

AN ANALYSIS OF PREFERRED MIDDLE SCHOOL TENOR-BASS  
LITERATURE PERFORMED IN TEXAS UNIVERSITY  
INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE CHORAL CONTESTS

A THESIS

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BY

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DENTON, TEXAS

MAY 2012

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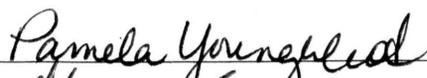
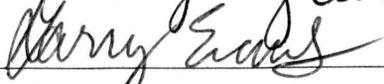
April 1, 2012

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ashley Delaney entitled "An Analysis of Preferred Middle School Tenor-Bass Literature Performed in Texas University Interscholastic League Choral Contests." I have examined this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Music Education.

  
Vicki D. Baker, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

  
  
  
Department Chair

Accepted:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## ABSTRACT

ASHLEY DELANEY

### AN ANALYSIS OF PREFERRED MIDDLE SCHOOL TENOR-BASS LITERATURE PERFORMED IN TEXAS UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE CHORAL CONTESTS

MAY 2012

The purpose of this study was to provide a critical investigation of trends in literature selection for Tenor-Bass choruses over a five-year period at Texas University Interscholastic League Middle School Choral Concert Contest and to supply a pedagogical analysis of the most frequently performed repertoire selections. Results indicated that the Tenor-Bass choruses ( $N=287$ ) that entered UIL competition between 2007 and 2011 tended to perform similar repertoire, often by Texas composers, from year to year. Additionally, directors tended to choose literature that was limited in vocal range, easy to moderately easy in both melodic and rhythmic patterns, repetitive, accompanied, and written in major keys.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
Chapter	Page
I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	1
American Literature and the Divergence of Gender Choirs.....	1
Transformation in the Twentieth Century .....	3
Establishment of Texas Competitive Choral Contests and Festivals .....	5
Competitive Literature Selection for Middle School Tenor-Bass Chorus.....	6
Psychological and Physiological Challenges.....	6
Competitive Instincts of the All-Male Choir .....	7
Acquiring Superior Tenor-Bass Literature .....	8
Prescribed Music List .....	10
II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	12
Purpose of the Study .....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Hypotheses.....	13
Method.....	13
III. RESULTS.....	17
IV. DISCUSSION.....	25
Research Question 1 .....	25
Research Question 2 .....	26
Research Question 3 .....	26
Research Question 4 .....	27
Research Question 5 .....	27
Research Question 6 .....	28

Research Question 7 .....	28
Research Question 8 .....	29
Research Question 9 .....	29
Research Question 10 .....	30
Research Question 11 .....	30
Research Question 12 .....	30
Research Question 13 .....	31
Research Question 14 .....	32
Research Question 15 .....	32
V. CONCLUSION.....	33
REFERENCES .....	34
APPENDIX	
A: University Interscholastic League Adjudicators Vocal Concert Rubric.....	39

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Ranking and Rating of Preferred Selections.....	17
2. Highest Ranked Composers of Preferred Selections.....	18
3. Most Frequently Performed Composers' Affiliation with Texas.....	19
4. Voicing, PML Grade Level, and Accompaniment of Preferred Selections.....	20
5. Conferences and Classifications of Performing Choirs.....	21
6. Key, Meter, Duration, and Style of Preferred Selections.....	22
7. Tempo, Repetition, Modulations, and Rhythm of Preferred Selections.....	23

## CHAPTER I

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **American Literature Development and the Divergence of Gender Choirs**

The importance of literature selection in the middle school choral classroom has been addressed in a number of studies (Brunner, 1992; Cooksey, 1999; Phillips, 2004). Choosing literature for the tenor-bass middle school chorus requires careful deliberation due to singers' range limitations, vocal maturation, and musical preferences. Further, research suggests (Cooksey, 1999; Killian, 2003; Zemek, 2010) that recruitment and retention of male singers presents unique challenges, thus making appropriate literature selection more critical.

Historically, American choral music and public singing was dominated by male singers, tune compilers, composers, and singing school masters (Birge, 1966; Gates, 1989; Mark & Gary, 1992). In Colonial America, choral music selections were primarily based on sacred works and generally consisted of homophonic hymns, psalm tunes, and anthems written by male composers or arrangers. Although the choral music was written to accommodate both the female and male vocal ranges, female participation was limited (Gates, 1989; Scholes, 1934). Gradually, female participation in singing during worship increased as society began to place a greater emphasis on musical literacy and proper tone production (Gates, 1989). The earliest music organizations existed

primarily in New England and were continuously in need of financial gifts, participation, and audiences (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995).

Worship was centric to early American society (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995; Birge, 1966; Gates, 1989). As a result, sizeable public choral music performances, as well as original secular literature, struggled to gain support (Mark & Gary, 1992). Many of these fledgling mixed-gender choral societies and unions attempted to emulate the English choral festivals that had been well-received in Europe (Birge, 1966) by performing classic oratorios and English anthems, but were largely unsuccessful (Gates, 1989).

The state of American choral music during the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was one of relentless change (Mark & Gary, 1992; Scholes, 1934). As musical literacy and education grew, female choral participation greatly increased and Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass (SATB) arrangements became standard practice (Gates, 1989). Prior to World War I, American secondary music programs were commonly non-credit, extracurricular activities outside the central curriculum offered in the public schools (Bakkegard, 1957; Mark & Gary, 1992). As interest in fine arts education slowly gained momentum through greater public support, an increased need arose for secondary teachers skilled in the musical arts. Textbooks and appropriate literature were also required (Birge, 1966), consequently providing a series of new challenges for public school music programs (Bakkegard, 1957). When high schools became a part of the public school education system in the late 1800s, vocal music was

included in the curriculum. However, prior to 1930, public high school enrollment represented less than 50% of the 14-17 year old population (Mark & Gary, 1992), thus minimizing the impact of music education in secondary education.

