

Awakening Artistry in the Choral Rehearsal

Mary Ellen Pinzino

(International Choral Bulletin 2006)

You are at a choral concert. The intonation is perfect. Rhythm is exact. Attacks and releases are impeccable. The sound is beautiful. Yet the performance does not move you. What is it that is missing? What inspires performance? What does it take to bring vitality to choral performance?

Colleagues across the globe are discovering that movement in the choral rehearsal can activate musicality, build music skills, develop vocal technique, and stimulate energy in singers of all ages. Every musical nuance can be represented in movement. Everything musical can be communicated through movement. Every movement evokes style, expression, and momentum to match. We can make our singers come alive, make music come alive, and make choral performance come alive by engaging our singers in movement in rehearsal.

Movement

Movement embodies every aspect of choral singing—tone, articulation, line, phrasing, dynamics, expression, style. It is the physical means through which singers can literally grasp the intangibles of choral artistry, feel nuance, and actively engage in the wonder of the choral art. Movement is momentum, energy, vitality. Movement is the life force of choral performance.

Movement in the choral rehearsal is overt physicality applied to every dimension of choral singing, vitalizing performance. It is not dance, choreography, choralography, prescribed movement, or a particular methodology. Movement is the current of electricity flowing through singers that generates line, phrasing, dynamics, momentum; for how the singer moves, so does the voice, the line, and the human spirit.

Movement is the finest accompaniment to choral singing. It invites singers as well as conductors to interact with *the energy of the line*. Every musical nuance is a push and pull of that energy. The choral rehearsal becomes a “sandbox of energy.” Through movement, singers can play with the energy of the line in all its nuance, uncovering the power of text, rhythm, melody, harmony, and the interaction between the various elements of the choral art. Singers in movement are the directors of a “play” of energy, with the score as script.

Movement awakens musicality in singers of all ages and degrees of expertise. It neutralizes the broad range of skills within an ensemble, enabling less experienced singers to efficiently rise to the expected level of performance. Further, movement mirrors musical comprehension, providing conductors with visual feedback about the ensemble’s understanding of the music, with a window to each singer’s concept. Movement transports singers of all achievement levels to greater focus, greater deliberateness, greater artistry.

Background

Mary Ellen Pinzino, Director of the Come Children Sing Institute, and Michael J. Anderson, Vice President of the International Federation for Choral Music, discovered surprising commonality in their career-long applications of movement with singers of very different ages—hers with preschool children and children’s choirs at the Come Children Sing Institute, and his with college choirs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Collaboration ensued, fueled by observations of each other’s work, by Mary Ellen’s extensive study with Edwin Gordon, by Michael’s tenure singing under Robert Shaw, by each conducting college choirs, high school festival choirs, and by joint presentations throughout the US. The final year of the three-year association included the choirs at the University of Illinois at Chicago as their laboratory. The summation of their perspectives is presented here.

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Movement brings conductor and singers into greater intimacy with each other and with the music, creating a community of musicians. Conductor and singers, together, become more musical, more playful, more energized through movement. Shared movement charms conductor and singers into revealing greater artistry in movement, uncovering shared passion for the choral art.

Movement is a non-verbal language that speaks directly to the choral art, and directly to the artistry of the singer. It is through movement rather than words that we can best communicate musicality to singers. Words get in the way of the very artistry we are trying to achieve. Talking is not musical. Movement conveys musicality, as movement and music are inseparable. Talking explains to our singers what *we* feel. Movement gives singers the means to feel it themselves.

Rehearsal Technique

Tradition allows conductors to move; yet it is singers who most need to exercise musicality. Try introducing movement to your singers with your favorite warm-ups. Explore different kinds of movement with different vocal exercises, different vowels, different kinds of articulation. Listen for changes in sound, phrasing, energy. There is no right or wrong way to move. There are only dramatic differences in tone, line, dynamics, momentum,

musicality, when singers move as they sing.

Move beyond habitual conducting gestures, defined planes, and upper torso. Singers will follow. Choral sound and expression soar when movement includes the lower body, the bending of knees, the shifting of weight. Notice that energized arms moving to an open position activate space in the sound; that energized knees activate breath. Notice the greater sense of momentum when singers are on the balls of their feet, poised to move forward. Notice the beauty of the phrase when singers transfer weight forward from one foot to the other within a crescendo, and back for the decrescendo. You will discover movements you will use as cues to evoke a particular kind of tone, vowel color,

articulation. You may find traditional, fragmented warm-up sequences become very musical phrases.

