one that you would recommend that I would do from Hamilton Children’s Choir?

ZP: What age group?

JH: So, they’re my Concert Choir, it’s kind of like—it could be a sixth grader through senior in high school. This year we are having growing pains, in a good way. Last year I had 78 in that group, and there was one, fifth grader who was just brilliant. We only lost four seniors last year. We also had a ground swell of the [Treble] choir that is like age fourth grade through sixth or seventh [grade]. They feed into Concert Choir. So now, what’s happening [is] that they’re [Treble Choir] pushing up into [Concert Choir]. Many of these younger ones are ready to go on and we have over 90 [in Concert Choir] for next year already.

ZP: So, what did you did [sic] for like, recruitment? Interesting, maybe something that we can use.

JH: Well, my board made a big difference. When I took over the choir, the financial picture was shaky. So, my first strategy was to get a board of people that loved it and—not so many parents, some, yeah, but community members. And I have a board chair. He’s phenomenal. He is a real estate agent, does not have kids in the choir, but young kids he does have. And he understands marketing. He understands business. He was the one that laid it [facts] on the table and said, “So, if this trend continues financially, we will be closed in a year and a half.” And when he said that, you could feel the energy around the table just get electrically [charged]. Nobody wanted that to happen. This [choir] was like a gem! When people heard it that way, it made the music teacher that was at the table—she went back to all the teachers in the local community and said, “If all of us get one kid in the choir, it will help.” So, there was recruitment at that level. There was—the board chair—he generated flyers that we just put everywhere. A finance person—she said, “You know, our costs are prohibitive! It was to the degree that those who were, um, in the choir were seen as elite. And it wasn’t true. Some of the kids were getting a free ride. So, I don’t give free rides anymore ‘cause [many of] those kids
weren’t as committed. So, we were bumping up the level of what they had to pay, but then simultaneously we dropped the price for everybody, which was counter-intuitive. And we equalized—like the cost of what it takes each choir—the younger ones don’t have as many performances. They don’t have as much music, and yet it wasn’t as good a deal to be in the younger choirs as it was the top choir. So, we realigned the structure and it ended up dropping the price of choir for the younger choirs by 40%.

ZP: Oh, good.

JH: It was significant. And that was advertised on our website and then we started using yard signs. That’s been my husband. He’s my yard sign guru. He just places them at strategic intersections and they say, “Auditions for SVCC—Call…” And some people don’t even know what the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir is, but they see these signs two weeks before the [audition] time and they call the office and find out about us and look us up on the website.

ZP: Um hm.

JH: So, it comes at all different angles, but when people heard we were dropping the price, that just did a huge thing. So, now we are trying to manage the masses. So, now I have already over ninety [who] are signed up for the Concert Choir, and I have like twenty-five boys with changed voices that don’t want to leave. And I’m feeling like we’ve got to service their whole voice, not just have them sing in falsetto all the time.

ZP: Yes, yes. No, it’s good. You know, even extra time—a little extra time that they can sing a few pieces on their own—will help.

JH: So, we are going to have the Concert Choir—our stage only accommodates about eighty at a time. I mean, we do all group things, but you can’t really see [all] the kids when you do it. So, we’re going to have a Concert Choir of all maybe a hundred by the time it’s all said and done for the next season and rehearse. When I do my recital, we’ll be in the James Madison Forbes Center, which has great stage space but only 650 can be in the audience. So that’s limiting. The venue we usually perform in has space for 850 in the audience, but not great stage space and it’s acoustically not as pleasing. But we’re going to try to have everybody rehearse together in Concert Choir for 45 minutes - warm-up, be a group. And then I’m going to split them and have the older girls and the changed [voice] guys go together and do SATB repertoire, while I take the rest [to do SSA repertoire]—and right now, I have close to sixty of the rest.

ZP: Yeah, you are getting to the youth choir.

JH: Yeah, and I’ll do some rep with them. So anyway, that’s the long answer to, “What piece should we do that represents the Hamilton Children’s Choir?”

ZP: So, the girls and the boys. What about this piece that we did at the beginning? “Wau Bulan?”
JH: Spell it.


JH: Oo! Okay! Is that one you do often?

ZP: I mean it became [a] sensation on [the] internet. And André Heywood performed with his boys with the St. John’s Boys’ Choir and now it’s performed all over the world.

JH: Because of your performance?

ZP: HCC introduce [sic] it with Tracy Wong! I mean we publish [sic] it by Cypress.

JH: Okay, all right.

ZP: But it depends what is your taste—like it’s what you’re looking for.

JH: No, I don’t have any preconceived ideas of what this will look like. I really want to be representative of the children’s choirs that I visit. So, if that’s the piece that comes to your mind as “this is like one that we treasure as much as anything else,” I think that’s the one to do.

ZP: Well, we have so many pieces—like we couldn’t figure out what to sing for—but if you have boys—I’m thinking like to give them even extra parts.

JH: Hm hm. Yeah, you can name several that come to your mind because even if I don’t use them for my doctoral recital, I’ll use them for something else! (Laughs)

ZP: I mean it’s just like “Wau Bulan” is [an] unusual piece—like it’s unusual choreography, and I will say unique for North America and it is authentic.

JH: So, this one…

ZP: When they did sitting on the floor.

JH: Yes, okay, I can’t quite remember that one, but how do you say that? “Wau Bulan?”

ZP: “Magnificat” by Christina Donkin, but it’s ten parts, a cappella. One of the favorite pieces was from my ACDA program—the “Magnificat.” They sang [it] in the aisle, but it is ten parts.

JH: That would be a challenge, but I like giving my kids challenges.

ZP: And then the French piece is very beautiful, “La Belle.”

JH: Hm hm, “La Belle?”
ZP: Hm hm.

JH: If I get on there and look—do you say, “Wau Bulan?”

ZP: “Wau Bulan.” It’s kites in the sky. It’s like, a children’s song.

JH: I have a very good friend who’s getting her doctorate in choral music. She’s from Malaysia. She can help me. (Laughs)

ZP: And Tracy’s—she can Skype with you. She’s like open to help.

JH: Who?

ZP: Tracy Wong, who make arrangement [sic]. She’s here in Toronto and she’s also helping us.

JH: (Gasp) I wonder if she is a friend to my friend—’cause I know that you had worked with - yeah! Was she at ACDA?

ZP: Yeah!

JH: Is she young? Youngish?

ZP: She looks very young, yeah.

JH: I think that Tracy and my friend are friends.

ZP: Okay. So, I mean it’s two totally different directions, right? Like “La Belle” is [a] beautiful a cappella piece and “Magnificat” [is] maybe too challenging—like it will take too much time to pull it together. And you need a really good soloist to sing Gregorian Chant.

JH: Okay. So, I’m asking your permission. Can I “steal” your choreography if we do that—like if I get on…?

ZP: It’s everybody do it! [sic]

JH: Everybody’s doing it? Everybody’s stealing it? (laughs) That sounds exciting!

ZP: I mean Tracy can also take [the] lead on it.

JH: She can take what?

ZP: Lead on it. So, she can Skype with you and teach.

JH: Oh, that would be great!
ZP: She is from Malaysia and she will teach in a real authentic way!

JH: That’s wonderful. Okay!

ZP: She do [sic] that with a number of choirs right now with people [who] just want to perform it.

JH: Yeah, yeah! That’s great! So, does she compose for your choir regularly?

ZP: She just finish [sic] her doctorate at U of T and teaching at McMaster University right now and publishing [a] number of her pieces by Cypress. She has as well, some pieces for SATB choirs.

JH: Hm hm, good! So, you don’t have anyone who regularly does it [composes], it’s just kind of as you go along and find people? Okay! How often would you say that you have new works generated for the Hamilton Children’s Choir? Is it—do you have one a year, or not as often?

ZP: The new music, you mean?

JH: Yeah, new music.

ZP: Oh, like for ACDA, we had “Train” Stephen Chatman, which was re-arranged for ACDA. Then we premiered—world premiere for “La Belle” arr Meghan Quinlan was in France—but still it’s in North America—was the big event. First time. What other pieces we did? [sic] Of course, “Wau Bulan,” arranged by Tracy Wong.” These three pieces was for ACDA National Conference. Unfortunately, it is relying on grants, sponsors, and budget, otherwise I will commission a lot of music.

JH: Yeah. All right. Let’s see. I’ve got to get back to music literacy and I know we are running short on time. Can you talk about how you incorporate music literacy into your choirs?

ZP: We are using “Young Journeys Theory Books” which is designed—that’s what you mean, right?

JH: Hm hm.

ZP: Um and we teach theory and sight-reading on all levels. And this is [sic] fantastic books by Jean Ashworth Bartle who was [the] founder of [the] Toronto Children [sic] Chorus, Eileen Baldwin, and Linda Beaupré—three of them. It’s Kodály-based. Um. And it has a little sight-reading book in the back and [a] CD to practice at home. So - [there is] no way we will be able to sing [the] music what [sic] we are singing—a cappella repertoire—with my group, if I don’t teach them.

JH: Mm hm.
ZP: If we sing world music I think it should be totally authentic and it is important to spent time with singers, to study [the] background, learn about [the] culture, speak about [the] composer and find as more [sic] as possible info about [the] piece, language and color of [the] sound. Then it’s authentic. It’s not just like, uh, mimicking.

JH: So, you do give them visual or oral…

ZP: Both, I also contact people from different countries to record the words, the text. And uh, we do analysis of the score and study even patterns for conducting.

JH: Mm hm.

ZP: …what the keys are. And like, I really like that they can hear the harmony sides, but it’s such a limited time. So, all this voice training, music literature, like, everything comes, and social part in such short rehearsal time!

JH: (Laughs)

ZP: So, everything comes in this amount of rehearsal time.

JH: It’s hard, isn’t it?

ZP: It’s very hard.

JH: Um. So, how much of the rehearsal time do you give to theory training per week?

ZP: Through the whole rehearsal!

JH: Throughout.

ZP: I mean like we have the younger choirs, they have, like, a certain time—fifteen minutes from like, teaching the books and all this. But with my Ilumini group, like, we sing in solfege. We sight-read all the pieces in solfege. We count sing. Then, I make marking [sic]. Like breath-markings, pencils, fighting for pencils.

(Laughter)

ZP: Tuning forks. We [are]using tuning forks, also.

JH: So, you require them to have tuning forks?

ZP: Mm hm. Trying to find the key for each piece, like, from [a] tuning fork.

JH: Mm hm.
ZP: If you noticed at ACDA, one of the singers were giving pitches for choristers from [her] tuning fork and [a] number of choreographed pieces, I didn’t conduct. The choir perform [sic] without me at the front of them. It’s very risky, right? [But] when there is choreography and conductors stand at the front of them and [are] just waving [their] hands, so [there is] no point to me.

JH: To use—say that again.

ZP: You know when it’s beautiful choreography and sometimes conductors [conduct while] standing just in front of the choir, covering them—at least stand on the side!

JH: Yeah, I know, I move away.

ZP: Or like it’s some pieces with no conducting.

JH: Yeah, yeah. Oh, that’s great. Um, and do you have theory teachers or does each director do the theory? Okay.

ZP: Conductors and accompanists teach theory for each choir.

JH: And you expect practice outside of your rehearsals?

ZP: Yes!

JH: So, how much do…

ZP: And also, it comes with experience. And, um, yeah, to have like [an] hour and a half of music for June—this is a lot to expect from [a] child who [has] just joined [the] choir in September.

JH: Yes, it is. So, you keep your—your songs active?

ZP: Some pieces, yes—like signature pieces. Because if you [are a] traveling ensemble and have these invitations—So, for example, we were in France three years ago. It’s uh, um, [a] world showcase on choral music. And, they select choirs themselves every two years. They pay all expenses. And they sell 37,000 tickets in one week for ten ensembles they invite. And it’s only one children’s choir—four [or] five vocal ensembles, a cappella ensembles and four adult choirs, which is very high level. And we were invited in October. So, they were expecting that we will be performing [an] hour and a half every night.

JH: Wow.

ZP: …in October.

JH: Yeah. Wow.
ZP: So, you have to keep repertoire.

JH: Yeah. So, you said, “Signature pieces.” Can you rattle off some of those signature pieces?

ZP: Yeah, one of them is “Pakkanen,” the Finnish piece, which is rewritten for HCC, by one of the singers [of] Rajaton.

JH: Can you spell that?

ZP: P-A-K-K

JH: “P” or “B”?


JH: Mmmm.

ZP: They’re like—you have [a group] in [the] U.S. What is [it] called, [an] a cappella group? All [the] kids get crazy about it.

JH: Oh yeah, Pentatonix?

ZP: Pentatonix. Yeah. But it is like, quite [a] sophisticated group because they’re singing like from choral—[It] can be [a] choral piece and then they have like what “Rajaton” is. Anything. It’s called, Rajaton. And their name [is] translated “boundless.”

JH: Can you spell that one?


JH: Okay.

ZP: And, then one piece, which is like really from my beginning of the work with the Hamilton Children’s Choir—like for years, which I kind of didn’t touched for a while now, is called “Eternity” [by] Michael Bojesen.

JH: “Eternity?”

ZP: “Eternity”

JH: Michael?

ZP: Michael Bojesen [from] Denmark. Then it’s also from Rajaton, “Dobbin’s Flowery Vale.”
JH: The…

ZP: Dobbin’s Flowery Vale. It is by Rajaton by arranged by [a] Canadian composer—like she did [a] version for treble voices. We ask that they don’t reduce any parts. So, we [are] singing exactly what Rajaton [is] singing. All parts. We didn’t reduce anything. So—it’s so many pieces! Like, we did the whole Pergolesi *Stabat Mater*. They love like, the spectrum of repertoire—so different [and] diverse. And they love, like, Rachmaninoff.

JH: Mm hm. Which one by Brahms did you say you did?


JH: Mm hm. Okay, this is very helpful.

ZP: And then [the music] can be, like, pop music, along with it—along with all of it.

ZP: From Brahms, to avant-garde to pop!

JH: Yeah! What pop things do you do? Are they Canadian pop [songs]?

ZP: It’s very important to find, like, a really good arrangement. Right? Which is difficult. And they don’t want to sing, like any of this [sic] cheesy arrangements. So, like, the last Thursday, we did “Wavin’ Flag,” which is like—has a message—a great message of community and being united and then it’s all parts of instrumental parts.

JH: What’s it called again?

ZP: “Wavin’ Flag.”

JH: Oh, “Wavin.”

ZP: “Wavin’ Flag.”

JH: “Wavin’ Flag!” Okay! Got it! (Hums tune) That one?

ZP: And then you have to see, like, all those kids in [the] audience they just were running through this aisles and singing with the choir and climbing on [the] stage.

JH: Yeah! I did it myself with an Orff ensemble when I was at a middle school.

ZP: Oh, okay. Also, Titanium. Titanium we did from—I think it’s from this Pentatonix sing [sic], but it’s all a cappella. All parts.

JH: And who is the arranger?
ZP: It was one of our alumnus—Emily Taub.