### **Transformation in the Twentieth Century**

Fortunately, the 20th century brought about many positive and monumental changes in the world of music education, beginning with the formation of the first national conference of music supervisors (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman, 1995; Birge, 1966). In an effort initiated by Philip Hayden, founder of the Music Supervisors National Conference (MSNC), standards of music education were created and implemented for the first six grades by 1919 (Mark & Gary, 1992).

Post-World War I and the Great Depression, the slow economic revitalization stirred renewed interest in a national investment in fine arts education (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995; Birge, 1966). As America began to prosper, music societies, fraternal organizations, and community associations benefitted from privately funded contributions to support early competitive music contests and festivals (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995; Mark & Gary, 1992), thus resulting in a surge of original American compositions. As music education developed, gender choirs began to form (Gates, 1989). New choral selections were debuted by community ensembles, most often consisting of adolescent singers and adults singing in Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass (SATB), Soprano I,

Soprano II, Alto (SSA), or Tenor I, Bass I, Bass II (TBB) ensemble configuration (Gates, 1989; Scholes, 1934).

By the 1920s (Bakkegard, 1957), national music contests for high school students aided in facilitating increased enrollment in school music programs, progressed standardization of band and orchestral instrumentation, and increased emphasis on music teacher certification programs (Abeles, Hoffer, & Klotman, 1995; Bakkegard, 1957). Literature selections for these early choral competitions were generally representative of the curriculum available in the schools and in music textbooks. According to Mark and Gary (1992), many schools continued to use standard, established literature books which contained choruses of European masters. Two of these books were Charles Aiken's *High School Choralist* (1866) and *The Choralist's Companion* (1872), which included four-part (SATB) works by composers such as Handel, Haydn, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Mozart, and Beethoven. Patriotic and Americana-style songs, as well as arrangements of hymns, spirituals, glees, popular ballads, and carols were developed for the high school chorus in both SAB and SATB voicing (Mark & Gary, 1992; Phillips, 2004). While elementary and high schools had very specific literature options, choral music for middle school was less defined in that it was largely a continuation of grammar school instruction and varied from state to state in terms of standards and organization (Gates, 1989).

## **Establishment of Texas Competitive Choral Contests and Festivals**

The founding of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) in 1920 prompted many innovative activities devoted to improving Texas music education. Initially structured to aid in the development of the high school band program (Texas Music Educators Association, 2011), TMEA created a division expressly designed to promote and support Texas choral activities in 1938. Choral contests, offering ratings or rankings to schools on a national level, slowly increased the demand for competitive choral literature output by composers (Bakkegard, 1956). Although participation in national competitive choral contests aided in legitimatizing public school music in Texas (Bakkegard, 1956), the loss of classroom instructional time and expense associated with participation in national choral contests could not be justified, and participation was proscribed after 1941.

Following the prohibition of national contests, TMEA became affiliated with the Texas-based University Interscholastic League (UIL). In 1946, UIL facilitated the first statewide choral concert and sight reading competition (Bakkegard, 1957), and the contest was officially sanctioned as a UIL activity in 1948 (University Interscholastic League, 2011). As an executive organization operating out of the University of Texas Offices of Diversity and Community Engagement (University Interscholastic League, 2011), UIL continues to oversee academic, athletic, theatrical, and musical competition, while providing superior standards and expectations for advanced achievement (Floyd, 1999; Rentz, 1999).

UIL choral contests have increased the demand for compositions appropriate for Mixed Chorus, Tenor-Bass Chorus, and Treble Chorus (University Interscholastic League, 2011).

### **Competitive Literature Selection for Middle School Tenor-Bass Chorus**

Though lack of female music participation was problematic in the formative years of American music instruction (Gates, 1989), quite the opposite problem plagues the field of music education in recent years. Research (Fiocca, 1989; Forbes, 2001; White & White, 2001) affirms that fewer males than females select choir as an elective during junior high or middle school.

### **Psychological and Physiological Challenges**

Adolescent males are hesitant to participate in a choral performing ensemble due to sociological implications regarding singing, inadequate choral literature (Gates, 1989; Phillips 2004), and psychological and physiological development during puberty (Brunner, 1992; Cooksey, 1999; Crocker, 2000; Killian, 2003; White & White, 2001). Cooksey (1999) maintains that during the formative years, ages 9 to 14, many males struggle with self-identity, as the body makes dramatic, and often, uncomfortable changes. Defining male vocal registers during adolescence can be challenging (Cooksey, 1999; Killian, 2003; Zemek, 2010). As the larynx grows and vocal folds lengthen (Cooksey, 1999; White & White, 2001), the awkward sensation during phonation can be baffling to both the director and the chorister. Thus, young males may be more hesitant to sing and

difficult to inspire musically (Brunner, 1992; Killian, 2003; Morgan & Burrows, 1981).

### **Competitive Instincts of the All-Male Choir**

Due to the nature of supply and demand, literature options for Tenor-Bass Chorus are more limited than Treble or Mixed Chorus (Barresi, 2000; Rentz, 1999). Literature selection for performance in a competitive environment is important for all choirs, but particularly the Tenor-Bass Chorus (Fiocca, 1989; Stamer, 2004) as additional incentive is needed to increase interest in choral music participation (Cooksey, 1999; Phillips, 2004; White & White, 2001). Males are predisposed to thrive in competitive environments (Barresi, 2000; Corbin, 1995; White & White, 2001), thus the selections performed for competition must both challenge and motivate the middle school male chorister (Barresi, 2000; Cooksey, 1999; Phillips, 2004; Zemek, 2010).