Experiment with movement with choral repertoire. A mirror can help you better translate your concept of a piece into movement. Find full-body movement that best communicates the turn of a phrase, the energy of the line. Discover the movement of a line that makes a passage unique, or like another, and invite singers to move with you as they sing. Be prepared to hear a quality of sound that you have never heard from your choir. Be prepared to witness breath support you have not been able to achieve through breathing exercises. Be prepared for singers to become fully engaged in the choral art.

Singers reluctant to move may respond to the invitation for all “to conduct,” to mirror the conductor’s movement, or to move in specific ways—“skating” the phrase, “throwing” the attack. When movement becomes part of the process of singing, singers overcome inhibitions, initiate movement with everything they sing, and bask in the energy of making exciting music with their peers. Overt musicality is hard to resist.

Movement allows for every singer’s individuality, musicality, and creativity. We demonstrate interaction with the energy of the line, but our movement serves as a springboard, inviting singers to jump in and surf the waves themselves, riding the powerful twists and turns of the choral art. Singers, in turn, show us more daring moves, building our confidence and movement vocabulary, as we all risk being utterly musical.

As you visit my rehearsal today, you will notice that my singers rehearse standing. Sitting encumbers movement. The power of movement speaks for itself with singers. They choose to stand so they can be more actively involved in making exciting music. They “need to sit” only when rehearsals get bogged down with explanations or unmusical activities.

My verbal comments during rehearsal will be for your benefit more than for my singers, as I communicate musicality to them through movement. The less I talk, the more music can command the singers, and the more musically they will sing. My role is that of coach, guiding the musical play.

Step into my rehearsal. *“Watch this line move.”* (Conductor sings and demonstrates the “energy of the line” in movement). *“Note the change of direction. Sing and move it with me. Get on the balls of your feet, so you can move forward with the line. Step into that line and use your arms to place that phrase. Use your knees to initiate the next line. That’s it! Throw your shoulders into that next phrase. Use your arms to follow through as you reach the peak of the phrase..... Aha! Musical delivery!”*

“Let’s take the next section of this work with everybody on the soprano part. Energy and imitation characterize this entire section. The first statement of the theme moves like this.” (Conductor sings and moves the energy of the line.) *“Sing and move it with me. Now sing your own part, and when you find that line or something similar, move accordingly..... Wow! The vitality of that line being tossed around from one part to*

another was very exciting, and the ‘undulating choir’ beautifully reflected the structure of this piece!”

“Now go to the next section of this work. Place that first phrase as if you were gently lifting a bird over a fence. Each phrase in the sequence requires similar movement..... Ah! Your phrases are so musical!”

Movement uncovers musicality in our singers, always finding greater abundance than we assume to be there. It draws artistry out of our singers rather than trying to put it in. It frees the voice rather than trying to control it. Movement invites singers to become the music.

Movement can be applied to every dimension of the choral art—line, phrasing, dynamics, articulation, enunciation, attacks, releases. Every musical nuance can be manifest in movement. Every movement generates the corresponding nuance in vocal delivery. Every application of movement energizes singers and awakens artistry in the choral rehearsal.

Step into my rehearsal. *“This line needs greater power. Make a fist. Two of them. Sing with rising fists, showing your power. Use your knees. More rage!..... Aha! That’s it! Now you’ve got that line!”*

“Go to letter ‘A.’ Snap each of those chords into place with the thrust of your hands.

“Charge forward into that sforzando, then step back and put your hands in your pockets..... Wow! That created a beautiful diminuendo!”

“Sing the staccato section with staccato movement. Make your movement crisp and diction will follow.”

“Go to Letter ‘B.’ Reach out and grab that descending line. Bring it to your body and then reach out and grab the next one. Continue for the entire sequence.”

“That last phrase needs something different. I’m not sure what. Let’s experiment with movement as you sing and see if we can find what works..... I still haven’t seen what I want to hear. Let’s explore it again..... Aha! John, your movement was beautiful! That’s just what that phrase needs! Show us, John, so we can all do it!

“Go to Letter ‘C.’ Everybody sing the tenor part. Move into that crescendo, transferring weight to the forward foot, stepping back on the decrescendo..... That’s it. There are a series of similar phrases weaving through the various parts. Take your own part this time and shift your weight into each of those phrases..... Wow! That was stunning!”