JH: Oh, that’s so cool. Is it published?

ZP: No.

JH: No? That’s really fun. I want to be sensitive to the time because it is almost two o’clock. Do we have to be out of here?

ZP: It’s okay.

JH: It’s okay? All right.

ZP: I mean we have some stuff to work [sic]. I guess they have a lot of questions for me.

JH: Okay! You are the lady of the hour here. Um, so, for each concert season, would you say you try to keep about an hour and a half worth of music?

ZP: At least we have to have one hour of music—sound time.

JH: Okay, 90 minutes worth of music. Wow!

ZP: So, about 50, 60 pieces.

JH: And you would—I have never seen your choirs perform with music, so, you always expect memorization, correct?

ZP: Yeah, I found it is, you know—it’s a wall between singers and audience.

JH: I agree. I would rather sacrifice a little bit of something but to have them connected with me and the audience or whatever.

ZP: It’s such a wall.

JH: I agree.

ZP: And you know like, back home—you know—even [as a] conductor—I get so lazy here, but even [the] conductor will have no music on the stand.

JH: Do you ever conduct with music?

ZP: I, pretty much, I don’t need it. Sometimes I hold it, just to remember the order.

JH: Yeah, okay. I noticed that you kind of walk out on stage.

ZP: Yeah, I don’t really [need it].
JH: That’s impressive! *(laughs)* And uh, what’s the longest that you would keep a song in your repertoire?

ZP: Oh, it depends on the events we are going [to] and what expectations from invitations too. So, right now, like, we have all new [music]. In [a] collaboration, singers learn something different and something new and something like—not what I [might] do. Right?

JH: Right.

ZP: It’s a different taste—different kind of vision.

JH: Yeah. Yeah! That’s really great.

ZP: This collaborative project with Toronto Children’s Chorus was [an] excellent opportunity to learn from Elise [Bradley], [her] repertoire choice, [and her] rehearsal techniques. I want them [HCC members] to see how her kids [are] working. It’s good for them. Great experience!

JH: Yeah. It makes them see different angles—different interpretations. It’s good. I think you have answered most of these things. Is there—oh, performing attire—like I’ve seen the yellow with the black [outfits] and then more recently—like your stars concert—it seemed like they had black with colorful scarves. Which—do you have a standard attire? Or is it always…

ZP: It’s our HCC colors—gold and black.

JH: The gold and black is your…

ZP: But if money were no issue…

JH: What would you do, if you could do anything you wanted?

ZP: I would have a set of white—full white, pants and like, some floaty tops, um, that the light design can change the color and reflect.

JH: Oh!

ZP: Organza kind of fabric! Double-sided! Like both-sided changing. Reversible! I have a lot of ideas and not as much money!

JH: *(laughs)* It is so expensive, more than you’d ever think. We just changed [uniforms] two years ago. Uh. It’s a big deal. Would you allow somebody to have colored hair in your performances?
ZP: I try not. I explain. I don’t say, “This is not—prohibited” or something. And I say, “So much attention [goes] to you. From the audience perspective, don’t you think it’s fair that everybody have [sic] to look…”

JH: Equal.

ZP: We should look like [an] ensemble, right?

JH: Yeah.

ZP: It’s a part of [our] uniform.

JH: Yeah. Well, when we were in Kentucky at the Performing Art Center there [for] ACDA, there was one choir that had a girl with green hair and some of my choristers said, “Ms. Hostetter, thank you for not allowing that because that’s all I could think about.”

ZP: Yeah. You know what I do? I show the videos I can find on YouTube—something. And I ask, “What do you think? What was distracting?” And it’s just like education. And then the kids, come to [it] themselves. They say, “I guess I have to change my color.” (Laughs) And I says, [sic] “Yes, that’s good.”

JH: That’s great. I like that because if they own it, they own it and [are] not just resentful that’s it’s a big rule.

ZP: Yeah, it’s not a rule. I try to make as less [sic] rules as possible.

JH: I like that.

ZP: You know, like we have this in Russian—[a] funny expression [about] wife and husband. Right? The husband always feel [sic] that he’s the leader—make decisions in the family and all this—right? I don’t know, in North America, it’s different, but in our country [it’s] like this. So, the wife is [the] neck. So, wherever [the] neck turning—that direction, the head [husband] is watching.

JH: (Laughing)

ZP: It’s just a joke. But that’s how I work together with the kids. I give them—of course—I give them direction. I try to show them something—like, convincing them—but not by the rules. Like, for example, before the concert on Thursday, I show them the video of “Wir Eilen.”

JH: Oh, we did that that last year! Mm hm?

ZP: Bach. And I found two videos on YouTube where one girl, she just like, [for] five minutes—and I played the whole piece—[for] five minutes she is staring like this to the
floor and doesn’t move even her lips. And they were all discussing. And I asked, “Did you hear the piece? Like, did you remember the sounds—what it was [like]?” And they said, “No!” And I said, “How busy you were. What were you doing?” And they said, “We were all watching that girl!” And I said, “That’s what happen [sic]. You know it is [sic]. One of you don’t know the words, the full attention—nobody already paying attention to anything else. Everybody [is] watching that person.” Because, this is just like—something wrong! Always [the] audience [will] try to find what is wrong!

JH: Yeah. I love that too! Yeah! It’s really good. One example that I give—I just did this Monday in my rehearsals. We have a spring choir where we say, “You all come.” We do five weeks [of rehearsals] just to show them what it’s like and have a little share session with whatever—two or three songs, we do—not that well. But I had this little boy that—he was just—you know—he was just being a little boy, but there was this quiet moment and he was still doing this [moving around]. So, I pulled out my tablet and I said, “Now which piece of paper do you want? Do you want this one [with writing] or this one?” Well, they wanted the one without anything on. And then I put a little dot on one [piece of paper]. And then I said, “Do you want this one?” They said, “No, we want a clean one.” And I said, “Well when you are moving around, you are that dot that everyone looks at. And everyone wants this [clean paper] where you are all uniform and doing the same thing and directed at the music.” And usually—I mean even that little boy—who was seven I believe—he stopped! (Laughing)

JH: Is there anything else about your organization that you’d like me to know or write about?

ZP: I think it is very unique in the way what is happening around music and the team. It’s so open-minded. I am [the] kind of artistic director who desires [a] group of people working together—also the kids. I want singers to “own” their ensemble and take responsibility—not to have fear, but to be passionate about it. I have to be so patient.-You can’t make this happen.

(Tricia LeClair enters.)

JH: Yes?

TL: Hi. Sorry to interrupt.

JH: That’s all right!

TL: I’m having to go to a doctor’s appointment. And I will be back for 5:00.

ZP: Okay.

TL: And um, just the idea—well I’ll tell you later. But, the risers are there. They just have to be set up. So, Gillian is going to go over and make sure they are set up for six
o’clock with anybody who shows up. Anjanette is putting out an email to see if anybody can show up early. But don’t [you] set them up.

JH: *(Laughs)*

ZP: I have to start rehearsal at six!

TL: Yeah. That’s okay. Well, we’ll get them set up. We have them. That’s the main thing.

ZP: Yeah, of course!

TL: Okay, and then Gillian has a few things to do with TCC.

ZP: Yep. Okay, I will do it. Okay, thank you!

JH: Thank you Tricia!

ZP: So, that’s how it works. I will set up risers with the kids. I am honored to be artistic director of such [a] fabulous organization! [We have] excellent artistic staff, and fantastic committed singers!

JH: Well, I think this is wonderful! I would just love to move to Hamilton for a season and shadow you the whole time!

ZP: *(Laughs)*

JH: That’s what I would really love, because I know there is so much! Are you a vocalist or an instrumentalist?

ZP: No, I am a conductor! This is the system. In [the] Russian system. I trained from 14 years old in the choral department of the State Music College and five years in the choral department of [the] State Conservatory.

JH: Oh, I see.

ZP: To be [a] conductor of the choir, you have to study both voice and piano. You have to be able to play piano really well— to play scores. So, at the exams, in the music college, you [are] playing [the] score by memory, for example, and they say, “Okay, stop.” And they [will] say, “Now, sing the chord from [the] bottom [to the] top on [the] third beat of [the] bar.” So, you have to hear the score in vertical and horizontal ways, this way [up] and this way [down].

JH: Oh, my goodness. And, it’s by memory?

ZP: Yes. So, it is like, inner hearing. It’s very intense training. So intense!
JH: Wow.

ZP: So, and to get to the music college, you have to finish music school, being a child. So, otherwise, you have no career. You can’t go to music college to study music if you don’t have this eight years of training in music school.

JH: That’s amazing.

ZP: It’s very different.

JH: So, would you say that the quality of music in Russia is much higher than what North America produces?

ZP: I will not compare this way. Both schools have amazing things to offer! The whole system is different. Government support is different. For example, [the] professional choir, Moscow Chamber choir—it’s a full-time job for all singers. And they [are] paid to be in the rehearsals. And they will practice every day from Monday to Thursday—like four [or] five hours. And they will do for warm-up—they probably can sing like [a] quartetone chromatic scale and have huge number of the performances.

JH: That’s really good. Oh. There are so many things that are going on around the world that are so wonderful.

ZP: Yeah, it is so cool, for sure.

JH: Well, I think that is all the questions I have. Although, I just had this brainstorm that I would love a little video of you demonstrating your dinosaur again.

ZP: (Laughs)

JH: Would you do your dinosaur for me while I videotape you?

ZP: Yes. (Laughs) So, this [is] my dinosaur...

JH: So, wait. Let me start. Okay.

ZP: Dinosaur, from [the] Phonopedic Method. A small head but it’s round. It’s not squished. Ah. (high pinched sound) OH. (High sound with space) It’s very rounded. Ah. (High pitch) OOOOHHHHH. (Descending vocal slide) OOOOOOOOOOHHHHHH—AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH (low pitch)...eeeeeellllhhhh (vocal fry).

JH: (Laughs) Great.
Appendix 5: Interview with Jiří Skopal  
Director of Jitro “Daybreak”  
August 23, 2017

Janet Hostetter: I’d like to hear the background of the choir and then, the more important questions are about how you—what you believe about the choir. What is your philosophy? Okay. So, how long has the program been in existence? Did you say forty…?

Jiří Skopal: Forty-three years.

JH: Forty-three years.

JS: Forty-three years.

JH: Good.

JS: But, I worked with this choir [for] only forty years.

JH: Okay.

JS: But, after the first three years, the choir was only twenty [or] twenty-five children.

JH: Okay. In the first—in the beginning.

JS: Mm-hm.

JH: Okay. And, is there a vision or mission statement for the organization?

JS: Ah! (with humor) We would probably sing the most difficult music and very good music and contemporary music and, uh, we will try to be motivation [sic] for—for contemporary, uh, composers.

JH: Okay. And, do you…

JS: Or a new way [for the] choir.

JH: Okay! Good! Is there—do you provide your choristers with a handbook of rules and procedures?

Interpreter 1: We’ve got a little book called, uh—Isabella—uh?

Interpreter 2: It is ten rules.
I1: And, it’s wrote [*sic*] by one of the member [*sic*] of the choir. She was here—when…There are ten rules, and it is a small book, and it is wrote [*sic*] by…

JH: Is it things that she just decided were important for everybody to know from her experience or…

I2: It was like everybody put their heads together.

JH: Yeah. Okay.

JS: But in this book, you have this [*sic*] two books. One from…

JH: Theory.

JS: [In] this book, you have ten rules.

JH: Okay. Awesome! And, you told me, but how many performing and training groups exist? You said seven, right?

JS: Mm-hm. Seven group [*sic*]. Yes! (*Květa brings book.*) You [can] have this book in English.

JH: Oh. What!?

JS: This is the first [choir], the second [choir], third, fourth, all the way—but in English.

JH: Oh, [do] you have one I can have? Oh, perfect. Perfect! Um, and how many groups of the seven perform? All of them, right?

I1: All of them. But, uh, Jitro performing [*sic*] the most—the most.

JH: What Is it called?

I2: Jitro. Main Choir—like the Main Choir.

JS: Main Choir.

I1: Main Choir—the hardest one.

JH: Okay.

JS: Uh, with small groups of two-three times, right?

I1: Five year.

JS: Year. This age, um, ten, eleven.
I1: The youngest one!

JH: All right! How many times [do they perform] in a year?

JS: Ten times.

JH: The youngest one? Okay. To—what was the most?

I1: The most in a year?

JH: Yeah!

JS: Forty [or] fifty. But, uh, many years ago—hundred fifty!

JH: *(Laughs)* When you were raising money?

JS: Yes.

JH: Yeah. Uh huh. *(Laughs)*

JH: Um, how many children did you say [are in the whole program]? It was three hundred and…?

JS: It was three hundred, fifty!

JH: Three hundred fifty. And, what is your largest group total?

JS: Jitro?

I1: Jitro.

JH: And how many is that? Forty?

I1: Eighty!

JH: Eighty.

I1: Eighty. Yeah. The smallest one…

JS: Seventeen.

JH: Okay. And, that is the second largest probably?

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: And what do you call the smallest one?
I2: Beagles.

JH: Like little yippy dogs?

I2: Yes! *(Laughs)*

JH: Okay. *(Laughs)* Um, okay! So, how often and for how long do the grades rehearse?

JS: The smallest one, two age [sic]—from four to nine, only one rehearsal per week plus from class at school—voice building— one hour. And children in age from nine to eleven, two times per week, plus voice building. And Jitro two or three times per week.

JH: Two or three times?

JS: Hm, yes.

I2: Yes!

JS: Plus, many—for example—weekends.

JH: Weekends?

JS: Singing. Yes.

JH: Yeah. Okay, plus voice building. Right?

I1: Yes, of course!

JH: Um, let’s see. I don’t know if you have a sample of your performing schedule that you could share with me. I would love to have it if…

I2: We have no schedule of it.

JS: Twenty-minute, voice building, warming…

JH: Right. What I mean is—um, like your concert schedule.

I1: Okay. Oh, a program of the concert you mean?

JH: No. I mean even—like on May 10, we go here. May 15 [we have] a concert here.

JS: [Do you mean] next year [sic] performance?

JH: Mm-hm. All year—or do you just have an all-year schedule?

JS: Yes. Yes. Every—every time, we have it on our website.

JH: Website! Oh, okay. It’s there. That’s great!

I1: You can see it.

JH: Okay. Let me write that down.

(Květa brings a book of information.)

JS: Um, for example, last year’s from here…

JH: Ah, yeah! Can I have that? (Laughs)

I1: It’s from the last year. It’s not this year’s [schedule].

JH: That’s ok. That’s all right!

I1: We will give it [the schedule of performances] to you later.

JH: Okay. Sure!

I1: We just need to print it.

JH: Sure! Um. And, the name of this building?

JS: Choir Building. Jitro Choir Building!

JH: (Laughs) Um, okay!

JS: But we say, um, choir—small—small building. [In] Czech, “dům” is house. “Dům chek” is familiar—uh, small—small dimension.

I1: More familiar.

JS: Smaller.