The benefits and detriments of highly structured, competitive choral environments have been debated by music professionals (Morgan & Burrows, 1981; Phillips, 2004; Rentz, 1999; Stamer, 2004). However, the consensus among choral music educators is that competition is generally beneficial in that it offers students the opportunity to receive constructive evaluation regarding their performance, perform a wide variety of quality literature, and observe other choirs' performances (Batey, 2002; Corbin, 2001; Stamer, 2004; Wis, 2003). Research suggests that Tenor-Bass Chorus participants favor competitive environments in which ratings are received for merit and performance (Rentz,

1999; Stamer, 2004), thus widening the appeal of competition to directors of this choir classification (Morgan & Burrows, 1981).

### **Acquiring Superior Tenor-Bass Literature**

Obtaining innovative and instructive music literature suitable for middle school tenor-bass competitive and non-competitive choral performance poses a demanding and complex objective for music educators nationwide (Apfelstadt, 2000; Brunner, 1992; Reames, 2001). A number of studies (Cooksey, 1999; Killian, 2003; White & White, 2001; Zemek, 2010) have investigated changing male voice characteristics and appropriate music selection. Choral literature featuring appropriate range and musical substance for the tenor-bass chorus continues to elude even the most seasoned educators (Crocker, 2000; Eaton, 2009; Killian, 2003; Phillips, 2004; White & White, 2001; Zemek, 2010). Many directors recommend two-part tenor-bass music for seventh and eighth grade boys in that the ranges are limited and relatively high (Gates, 1989; Morgan & Burrows, 1981; Phillips, 2004). Often, directors will decide to arrange or compose music, modify an existing piece, or transpose the song to fit the specific needs of the tenor-bass choir (Phillips, 2004).

Criteria for choral music selection can be classified as either aesthetic or technical, but it is difficult to find literature that addresses both (Barresi, 2000; Corbin, 1995; Reames, 2001; Rentz, 1999). Repertoire should be sufficiently challenging to provide students the opportunity to perform to their utmost ability, while nurturing their full vocal potential (Baker, 2004; Brunner, 1992; Reames,

2001; Zemak, 2010). Accommodating the changing male voice's limited flexibility and range proves a daunting task (Crocker, 2000; Killian, 2003), yet music educators agree that repertoire selection is one of the most significant factors in the evaluation and ratings process for a competitive performing ensemble (Baker, 2004; Brunner, 1992; Crocker, 2000; Morgan & Burrows, 1981).

In Texas, the evaluation of the professional capability and proficiency of secondary music educators is often based on their ensemble ratings at UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest (Baker, 2004). As a result, some directors will favor repertoire that has proven to be successful in competition (Morgan & Burrows, 1981). Other studies indicate that resourceful music educators often request new repertoire recommendations from colleagues and mentor teachers (Crocker 2000; Herman, 1988; Killian, 2003).

Research states that highly effective middle school choral music professionals display knowledge of a wide variety of tenor-bass choral literature (Cooksey, 1999; Reames, 2001), which is essential in maintaining a thriving choral program (Zemek, 2010). Brunner (1992) suggests a conscientious approach to literature selection for male voices involving an "honest appraisal of each composition for its musical content, teaching value, aesthetic appeal, and overall quality" (p. 27). Moreover, studies advise (Brunner, 1992; Herman, 1988; Reames, 2001) literature selections should emphasize curricular subject matter such as sight reading, theory, form, and music history, as well as dramatic

content, expression, sense of pride, and aesthetic response (Phillips, 2004; Spurgeon, 2002). Selections should also aid in the recruitment and retention of the musically hesitant adolescent male singer by other connective means (Corbin, 1995).

### **Prescribed Music List**

Extended lists of choral repertoire are generally utilized in organized public school competitions or festivals and formally adjudicated events. Studies (Rentz, 1999) have been conducted to determine which composers are most suited to include in music education textbooks, state-sponsored music event catalogs, and choral repertoire lists (Floyd, 1999). According to Rentz (1999), choral conductors receive literature information through numerous resources, including communications with colleagues, attendance at state, regional, and national convention performances, and choral music reading sessions, workshops, and clinics.

In Texas, the UIL provides a Prescribed Music List (PML) that serves as a repertoire manual for approximately 500,000 music students participating in the UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest (Floyd, 2006). The PML also serves the nation as a principal resource of accessible performance materials for school music programs (Floyd, 2006; Rentz, 1999). The Prescribed Music List is continually revised to include additional repertoire, to eliminate repertoire, or to modify the level of difficulty rating. A committee of music education professionals is elected to serve as an executive agency to review submissions and

suggestions. The performance literature is divided into three major categories:  
Mixed Chorus, Treble Chorus, and Tenor-Bass Chorus (Rentz, 1999).

CHAPTER II  
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to provide a critical investigation of competitive literature trends at University Interscholastic League Concert and Sight Reading Contest for non-varsity and varsity middle school Tenor-Bass Choruses in Texas and supply a pedagogical analysis of the most frequently performed repertoire selections. Data from this study could assist middle school choral music educators in making successful repertoire choices for tenor-bass choirs by providing a list of tried and true compositions, composers, and musical elements.