Singers write musicality into their bodies instead of into the score. The kinesthetic sense of a line rehearsed regularly with movement brings the rehearsed nuance with it in performance. The muscles remember what the mind forgets. Singers who rehearse

consistently with movement become so musical that they cannot sing without it—without musicality.

Rhythm Skills

Movement is the key to developing rhythm skills, whatever the age or experience of the singers. Rhythm is movement. Time values and note names provide snapshots of notes on the page, but they do not capture song in flight. Singers must be freed of the measuring sticks of notation and the mental gymnastics of music theory and experience rhythm through movement. We must take our own concept of rhythm out of the mind and put it into the body. Rhythm is not intellectual activity. It is physical activity.

We intellectualize rhythm and pitch through music theory and then chide singers to “concentrate,” to “think,” to “pay attention.” We need to get singers into movement to get them out of thinking. Intellectual thinking actually gets in the way of musical thinking—*audiation*, which is not in words, not in theoretical constructs, but in sound, in movement. Musical thinking is the body’s way of making sense—a sense of meter, a sense of tonality—rather than the mind’s. It demands the processing of aural input through singing, chanting, and moving, rather than through intellectual channels. Audiation is to music what thinking is to language.*

We often put a bandage on singers’ lack of rhythm audiation rather than fixing the problem. We implore our singers to “follow the beat,” “watch the conductor,” “take my tempo.” Yet the beat should be felt rather than tracked visually. We often rely on techniques with text or mnemonic devices to secure rhythm, but that does not develop rhythm skill that can be transferred to the next piece of music. Nor does it develop rhythmically independent singers. Rhythmic competence requires the internalization of beat, meter, and tempo.

Singers must be able to navigate the space between the beats in order to accurately impose beat and meter within that space. Involving singers in “sustained movement,” flowing movement in which some part of the body is always moving, primes the canvas for the placement of beat and the defining of meter and tempo. It also puts in motion the raw material for tonal skills, phrasing, and expression. All styles, all tempos, all music invite sustained movement.

The entire body is the instrument of sustained movement. The greater the use of arms, shoulders, knees, hips, weight, the greater the musicality. We must move beyond our traditional notions of beat patterns. There is far more musical material to conduct than the beats. Traditional beat patterns mark only time; they define only the corners of the vast space of choral music. Freeing singers into sustained movement opens the full range of musical expression that can be applied to all dimensions of choral singing.

* For a complete discussion of audiation and of rhythm, see Edwin Gordon, *Learning Sequences in Music: Skill, Content, and Patterns A Music Learning Theory*, GIA, 2003, and *Rhythm: Contrasting the Implications of Audiation and Notation*, GIA, 2000.

Step into my rehearsal. *“Move with me as you sing this song. Keep some part of your body moving throughout. Don’t feel you need to move to the beat, just move. Find out what happens between the beats. Use your hips, shoulders, arms, knees. There is no ‘correct’ way to move. Just let the song move you as you move the song.”*

It is within sustained movement that we place weight—beat. The strength and pattern of weight determines meter. A regular pattern of weight that defines strong beats, macro beats, divided into three beats of lesser weight, micro beats, establishes triple meter, whatever the time signature or conducting pattern. Performance in any meter without weight that defines the meter is unmusical, even if with beautiful tone and precise intonation.

“Counting” beats does not guarantee their relationship to meter, to weight, nor to musicality. Weight in meter is best manifest physically through body weight. Rehearsing a song in any meter with singers moving both macro and micro beats, with appropriate distribution of weight, sustains momentum, secures tempo, and propels musicality. Swaying or moving only macro beats will rush the tempo, as weighted micro beats in relation to more heavily weighted macro beats are essential for singers to sustain tempo. Moving only micro beats will not define the meter, as without stronger, weighted macro beats, all beats sound alike. Both macro and micro beats are necessary, with appropriate weight distribution, in order for singers to perform rhythm precisely and musically.

Choral warm-ups can be designed to develop a sense of meter through experience with a variety of meters in movement, including unusual meters in five and seven as well as duple and triple meters, each with its own pattern of weight in macro and micro beats. Select one meter to use as a warm-up in each rehearsal, chant on a neutral syllable, and rotate meters through successive rehearsals.