JH: Choir small house…

I1: Yes!

JH: And, this was a military-quarters? Or what was it before? You said it was a…

I1: Yeah. It was a military building because our house is in a part of a military buildings [sic].
(Květa brings documents, changing the conversation.)

I1: There is [sic] the concerts of 2016 so that you can see.

JH: Oh, perfect! Thank you! Yes, thank you! That’s helpful! Okay, (to husband) don’t let me forget that. Um, let’s see—and, you are funded? Name the ways that your program is funded. You’ve told us some [things]. So, tuition—like students pay.

I1: Uh huh. Yeah.

JH: Tuition. And, you said eighty dollars per year?

JS: Yeah. Yes!

JH: Is that for every age?

JS: Yes, yes—small difference between the children of four [and] five years. It’s seventy dollars.

I1: But, it’s a small difference.

JH: Ok sure. And, then the rest of the funding comes from sponsors?

I1: Yeah, sponsors, and from the city.

JH: Oh, the city pays?

I2: Yeah!

JS: Yes.

JH: (Laughs) I am going to send our mayor to you!

JS: Minister.

I1: Yeah. From [the] region. Like [the] region of Hradec Králové?

JH: Yeah, maybe a county?

JS: From ministry for country.

I1: Yeah. Minister of culture.

JH: Okay. From the government?

JS: Yes.
JH: Okay, the national government? Or local government?

JS: Yes. Yes.

JH: Both! Oh, nice! Um, and then your staff members—it’s you, your wife, and Lucy?

JS: Lucy, plus…

I1: [We have a] lot of teachers!

I2: Lots of teachers!

JH: How many people?

JS: Fifteen.

I1: Fifteen teachers!

JH: Part-time—part-time or full-time?

JS: I think for full-time [we have] ten [staff members].

JH: Wow! And, is that [full-time] twenty-one hours? [Or only] ten to twenty-one [hours]? *(Laughs)*

JS: Twenty-one [hours] yes, but, this money—I come back to money—from ministry of culture and from city is about twenty percent of what we need. And, [the] other is from our…

JH: Concerts?

JS: Concerts.

JH: Oh, okay. So, I need to put concerts in. Concerts are the most of the support, right?

I1: Yeah.

JH: Most of it—maybe eighty percent?

I1: Eighty percent of what we have. Yes.

JH: Is the concerts?

I1: Yeah.
JH: Okay. Let’s see. So, we have—*(JS takes a phone call. JH turns her attention to the interpreters.)* I will ask you some questions. I think you will probably know. Do you have to recruit for the choir?

I1: Yeah. Yeah, like, we are the older ones. The older ones, after graduation, they are helping us. So, they are going to school, and they are listening to small children. And, if they are good, they are giving them some papers. And, they are saying, like, “Come with us and come to our choir. You can sing with us!” And, they are coming and singing with us.

JH: So, the ones that aren’t so good, you just leave them be? *(Chuckle)*

I2: Um, yeah.

JH: What if they want to come, but they aren’t so good?

I1: They can [come]. They can, of course. They can [come] but, in the schools, we are taking better ones. But, anyone can come here and sing with us.

JH: Open.

I1: We are open to everyone.

JH: Okay, and what is the average length of membership in the choir? Like, once you come, do people stay forever? Do sometimes people come—do you have people that just, one year, come in and then leave?

I1: Yes. There are people that stay forever, like me.

I2: I have been here for fourteen years.

I1: I am here also for fourteen years. So, we are here for ages!

JS: But we work really hard. Therefore somebody is—*[finds it]* difficult. This year is more difficult—hard work *[sic]* than thirty years ago.

JH: Oh, okay, because you have higher standards all the time?

I2: Mm-hm.

JH: Do you have a higher level of drop out?

I2: No. It’s more like kids are lazy.

I1: And, they don’t want to work harder, so they just go.
JH: Yeah.

JS: And, also work [sic] with me is difficult!

(Laughter)

I1: Sometimes! No! (Laughs) Just like, we need to work and, we want to be good! So, we need to work hard!

JH: Yeah.

I1: And, this is just the choir!

JH: Yeah, that’s the motivation [for working hard] right there!

I1: Yeah, yeah!

JH: So, do you have an alumni program? Do you have a way of—do you know what an alum is?

I2: No.

JH: People that graduate from the choir. Do you stay connected with them?

I1: Of course.

JH: How? How do you do that?

I1: We are in contact with them, and they are helping [sic] to us. For example, we had a concert with Segura (?) and they were with us. They were singing with us. So, we are in contact.

JH: The whole concert or just like [at] the end?

I1: I think the whole concert.

JH: How did they know the music?

I2: Before the concert, they are [sic] practicing with us.

JH: For how long? Just that night?

I1: Um, not that night, but, yeah, maybe three rehearsals. They are [sic] practicing with us, and they are practicing at home, I think, because, it’s hard songs [sic]. And—for example—of course, they are with us on our camp.
JH: Oh, okay.

I1: Like [at] our singing camp and they are with us.

JS: But, a few months ago, we make recording of mixed choir and (?)

JH: That’s neat! Okay, um, let’s see. Got that. Are your concerts mandatory? Do you have a— “mandatory” means you have to come, or it’s not good.

JS: *(Nods his head affirmatively.)*

JH: What would happen if—what would you do if kids would just not show up? What would you do?

JS: We—we will go next year in Canada [sic]. Most of the two months ago, with seven days providing a performance, [they] must be there. If they will [not] be there now, no…

I1: They can’t go to Canada.

JS: And, this December…

I2: December.

JS: We will be [gone for] two weeks [in] France [giving] many performance [sic]. Who will be there [and those who] will be not there—is impossible to go to Canada.

I1: [They] won’t go to Canada.

JH: Okay. So, [how] you have to be professional, or you have to be…

I1: Be everywhere and do a lot of jobs and if we don’t, we can’t go to Canada.

JH: Uh huh.

I1: It’s like a…

JH: Privilege! I like that!

I1: Yeah!

JH: They can still be in the choir, but they just can’t go to the tour.

I1: Of course! Of course, they can still be with us, but they can’t go to Canada!

JS: We must prepare. It’s impossible for sportsmen. No competition—no competition go to Olympia.

I1: It’s the same.

JS: [In] America, I know that this competition—that who is here now—will go to Olympia.

JH: If you miss practice, you don’t play!

JS: Yes.

I1: Exactly!

JH: Do you ever do outreach or charity? Charitable performances?

I1: Yeah. We are having some charity concerts. Uh, I don’t know. We just had some charity concerts.

JH: Like, for who [sic] do you benefit?

I1: We sang uh, some weeks ago for a charity. It is a home for ills.

JH: People who are sick?

I2: Yeah, yeah.

JH: Uh huh. Okay. Okay. Was that to raise money or just to encourage them?

I2: More like [to] encourage them, I think. The money, of course, too.

JH: Ok, good! And, um, where—what type of venues do you most often perform in? Would you say cathedrals?

JS: Popular now [is] contemporary—I like that [the] most—it’s contemporary music and one...

JH: Actually, I am talking about the building—the venue.

I1: Half and half—church, yeah, churches or big halls.

JH: Big concert halls?

JS: In Japan, alway [sic] in hall. In France, most—churches [sic].

I1: Churches. It depends on where we are.
JH: Schools? Were you [perform] in schools?

I1: In Japan—yeah—we sang in schools—in America too! For example, in France, it is not that much in schools [sic].

JH: Okay. Good. Now, we are getting to the really important stuff. All right. So, we’re going to talk about vocal tone. Okay?

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: So, what pedagogical—do you know what that means? Teaching concepts [that] form the basis of your teaching? Like, you were doing it today. Like, you were doing this stuff. So, what are the important parts of teaching vocal tone?

I1: We read from a book. Um, from G’bar (?).

JH: Say that again?

I1: It’s a book, and there is some theory about how we should sing.

JH: Okay.

I1: About breath—about how we should stay—about how we should pronounce. And, mostly in this book, uh it has things about focusing [your] soul and physical…

JH: Mental?

I1: Yeah mental. Yeah, that’s the word. So, that’s it!

JH: Okay. Okay!

JS: But, our voices must be—[must] know [sic] what [vocal concepts] means [to] this teacher [and] this teacher [and] this teacher, but now, [it is] I…

JH: Yes, right. Right!

JS: And, next time I will be not here [sic], maybe [there] will be another.

JH: Someone else?

JS: But, [there] must be only what this one mean—no different way. [There’s only] one way here—one idea.

JH: Sure, sure! So, but I want to know what your idea is. What does—let me ask these ladies. Like, I want to know what you think!
JS: The saying is, “If small children [are] learning how to write…”

I1: “Or, how to draw.” One way (response) is that they don’t want to draw. It is not fun for them, and then they don’t want to do it.

JH: Mm-hm.

I1: So, they just pass and let it go.

JH: Uh huh.

I1: And, the second way is that…

JS: [The] second way [is] they try [to] be good, [they make it] nice, made [sic] it for [their] mother, who like [sic] it and, and…

I1: They want to do their best.

JS: That moment is important.

JH: I love that!

JS: [The child will own it] “It’s mine! Mine!” One hour, three hours, ten hours now—[practice goes more quickly].

JH: Yes. Uh huh.

I1: So, the most important is about—that we want to do it the best. It’s about mental decidedness.

JH: Deciding to do it?

I: Yeah. Right!

JH: So, now let’s get into very specific. So, I am going to direct it to these two.

I2: Okay.

JH: So, what would you say your director tells you to do in order to be that very best drawing? Like, to get the best tone. What does he ask you to do?

I1: That we should have our mouths open like this. (They place their index fingers in a vertical position on either side of their mouths.)

I2: And, he [will] say we have to have our teeth to be showing.

I1: And, our tongue should be… *(pointing inside their mouths.)*

JH: Your tongue should be…forward? Uh huh.

I1: Yeah. Yeah! Our tongues can’t be in our throats. That is really important.

I: Our chin. Our chin should be a little bit down—not like this *(she leans her head back so that her chin sticks up in the air and sings with tension on “ah”)* but like this *(she sings on one note with level chin on “na”).*

JH: Yes.

I1: Our mouth should be open for three fingers.

JS: The best singer [should have] five [fingers].

I1: The best singers have five fingers!

*(Laughter)*

JH: This is too big!

JS: Anna Netrebko? Anna Netrebko is the famous opera singer? She can put her fist in her mouth.

I1: We will show you. I will show you.

JH: Okay.

I1: And, we should stay like our backs—chest.

JH: Chest?

I2: Chest.

JH: Posture. Chest is open?

I1: Chest is open. Yeah.

JH: Okay.

I2: Breathe down, like…

JH: Breathe low. Diaphragm—the diaphragm!
I1: Yeah, yeah. Our legs should look like this, not like this (*put close together*). The tone in our head here. The tone should be in our head. It should resonate everywhere!

JH: Oh, that is a good word.

I1: Yeah!

(Laughter)

JH: That’s excellent! Does he, um use, analogies to sing? Do you know what an analogy is? Analogy, um, the drawing thing is an analogy. You aren’t talking about drawing, but you’re using that to describe what you want. That’s an analogy. So, what other analogies?

I2: We call it an egg. It’s like for the breathing.

JH: An egg?

I2: Yeah, it’s like the front and the sides.

I1: We have a book with it and, we [will] show you the—show you the drawing. And, you will see it, and we will describe it on the pages. It is much easier for us.

JH: Uh huh. That’s great! Are there any other analogies for the mouth or anything?

I2: Um, we say sometimes, “It’s like,” um…

JH: A headband? A rubber band?

I1: Yeah, a rubber band. We have our mouth like on a rubber band. (*She caresses her cheeks with the back of her hands so that the jaw drops down naturally.*) To be like—open the mouth the best. It shouldn’t be like—it should be free! It should be easy for us.

JH: Open?

I1: Open like—yeah! Exactly! And, one other thing—that we are—like we have a little…(*She pulls an imaginary ‘string’ out of the top of her head with her thumb and index finger.*)

JH: String?

I1: String! Yes. That’s why we are like, standing like this. (*She holds her chest high and demonstrates it is broadening with her hands*) like we have something here that is pulling us. That is why we are standing like this.

JH: Mm-hm. That’s good. Um, is there anything for the space in your mouth?
I1: The most important is the tongue. *(She points inside her mouth and then caresses underneath her jaw.)*

JH: The tongue? Okay.

I1: You can’t have it in our throat, yeah. It destroying [sic] the tone.

JS: *(Showing a book to JH). We start from this book. We are reading this book. Two [or] three minutes every rehearsal about…*

I1: How to stand, right! How to be…

I2: It’s like, in school, we write.

I1: He is reading. He is reading the most important things. That’s the egg—and our teacher, he is saying to us—he is reading this. And, he is reading the most important things. And, we have our notebooks, and we are writing in it.

JH: Taking notes?

I1: Yeah. Taking notes. *(She raises her hand to her throat.)*

JH: This would be your larynx?

JS: No. No.

JH: Tension? Relaxed?

I1: Relax! Yeah!

JH: So, everyone has these pages in their…?

I1: No! No, just our teacher and the ones that are…

JH: Highlighted.

I1: Highlighted. Yeah! He reads this, and he says to us the most import thing from it. And, we are writing the most important part of this long, long…

JH: How often does he do that? I mean is that at the beginning?

I2: He says, like, “Now write!”

I1: Now, write the most important thing. And, he is reading it for three times slowly. And, we are writing it in our notes and…”
JS: And we have this from age twelve and understand, understand, understand…

I2: Every year…

JS: Every year! “Yes,” [choristers say,] “I understand!”

I1: “I heard it!”

JH: Repeat it. You repeat it every year.

I1: Yes. Repeat it every year, because it is really important.

JH: Okay. So, would you get that kind of instruction once-a-year or throughout the year?

I2: Oh, throughout the year.

JH: Several—a number of times—Mm-hm. And, I can answer this next question. Do you use audio sources to expose singers to good vocal tone production? And, the answer is “yes” because I saw it today!

I1: (Laughs) Yes. Yes.

JH: And, you saw it and heard it!

I1: Yeah!

JH: How often would you say that happens?

I2: Not many times.

JH: Not many times?

I1: We are not watching the videos because we have our teachers. And, uh, every one of us—we are having one hour with our teachers. So, they are showing us how to do it.

I2: Or, sometimes—our teachers, like, send videos to us by emails [sic]

I1: By emails! And, we are watching it at home.

JH: Oh! Okay. That’s great! Hm. That’s a good idea. How do you know that people are watching them? I mean do people…

I1: Uh, we ask before—before the rehearsal, “Who—who watched it?” And, we are like, “I watched it!” (She raises her hand.)

JH: Yeah! And, what if someone doesn’t raise their hand?
I1: Watch it today and [then] write a note to not forget it.

JH: Okay. All right. We are going to move to musicianship training. Do you know what I mean? Like, theory. Okay?

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: Okay.

I2: Okay.

JH: So, um, would you say—do you ever learn songs by just echoing—call and response? Or, is it always reading the score? Like, we’d say, “learning by rote?”