**Research Questions**

This study will address the following research questions regarding the 10 most frequently selected Tenor-Bass octavos in UIL competition from 2007-2011:

1. What are the titles of the most frequently performed octavos?
2. What was the average UIL contest rating of the Tenor-Bass Choruses performing the selection?
3. What composers are predominant and are they affiliated with Texas music education?
4. What is the voicing and range of the octavo?

5. What is the PML Grade Level, or difficulty rating of the octavo?
6. Is the selection accompanied or a cappella?
7. What UIL conferences (C, CC, CCC) performed the selection?
8. What was the choir classification – Varsity (V), Non-Varsity (NV), or Sub-Non-Varsity, Composite, or Combined (O) performing the selection?
9. Which key signatures and tonalities are the most prevalent?
10. Which time signatures are utilized?
11. Is the octavo primarily rhythmic or expansive?
12. What rhythmic patterns are predominant?
13. What is the approximate performance duration of octavo?
14. What textual languages are most commonly selected?
15. What musical styles are most commonly represented?

### **Hypotheses**

With this study, the researcher posits the following hypotheses: a body of literature is consistently performed by Tenor-Bass Choruses at UIL due to common musical elements and likelihood of successful ratings.

### **Method**

The state of Texas is divided into 28 regions in accordance with guidelines set forth by Texas Music Educators Association. For the purpose of this research, seven regions were selected randomly, representing the various geographic areas of Texas. The regions included: Region 11, Region 15, Region 17, Region 20,

Region 21, Region 26, and Region 28. UIL Middle School Choral Concert Contest results and performance repertoire for years 2007 through 2011 were obtained via each of the regions' music websites. Data from 2007-2011 for the seven regions indicated a total of 287 Tenor-Bass Choruses, distributed as follows: Region 11 ( $n = 32$ ), Region 15 ( $n = 47$ ), Region 17 ( $n = 39$ ), Region 20 ( $n = 50$ ), Region 21 ( $n = 14$ ), Region 26 ( $n = 39$ ), and Region 28 ( $n = 66$ ).

Choirs entering UIL Concert Contest are required to perform three octavos, two of which must be on the PML. Choral directors have the option of choosing a third piece, often referred to as a "choice piece," from a source other than the UIL-sanctioned list. Data from the seven region websites was extracted to calculate performance frequency, composer, PML grade level, voicing, and type of accompaniment of the octavos selected for tenor-bass choirs entered in UIL Concert Contest from 2007-2011. The 10 most frequently selected octavos, hereafter referred to as "Preferred Selections," were identified.

The PML Grade Level of the Preferred Selections is a designation of the difficulty rating of a piece and is based on the size of the school population. The least challenging literature is identified as Grade Level 1, continuing numerically through Grade Level 5, which is typically deemed as appropriate for high school performing ensembles. An additional category, Grade Level 6, includes extended choral works that constitute the highest level of difficulty. Middle school Grade Level requirements range from Grade 1 through Grade 3. Currently there are 1,006 Treble Chorus, 1,217 Mixed Chorus, and 612 Tenor-Bass Chorus choral

literature options on the PML. Of the octavos designated for Tenor-Bass Chorus, there are currently 67 selections in the Grade Level 1 category, 129 in the Grade Level 2 category, 145 in Grade Level 3, 117 in Grade Level 4, and 142 in Grade 5 Level options. Voicing for the octavos include TB, TTB, TBB, and TTBB.

According to UIL regulations (2011), “at least one composition must be performed without accompaniment” (University Interscholastic League, 2011). Performance results were further analyzed to indicate whether the Preferred Selection was indicated as *Accompanied* or *A cappella* on the PML.

Data were further analyzed to determine school conference, choir classification, and contest ratings of the Tenor-Bass Choruses performing the Preferred Selections. School Conference (C, CC, CCC) is based on the student population of a middle school as follows: C conference (population of 199 students and below), CC conference (population of 200-429 students and below), and CCC conference (population of 430 to 989 students). School population figures only include 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Choir classification, the ability level of the choir as assessed by the director, was also examined. UIL classifies choirs into three primary categories, ranging from highest to lowest ability level: Varsity, Non-Varsity, and Sub-Non-Varsity Choir. Subcategories of these classifications include composite groups, which include 6<sup>th</sup> grade choir members, and combined groups, which incorporate students from two or more schools taught by the same director. According to UIL guidelines, directors must designate at least one choir as Varsity level, regardless

of the gender of the choir. For the purpose of this research, Tenor-Bass Choruses classified as Non-Varsity (NV) and Varsity (V) were categorized separately, and Sub-Non Varsity groups, composite, and combined groups were designated as Other (O).

Data included UIL Contest ratings of the Tenor-Bass ensembles performing the Preferred Selections. The UIL adjudication rating scale is aligned as follows: Division I – Superior, Division II – Excellent, Division III – Average, Division IV – Below Average, and Division V – Poor. A complete list of Grade Level rating rubrics employed by UIL adjudicators can be found in Appendix A. The average UIL contest rating of the choruses performing the Preferred Selections was calculated and a mean of 2 or below was categorized as a successful performance. Each Preferred Selection was then analyzed to find commonalities in relationship to range, meter, key signature, language, style, and performance length.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The Preferred Selections comprised 27% ( $n = 232$ ) of the 861 choral compositions performed in Tenor-Bass UIL Concert contest from 2007-2011. Successful performance averages (2 or below) were associated with all of the selections except the 10<sup>th</sup> ranked song (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Ranking and Rating of Preferred Selections*

---

Preferred Selections	Frequency	Rating
<i>Sons of Art</i> (Crocker/Leavitt)	32	1.91
<i>Aura Lee</i> (Trad.Poulton/Crocker)	30	1.83
<i>She Walks in Beauty</i> (Farnell)	29	1.66
<i>Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet</i> (Moses)	25	1.84
<i>Leave Her, Johnny</i> (Crocker)	25	1.80
<i>Set Me As a Seal Upon Your Heart</i> (Farnell)	22	1.68
<i>The Shepherd's Spiritual</i> (Moore)	21	1.67
<i>This Train</i> (Moore)	19	1.95
<i>I'm Bound Away</i> (Patterson)	15	1.67
<i>Benedictus</i> (Schram)	15	2.04

---

Data suggested a high preference for the composer Emily Crocker, Laura Farnell, and Donald Moore (see Table 2). Results indicated that the highest ranked composer was Crocker at 38%, followed by Farnell at 22%, and then Moore at 17%.