Step into my rehearsal. *“We’re going to chant some simple patterns in triple meter and keep the meter going. No melody. No words. We’ll chant on “BAH.” Sometimes I will throw in more difficult patterns in triple meter for you to repeat after me. Other times I’ll give you a pattern and you can respond with your own patterns in triple meter. I’ll start chanting to get us into triple meter.”* (Conductor begins chanting and moving in triple meter.) *“Move with me. Chant with me whenever you are ready..... That’s the idea.”* (Conductor coaches over continued movement and ensemble chanting in the meter, rather than interrupting the meter with talking.) *“Now you are rushing the tempo. We need more weight on macro beats. Throw your weight around, literally. Leap into those macro beats. That will give them weight!”* (Conductor demonstrates suggested changes in movement while continuing chanting and movement throughout.) *“Now you are delivering weight on macro beats, but you have let go of micro beats. Without micro beats, we do not define the meter. Get those knees bouncing micro beats with greater weight on macro beats. Try leaping into macro beats while stepping micros..... Wow! What a difference! Now I am feeling triple meter, momentum, steady tempo, musical delivery!”*

Chanting and moving in a variety of usual and unusual meters, without melody or text, stimulates the perception of relationships between macro and micro beats, easy placement of challenging patterns within the matrix of macro and micro beats, and discrimination between meters—not in theoretical definitions, but in the *sense* of meter. The use of body weight to appropriately weight macro and micro beats in both usual and unusual meters develops rhythm audiation, and can be applied directly to all choral music.

Step into my rehearsal. *“In this piece you are singing the right notes at the right times, but there is no sense of meter, no momentum, no driving force. It sounds boring. This time while you sing, move in triple meter as you did in our warm-up.”* (Conductor initiates movement in triple meter with appropriate weight on macro and micro beats, and coaches while singing and movement continue throughout.) *“I don’t feel any difference in weight between macro and micro beats..... Now you are swaying to macro beats and there are no micro beats. Your singing mirrors your movement. We need both macro beats and micro beats within us as we sing..... That’s better! Now those lines have momentum. That was very musical! What a difference!”*

Meter propels performance. It inspires momentum, secures tempo, and drives rhythmic vitality. A strong sense of meter provides for shifting meters to be easily navigated, for syncopation to play against the expected weight, and for tongue-twisting text to fall into place. Proper weighting of macro and micro beats is as important to achieving rhythmic vitality as vocal technique is to achieving a beautiful sound.

Tonal Skills

The connection between movement and rhythm may be more obvious than the connection between movement and the tonal dimension of music. Movement is, however, equally important for the development of tonal skills. Tonal audiation provides for singers to sing tunefully, and to sing in tune.

With language, gesture/body language serves speech, helping us to express our thinking, drawing out what we know into words. With music, gesture/movement serves singing, helping us to express our audiation, drawing out what we know into song. “What we know” is dependent upon aural input as well as oral output. Engaging singers in Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Lydian, and Aeolian as well as Major and Minor tonalities develops a sense of tonality. The stronger the sense of tonality, the better the singer will sing in tune.

Movement connects tonal input to tonal output. It is the catalyst for the fusion of aural to oral, tonally. Movement alerts the vocal mechanism to pay attention to tonal audiation. It keeps the act of singing on task, focused on audiation. In speech, we jokingly use the phrase “open mouth, insert foot” to describe the act of speaking without thinking. Similarly, we “open mouth, sing out of tune” if we sing without audiation.

The singer who cannot sing on pitch is one who has not yet grown beyond “tonal babble,” one who has not yet learned to sing with tonal audiation, one who has not yet

had experience with a variety of tonalities with movement to develop tonal audiation. The singer who generally sings tunefully, but does not sing in tune, is one who has grown beyond tonal babble enough to approximate pitch relationships, but who has not yet had experience with various tonalities and tonal patterns, with movement, to establish a sense of tonality. These singers sing through imitation rather than through their independent tonal skills, much as one traces a drawing rather than being able to draw independently.

Choral warm-ups can be designed to develop tonal audiation through experience with a variety of tonalities in movement. Select one tonality to use as a warm-up in each rehearsal, sing on a neutral syllable, and rotate tonalities through successive rehearsals. The very act of moving while singing songs in various tonalities enhances the development of tonal audiation.