I2: Um, sometimes we learn by echo. But mostly the small children learn by echo. We usually just like, read the notes from the paper that we are learning at the beginning.

JH: Okay. Um, so, how is that literacy—how do you develop—do you know what literacy is? That’s like [when] you know how to read music. Okay, so, how is that developed in your program?

I1: We are trying to do this in every rehearsal—to practice how to read notes—from the smallest one to the oldest one.

JH: How much time in rehearsals is dedicated to that type of training?

I1: Ten minutes—every rehearsal.

JH: Ten minutes—same as ours! Okay!

I2: Mm-hm.

JH: Um, does—do you ever have—are the directors always the ones that teach the theory lesson or do you have different people that come in?

I1: Mostly the same person.

JH: Okay. Mostly taught by directors?

I1: Yeah. Yeah.

JH: Um, so is this a particular—like I was telling Jiří that we use Kodály in my choir. It’s a method and you just—it’s kind of your own—making your way—training for theory.

JS: Yes. Yes.
I1: We have our own method.

JS: We spoke about it.

JH: Yes. That is what I thought. I just wanted to make sure.

JS: Yes. [The] tonal method [is] with folk songs.

JH: Folk songs?

JS: Yes. Yes. Folk songs.

I1: Folk songs. Like,

JS: Tonal method.

I1: Tone methods.

JH: A tonal method.

I1: Because we have for each tone of the…

JH: Right! Yeah, you were saying something?


I1: Each tone has one song.

JH: Each tone has one song? Do you have a book that goes with that or?

I1: We will give it to you.

JH: Thank you! All right. So then, I think I—you said not much is expected to be practiced at home. Correct?

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: So, most of your rehearsal takes place here with your lesson? Um, and then do you have any…

I1: But, it is important to say that in a year, we can go here (choir building). Uh, not in a time of a rehearsal [sic] and [we can] practice here all [alone] or with a friend. This building is open for us all day.

JH: Ah!
I1: And, we can be here and practice what we need. And, how long we need.

JH: That’s neat. It’s never locked?

I1: Um, like it’s locked because we are in school, of course.

JH: Yeah.

I1: So, I don’t know…

JS: Somebody is here one hour before…

I2: Before the rehearsal and we can come here.

JH: I see.

JS: Somebody is here two. Somebody, thirty minutes…

I2: Mostly, the smaller kids, because they learn new songs.

JH: Okay.

I2: So, they trust us.

JS: (Shows JH another book.) Our method! Songs and this is from… (41:00)

JH: 1985! It must be really good. It works! (laughing)

I1: Yeah it works!

JH: I would like a copy!

JS: We seeing [sic] that this method is from the eleventh century.

JH: Oh, neat! Okay!

JS: (Singing a series of words with the scale) …Re…Mi…Fa. “Fa” is nothing!

(Laughter)

JS: “Fa”… is song. “Fa” is [the] fourth step.

JH: Yes.

JS: Is same. Is now—[there’s] no these going out of style—but, for second (singing) for fourths (singing), fourths, fives, six, sevens.
JH: Do I get a copy of this?

JS: Yes! *Calls for Květa.* Yes.

JH: Thank you! Thank you! *(To husband)* Don’t let me forget that. All right. So, I lost my spot. Do you provide—do you have any listening tracks? Like, you said for the alumni, you provide a training CD—I guess—for them? Do you provide anything for your…?

I2: Sometimes. We have—on our page—we have one. We can log in—the members.

JH: On the website?

I2: Yes. We have a password.

I1: And, there are songs, and we can sing with excellence. It’s from the—we have songs, and we can listen to them and practice.

JH: Now is this—are the songs, ones you are actually performing or are they the ones that are for musicianship training or like, for theory training?

I2: For concerts.

JH: So, it’s stuff you would get ready to perform?

I1: Yeah.

JH: Mm-hm. All right. So, you don’t have to really do musicianship? How do you know that—how does Jiří know that you guys are doing well? Like, is it because of your one-on-one lesson? People can say, “Ah, Michelle is having trouble with…”?

I1: Some song. We have like, rehearsals on Sundays, and before the rehearsal, we have, uh…

I2: I could say, “exam.”

I1: an exam.

JH: And this is once-a-month right?

I2: No, twice…

I1: Twice-a-month! Maybe…

I2: Sometimes. Before a tour but every Sunday.
JH: Oh!

I1: Like, and for example, three [hours] every Sunday—like, more songs.

JH: Okay. So, if...

I1: If we are just—we came here—uh—[to see] our choirmaster and we are singing [sic] to him.

JS: (Showing something to JH.) This is small one—smaller class. This is song, song, song. Who was singing—ten, seven, seventy-five.

I1: So, results—the most—the most—the highest mark is ten plus!

JS: And this—two hundred seventy-four is before, before, before, before.

JH: Ah, I see.

JS: And from this [it] is clear who is first, who is second, who is...

I1: And, most points. [The] highest mark is ten plus and uh...

JH: I see.

I1: Ten and more is good.

JS: Ten plus, ten plus, ten plus.

JH: Ten plus, yeah!

I1: Yes. Then we count all of them. And uh, who is first, who is second...

JH: Okay. So, would this determine who gets to go on the tour then?

I1: Yeah.

JH: All right. So, you have to know your songs! So, it is motivating!

I1: Yes, it is motivation for us!

JH: You have to work hard outside because you want to do so well?

I1: Yes.

JH: How often do you do the testing?
I1: Uh, the testing. I don’t know.

I2: Usually, every Sunday.

I1: Every Sunday, if we have a rehearsal.

JH: Okay. Okay.

I1: Sometimes three songs—sometimes two songs.

JH: And, you sing by yourself in front of other kids or just…?

I2: Well, if it’s a song for three voices…

I1: Three voices, like, soprano, mezzo-sopranos, altos…

I2: One soprano comes, one soprano two…

I1: For trio. For trio!

JH: And everybody else is watching?

I1: No. No! They are waiting outside.

JH: It’s private.

JS: I make it here, “one, two, three, four…”

I1: Our master is here, and the other childs [sic] are like…

JH: Outside the door?

I1: Yeah.

JH: So, is there a ranking from the top student to the lowest student?

I2: Yes!

JH: What is the privilege of the top student, other than the fact that they get to go on tour?

I1: To go to the tour, so that we can show that we are the best! Or, if we want to make the song, uh, like—the song can have three parts, so the first part is sing-ed [sic] by the whole choir. The second part is sing-ed [sic] by—for example—sixteen or twelve [sic] best [singers.]
JH: Ah! Okay!

I1: And, the third part is sing [sic] by whole choir.

JS: So, everybody know [sic] who is the first or the sixth or…

JH: Ah! That is what I was trying to figure out!

I1: We all know who is the first one.

JH: There’s no secrets [sic]. You know who’s at the bottom and who’s at the top?

I1: No secrets. Yeah.

JH: It’s motivating to keep working hard?

I1: Yes.

JH: Yeah. All right. So, we are going to move to a different category: literature [or] music! How do you find new repertoire—new songs for the choir?

JS: We know—with our very good composer, Jan Jirásek.

I1: That’s a choir friend. He is a composer.

JH: Jan?

I1: Jirásek.

JH: Spell that.

I2: J-I-R-Á-S-E-K. Yep!

JH: Okay! Got that. All right. He composes?

JS: (Grinning and getting ready to dial his phone.) Would you like [to] speak with our friend and ask him about…?

I1: Would you like to speak with him?

JH: Well, he gets the literature?

I1: Mm-hm. Our choirmaster, uh (pointing to JS) knows all the composers before, like Jan Jirásek, and they were writing songs just for our choir, and they dedicated [them] to us. It’s just for Jitro.
JH: Wow.

I1: And, we—for each choir—uh, for each of the composers, we get a CD of their songs. They composed for us, and we record it [sic]—these songs and we put it on a CD, and we are selling it. Like it’s a CD of Jan Jirásek.

JH: Oh, okay!

I1: Jitro and Jan Jirásek you know.

JH: Okay. How many CD’s do you guys have out?

JS: Thirty-six.

I1: Thirty-six CD’s!

JS: (Hanging up his phone) Maybe, [Jan J Jirásek is] walking!

I1: (Laughs) He will call back.

JH: Yeah. So, do you ever use—[let’s] see your—what I have seen so far is photocopies. In the United States, we have publishers that these [scores come from] you know. Do you have publishers of your music or is it all…?

I1: Um, can you repeat the question for us, please?

JH: Yeah—so like, I buy for my choir—we have people that buy a composer’s works.

JS: Yes. If you will try to sing “Hoj, Hura Hoj, Hura Hoj,” you must buy…

I1: You have to buy it.

JH: I want that one! Yeah, but, you don’t have to buy it?

JS: No. All—it’s my friend’s.

JH: So, we can buy it? I could buy it from a publisher?

I1: Mm-hm. I guess. Yes?

JS: Most of them is publisher [sic] in [the] USA.

JH: Okay. I see! So, you are just special because… (laughing)

I1: Because they are friends!
JS: But, there is the same situation in another choir in [the] Czech Republic.

I1: Yeah!

JH: So, they have to buy stuff too.

JS: Send me and you—I send colleague—all [the] same, but there are no—after ten years, maybe for a publisher…

I1: Like, there are choirs in the whole Czech Republic, and they are sending songs because our choirmaster want [sic] some song. He’s just write [sic] to another choirmaster, and he sends to him the notes, and we can sing it.

JH: Oh, that’s great! So, if I were to choose a song for my choir to sing, that this choir does—like, I am studying five different choirs in the world. Okay. And, I’m going to have my students sing one song from each choir. Which one should that be?

I1: From our choir?

JH: From your choir. And, not too difficult.

I1: Like you can choose.

JH: Unique. Unique to Czech—like, it has to be very Czech!

JS: (Singing) “Hoj, Hura, Hoj!”

I1: “Hoj, Hura, Hoj!”

JH: I love that one—no honestly!

I1: That’s the one, we want to!

JH: Let’s see, H-U-J…

I2: H-O-J-H-U

JH: H-O-J

I1: No! At beginning—H-O-J, H-U-R-A.

JH: Got it! I have it written down.

I1: Spelling is not my thing! That’s not good!
JH: So, okay, would you say that [“Hoj, Hura Hoj”] is your most distinctive, defining work for this choir? Like do you have one that…

I1: From the Czech ones—like from the Czech songs?

JH: Yes.

I1: “Hoj, Hura Hoj” is!

JH: Would all of the choir—Like, is there a song that everybody that comes through this [choir] knows?

I1: “The Friendship is Like a Golden Gate.” It is very easy.

JS: That is for six-year-old children also. [It] is possible to sing it for two voices, three, five, ten.

JH: Canon?

I1 and I2: (Singing in canon) 55:45

JS: “Friendship is…”

JH: Ah ha! Good! So, a canon! Yeah! Um, let’s see. So, Jan Jirásek—he is your main composer?

I2: Yes.

JH: How long has he been your composer?

JS: He was my student. Forty years!

JH: Okay.

JS: He’s sixty! Sixty and a half—last month he was sixty. He was born [in] 1955.

I1: He was born in 1955.

JH: Okay, and, how often does he give you new works?

I1: Everything, uh, that is for our choir—we are doing the premiers. We are the first that can sing it.

JH: Right, I got that. So, how many new works in a year does Jan Jirásek provide?
I1: They are really hard! Like, really, really hard! So, it takes a lot of time to practice them to be good.

JH: So, do you think you learn one new one or two new ones in a year?

I1: Like the problem of the head.

JS: Problem with uh…

JH: Okay. So, that’s the song you learned this year or…?

I1: Yes, this year.

JH: Okay. So, would you say it is one a year of his that you…?

JS: From Jirásek? Yes! Plus, in February, we sangs [sic] were premiere [sic] for forty-five minutes. And, [in] November, we recorded Mass (?)—another composer from Brünn (?)

JH: Oh, my goodness!

JS: And, one month ago, we recorded with Olomouc Philharmonie [for] twenty minutes.

JH: That is awesome! You guys! You are very fortunate! You need to hug him [JS] later. Later! (Laughs)

JH: One final area. These all have to do with your performance practice. Do you know what I mean? Like how—your traditional ways of being on stage. So, how many pieces would you say you learn for each concert?

I1: We know one of…

JH: All right. Let’s say it like this—how many…?

I1: There’s a bunch of songs [that] we know, and we are, um, taking them, and we are singing them at the concert. And we know some songs for—how many?

JS: Twenty pieces [are] church music; twenty [are] classic or popular music or Jirásek and some other [are] folk songs. And for every state, Japanese, [for instance, we perform] three [or] five [cultural works] but one piece [is] twenty-five minutes in Japan.

I1: In every culture there is one big song.

JS: There is one, three, five songs for Japan. We know “I’m Goin’ Up a Yonder,” “Hymn to Freedom,” and many American [songs] for voices and many—and “The Old Chisholm Trail” for America.
JH: So, you are well rounded across the world?

JS: For you! (He hands JH CD’s produced by Jitro, one-by-one.) Petr Eben, contemporary composer. Ilja Hurnik—our famous composer.

I1: Czech composers.

JS: Otmar Mácha. For [a] classic [composer] in his time is—[he] died fifty years ago—Bohuslav Martinů. Jan Jirásek—[this is] not difficult music, but for Christmas. And, for example, [a] big work also in Japanese. This [is] twenty minutes—ah, about Hiroshima.

JH: Oh, wow! Are these for me?

JS: Yes!

JH: Thank you! A gift!

I1: You’re going to listen to them!

JH: I will listen to them! Oh, my! This is wonderful! (Speaking to her husband) Don’t let me forget these either! (Laughter) Um, let’s see. So, these pieces—that you say you know—how many—is it just one year or do you carry your songs through the years?

I1: Through the years. For example, the “Hoj, Hura Hoj,” we have [sung for] so long. Forever!

JS: Thirty-eight years.

I1: Like, “Hoj, Hura Hoj” is in our choir repertoire for thirty-eight years.

JH: So, all the alumni would know it?

JS: Uh, this version… (pointing to a CD entitled, Přidavky Jitra)

I2: Songs after the concert.

JS: [They are] in English, but there is [also] Czech. [It is] not difficult music. [It] is encores!

JH: Oh. Okay. The crowd pleasers!

JS: Today we sung [sic] “Ty bystých zvony” and “Tovačovský hatě.” We sang [these].

JH: Okay!

JS: From U.S.A.’s “America the Beautiful,” “I’m Goin’ Up A Yonder,” “Hymn to Freedom,” “The Old Chisholm Trail.”
JH: Yes! I know those! Oh yeah!

JS: But this is [from] eighteen years ago.

JH: Yes. Ah! This is awesome!

JS: (Pointing to song on the "Closing the Century" CD) Here is also, “Hoj, Hura, Hoj.”

JH: That’s awesome. This is great!

JS: [It is] seventy years old!

JH: Seventy?

JS: Yes. Because of the “Century” name of this CD.