Table 2

*Highest Ranked Composers of Preferred Selections*

Composer	Performances	Percentage
Crocker	87	38%
Farnell	51	22%
Moore	39	17%
Crocker/Leavitt	32	14%
Moses	25	11%
Patterson	15	6%
Schram	15	6%

Results showed that 57% of directors who had choirs performing the Preferred Selections chose composers (Crocker, Farnell, Moses, and Patterson) who were directly affiliated with Texas, in that they were educated in Texas and also taught choral music in Texas at some point in their career (see Table 3). Moreover, 14% of directors preferred composers who were indirectly affiliated with Texas via collaboration with a Texan (Leavitt), and 29% of directors

preferred composers unaffiliated with Texas.

Table 3

*Most Frequently Performed Composers' Affiliation with Texas*

Composer	Educated in Texas	Taught in Texas	Indirect Affiliation with Texas
Crocker	Yes	Yes	No
Farnell	Yes	Yes	No
Moore	No	No	No
Leavitt	No	No	Yes
Moses	Yes	Yes	No
Patterson	Yes	Yes	No
Schram	No	No	No

Results indicated a stronger preference for 2-part Tenor-Bass literature (90%) as opposed to 3-part Tenor I, Tenor II, Bass (TTB) or Tenor, Baritone, Bass (TBB) literature (see Table 4). Half of the Preferred Selections (5) were selected from the PML Grade 1 (easy) list and the other half were classified as Grade 2 (moderately easy). The octavos classified as Accompanied (80%) were selected more frequently than *A cappella* octavos (20%).

Table 4

*Voicing, PML Grade Level, and Accompaniment of Preferred Selections*

Preferred Selection	Voicing	Grade	Accompaniment
<i>Sons of Art</i>	(TB)	1	<i>A cappella</i>
<i>Aura Lee</i>	(TB)	1	Accompanied
<i>She Walks in Beauty</i>	(TB)	2	Accompanied
<i>Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet</i>	(TB)	1	Accompanied
<i>Leave Her, Johnny</i>	(TB/TBB)	2	<i>A cappella</i>
<i>Set Me As a Seal Upon Your Heart</i>	(TB)	2	Accompanied
<i>The Shepherd's Spiritual</i>	(TB)	2	Accompanied
<i>This Train</i>	(TB)	1	Accompanied
<i>I'm Bound Away</i>	(TB)	2	Accompanied
<i>Benedictus</i>	(TB)	1	Accompanied

The choirs performing the Preferred Selections were almost evenly divided between CC (200-429 students) and CCC (430-989 students) conference schools (see Table 5). Tenor-Bass choirs from the least populated Conference C middle schools (1-199 students) constituted less than .5% of the total. Non-Varsity groups constituted a large majority (87%) of the tenor-bass choirs performing the Preferred Selections, with Varsity (9%) and Other (4%) choirs representing a small portion of the performing groups.

Table 5

*Conferences and Classifications of Performing Choirs*

Designation	Total	Percentage
Conference		
C	1	0.4%
CC	114	48.6%
CCC	118	51%
Classification		
Varsity	20	9%
Non-Varsity	203	87%
Other	10	4%

Musical analysis revealed that 90% of the Preferred Selections were written in 4/4 meter (see Table 6). Ninety percent of the Preferred Selections had a major tonality. G Major (40%) was the most preferred key signature, followed by F Major (20%), and B-flat Major, E-flat Major, D Major, and G minor each represented 10% of the total. Modulations were present in 4 out of 10 of the Preferred Selections. The two a cappella octavos on the list of Preferred Selections had the shortest performance duration—*Leave Her, Johnny*, 0:45 seconds and *Sons of Art*, 1:00. The remaining accompanied octavos were under 3:00 in duration. In terms of musical style, African American spirituals and

modern settings of a classic text each received 30%, followed by sea shanties (20%), English songs (10%), and American folksongs (10%).

Table 6

*Key, Meter, Duration, and Style of Preferred Selections*

Preferred Selections	Key	Meter	Duration	Style
<i>Sons of Art</i>	G Major	4/4	1:00	English Song
<i>Aura Lee</i>	B-flat Major	4/4	2:45	American Folksong
<i>She Walks in Beauty</i>	G Major	4/4	2:45	Modern Setting (Classic text)
<i>Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet</i>	G Major	4/4	1:50	African-American Spiritual
<i>Leave Her, Johnny</i>	F Major	4/4	0:45	Sea Shanty
<i>Set Me As a Seal Upon Your Heart</i>	G Major	4/4	2:45	Modern Setting (Classic text)
<i>The Shepherd's Spiritual</i>	D Major	4/4	1:56	African-American Spiritual
<i>This Train</i>	E-flat Major	2/2	2:00	African-American Spiritual
<i>I'm Bound Away</i>	F Major	4/4	2:11	Sea Shanty
<i>Benedictus</i>	G minor	4/4	1:45	Modern Setting (Classic text)

An analysis of the tempos of the Preferred Selections indicated that legato and lively songs were evenly divided at 50% each (see Table 7). Repetitive melodic motives and rhythmic patterns were present in 100% of the repertoire. Quarter and half notes were present in 100% of the pieces and eighth and whole notes were in 90% of the selections. An examination of dotted note values revealed that 80% of the selections included dotted quarter-eighth note patterns, 60% contained dotted half notes, and 20% had dotted eighth-sixteenth note patterns. Less frequent rhythmic figures included syncopation (40%), triplets (30%), and pairs of sixteenth notes (10%).