Step into my rehearsal. *“I’m going to sing a little Phrygian song repeatedly on ‘TOO.’ Move with me (sustained movement) for the first couple of times through and then sing as you move when you are ready.....”* (Conductor continues to move and speaks on the resting tone so as not to interrupt the tonality with talking.) *“Just listen again and move with me. You aren’t yet in this tonality.”* (Conductor sings and moves the song repeatedly and then speaks on the resting tone.) *“Sing with me again. Keep moving as you sing..... Now you are in the tonality.”* (Conductor continues to speak on the resting tone.) *“I’m going to sing tonal patterns in this tonality. You respond to each with the resting tone.”* (Conductor sings tonal patterns that highlight the characteristic tones of the tonality. Conductor then speaks on the resting tone.) *“This time, echo my patterns..... Let’s go back to the song..... Now you are singing beautifully in tune.”*

The least familiar tonalities, the modes, with movement, focus audiation far more than any deliberate attention to “pitch.” The experience of multiple tonalities with movement directs audiation to pitch relationships—not in theory, but in sound, leading singers to discriminate between tonalities and sing better in tune. Whatever the tonalities of our chosen repertoire, singers will sing better in tune because of their experience with various tonalities in movement—because of their *sense* of tonality.

We can assure better intonation when learning a new piece of literature by approaching it from the perspective of tonality and movement. For example, if our repertoire includes a new piece in Phrygian, the above “warm-up” would serve to stimulate the audiation of Phrygian. Following immediately with the new Phrygian song, with movement, will encourage singing in tune from the start.

Movement serves another important function in the development of tonal audiation. Movement activates breath. We know the importance of breath for singing, yet overlook the importance of movement for breath. When singers are engaged in energized movement, breath becomes a natural part of being musical, rather than an imposed process for vocal technique. Breath becomes part of the expression of line, with singers very naturally taking timely and sufficient breath for whatever line they are executing in

movement and song. Movement focuses audiation, so musical thinking guides breath rather than intellectual thinking about breath.

The development of tonal audiation with movement activates the whole musculature for singing. It stimulates not only a supported sound, but also a “head sound” and natural resonance. The more singers develop tonal audiation, the more they naturally develop vocal technique.

Step into my rehearsal. *“Show me in movement the building of phrases as you sing this song in Dorian tonality. Use your arms! Bend your knees!..... Wow! The climax of the piece was beautiful! The sound was gorgeous—fully supported, and so well in tune!”*

Vocal Technique

Vocal production is in the domain of the body, yet we have traditionally addressed it intellectually. The whole body is the vocal instrument. The mechanics of singing can only be imagined. Movement makes vocal technique more tangible, communicating non-verbally to the whole body—relieving tension, developing tone, breath, vowel placement, and resonance. Full-body movement that opens the arms opens the sound. Movement that actively engages knees evokes appropriate breath. Arm movement that generates energy while singing in the high register, assures space in the sound. The physical experience of good vocal production stimulated by movement teaches the muscles far more effectively and efficiently than the intellectualization of the vocal process.

Step into my rehearsal. *“This time, take that octave stretch with deep knee bends as you sing the lower octave, moving arms from a closed position at the knees to reaching broad, high, and wide as you straighten the knees and sing the higher octave, returning to the first position with the lower pitch. Repeat, as we move up in half steps..... Try it this time on “AH.”..... Let’s do the same thing on “OH.”..... Let’s try “OO.”..... We look like a ballet class, but the sound is glorious!”*

Singers become more focused on the production of sound through movement than they do by trying to will the muscles to obey. The kinesthetic sense of sound and vocal production stimulated by movement becomes the template for singing with good vocal technique, which can then be triggered in any piece of choral literature through movement.

Step into my rehearsal. *“Thrust your arms out from the body in an upward motion to initiate this descending five-note pattern on ‘HAH.’ Repeat successively, each time a half step higher. Thrust those arms! Step into each repetition. Use those knees.”..... Good for you! Your sound in the upper register was wonderful!*

Movement breathes life into efforts to breathe properly. The more we explore the power of movement with vocal production, the more we find that good vocal technique commands our rehearsals, and the less we need to rely on traditional practices of teaching

vocal technique. Movement puts the focus on musicality, assuring that vocal technique takes its rightful place, subordinate to musicality rather than the generating force.