JH: Wow! So, do you always perform from memory? Do you ever use music in concerts? Do you ever like, read from a score in concerts? Some choirs stand up like this.

I1: No. No. No.

JH: Good. Good! All by memory—always by memory. And, so you don’t—do you ever drop repertoire? I mean do these girls know everything you [have] ever taught?

I1: No.

JH: So, that would be impossible, huh? (laughing)

I1: Yeah!

JH: But, you do keep your best repertoire? You keep it going?

I1: Yes.

JH: Okay! And, you perform a lot of a cappella music—I have observed.

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: You would say more than half of it is a cappella?

I2: Yes.

JH: Okay! What percentage is accompanied, would you say—like, with piano or other instruments?

I1: Mostly piano.
JH: Okay. So, what percentage of your total repertoire—so, how much is a cappella and how much is accompanied by piano?

I1: Fifty percent.

JH: Okay. All right. All right! What is your…?

I2: Usually, the first half of the concert is a cappella and the second half is with the piano.

JH: Okay. That is good. So, what—I am going to ask the “Michelle’s” again—so, what things does your director tell you [that] you have to do on stage as a behavior?

I1: Uh, to look like—not to look like [but] to be in [the] music—to feel the music—to show the people what we love.

I2: We can’t scratch ourselves like this! We can’t! (Scratches the top of her head.)

JH: No hands to the face! No scratching!

I1: We can’t have hair like this in our face! We can’t be like this. (Pulls her hair into her eyes.)

JH: Hair must be pulled back.

I1 and I2: Yeah!

JH: How about the way you walk—your deportment—when you walk on and off stage?

I1: To smile! To go on stage like we are stars—not like we are stars but we are—I don’t know how to describe it.

JH: Confident?

I1: Uh, yeah, confident and to show the best we can.

JH: All right. So, you said you do use piano for accompaniments.

I1: Mm-hm.

JH: What other instruments?

I1: Sometimes we use bongo.

I2: Two drums.
JH: Bongo drums?

I2: Bongo drums. Yeah.


JH: Orff instruments?

JS: And, sometimes [in a] big concert, we have with very famous violinist. [He demonstrates playing a violin.]

JH: Orchestra?

JS: And sometimes with—we are singing with orchestra.

I1: Jingle Bells!

I2: At Christmas, we have lots of bells.

(Both girls start singing “Jingle Bells.”)

JH: Do you ever use choreography with your choirs? Movement?

I2: We have one song. It’s called “Gorale” and we have to play…

I1: Today we sang it.

JS: But we found this. (He demonstrates fist fighting.)

I1: The last song we sang, “Gorale,” we didn’t show you the movements.

JH: So, are you pretending to play instruments?

I2: We are—it’s about a man—a fight—two lovers that are fighting over a girl.

I1: And we are fighting.

I2: Argue!

JH: (Demonstrates a fist fight.)

JS: Yes, and, also me!

(Laughter)

I1: Yes! So, at concerts, people love the song because it’s just really good.
JH: It’s funny.

JS: In the whole world [people] laugh then but in the Czech Republic… *(JS looks side-to-side with a serious expression.)*

*(Laughter)*

I1: Yeah! Exactly!

JH: It’s too real! Huh?

I1: Yeah!

JS: *(Still acting)* What—what’s happening!

*(Laughter)*

JH: Okay! Who designed that choreography? Who does…

JS: Composer.

I1: The composer. It’s wrote *[sic]* in our part.

JS: Because, this song was for about two minutes, but we—this composer is my friend also.

JH: Of course!

I1: Michal?

JS: Yeah, Michal. And study was—professor in Olomouc—we meet *[sic]*. I studied there also. With pianist (Michal) and me—we are friends [for] fifty years. And, uh, we prepared a Washington performance with Bobby McFerrin in 2008. And, we try to make this [song] more difficult—[the] two minutes [of] this song and that, and with instrument, *[sic]* and with body movement. And, [this] was with our choir in Washington.

JH: Okay! Very good! Um, so—I already know about your CDs. [Do] you do some digital YouTube stuff?

I1: We have “Hana wa Saku” (Flowers Will Bloom) on YouTube.

JH: Say that again?


JH: That’s on YouTube?
I1: Yes!

JH: That’s a song—the name of a song?

I1: Yes. Yes. It is in [the] Japanese language.

JH: Do you ever make concert DVDs or anything like that?

I1: For example, when we had a concert with the Czech—like, with the violinist, we had a recorder [sic]—a CD from this concert. And, sometimes [sic] we had our (Brinewood?) DVD’s from our concerts—like, parents filmed it and gave it to us, and we have DVDs from it.

JH: Okay. Wonderful. So, the last question for then, the wrap-up is, “Describe your performing attire.” I think—do you have several outfits or is it mostly the red?

I1: Most of the red. [Do] you want to see it or…?

JH: Describe it, because I’m going to have to write it down. But, yeah, maybe I will take a picture then!

I1: So, [we wear] the red skirt, red vest, and white blouse and white shoes.

JH: All right. I saw your shoes. And, you have a tie?

I2: We call it fishy!

JH: Fishy?

I1: Fishy.

JH: I know what you are talking about, that floppy thing hangs here?

I1: Yeah. I don’t know how to describe it in English.

JH: I don’t know how to spell it in English—fishy thing.

I1: *(Laughs)* Fishy thing. Okay!

JH: And, then sometimes—do you have another outfit you wear?

I1: Yes. [A] folk outfit.

JH: Oh, that’s right! I saw that too.

*(Květa brings a “fishy” to show.)*
I1: Yeah. Fishy. We put it here. *(She motions to her neck.)* We have a folk outfit—like, an actual costume—big skirt, long, furry skirt, really tight vest, [and a] blouse with big sleeves.

JH: Traditional folk?

I1: And, we have our hair.

JH: Braids?

I1: Yeah, braids, with uh, red ribbons.

JH: Yes, I will have to take a picture of that. So, Is there anything else? I know that you are very busy! So, we gotta get Jiří—he’s gotta go plan. Is there anything else about your organization that you think the world should know? In case the world reads this?

I2: So, when small children come to the big choir, they have to learn songs, and we have like a paper with them. And, when they learn it, they have to sing it to the older ones from the choir.

I1: And, if they know it and they sing it correct *[sic]* we give them a sign—like we sign it! And, if they have it all, they get the red costume!

JH: Oh!

I1: And this part—they are part—and, they are the member of the Jitro.

JH: When they get all of those songs?

I1: Yes!

JH: How many songs are there?

I1: About thirty. And, they are, uh…

JS: Two parts!

I2: It’s in two parts. After the first part, they get the red one.

I1: Red one. Like, the Jitřičko.

I2: We call them Jitřičko because they don’t have all the songs.

I1: They are practicing with us, but they are not Jitro. They are just like, one step below. And, the second part, they get the Jitro costume.
I2: No. No. After the first part, they get the costume. After the second, then they can go on the tours too.

I1: Yeah!

JH: So, what do they get after the first set—like fifteen songs. They learn fifteen songs, and then they get…?

I1: Costume! They are the step below.

JH: Say that again?

I1: Jitřičko.

JS: Small Jitro!

I1: Small Jitro. Like, they are practicing with us. Like, I can write it.

JH: Yeah. Yes!

I1: Smaller Jitro.

JH: I like that! That’s cool.

I2: Sometimes when they make the first half, they go with us…

I1: To France or Germany.

I2: Like separation for the biggest tours.

I1: Like, they can’t go to Japan because that is the biggest…

I2: Because they don’t know all of the songs that we sing in the concerts.

I1: So, they need to have both parts to sing in Japan and America.

JH: Yeah. Okay. This is wonderful. So helpful! Now, I have to work! I have a lot to write!

I1: That’s all?

JH: Did you want it to be more? (Laughs)

I1: There is a rule that if we are missing on a rehearsal—for example, [if] I am ill [or] I am sick, I must go to choir, uh, any other day in my free time and be there for my own rehearsal to...
JH: Catch up?

I1: Catch up. Yeah.

JS: For everybody, we work!

I1: If I am missing, I come to choir. I wrote the date—the time I am here. I am practicing, and the teacher should sign it—that I was here and they see me practicing.

JH: Okay. You have to log in your practices. So, everyone has to have the same amount of time. (Speaking to Jiří) How often do you run rehearsals a week? How many times a week do you run rehearsals here?

I1: Like, you mean our choirmaster here?

JH: Yes.

I1: He is it at our rehearsal every time.

JH: So, how many times a week is that?

I1: He is practicing just with Jitro.

JH: So, okay, two to three-times-a-week?

JS: Three times with [the] choir, but many, many times with voice building.

I1: He also has voice building.

JS: Every day—only on Saturday I…[am not].

JH: You are here! And it is two-hour rehearsal blocks?

I1: Hm, yeah. Two hours. Two hours!

JH: And Sunday, it’s three [hours].

I1: On Sunday, it’s three plus the exams.

JH: How does it feel to you all to be sitting for two hours without a back [rest]?

I1: We are getting—like it is normal. We are used to it! It’s important to sing like this. We can’t sing good if we will like—(she leans back lethargically). It’s just—I need to sit right like this. It is important.

JH: Or stand!
I1: So, for us, it’s not a problem, I guess.

JH: Developing posture. Mm-hm. Yeah! Is there anything else?

I1: That’s it!

JH: Thank you! Yeah, this is great! Good!
Janet Hostetter: How long has your program been in existence?

Amilcar Soto: Los K’ana Wawakunas started in 2011 as a workshop of music and dance. Kids from different schools would come and learn. They would come and sing, and Voces Blancas de Esperanza was the first name. After two or three years I stopped doing that where I was working. I did a song called “Los K’ana Wawakunas.” It was about a boy that didn’t need to feel lesser than others. After that, I started working with the parents. So, then I did a video. It was two videos. So, we worked with those two things, and that is how it started. We don’t have the support of any institution. Just parents that put down money for the videos and they help with the recordings. The financial support comes from parents. I do not receive pay at all. What I love about it is that I see my songs being sung through their voices and other people enjoy it. This is the beautiful thing I get from it. I love when people hear it and say, “Wow” that is such a beautiful song. We love it.”

JH: Is there a vision or mission statement for your organization?

AS: My object with them is to be able to help the kids go to another level—nationally or internationally. Thanks to their hard work, we have been able to visit many places around this country and have people hear them. We have been to the president, congress and national television programs. We also did stuff for campaigning and the government.

JH: Is there a handbook or manual for your organization?

AS: We wanted to, but the parents wanted to be the owners of the institution, so I decided to leave it like this. I founded the choir, so that’s how we started. I am the one who registered the group. For this reason, I am still thinking about making it. The parents aren’t quite with me. One parent said I am taking advantage of his students, but I am the director, and I did everything without the economics. When we get paid, the families receive from it. The parents take charge of the money—of the economics.

JH: How many performing and training groups exist?

AS: Just one choir. Since Kana Wawakunas exists, I have just wanted to continue with them. A lot of people listen and tell me how beautiful it is. For me, the work of the choir is to educate other generations about Peruvian values.

JH: How many children are involved in each group?

JH: How often and for how long do your groups rehearse?

AS: It depends on the projects. If we have intentions to do a recording, then we rehearse every other day. If there is a presentation coming up, then we will rehearse every single day. The hours of rehearsal are two hours each.

JH: Where does your group rehearse?

AS: In my house. I also have a parent who is very good. When we rehearse in his house, the parent doesn’t charge us for anything: rent, electric or anything. Sometimes parents don’t even say, “thank you” for all I do.

JH: How many staff members assist in running your organization?

AS: I am the only person. Parents help with economics.

JH: How is your organization funded?

AS: Parents help pay. Economically they think about it when they have to pay for the recording.

JH: How do you recruit for your ensemble?

AS: I do casting with a selection of voices. I place audition notices on TV. I also go out to different schools and give an invitation—some preparations every day. I give them goals. I tell them things they need to prepare to do a song for me. In the last audition, 150 kids auditioned. Thirty stayed. We did one testing week of rehearsals. If kids came late, they had to bring a snack for everyone. Then I could also see the support of the parents. Some got tired and didn’t persevere. From those 30, only 12 kept showing up. From those 12, only four made it into the group. The others just came to be famous and because it [the choir] is known. Then we have problems with kids. We recorded two songs, and then several kids left the choir. This choir has had three generations. The current choir has only eight original members. Kids leave because of studies or voice change or moving or problems with their family.

JH: Describe your approach to teaching vocal tone production.

AS: Fuerte! Strong! The music is mostly an expression of the song. We play with the timbre of the voice of each child. Some sing sweetly in Quechua and some in Spanish, I choose soloists based on timbre.

JH: How do you approach bodywork in terms of singing?
AS: Before I worked in the schools, the music was very slow and I worked with choreography that gave the music more expression and color. One time I was invited to sing in the cathedral, and they wanted us to sing without moving. We didn’t do that invitation because for us the music has movement. And also, the movement calls attention to the spectator. The movement also helps distract yourself from being “pitchy.” When there are musical interludes, we take the opportunity to do more movement.

JH: In your words, describe the ideal vocal tone.

AS: Strong! Sincerely sing forte or piano or give the songs more gusto. I ask them to give the song more gusto or to sing it sweeter, or with more personality, or with more attitude. I ask them to make their voice crying or sad. I ask them to sing in a way that reflects the lyrics.

JH: Do you use audio sources to expose your singers to concepts of vocal tone production?

AS: Yes. Sometimes I look for YouTube videos and compare what others do. I can see so many timbres in other children’s choirs. What I like about my choir is that my children demonstrate their natural tone from our country. Lyric music seems really formal. The voices of my choir show and demonstrate what our land is like. They have a natural expression about our land. This is what makes me feel like I can bring a natural sound with a lot of expression.

JH: How do you teach the songs to your choristers?

AS: The songs that we sing are OUR songs, so I teach them with my falsetto voice, and I try to work with them on their memory, and sometimes I use the staff.

JH: How do you develop music literacy in your rehearsal process?

AS: I don’t really. We are more dedicated to recording songs. We mostly do recordings with melodies.

JH: Describe your philosophy of performance practice.

AS: At Christmas time we do performances. We get a lot of invitations. We travel to many different places. We sing maybe 8-10 songs. Eighty percent of the repertoire is my compositions. The rest may include traditional Christmas carols.

JH:What instruments, if any, are used to accompany your choir?

AS: We use Peruvian folk instruments including, accordion, violin, cana and zamponia. I personally play guitar, charango, mandolin, cana, zamponia, trumpet. My main instrument was trumpet. I studied it.
JH: Do your singers utilize choreography during performances?

AS: Always!

JH: Do you generate recordings of your choirs for the public?

AS: We have DVD’s that include audio and video.

JH: Describe your choir’s performing attire.

AS: Each uniform is made out of lamb’s wool and costs $250-$230. They are colorful and represent the Peruvian culture.

JH: Is there anything about your choral organization that you wish to share that has not yet been asked?