Table 7

*Tempo, Repetition, Modulations, and Rhythm of Preferred Selections*

Musical Elements	Number of Selections
Tempo	
Legato	5
Lively or Up-Tempo	5
Repeated Musical Motives	10
Modulations	4
Rhythmic Figures	
Eighth Notes	9
Quarter Notes	10
Half Notes	10

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Whole Notes	9
Dotted Half Notes	6
Triplet	3
Dotted Quarter and Eighth Note Pair	8
Dotted Eighth Note and Sixteenth Note Pairs	2
Sixteenth Note Pairs	1
Syncopation	4

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## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

#### **Research Question 1**

What were the most frequently performed octavos and are these octavos correlated with high ratings at UIL Contest?

The most frequently performed octavos are part of the musical canon of tried and true literature selections for Tenor-Bass UIL performance in the state of Texas. Due to the popularity and frequency of the Preferred Selections, they could have in all probability been selected based on recommendations by other directors, which would support studies by Crocker (2000), Killian (2003), and Herman (1998) that indicate that music educators ask for repertoire recommendations with a proven success rate from colleagues and mentor teachers.

Another possibility is that the literature was chosen due to the director's past success with a particular piece at UIL Concert Contest, which is in keeping with the findings of the Morgan and Burrows (1981) study that indicated directors favor repertoire they have performed successfully in competition. A final possibility is that the Preferred Selections were chosen because they contained certain musical elements or the director had heard a successful performance of the octavo, which is in line with research by Cooksey (1999) and Reames (2001) who

suggested that highly effective middle school choral music professionals study and display knowledge of a wide variety of Tenor-Bass choral literature. The choirs performing the Preferred Selections all received a successful rating of 2 or below with the exception of the 10<sup>th</sup> ranked song, at an average of 2.04 performance rating.

### **Research Question 2**

What was the average UIL contest rating of the Tenor-Bass Chorus performing the selection?

The overall mean of the UIL ratings of the Preferred Selections was 1.81, which is close to the rating of 2, or excellent. Achieving high ratings at UIL is important to the propitiation of Tenor-Bass Choruses because, according to research (Cooksey, 1999; Phillips, 2004; Stamer, 2004; White & White, 2001), competitive success assists in motivation, participation, and retention in male choirs. Directors benefit from high ratings in competition not only by strengthening their choral programs, but by securing their employment and reputation, according to a study conducted by Baker (2004).

### **Research Question 3**

What composers are predominant and are these composers affiliated with Texas music education?

Out of the 10 Preferred Selections, three were composed by Crocker, while Farnell and Moore each had two compositions on the list. Crocker and Farnell had both received their education and had taught in Texas at some point in

their career. Director preference for Texas composers could perhaps indicate that composers who have first-hand knowledge of the UIL process have greater insight in writing selections that have a high potential for success at UIL contest. The familiarity of Texas composers with UIL competition requirements correlates to the study by Phillips (2004) who found that directors will oftentimes arrange or compose their own music to fit the specific needs of a TB chorus. An additional factor affecting literature choice could be the element of name recognition of composers among colleagues in the state.

#### **Research Questions 4**

What is the voicing and range of the octavo?

Voicing of all of the Preferred Selections was TB, with only one piece offering the option of TTB. Perhaps the rationale behind the selection of TB music was that it suited the ranges of the choir and the division of parts was most appropriate for the size of the group. Cooksey (1999) maintained that the range of TB literature is the key to providing the path for a successful performance, in that the music needs to be vocally comfortable for the male adolescent voices.

#### **Research Questions 5**

What is the PML Grade Level, or difficulty rating of the octavo?

Because almost all of the choirs entered were from either CC or CCC conference schools, and 87% were categorized as non-varsity, in accordance with UIL guidelines, the required Grade Level of literature would either be Grade 1 and Grade 2. It is interesting to note that out of the 10 most frequently chosen

selections, exactly half were on the Grade 1 list and half were on the Grade 2 list. This is an indication that the directors chose music that was not overly challenging and was within the ability level of the choir to perform successfully.

As Baker's (2004) study indicated, directors present a strong inclination for 2-part literature and easy to moderately easy compositions that would most likely be connected to a higher rating of success at UIL. This correlates with research from Rentz (1999) who concluded that the most frequently performed compositions in the 1995 Texas UIL Concert Contest were also Grade Level 1 and 2.

#### **Research Questions 6**

Is the selection accompanied or a cappella?

The fact that only 20% of the Preferred Selections were a cappella could partially be due to the UIL regulation that only one out of the three pieces must be performed without accompaniment. This a cappella requirement ensures that an ensemble's tone and tuning is adequately secure, without reliance on the aid of a piano or other pitched instrumental assistance. The fact that performance of a cappella pieces is inherently more difficult may further explain the smaller percentage.

#### **Research Question 7**

What UIL conferences (C, CC, CCC) performed the selection?

