

## AUDIATION IN FLIGHT

By Mary Ellen Pinzino  
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The choral classroom offers an opportunity for new insights into the process of audiation. It provides a laboratory for teachers to grow from the basic goals of developing tuneful and rhythmic singers, to musicality in performance—audiation in flight.

What is it that propels audiation to take flight? What is it that connects tonal and rhythm skills to exciting performance? What is it that moves tonal and rhythm audiation to line, phrase, dynamics, style, musical nuance? What is it that infuses performance with energy? What is it that links audiation to text and to vocal technique? Movement. Sustained movement. Movement in meter, with appropriate weight on macro and micro beats. Movement of line, phrase, dynamics, style, and musical nuance. Movement of text expression and vocal imagery. Movement of the singer's body and soul.

Movement is as appropriate in the college choral rehearsal as it is in the preschool classroom. And movement ignites in college singers the magic of tonality, meter, line, phrase, style, text, rhythm, and melody, just as it does in preschoolers. Conductors just have to get beyond thinking that older students will not move, that movement is appropriate only for the conductor, and that beat patterns define conducting.

Beat patterns reflect beat, meter, and tempo. If we are doing our job teaching rhythm audiation, singers should not need to “watch the beat.” There is much more important musical material to conduct than beats. Engaging singers in movement of such musical material awakens artistry—propels audiation.

Movement communicates musical nuance as words cannot. To engage singers of all ages in movement, conductors must be willing to explore their own musicality and translate it through movement. They must be willing to creatively use arms, hands, legs, knees, and weight to demonstrate line, articulation, dynamics, phrasing, and energy, and to encourage singers to do the same. They must be willing to trust that a conductor's sheer musicality in movement stimulates sheer musicality in movement from singers. Conductors must be willing to risk being utterly musical.

Overt movement in rehearsal leads to covert movement energy in performance, making performance come alive. Songs for all ages and stages of singers are raw material for movement. [Song #1](#), *Never In a Hurry*, offers a little kernel of choral art that has been used both as an art song with preschoolers and as a warm-up with children's and college choirs. Sustained movement throughout successive repetitions of this Lydian song gives both preschoolers and college singers the opportunity to “feel” the interaction between text, rhythm and melody; the contrast between the first two measures and the seemingly more sprightly last two measures; the dynamic growth on the initial long note; the nuance of the choral art.

Sustained movement with Phrygian [Song #2](#), *Ant*, offers opportunity for singers to “feel” the building energy of the line. It leads singers to naturally create the shape of the line and the peak of the phrase, with appropriate dynamics and energy. Further, sustained movement that engages lower body as well as upper body stimulates proper use of breath and proper vocal technique. Weighted movement in triple meter (movement in the meter with appropriate weight on macro and micro beats) propels the song, better defining text and rhythm, and exciting momentum. Bringing together sustained movement and weighted movement in meter awakens choral artistry in singers of all ages with choral repertoire of any voicing.

In [Song #3](#), *Giraffe*, movement becomes the vehicle for phrasing. Whether using this piece as a performance piece for children or as a warm-up for the college choir, singers find, through sustained movement, the need to grow on long notes, the need to shape phrases, and to accommodate phrases of varying lengths, executing this Dorian song with musicality.

Macro and micro beat movement with appropriate weight in the Mixolydian [Song #4](#), *Penguin*, presents new challenges with unusual and shifting meters, not only defining meter, but also leading to better definition of text. Sustained movement with quick tempo and changing meters leads singers to shape phrases amidst meter changes, better expressing text and energizing delivery.

With the more vocally demanding [Song #5](#), *May Night*, weighted movement in meter defines the meter, clarifies the text, and assures momentum. Sustained movement leads singers to articulate phrase, line, and dynamics, with drama at the peak of the phrase, and stimulates appropriate breath and vocal technique for the greater vocal challenges of this Dorian song. Expressive movement that reflects text evokes still more artistic delivery. Singers of all ages demonstrate artistry through movement applied to all dimensions of the choral art.

Movement is our most efficient means of communicating all that is musical. It is through movement that we not only teach the foundation of rhythm and tonal skills, but that we can also teach musical nuance and inspire energized performance. Unison songs presented here as well as sophisticated college choral repertoire invite movement for complete immersion into the choral art. It is movement that ignites singers, awakens artistry, and gives flight to audiation.

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# NEVER IN A HURRY

#1

LYDIAN  
DUPLÉ

Haiku

MARY ELLEN PINZINO

Ah, the but-ter-fly!— E-ven when chased it nev-er seems In a hur-ry.

## Ant

#2

PHRYGIAN  
TRIPLE

MARY ELLEN PINZINO

Lit - tle Ant, Lit - tle Ant, Why don't you rest? Why don't you rest? You  
work so hard, you've no time to play. Why don't you rest? Why don't you rest?

## Giraffe

#3

DORIAN  
TRIPLE/DUPLE

MARY ELLEN PINZINO

Gi - raffe, Gi - raffe, Your  
legs are long, Gi - raffe, Gi - raffe, Your  
neck is long - er, Gi - raffe, Gi - raffe, Your  
name should be, Gi - raffe.

# Penguin

#4

MIXOLYDIAN  
UNUSUAL UNPAIRED/DUPLE

MARY ELLEN PINZINO

Musical score for 'Penguin' in Mixolydian mode, 7/8 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 230. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'Mis - ter Pen - guin, Mis - ter Pen - guin, Are you com - ing to my par - ty, Mis - ter Pen - guin? You are al - read - y dressed in your tux - e - do, But where is your bow - tie?'.

# May Night

#5

DORIAN  
DUPLÉ

Words by Sara Teasdale

MARY ELLEN PINZINO

Musical score for 'May Night' in Dorian mode, 2/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 90. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'The spring is fresh and fear - less And eve - ry leaf is new, The world is brimmed with moon - light, The li - lac brimmed with dew. Here in the mov - ing shad - ows I catch my breath and sing-- My heart is fresh and fear - less and o - ver brimmed with spring.'

Songs from the Come Children Sing Institute [SONG LIBRARY](#)  
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