AS: I really feel like you guys gave me life again. I was not feeling very focused. I think I didn’t trust you guys because of last year. The parents discouraged me and one time I was talking with Brook, and I asked her “How do you guys get paid?” I have a friend who has an orchestra in Lima. And she said her students pay monthly just to help with rent, music and paying the teachers to travel. I don’t do any of that, so I felt the opposite. I feel frustrated by the parents. They are not appreciative. It has taken away my joy. I didn’t want to continue. Then I thought about the fact that I would like to have this group for my daughters. Amy has been singing since she was three years old and now she is eight. I have hope that my girls will remember this time when they are older. This music tradition started with my family. My sisters all sing and play. This is how I learned to teach and share music. With my family, we sang in parts. I am the only boy. I have only sisters.
# Appendix 7: IRB Approval Form

## James Madison University
### Human Research Review Request

**FOR IRB USE ONLY:**

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<th>Exempt:</th>
<th>Protocol Number: 1st Review:</th>
<th>Reviewer:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Expedit</td>
<td>2nd Review:</td>
<td>Reviewer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒</td>
<td>02/23/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Board</td>
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<table>
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<th>A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Dates:</td>
<td>From: 04/15/17 To: 04/14/18 (Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responsible Researcher(s):</th>
<th>Janet M. Hostetter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hostetjm@dukes.jmu.edu">hostetjm@dukes.jmu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>540-560-9504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Choral Department, James Madison University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Building MSC 7301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address (MSC):</td>
<td>880 South Main Street, Harrisonburg VA 22807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please Select:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Faculty</td>
<td>☐ Undergraduate Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Administrator/Staff Member</td>
<td>☐ Graduate Student</td>
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**If Applicable:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Advisor:</th>
<th>Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vanderjx@jmu.edu">vanderjx@jmu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>540-568 5803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Director of Choral Activities, Choral Department, James Madison University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Building MSC 7301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address (MSC):</td>
<td>880 South Main Street, Harrisonburg VA 22807</td>
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| Minimum # of Participants: | 4 Choral Directors |
| Maximum # of Participants: | 10 Choral Directors |

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<th>Funding:</th>
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<th>Incentives:</th>
<th>Will monetary incentives be offered? Yes: ☐ No: ☒</th>
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<td>If yes: How much per recipient? _____ In what form? _____</td>
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**Must follow JMU Financial Policy:**

[http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects](http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects)
Institutional Biosafety Committee Review/Approval:  
Use of recombinant DNA and synthetic nucleic acid molecule research:
☐ Yes  ☒ No
If “Yes,” approval received:  ☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Pending
IBC Protocol Number(s):
Biosafety Level(s):

Will research be conducted outside of the United States?
☒ Yes  ☐ No
If “Yes,” please complete and submit the International Research Form along with this review application:
http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbinternationalresearch.docx.

Certain vulnerable populations are afforded additional protections under the federal regulations. Do human participants who are involved in the proposed study include any of the following special populations?
☐ Minors  ☐ Pregnant women *(Do not check unless you are specifically recruiting)*
☐ Prisoners  ☐ Fetuses
☒ My research does not involve any of these populations
☐ Elderly  ☐ Diminished capacity/Impaired decision-making ability
☐ Economically disadvantaged
☐ Other protected or potentially vulnerable population (*e.g.* homeless, HIV-positive participants, terminally or seriously ill, etc.)
☒ My research does not involve any of these populations

Investigator: Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.

1.  ☒ YES  ☐ NO  Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board define the project as *research*?
   The James Madison University IRB defines “research” as a “systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2.  ☒ YES  ☐ NO  Are the human participants in your study *living* individuals?
   “Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research obtains: (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information.”

3.  ☒ YES  ☐ NO  Will you obtain data through *intervention* or *interaction* with these individuals?
   “Intervention” includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (*e.g.*, measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant’s environment that are performed for research purposes. “Interaction” includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (*e.g.*, surveying or interviewing).

4.  ☒ YES  ☐ NO  Will you obtain *identifiable private information* about these individuals?
   “Private information” includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific purposes which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (*e.g.*, a medical record or student record). “Identifiable” means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (*e.g.*, by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).
5. ☐ YES  ☒ NO  Does the study present more than minimal risk to the participants?

"Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic well being, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.

**CERTIFICATIONS:**

For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, all research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. “Research staff” is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

Test module at ORI website [http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml)

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<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor</th>
<th>Training Completion Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet M. Hostetter</td>
<td>9/07/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy – Research Advisor</td>
<td>7/22/14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional training interests, or to access a Spanish version, visit the National Institutes of Health Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) Course at: [http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php](http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php).

By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.

Principal Investigator Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Faculty Advisor Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Submit an electronic version (in a Word document) of your ENTIRE protocol to researchintegrity@jmu.edu.

Provide a SIGNED hard copy of the Research Review Request Form to:

Office of Research Integrity, MSC 5738, 601 University Boulevard, Blue Ridge Hall, Third Floor, Room # 342
Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the pedagogical practices of international children’s choirs with regard to the specific categories of vocal tone quality/production, musicianship training, repertoire development and performance practice.

Research Questions:

1. How do international children’s choirs develop their unique sound?
2. How do international children’s choirs develop musicianship among their choristers?
3. How do international children’s choirs secure literature for their choirs?
4. How do international children’s choirs present themselves in performance?

Hypotheses:

Reputable children’s choirs exist all over the world. A compilation of choral pedagogical practices from selected choirs will provide English-speaking children’s choir directors with an invaluable resource for incorporating new ideas in regards to vocal tone production, musicianship training, literature development and performance practice.

DMA Thesis:

1. The lecture recital, including factual data, gleaned from this study, as well as presenting several pieces as identified through the study, will fulfill the requirements of the JMU School of Music requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting: Literature, Pedagogy and Performance.
2. This study and accompanying thesis will fulfill the requirements of the JMU School of Music requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting: Literature, Pedagogy and Performance.

Procedures/Research Design/Methodology/Timeframe

Describe your participants. From where and how will potential participants be identified (e.g. class list, JMU bulk email request, etc.)?

Following an overview of international children’s choirs, the following ensembles and conductors have been identified based on their national and/or international reputation. The participants are the choral conductors and their choir members.

1. Los K’ana Wawakunas (Peru) directed by Amilcar Soto
2. Gondwana Voices (Australia) directed by Lyn Williams
3. Jitro (Czech Republic-Girl Choir) directed by Jiri Skopal
4. Hamilton Children’s Choir (Canada) directed by Zimfira Poloz
5. Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir (Philippines) directed by Jude & Theresa “Tikya” Roldan

How will subjects be recruited once they are identified (e.g., mail, phone, classroom presentation)? Include copies of recruitment letters, flyers, or advertisements.

With IRB approval, participation will be formalized with written consent forms and an explanation of the project communicated via email such as:
Dear (Choir Director’s Name),

Greetings! I am the artistic and executive director for the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir and a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Emily Ellsworth, artistic director of Anima-Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus, suggested that I contact you. I am thrilled to reach out because I have admired your work ever since I became aware of your choir via YouTube!

I am writing to find out if you would be willing to collaborate with me in generating information for my doctoral thesis. The thesis is entitled, A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs. As part of this study I will explore the approaches international children’s choirs use in regards to vocal tone production, musicianship training, literature development and performance practice. As part of my research project, I would be honored to learn from you and your choir and to specifically write about the pedagogical processes you utilize and develop with the choristers of ____________________ (name of choir). Would you be willing to answer questions and allow me to visit rehearsals and performances either in your country, over Skype or in the USA? If I am able to visit, I wI don’t know if you have plans to spend time in the USA over the next year but if you do, I would like to explore the option of hosting you!

If you agree to participate with your choir in this study, I would love to visit your choir sometime! Hopefully a trip to your country would not be out of the question. At the very least, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you over Skype and observe rehearsals remotely. My ultimate goal is to teach the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir at least one selection from each internationally known children’s choir that participates in the study and to present these songs during my lecture recital. I would be honored to work with you as I very much admire the colorful and creative selections you produce with your choir.

If you would like to view a recent video clip of the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir. Please go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QvDSWK0GAg

A subset of my Concert Choir generated this YouTube clip in collaboration with the Shenandoah National Park Service this past summer.

I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Sincerely,

Janet M. Hostetter  
DMA Student in Choral Conducting, James Madison University  
Artistic & Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir  
hostetjm@dukes.jmu.edu  
janet.hostetter@emu.edu  
540-560-9504
Describe the design and methodology, including all statistics, IN DETAIL. What exactly will be done to the subjects? If applicable, please describe what will happen if a subject declines to be audio or video-taped.

The study will be conducted through an interview format with each choir director. These interviews will be held either by Skype or site visits by the researcher. If the director agrees to have rehearsals video-taped, consent forms will be sent to the director of each choir via email ahead of site visits for distribution to parents and choristers. I will be available to respond to all questions via email or Skype that the director asks of me. I will also be available to answer chorister or parent questions at the beginning of each rehearsal that I attend.

Each director will be given the option to be audio-taped in their interview. In the event that the director declines to be audio-taped, the researcher will take notes.

In the event of a site visit, each participant will be given the option to be video-taped in their rehearsals or not. If any participant declines to be video-taped, the researcher will either take notes or position the camera in such a way that those without consent forms are not visible to the camera. Individuals who decline to be video-taped will not be publically singled out or humiliated. The director and the researcher will make plans ahead of the rehearsal to place choristers discretely out of the camera’s view so that no one is aware of their decision to decline being video-taped.

Each director and ensemble will be identified in the study and subsequent thesis.

All interviews will be conducted either by Skype or in person on site. The interviews will be transcribed into Word documents.

The study subjects will be recorded using my computer recording software (QuickTime). These recordings will be used only for:
- the tabulation of data,
- checking for accuracy in terms of data tabulation,
- quotes from subjects who agree to be identified.

Selected audio or video portions of rehearsals may be used in the lecture recital and subsequent public forums with the express permission of said ensemble.

The Interview Questions are as follows:

Researcher: Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of the study and meeting with me today. Let’s begin with the history of your organization.

I. Descriptive Data

1. Give a brief description and history of your children’s choir program.
   a. How long has your program been in existence?
   b. Is there a vision or mission statement for your organization?
   c. Is there a handbook or manual for your organization,
   d. How many performing and training groups exist?
   e. How many children are involved in each group?
   f. How often and for how long do your groups rehearse?
   g. Please provide a sample of your choir’s rehearsal schedule.
h. Where does your group rehearse?
i. How many staff members assist in running your organization?
j. How is your organization funded?
k. What is the administrative structure of your organization?
l. How do you recruit for your ensemble?
m. What is the average length of membership?
n. Do you have an alumni program? If so, please describe.

2. Please outline your annual performance schedule.
   a. How often do your choirs perform each year?
   b. Are all concerts mandatory?
   c. Do you do outreach or charity performances with your choirs?
   d. Describe the venue or venues where your choirs most often perform.
   e. Do you tour? If so, how often and how far?
   f. If you tour, how are tours funded?

Researcher: Let us continue by discussing your pedagogical practices.

II. Pedagogical Categories

3. Describe your approach to teaching vocal tone production.
   a. What vocal pedagogy concepts form the basis for your teaching of vocal tone production?
   b. How do approach bodywork in terms of singing?
   c. In your words, describe the ideal vocal tone.
   d. What analogies (if any) are used to describe the ideal vocal tone to singers?
   e. Do you use audio sources to expose your singers to concepts of vocal tone production?

4. How do you develop musicianship among choristers?
   a. What is the balance in your rehearsal process in teaching by modeling (rote) versus learning music from a printed score?
   b. How do you develop music literacy in your rehearsal process?
   c. Do you dedicate a portion of your rehearsal time to theory training? If so, how much time is dedicated to this pursuit?
   d. If theory is taught separately from the music, who teaches the lesson?
   e. If theory is taught separately from the music, what approach or methodology is used, if any?
   f. Are your students expected to practice concert music outside of rehearsals? If so, how is this practice structured and assessed? Do you provide rehearsal tracks and/or a practice guide to aid choristers in their assignments?
   g. Are your students expected to practice musicianship assignments outside of rehearsals? If so, how is this practice structured and assessed?

5. Describe standard literature for your choir.
   a. How do you find new repertoire for your ensemble?
   b. If you utilize printed octavos for your choir, where do you access these works?
   c. Many choirs regularly sing or become known for, one or two defining works. Does your choir perform any such distinctive pieces? If so, please name them.
   d. Does anyone regularly compose music specifically for your choir? If so, who is the composer?
   e. If someone composes original music for your choir, how regularly are new works generated?
6. Describe your philosophy of **performance practice**.
   a. How many pieces do your choirs learn for each concert season?
   b. Does your choir perform from memory? If so, what percentage?
   c. How often do you repeat repertoire?
   d. Do your choirs perform *a cappella*?
   e. What behavioral expectations do you have for your singers in terms of stage deportment?
   f. What instruments, if any, are used to accompany your choir?
   g. Do your singers utilize choreography during performances? If so:
      i. How often is movement used?
      ii. Who designs the choreography?
      iii. Who teaches the choreography?
   h. Do you generate recordings of your choirs for the public? If so, which of the following media platforms are utilized:
      i. Compact Discs
      ii. Online digital downloads
      iii. YouTube videos
      iv. Concert DVDs
      v. Other?
      i. Describe your choir’s performing attire.

7. Is there anything about your choral organization that you wish to share that has not yet been asked?

   *Researcher: Thank you so much for participating in my study. Your information will be invaluable to the completion of this project. I have enjoyed getting to know you and your choristers*

   **Emphasize possible risks and protection of subjects.**

   There are no potential risks for the subjects, beyond the risks associated with everyday life.

   **What are the potential benefits to participation and the research as a whole?**

   All choir directors who participate in the study will be presented with a completed copy of the thesis in order that they along with others may gain:

   a. Greater exposure in the global children’s choir community
   b. Awareness of choral music practices and traditions worldwide
   c. New pedagogical strategies for teaching singers to effectively emulate the vocal tone expected from indigenous choirs
   d. Acquisition of new musicianship teaching strategies
   e. Increased repertoire choices to include a broader range of international music
   f. Utilize performance practices of international choirs when performing works of these countries
   g. Ability to expose students to the pedagogical sounds and practices of children around the world.
Where will research be conducted? (Be specific; if research is being conducted off of JMU’s campus a site letter of permission will be needed)

Pending available funding and scheduling, the researcher plans to visit the following ensembles and conductors in the stated countries in the approximate time periods listed below:

1. Los K’ana Wawakunas (Peru) directed by Amilcar Soto (June, 2017)
2. Hamilton Children’s Choir (Canada) directed by Zimfira Poloz (May 2018)
3. Jitro (Czech Republic-Girl Choir) directed by Jiri Skopal (August, 2017)
4. Gondwana Voices (Australia) directed by Lyn Williams (June, 2018)
5. Hail Mary the Queen Children’s Choir (Philippines) directed by Jude & Theresa “Tikya” Roldan (June, 2018)

If funding and/or scheduling constraints prohibit site visits, the researcher will conduct interviews by Skype.