CCC Conference choirs represented 51% of the ensembles performing the Preferred Selections, which is logical in that schools with large populations have a

greater pool of potentially talented and interested students. It follows that CC Conference choirs from the second most highly populated schools comprised 49.6% of the performing ensembles. Understandably, only .4% of the choirs were from Conference C schools (1-199 students), in that they have a smaller number of potential choir students, plus enrollment of males in choir tends to be lower than that of females (Killian, 2003).

### **Research Question 8**

What was the choir classification – Varsity (V), Non-Varsity (NV), or Sub-Non-Varsity, Composite, or Combined (O) performing the selection?

Of the directors performing the Preferred Selections with their TB Chorus, 78% chose to classify their choirs as Non-Varsity. Perhaps the rationale for the Non-Varsity classification is that the repertoire requirements are less rigid and the difficulty level of the sight reading is reduced. Further, perhaps directors would expect adjudicators to set higher performance standards for a Varsity choir than a Non-Varsity choir. The 18% of directors that chose to designate their choirs as Varsity perhaps wanted to provide their students a greater challenge both in terms of repertoire and sight reading.

### **Research Question 9**

Which key signatures and tonalities are the most prevalent?

The two most prevalent tonalities for the Preferred Selections were G major (40%) and F major (20%). These are also the two primary keys of the sight reading materials that Texas choral directors utilize. Perhaps familiarity with

these keys assists the students both in learning the music and the muscle memory acquired from frequent sight singing in these two keys makes it easier to tune concert repertoire in the same modalities.

#### **Research Question 10**

Which time signatures are utilized?

The time signature found in the majority of the selected repertoire was 4/4 meter, which is not surprising in that it is the most common meter found in choral repertoire. This meter was most likely more appealing to TB chorus directors because it is generally easier to read rhythmically than compound meter or mixed meter.

#### **Research Question 11**

Is the octavo primarily lively or lyric?

The selected repertoire was evenly divided between the lively and lyric styles. Perhaps directors chose equal numbers of each style in that they showcase the versatility of the ensemble. Additionally, the choices may have been for pedagogical reasons in that lyric songs focus on breathing and phrasing, while lively songs are generally more rhythmically challenging.

#### **Research Question 12**

What rhythmic patterns are predominant?

Directors tended to select repertoire with the easiest rhythmic values, with quarter notes and half notes being present in 100% of the Preferred Selections, while whole notes and eighth notes were present in 90% of the octavos. Directors

selected the octavo, *Sons of Art*, which contained the easiest rhythmic patterns, twice as often than the songs, *I'm Bound Away* and *Benedictus*, which included more challenging rhythmic patterns.

### **Research Question 13**

What is the approximate performance duration of the octavo?

The shortest performance durations were the two a cappella selections, *Leave Her, Johnny* at 0:45 seconds and *Sons of Art* at 1:00. This suggests that directors prefer to choose a brief a cappella octavo for competition to minimize opportunity for error in intonation or tuning. The accompanied pieces ranged from 1:45 to 2:45. It is interesting to note that all of the octavos are less than three minutes in length.

### **Research Question 14**

What textual languages are most commonly selected?

English was the most common language chosen for the Preferred Selections. As English is the primary language of the United States it stands to reason that the most accessible choral music produced for choral competition in America would be in English. While English is the native tongue of America, the language presents inherent problems phonetically, such as diphthongs and triphthongs. Interestingly enough, the only other language represented was Latin, which is the language used in solfege for sight singing. Latin is a pedagogical tool used by a number of choral directors in that it focuses on the production of

pure vowels, which is critical to the development of vocal technique and proper intonation.

### **Research Question 15**

What musical styles are most commonly represented?

The majority of songs on the Preferred Selection list were African American spirituals, which often use the pentatonic scale, utilize call and response, include repetitive rhythmic patterns, and often contain a story-like, sacred text. Modern settings of classic texts were also highly favored. This option provides students with exposure to famous literary works. The other styles selected were traditional sea shanties and American folksongs, both of which contain limited ranges, repetitive motives, and simple rhythmic patterns.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The results of this study could assist middle school choral music educators in making successful repertoire choices for tenor-bass choirs. Standard compositions for Tenor-Bass Choruses are provided, as well as a list of frequently selected composers. Additionally, the musical elements contained in the most frequently selected octavos were listed to provide a reference for directors. A more extensive study encompassing all of the TMEA regions over an extended period of time could provide additional data regarding repertoire, composers, and desired musical elements that could assist middle school choral directors in choosing TB literature for competition. Further, this study could be extended to other states to determine if their list of tried and proven literature is different from that of Texas. Because the study sample only included one-fourth of the TMEA regions, results should not be considered conclusive. A larger sample size extending over a greater geographic region would be beneficial.