Energy

Energy is at the essence of choral artistry. Without energy, choral singing is boring, both in rehearsal and in performance. It is energy that moves the breath, energy that moves the line, energy that moves the soul. Choral artistry consists of the energy of the line, with every musical nuance pushing and pulling that energy, and the energy of the human spirit. Music comes alive when the energy of the life force meets the energy of the line.

One of our greatest challenges as conductors is to stimulate the energy of our singers—to make our singers come alive. No matter how well crafted the choral sound might be, how precise the pitches and rhythms, or how sophisticated the repertoire; without energy, choral singing is boring—for the singer and for the audience.

We often become so concerned that singers get the right notes that we fail to recognize the need to trigger the human spirit, the love of life, the vibrance that propels choral music. The mechanics of diaphragmatic breathing, the performance practices of a particular period in music history, and the understanding of the harmonic structure of a piece of choral music do not contribute to artistic performance, unless we unleash the energy of our singers.

Step into my rehearsal. *“Take your imaginary bowling ball and get ready to throw a strike. As you sing this exercise, throw that ball into the peak of the phrase. Repeat as we move up by half steps..... Come on, that strike is more exciting than that! Show your triumph!”*

Silly? Absolutely! Playfulness does wonders to release the life force! “Playing music” generates energy. Joy and humor have the power to move the soul, to awaken reluctant or dormant musicality—our own as well as our singers. It is just as important to get the life force moving as it is the vocal chords.

Movement energizes every aspect of choral singing. We often discourage movement and energy in the interest of maintaining discipline, yet singers become more focused and more deliberate with movement, and their singing becomes more energized through playfulness and humor. Many of the common practices in the choral rehearsal deflate the energy of our singers, suppressing the awakening artistry. Movement can serve as an antidote to each, bringing new life into our rehearsals and into the music.

Notation is one thing that stifles the energy of our singers. Of course, notation is necessary in our quest for choral artistry, but we have granted notation far greater power in the choral rehearsal than it deserves. It only represents the music that is birthed through the life force of our singers. It can only approximate what our singers can manifest. The more we can get our singers out of the notation, the more we can get them into the music. Notation rivets our singers’ attention to the page rather than to the music,

inhibits movement by the physical presence of a score, and holds captive the life force of our singers. Decreasing the reliance on notation, even for the smallest segment of a piece of music, frees the artistry of our singers.

Step into my rehearsal. *“You are familiar with the opening of this piece. Sing your first note. Put your music down. This time throw your whole body into that opening chord..... Again. It needs more energy..... Now pick up your music and sing the first phrase. That phrase moves like this.”* (Conductor sings and moves the energy of the line.) *“Put your music down. Sing and move the first phrase with me..... Now sing the opening chord as you just did and go on with the first phrase..... One more time. Articulate that first phrase with movement..... Pick up your music and turn to page three. You’ll find the same musical material. Look at page four. There it is again. Let’s sing this piece from the beginning, using music as needed, but applying the artistry throughout that you just demonstrated.”*

Rehearsal pacing also affects the energy of our singers. Our verbalizations about vocal technique, style, dynamics, and rhythm interrupt musical energy. Movement accelerates rehearsal pacing and propels energy. When we communicate all that is musical through movement, there is not much left to “talk about.”

Movement also generates energy by shifting power from the podium to the singers. Movement empowers singers with their own musicality. Singers “exercise” greater artistry in movement, making greater individual contribution to quality performance, and taking greater ownership of making exciting music.

Movement is our greatest resource as conductors. It can be applied to every aspect of the choral rehearsal. If the delivery needs more rhythmic definition, we can apply movement to secure meter. If the delivery needs a richer sound, we can apply movement that enriches the sound. If the delivery needs finer articulation, intonation, or vocal technique, we can apply movement that stimulates the desired outcome. Each application of movement infuses singing with greater vibrance and enhances all other dimensions of music making. Movement that stimulates breath also improves sound. Movement that stimulates energy also improves expression and vocal technique. Movement that stimulates rhythmic vitality also improves intonation. Movement affects every dimension of the choral art.