Will deception be used? If yes, provide the rationale for the deception. Also, please provide an explanation of how you plan to debrief the subjects regarding the deception at the end of the study.

No.

What is the time frame of the study? (List the dates you plan on collecting data. This cannot be more than a year, and you cannot start conducting research until you get IRB approval)

Twelve months pending IRB approval: April 15, 2017 – April 14, 2018.

**Data Analysis**

How will data be analyzed?

Data will be sorted and coded descriptively by common themes according to the research questions. Code words for vocal tone include: “shape,” “produce,” “throat” and “vowels” while code words for musicianship will be “read,” “listen” and “theory.” Code words for repertoire will include, “literature,” “pieces,” and “compositions” and be organized according to genre, composer and voicing. Elements of performance practice will be coded in the categories of choral attire, staging strategies, choreography and physical movement. The data will be compared and contrasted and reported within the framework of the thesis design, listed below:

Chapter One: Introduction, Need for the Study, Delimitations

Chapter Two: Review of Literature - An Overview of the History and Development of Children’s Choir in International Settings

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Results - Vocal Tone Quality/Production, Musicianship Training, Repertoire Development and Performance Practice
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications for Further Research

References

Appendix One: Forms and Surveys for the Study

Appendix Two: Lists of Suggested Repertoire by Choir

Appendix Three: Lecture Recital PowerPoint

Appendix Four: Lecture Recital Program

How will you capture or create data? Physical (ex: paper or tape recording)? Electronic (ex: computer, mobile device, digital recording)?

Each study subject will be invited to participate in an interview. If they agree to participate, they will first receive a consent form. In the consent form, the parameters of the study will be explained, and they will sign their consent in terms of the interview format. The signed consent form will be returned via email or email attachment to the researcher.

Each study subject will be given the option to be audio-taped in their interview. In the event that the subject declines to be audio-taped, the researcher will take notes.

In the event of a site visit, each study subject will be given the option to be video-taped in their rehearsals or not. If the subject declines to be video-taped, the researcher will take notes.

The interview will be conducted either by Skype or in person on site and consist of the seven questions and subsections listed above. The interviews will be transcribed into Word documents.

The study subjects will be recorded using my computer recording software (QuickTime). These recordings will be used only for:
- the tabulation of data,
- checking for accuracy in terms of data tabulation,
- quotes from subjects who choose to be identified.

I will capture the data electronically through digitally recording Skype or personal interviews and then transcribing it via computer. The digital recording and transcripts will have no identifying labels so as to protect the identity of the subject.

Do you anticipate transferring your data from a physical/analog format to a digital format? If so, how? (e.g. paper that is scanned, data inputted into the computer from paper, digital photos of physical/analog data, digitizing audio or video recording?)

The interviews will be transcribed to text and will be stored solely on my personal computer.

Consent forms will be collected at each site. I will take pictures of each consent form with my iPhone and transfer them to my personal computer for safe keeping in a file-encrypted folder using
MacPaw Hider AES-256 on my hard drive. The original paper copies will be destroyed once the digital versions are secure.

How and where will data be secured/stored? (e.g. a single computer or laptop; across multiple computers; or computing devices of JMU faculty, staff or students; across multiple computers both at JMU and outside of JMU?) If subjects are being audio and/or video-taped, file encryption is highly recommended. If signed consent forms will be obtained, please describe how these forms will be stored separately and securely from study data.

The Skype audio interviews, interview transcripts, and rehearsal videos will be stored solely on my personal computer, with backup copies on an external hard drive. The digital interviews and transcripts will not be stored on any cloud-based system. My personal computer and external hard drive are password protected. The digitally signed informed consent forms will be stored separately from the data in a file-encrypted folder using MacPaw Hider AES-256 on my hard drive. At the conclusion of the study, all audio, visual and typed will be stored on my external hard drive that is file-encrypted with the same software program.

Who will have access to data? (e.g. just me; me and other JMU researchers (faculty, staff, or students); or me and other non-JMU researchers?)

Only I will have access to all interview data.

If others will have access to data, how will data be securely shared?

My thesis advisor, Dr. van der Vat-Chromy, will have access to audio interviews, interview transcripts, video footage, and subsequent data analysis via Quicktime and Word documents, on my computer. I will only share my data when we are listening to, viewing or reading files on my computer. Dr. van der Vat-Chromy will have no direct access to my encrypted files or my computer.

Will you keep data after the project ends? (i.e. yes, all data; yes, but only de-identified data; or no) If data is being destroyed, when will it be destroyed, and how? Who will destroy the data?

I will preserve all identifiable data (Skype interviews, video footage and interview transcripts) from my study for use in future publications, conference presentations and a recital performance in 2019. Data will be stored on my personal computer and not any cloud-based retrieval system. The Skype interviews, video footage and interview transcripts will be stored solely on my personal computer, with backup copies on an external hard drive. My personal computer and hard drive are password protected. The audio files and interview transcriptions will be file-encrypted on my hard drive.

**Reporting Procedures**

Who is the audience to be reached in the report of the study?

The audience that will be reached in this report includes: the participating conductors and performing ensembles, the lecture recital audience, and the readers of the final document.

How will you present the results of the research? (If submitting as exempt, research cannot be published or publicly presented outside of the classroom. Also, the researcher cannot collect any identifiable information from the subjects to qualify as exempt.)
The results of this research project will be presented during my lecture recital and in my thesis document.

**How will feedback be provided to subjects?**

All subjects will be given a copy of my final document, transcriptions and video-recording of my lecture recital.

**Experience of the Researcher (and advisor, if student):**

Please provide a paragraph describing the prior relevant experience of the researcher, advisor (if applicable), and/or consultants. If you are a student researcher, please state if this is your first study. Also, please confirm that your research advisor will be guiding you through this study.

I am a student researcher, and this is my second study. My first study was entitled, “The Influence of Joseph Funk’s *Harmonia Sacra* on Alice Parker’s *Melodious Accord*” and was completed for the degree of MM in Conducting at JMU in May, 2004.

My advisor, Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy is guiding me through the current study. Her research resume follows below:

**SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15-30, 2016</td>
<td>Invited Instructor: Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kodály Summer Certification Course:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kodály Choral Ensemble Conductor and Instructor of Conducting class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19, 2015</td>
<td>Conference Presentation: Interest Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VMEA State Convention, Norfolk VA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Designing Highly Effective Rehearsal Plans: Daily, Monthly, Longitudinally</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16, 2015</td>
<td>Invited Workshops: University of Akron</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Chapter of ACDA, Dr. Bryan Nichols, coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Choral Cultures and Teacher Effectiveness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19, 2015</td>
<td>Conference Presentation: Poster Session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMTE Conference: University of North Carolina, Greensboro:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>A Longitudinal Perspective of the Roles of Expectations and Music Teacher</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Identity Development</em>, co-authored with Drs. William Dabback and Lisa Maynard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6 - 8, 2015</td>
<td>Conference Presentation: Interest Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voices United: George Mason University</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Highly Effective Choral Pedagogy: Teacher Behaviors, Rehearsal Behaviors, Conducting Behaviors (Cancelled due to family emergency)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9 - 14, 2015</td>
<td>Invited Workshop: Florida State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer MME Program, Dr. Judy Bowers, coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Cultures We Create in Choirs and the Communities We Become.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three class lectures and eight thesis advising sessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
November 19 - 20, 2014
Conference Presentation: Poster Session
VMEA 2014 State Convention, Hot Springs, VA
*The Progression of Expectations and Identity Development of Music Education Majors*, co-authored with Drs. William Dabback and Lisa Maynard

July 11 & 14, 2014
Invited Workshop: Florida State University
Summer MME Program Dr. Judy Bowers, coordinator
*The Cultures We Create in Choirs and the Communities We Become*
Two class lectures and three thesis advising sessions

September 23 - 24, 2013
JMU Visiting Scholars Program: Dr. Judy Bowers
Professor of Choral Music at Florida State University:
*Creating Community Service Through University Partnerships*

April 20, 2013
Conference Presentation: Interest Session
JMU NAfME Spring Conference
*Teacher Behaviors for Engaging Students*

November 19 - 20, 2012
Conference Presentation: Poster Session
VMEA State Convention, Hot Springs, VA
*Safety, Identity, Transmission And Enculturation: An Investigation Of Four Formative Aspects Of Choral Cultures On Music Majors In Undergraduate Auditioned And Non-Auditioned Collegiate Choirs*

July 7, 2012
Guest Lecturer: Lake Brantley High School, Orlando, FL
FMEA Emerging Leaders Summer Workshop
*Safety, Identity, Transmission and Enculturation: The Culture We Create in Choral Classrooms - And the Communities We Become*

July 5, 2012
Guest Lecturer: James Madison University Summer Graduate Program
*Safety, Identity, Transmission and Enculturation: The Culture We Create in Choral Classrooms - And the Communities We Become*

June 21, 2012
Guest Lecturer: Heidelberg University, OH
*Safety, Identity, Transmission and Enculturation: The Culture We Create in Choral Classrooms: Skype Lecture with Summer MME students*

May 10, 2012
Conference Presentation: Poster Session
JMU May Symposium’s Noftsinger Celebration of Scholarship
Poster Session: *Standing at the Crossroads: Analyzing Experiences in Student Teaching*, co-authored with Drs. William Dabback and Lisa Maynard

March 30, 2012
Conference Presentation: Poster Session
2012 (NAfME) National Association for Music Educators Conference
*Standing at the Crossroads: Analyzing Experiences in Student Teaching*, co-authored with Drs. William Dabback and Lisa Maynard
November 19, 2011  
Conference Presentation: Interest Session  
VMEA - Virginia Music Educators Association Annual Conference  
*Safety, Identity, Transmission and Enculturation: The Cultures We Create in Choirs*  

November 18, 2011  
Conference Presentation: Interest Session  
VMEA - Virginia Music Educators Association 2011 Annual Conference  
*Standing at the Crossroads: Analyzing Experiences in Student Teaching*, co-authored with Drs. William Dabback and Lisa Maynard  

August 11 - 13, 2011  
Conference Attendance  

April 26, 2011  
Guest Lecturer: JMU String Music Education Classes  
*International Education*  

April 1, 2011  
Conference Presentation: Poster Session  
Baltimore, MD: MENC Regional Conference  
*Safety, Identity, Transmission and Enculturation: The Development of a Survey Instrument for the Measurement of Four Formative Aspects of Choral Cultures*  

February 2009  
Conference Presentation Poster Session:  
TMEA: Texas Music Educators National Convention  

September 2009 - June 2010  
Voice Science Research Assistant  
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL  
Coordination of data collection, and file analysis preparation  

February 2009  
Published Book Review  
American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Journal  
*Neurosciences in Music Pedagogy*
Consent to Participate in Research

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Janet M. Hostetter from James Madison University. The title of this research study is: A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs. The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the pedagogical practices of international children’s choirs with regard to the specific categories of vocal tone quality/production, musicianship training, repertoire development and performance practice.

Research Procedures
Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study will consist of Skype, phone or on-site interviews with seven questions and their related subsections. With your consent, the interview will be recorded electronically and transcribed into a Word document.

Time Required
The interview will continue as long as it takes to fully answer each question with no more than two hours allotted to complete each interview.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
Upon receiving a copy of the completed thesis, participants will gain an:

a. Awareness of choral music practices and traditions worldwide
b. New pedagogical strategies for teaching singers to effectively emulate the vocal tone expected from indigenous choirs
c. Acquisition of new musicianship teaching strategies
d. Increased repertoire choices to include a broader range of international music
e. Performance practice strategies of international choirs for performing works of these countries

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to the Graduate Music Faculty at JMU, to members of the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir and to attendees at the lecture recital.

The researcher retains the right to use and publish identifiable data with the prior permission of participants.

All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.
Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Janet M. Hostetter  
Department of Music  
James Madison University  
liu2wx@jmu.edu

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy  
Department of Music  
James Madison University  
Telephone: 540-568 6714  
vanderjx@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
James Madison University  
(540) 568-2834  
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form and promises to supply me with a copy of the thesis “A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs” upon its completion. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent to be audio-taped during the interview process. ________ (initials)

☐ I give consent for my choir’s rehearsals to be video-taped and for portions of these tapes to be used at the researcher’s discretion in her lecture recital given my prior approval and the prior consent of all pictured subjects. ________ (initials)

☐ I give consent to be publically recognized and cited by name in the study document, lecture recital and other public forums such as conference presentations. ________ (initials)

______________________________________  ______________________
Name of Participant (Printed)                      Date

______________________________________
Name of Participant (Signed)                      Date

______________________________________
Name of Researcher (Signed)                      Date
VERBAL CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PARTICIPATION
(Consent Guide for Telephone Interview Surveys)

SUBJECT: A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs

Oral consent serves as an assurance that the required elements of informed consent have been presented orally to the participant or the participant’s legally authorized representative.

Verbal consent to participate in this telephone survey has been obtained by the participant’s willingness to continue with the telephone survey by providing answers to a series of questions related to what the participant has heard about this topic: A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs.

TELEPHONE SCRIPT:

1. Thank you so much for choosing to participate in this interview and study entitled: A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs. Are you willing to be identified by name and by choir name as part of the completed thesis?

2. Do you give your permission for this interview to be audio recorded? (If no, I will take notes.) I appreciate your participation.

3. As you know, the purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the pedagogical practices of international children’s choirs with regard to the specific categories of vocal tone quality/production, musicianship training, repertoire development and performance practice.

4. Your participation in this study will involve no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life.

5. In terms of the study interview itself, you will be asked seven questions with their subsections. You will be audio-recorded. You and your choir will be listed formally in the document and cited in the thesis and lecture recital itself.

6. At the end of the study, you will be given a copy of the final document, transcriptions and a video-recording of my lecture recital.

7. All identifiable data related to your choir will be retained for possible use in future publications, for presentation at a recital in 2019 and in possible conference presentations to demonstrate effective choral techniques you use in generating your choir’s unique sound. Do you give your permission for the public use of this identifiable data? (If no, then I will seek another choir to work with).

8. Do you have any questions?

9. Do you agree to participate in this study interview process?
VERBAL CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PARTICIPATION

I attest that the aforementioned written consent has been orally presented to the human subject and the human subject provided me with an oral assurance of their willingness to participate in the research.

I hereby attest that this script was read to _______________ (name of potential subject) on________________ (date).

I hereby attest that the potential subject was given the opportunity to ask any questions that they might have had, and to have them answered to their satisfaction.

_______ The potential subject has agreed to participate in the study interview.

_______ The potential subject has declined to participate in the study interview.

_________________________  _________________________
Surveyor’s Name (Printed)  Surveyor
Parent/Guardian Informed Consent

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by (Janet Hostetter) from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the pedagogical practices of international children’s choirs with regard to the specific categories of vocal tone quality/production, musicianship training, repertoire development and performance practice.
This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her (doctoral thesis).

Research Procedures
Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a series of interview questions with your child’s choir director and the possibility of video-taped and/or audio rehearsals featuring the practices of the ____ (name of children’s choir). Your child may be pictured as part of the choir rehearsal.