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Appendix A

University Interscholastic League  
Adjudicators Vocal Concert Rubric

## UIL Vocal Concert Competition

<b>TONE: Vocal</b>				
<b>Superior (Division I)</b>	<b>Excellent (Division II)</b>	<b>Average (Division III)</b>	<b>Below Average (Division IV)</b>	<b>Poor (Division V)</b>
<p>Student performers demonstrate highly developed, characteristic tone qualities for their vocal section and <i>musical style</i> throughout the performance with minimal lapses.</p> <p>Pitches are centered and focused.</p> <p>Student performers demonstrate an elevated awareness of tuning choral sections and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section with a few minor flaws.</p> <p>There is “near perfect” intonation within and between sections.</p> <p>Student performers demonstrate a highly developed concept of balanced musical lines and blend of tone within their section to produce a <i>desirable and</i> appropriate sonority of music performed.</p>	<p>Student performers demonstrate above average, characteristic tone qualities for their vocal section and <i>musical</i> performance, but there are some minor lapses.</p> <p>Choral technique and vocal production are excellent, but there are some flaws where students are unable to control and focus tone.</p> <p>The ensemble demonstrates an awareness of tuning within and between sections, but there are some minor flaws.</p> <p>For the most part, student performers demonstrate an excellent concept of balanced musical lines and blend of tone within their section to produce an appropriate sonority of music.</p>	<p>Student performers demonstrate average tone qualities for their vocal section and musical style of performance. However, performers lose their ability to control tone quality in varying dynamic ranges.</p> <p>Student performers demonstrate an adequate awareness of tuning choral sections and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section, but there are several flaws.</p> <p>Sounds are at times harsh, thin and/or pinched.</p> <p>Balance and blend are present, but lapses consistently occur.</p> <p>The ensemble demonstrates intermediate concepts of balanced musical lines and blend of tone to produce an acceptable sonority of the music performed.</p>	<p>For this classification, student performers demonstrate inadequate characteristic tone qualities for their vocal section and musical style of performance. Additionally, they lose control often.</p> <p>Student performers demonstrate little awareness of tuning choral sections and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section.</p> <p>The ensemble demonstrates below average concepts of balance and blend of tone, and does not produce a desirable or appropriate sonority of the music performed. There are an extreme amount of flaws.</p> <p>There is little or no use of dynamic contrast.</p>	<p>For this classification, student performers demonstrate undesirable characteristic tone qualities for their vocal section, musical style of performance, and lose control most of the time.</p> <p>Student performers demonstrate little or no awareness of tuning choral sections and sensitivity to uniform intonation within their section.</p> <p>The ensemble demonstrates improper concepts of balance and blend of tone, and produces an undesirable and inappropriate sonority of the music performed.</p> <p>There is little or no evidence of dynamic contrast.</p>
<b>TECHNIQUE: Choral</b>				
<p>Student performers will sing correct pitches.</p> <p>Choral technique is near flawless within each section with</p>	<p>Student performers will sing correct pitches.</p> <p>Choral technique is excellent within each section, but there are</p>	<p>Student performers sing incorrect pitches and do not recover quickly.</p> <p>Choral technique is good but at times</p>	<p>Student performers miss some pitches throughout the performance.</p> <p>Choral technique is obviously missing</p>	<p>Student performers miss numerous pitches throughout the performance.</p> <p>Choral technique is fundamentally</p>

only minimal lapses. Diction and clarity of text are demonstrated at all tempi. Rhythmic approach is uniform throughout the ensemble. Diction is appropriate and consistent throughout the performance according to stylist performance practices.	some lapses that do not recover quickly. Rhythmic precision and clarity are excellent however, some passages are not uniform throughout the ensemble. Diction is appropriate most of the time, but there are some inconsistencies that detract from the overall performance.	individual skill is lacking causing a consistent loss of clarity and precision. Rhythmic precision and clarity are not uniform much of the time. Attacks and releases are inconsistent throughout the performance. Diction is used inappropriately at times.	resulting in an overall lack of clarity and precision. Rhythmic precision and clarity are inconsistent most of the time. Attacks and releases are not performed uniformly most of the time. Diction is used inappropriately most of the time.	lacking and restricts the ability of the performer to meet the technical demands of the music. Attacks and release are not performed together. There is an inadequate approach to diction performed in the music.
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**MUSICIANSHIP: Ensemble Performance**

For this classification the suitability of the music is superior. Student performers artistically demonstrate the appropriate musical style on all selections. Clear, meaningful, and expressive shaping of musical passages is often achieved within and between sections of the ensemble with some minor errors. Throughout the majority of the performance, an exceptional use of dynamics provides musically effective and appropriate contrast for the music performed. Control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and musical style is exceptional.	For this classification, the suitability of the music is excellent. Student performers demonstrate the appropriate musical style with only minor inconsistencies. For this classification, clear, meaningful and expressive shaping of musical passages is somewhat evident within and between sections of the ensemble, but there are some inconsistencies. At times, an excellent use of dynamics provides musically effective and appropriate contrast for the music performed. The ensemble exhibits above average control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and musical	For this classification, the suitability of the music is adequate. Performers use appropriate style, but there are noticeable inconsistencies. Clear, meaningful, and expressive shaping of musical passages is somewhat evident within and between sections of the ensemble, but it is not consistent. At times, an average use of dynamics provides musically effective and appropriate contrast for music performed. The ensemble exhibits adequate control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and musical style with some lapses.	For this classification, the suitability of the music is inadequate. Performers do not address musical style throughout most of the performance. Little evidence of clear, meaningful and expressive shaping of musical passages exists within and between sections of the ensemble. A below average use of dynamics proves musically ineffective and results in little contrast for music performed. The ensemble exhibits little control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and musical style. Students are unable to convey musical understanding due to a lack of one or more fundamental	For this classification, the music is unsatisfactory. There is no attempt to address musical style throughout the performance. Little or no evidence of clear, meaningful and expressive shaping of musical passages exists within and between sections of the ensemble. An inadequate use of dynamics proves musically ineffective and results in little or no contrast for music performed. The ensemble exhibits little or no control of all aspects of rhythm, tempo, and musical style. Student performers' musical understanding is
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Student performers convey an artistic, energetic, and emotional performance to the audience.	style with minor lapses. Students convey musical understanding most of the time.	Performance is somewhat mechanical, lacking emotion and energy.	performance skills.	inadequate due to a lack of most fundamental performance skills.
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Source: [www.uiltexas.org](http://www.uiltexas.org)