Singers “moved” by their own musicality will “move” the audience. Movement energy is essential for exciting performance, whether the conductor chooses overt or covert movement in performance. The more singers engage in overt movement in rehearsal, the more movement energy will propel performance. Some of our most respected colleagues produce choirs with movement energy in concert that just ignites the audience. Anton Armstrong and his esteemed US St. Olaf College Choir brought an assembly of the American Choral Directors Association to their feet at their 2005 national convention. The energy of this choir, bound by their traditional holding of hands, just rippled in movement. Randy Stenson and his acclaimed Varsity Ensemble of St. Mary’s International School of Tokyo, Japan, have found movement so powerful in rehearsal that

this high school male ensemble chooses to perform internationally with each singer conducting while singing. Their unobtrusive movement only enhances their stunning performance, as it is so musical.

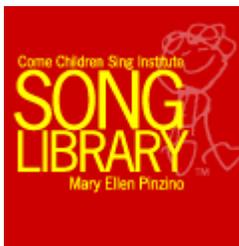
It is natural to move to music. It is unnatural to stand still and sing. Movement invigorates the choral rehearsal, animates singers, and inspires musicality. It is through movement that we can vitalize, energize, and humanize choral performance.

Birds sing beautifully, unbound by cages of notation, vocal technique, and choral decorum. Let us give wings to our singers' musicality and propel choral performance to new heights.

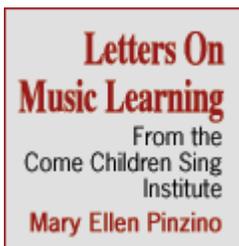
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Letters On Music Learning—reflections on music teaching and learning at the Come Children Sing Institute. Topics include movement, art songs for young children, a new tonal syllable system, music reading and writing, and classroom research on the development of tonal and rhythm audiation in relation to the work of Edwin Gordon. Written by Mary Ellen Pinzino. E-Book—128 pages. Printable PDF file.

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Articles by Mary Ellen Pinzino

“Awakening Artistry in the Choral Rehearsal.” Article addressing the use of movement in the choral rehearsal, spanning children through college singers. (International Choral Bulletin, 2006.)

www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“A Conversation with Edwin Gordon.” Interview with Edwin Gordon, discussing various aspects of his work. (Musicstaff.com, 1998.)

www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“Audiation In Flight.” Article addressing movement with song in the elementary school context. (Michigan GIML, 2005.)

www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“Feed the Meter.” Article addressing the importance of meter in choral performance. (Southwest Division ACDA, 2006.)

www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

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Selected Articles from “Letters On Music Learning,”

E-Book addressing music teaching and learning at the Come Children Sing Institute

“Audiation—Another Way of Knowing”

https://www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“Ode to Movement”

https://www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“Art Songs for Young Children”

https://www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php

“Song Writing”

https://www.comechildrensing.com/public_pages/forteachers.php



Mary Ellen Pinzino is the Founder/Director of the Come Children Sing Institute, a center for research and development in music learning since 1984. She is the composer of the Come Children Sing Institute SONG LIBRARY, a CD-ROM resource of more than 500 new songs for preschool, elementary school and children’s chorus, and creator of the Come Children Sing Institute music curriculum for children from birth through thirteen. She is the developer of Come Children, Sing! Online Music Classes for infants, babies and toddlers, and leads the production of *Come Children, Sing!*, the television program for preschool music.

Mary Ellen has taught all ages from birth through graduate students, teaching preschool classes and conducting the children’s choruses at the Come Children Sing Institute, and directing the Institute’s teacher training program. She has also taught elementary school music, high school choral music, graduate school music education courses, and served as conductor of the Women’s Choral Ensemble at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She authored 14 issues of *Letters On Music Learning* for music teachers, now compiled as an E-Book, has written additional articles for national and international publications, and writes extensively for parents about early childhood music learning for Come Children, Sing! Online Music Classes.

Mary Ellen’s comprehensive work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, her research on the process of music learning and music literacy, her work with children’s choirs and the application of movement in the choral rehearsal with singers of all ages, her many compositions for children, and her unique applications of technology to music learning have put her on the cutting edge in the field of music education. She is in demand as a clinician, presenting nationally and internationally for music educators’ organizations, including the International Society for Music Education, the Music Educators National Conference, the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, the Organization of American Kodaly Educators, the American Choral Directors Association, Suzuki Institutes, and the Gordon Institute for Music Learning. She has also presented in Portugal at the University of Lisbon, and most recently in Indonesia for the East Asian Regional Council of Overseas Schools and the Jakarta International School.

Mary Ellen received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and studied extensively with Edwin Gordon. She can be reached at mepinzino@comechildrensing.com.