Time Required
Participation in this study will consist of at least one rehearsal session but no more than five rehearsal sessions in which your child may or may not be involved.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your child’s involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to the child/parent for participating in this study, unless they are specifically interesting in learning about the pedagogical practices of internationally known children’s choirs. If enough people are interested in the study and a publisher can be secured, copies will be made available for purchase.

Payment for participation
There is no payment for taking part in the study.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented at a public lecture recital, in written publications and in future presentations at conferences. Your child will not be identified as an individual apart from the choir as a whole. The researcher retains the right to use and publish all data related to the named choir. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child’s identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information related to the research will be stored in file-encrypted folders on my external hard drive.

There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.
Participation & Withdrawal
Your child’s participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should you and your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child’s participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Name</th>
<th>Advisor’s Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>James Madison University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td>Telephone: (540) …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email Address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
James Madison University  
(540) 568-2834  
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent for my child to be video and/or audio-taped during rehearsal.______ (parent’s initial)

________________________________________________________________________
Name of Child (Printed)

________________________________________________________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)

________________________________________________________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian (Signed)  Date

________________________________________________________________________
Name of Researcher (Signed)  Date
CHILD ASSENT FORM (Ages 7-12)

IRB # 17-0416

A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs

We would like to invite you to take part in this study. We are asking you because you are a child who singing in the (____________________________) Name of Children’s Choir

In this study, I will try to learn more about how conductors teach their choirs about vocal tone production, music theory, performance practices and literature development. To do this study, I will interview your director and video and/or audio tape one to five rehearsals. You may be video-recorded as part of the rehearsal process so that I can see how all choristers respond to your director.

Participating in this study will not hurt you in any way. The reason I chose your choir to participate is because you are a part of a respected children’s choir that is known nationally and internationally. My goal is to help other people understand the things your director does that bring such great success to your choir.

Your parents have been asked to give their permission for you to take part in this study. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to remove yourself from rehearsals at any time.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask me.

IF YOU PRINT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM IT MEANS THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AND HAVE READ EVERYTHING THAT IS ON THIS FORM. YOU AND YOUR PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

_______________________________________________  ________________________
Name of Child (printed)          Date

_______________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of Investigator          Date

1200 Park Road
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
Janet.hostetter@emu.edu
1-540-560-9504
SURVEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Researcher: Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of the study and meeting with me today. Let’s begin with the history of your organization.

I. Descriptive Data

1. Give a brief description and history of your children’s choir program.
   a. How long has your program been in existence?
   b. Is there a vision or mission statement for your organization?
   c. Is there a handbook or manual for your organization?
   d. How many performing and training groups exist?
   e. How many children are involved in each group?
   f. How often and for how long do your groups rehearse?
   g. Please provide a sample of your choir’s rehearsal schedule.
   h. Where does your group rehearse?
   i. How many staff members assist in running your organization?
   j. How is your organization funded?
   k. What is the administrative structure of your organization?
   l. How do you recruit for your ensemble?
   m. What is the average length of membership?
   n. Do you have an alumni program? If so, please describe.

2. Please outline your annual performance schedule.
   a. How often do your choirs perform each year?
   b. Are all concerts mandatory?
   c. Do you do outreach or charity performances with your choirs?
   d. Describe the venue or venues where your choirs most often perform.
   e. Do you tour? If so, how often and how far?
   f. If you tour, how are tours funded?

Researcher: Let us continue by discussing your pedagogical practices.

II. Pedagogical Categories

3. Describe your approach to teaching vocal tone production.
   a. What vocal pedagogy concepts form the basis for your teaching of vocal tone production?
   b. How do you approach bodywork in terms of singing?
   c. In your words, describe the ideal vocal tone.
   d. What analogies (if any) are used to describe the ideal vocal tone to singers?
   e. Do you use audio sources to expose your singers to concepts of vocal tone production?

4. How do you develop musicianship among choristers?
   a. What is the balance in your rehearsal process in teaching by modeling (rote) versus learning music from a printed score?
   b. How do you develop music literacy in your rehearsal process?
c. Do you dedicate a portion of your rehearsal time to theory training? If so, how much
time is dedicated to this pursuit?
d. If theory is taught separately from the music, who teaches the lesson?
e. If theory is taught separately from the music, what approach or methodology is used, if any?
f. Are your students expected to practice concert music outside of rehearsals? If so, how
is this practice structured and assessed? Do you provide rehearsal tracks and/or a
practice guide to aid choristers in their assignments?
g. Are your students expected to practice musicianship assignments outside of
rehearsals? If so, how is this practice structured and assessed?

5. Describe standard literature for your choir.
   a. How do you find new repertoire for your ensemble?
   b. If you utilize printed octavos for your choir, where do you access these works?
   c. Many choirs regularly sing or become known for, one or two defining works. Does
your choir perform any such distinctive pieces? If so, please name them.
   d. Does anyone regularly compose music specifically for your choir? If so, who is the
composer?
   e. If someone composes original music for your choir, how regularly are new works
   generated?

   a. How many pieces do your choirs learn for each concert season?
   b. Does your choir perform from memory? If so, what percentage?
   c. How often do you repeat repertoire?
   d. Do your choirs perform a cappella?
   e. What behavioral expectations do you have for your singers in terms of stage
deportment?
   f. What instruments, if any, are used to accompany your choir?
   g. Do your singers utilize choreography during performances? If so:
      i. How often is movement used?
      ii. Who designs the choreography?
      iii. Who teaches the choreography?
   h. Do you generate recordings of your choirs for the public? If so, which of the following
media platforms are utilized:
      i. Compact Discs
      ii. Online digital downloads
      iii. YouTube videos
      iv. Concert DVDs
      v. Other?
   i. Describe your choir’s performing attire.

7. Is there anything about your choral organization that you wish to share that has not yet been
asked?
International Research

Complete this form if the proposed research will be conducted outside of the United States and submit with the Human Research Review Request form.

Responsible Researcher(s): Janet M. Hostetter
Project Title: A Pedagogical Overview of Selected International Children’s Choirs

1. In which country will the research be conducted?

As a student of JMU, I will be conducting the research both here in the United States and in as many of the choir locations as possible including Peru, South Africa, Australia and the Philippines. In the event that on-site visits are not possible, Skype interviews will be conducted.

2. Describe the rationale for selection of this site.

These countries are the home countries of the selected choirs.

3. Describe the ways in which cultural norms and/or local laws differ between the host site and the United States. Consider the differences in consent procedures, age of majority, autonomy of individuals, group consent, and/or parental consent. Include an explanation of what cultural sensitivities will be required to conduct this study.

In terms of choral music education and performance, there are not significant differences between United States and the aforementioned countries in terms of consent procedures, age of majority, autonomy of individuals, group consent, and/or parental consent.

4. Describe any aspects of the cultural, political, or economic climate in the country where the research will be conducted which might increase the risks for participants. Describe the steps the researcher will take to minimize these risks:

There are no aspects of the cultural, political, or economic climate of the United States that would increase the risks for participants.

5. Describe how the researcher will obtain culturally appropriate access to this community.

As a researcher, I have both professional and personal access to choral music educators and conductors around the world.
6. What is the primary language of the potential research subjects?

The primary language of this investigation is English. Interpretation will be necessary for Peru and the Czech Republic.

7. Is the researcher fluent in the primary language? If no, please explain how the researcher will communicate with the subject population during recruitment, consent, and completion of the study.

The researcher is fluent in English. The Czech Republic choir has an interpreter on staff who can help with translation. The researcher's daughter is fluent in Spanish and willing to serve as a translator to the Peruvian choir.

8. There are instances in which an ethics committee (IRB equivalent) or other regulatory entity must review and approve the research. Please provide information about the committee or entity reviewing this project.

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, JMU Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Choirs and Music Education, is directing my research, thesis completion, and lecture recital. She has many years of experience in international school settings and is particularly competent to supervise a study of this international nature. Dr. Jonathan Gibson, JMU Professor of Musicology, has lived in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia, and has a deep understanding and respect for the musical and social cultures of this region. Dr. Pedro Aponte, JMU Associate Professor of Musicology, has lived in Venezuela and completely familiar with the musical and social norms of South America. Dr. Bryce Hayes, JMU Assistant Professor of Choirs and Music Education, will complete my committee.

9. If the researcher is a student, describe how the faculty advisor and student will communicate to ensure there is adequate oversight of the project.

As a graduate student in the JMU School of Music, I see my advisor each week for no less than two hours in a one-on-one meeting.
Appendix 8: Letter to Emily Ellsworth

December 2, 2016

Dear Emily Ellsworth,

Greetings! I am the artistic and executive director for the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir and a doctoral candidate in choral conducting at James Madison University in Harrisonburg Virginia. The dissertation topic I am considering is to compare and contrast the pedagogical approaches of four to six internationally-recognized children’s choirs in regards to tone quality, music literacy, repertoire development and performance practice. If you have connections or can recommend children’s choirs outside the United States for participation in this project, I would be grateful for your help in identifying these choirs. My goal is to visit each participating choir, develop a relationship with the director and if possible bring our respective choirs together for a learning collaboration. My lecture recital could then include video clips depicting each choir’s approach and conclude with a colorful array of international choral repertoire performed by the Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir.

If you can think of an internationally known children’s choir that would benefit from this study, please provide as much information about the children’s choir as you are able, such as:

1. Name of internationally known children’s choir
2. Name of internationally known children’s choir director
3. Country of origin
4. E-mail for the director
5. Phone number for the director
6. Web address for the choir
7. Link to an audio-visual file of the choir performing, such as YouTube
8. A brief statement explaining why you are recommending the choir for this study.

Thank you for any assistance you are able to give. You may send your responses to me, Janet Hostetter in any of the following ways:

1. Email: janet.hostetter@emu.edu
2. Phone: 540-560-9505
3. Mail: Janet Hostetter, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Please do not hesitate to contact me with ideas or questions. I consider it a privilege to partner with you!

Sincerely,

Janet M. Hostetter
Artistic & Executive Director
Shenandoah Valley Children’s Choir
janet.hostetter@emu.edu
## Appendix 9: HCC Ilumini Choir

### HCC ILUMINI Choir Camp Schedule August 2018

**Breakfast from 8:00-8:45 / Monday-Thursday**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Meet Your Choir Leaders!</td>
<td>Choir Warm Ups, Vocal technique and rehearsal</td>
<td>Choir Warm Ups, Vocal Techniques</td>
<td>Choir Warm Ups, Vocal Techniques</td>
<td>Choir Warm Ups, Vocal Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>9:00-9:45</strong> Introduce Staff &amp; Choral Leadership Team, Vocal Techniques, Warm Up!</td>
<td><strong>9:45-10:30</strong> Sectionals – music sorting – lead by section leaders in groups</td>
<td><strong>10:30-10:45</strong> Refreshment Break</td>
<td><strong>10:45-12 noon</strong> How we rehearse: Working Review syllables, count singing/strokes, Theory/S.S. IPA, Handouts, Quartets</td>
<td><strong>12 noon – 1:00 p.m.</strong> Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>1:00-2:30 p.m.</strong> Joanne – body awareness/choreo session</td>
<td><strong>2:45 – 3:00 p.m.</strong> Refreshment Break</td>
<td><strong>3:00 – 4:00 p.m.</strong> REHEARSAL &amp; INDIVIDUAL VOICE SESSIONS</td>
<td><strong>4:00 – 5:00 p.m.</strong> Theory Class &amp; Sight Singing</td>
<td><strong>5:00-6:00</strong> REHEARSAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-8:15 p.m.</td>
<td>REHEARSAL</td>
<td>REHEARSAL</td>
<td>REHEARSAL</td>
<td>REHEARSAL</td>
<td>REHEARSAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15-9:30</td>
<td>Section/full choir team building activities/ Talent night prep</td>
<td>Section/full choir team building activities/ Talent night prep</td>
<td>Section/full choir team building activities/ Talent night prep</td>
<td>Talent night</td>
<td>Talent night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Return to Rooms/Lights Out 10:30</td>
<td>Return to Rooms/Lights Out 10:30</td>
<td>Return to Rooms/Lights Out 10:30</td>
<td>Return to Rooms/Lights Out 10:30</td>
<td>Return to Rooms/Lights Out 10:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rooms:**
- 125 G – Ilumini 125 J – Ilumini
- 242 – sectional room
- 243 – sectional room
- 212-A/D – choiro Studio Theatre
## Appendix 10: HCC Esprimas Choir Camp Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday August 20</th>
<th>Tuesday August 21</th>
<th>Wednesday Aug 22</th>
<th>Thursday August 23</th>
<th>Friday Aug 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m. –</td>
<td><strong>Meet Your Choir!</strong> Introduce Staff &amp; Choral</td>
<td>**Choir Warm Ups, Vocal Techniques and</td>
<td>**Section Leaders lead Choir Warm Ups /</td>
<td><strong>8:30am BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
<td>Rehearsal**</td>
<td>Vocal Techniques and Rehearsal</td>
<td>Section Leaders lead Choir Warm Ups / Vocal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Icebreakers (led by section leaders), Vocal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
<td>Techniques and Rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Techniques, Warm-ups, routines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rehearsal – concert run through in theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 10:45 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 12 noon</td>
<td><strong>How we rehearse:</strong> introduction syllables</td>
<td><strong>Vocal Session with Elizabeth McDonald</strong></td>
<td><strong>Movement Workshop with Joanne</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rehearsal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rehearsal – concert run through in theatre</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>/ counts / strokes</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 noon – 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 p.m. –</td>
<td><strong>First sectionals!! Requiring 3 rooms (SBA)</strong></td>
<td>**Sight-Singing How To’s &amp; Sight-singing</td>
<td>Theory breakdown (get book, review</td>
<td><strong>1 – 2pm</strong> Sectional rehearsals requiring 3 rooms</td>
<td><strong>Concert 3 p.m.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>groups (led by section leaders)</td>
<td>schools/expectations)</td>
<td>2 – 2:45 voice matching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 – 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment Break</strong></td>
<td>Pickup at 4 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Theory Jeopardy “those doing Book 2 to work</td>
<td>**Theory Jam Sessions (3 rooms) Book 5 &amp;</td>
<td>Theory Jam Sessions (3 rooms)</td>
<td>Rehearsal &amp; concert run-through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>separately with Stophia to complete”</td>
<td>Rudiments Book 3 &amp; 4 Book 2 &amp; New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>**Esprimas Choir Goals, Choir Journals &amp;</td>
<td>**Sectional Rehearsals – requiring 3 rooms</td>
<td>**FRENCH BRAIDING workshop (outside, weather</td>
<td><strong>Talent Show Prep Period</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Goals (outside, weather permitting)</td>
<td></td>
<td>permitting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Pick up window</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pick up window</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pick up window</strong></td>
<td><strong>Choir Dinner</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talent Night – 6:30pm choristers stay overnight</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drop off time – 8:45 am  *Arrangements can be made to drop off earlier if necessary.
Bibliography


