



The United States Army Field Band

The Joy of Singing

Companion Lesson Plans

THE JOY OF SINGING: STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF DICTION AND INTERPRETATION

This lesson is suitable for inclusion in a private voice lesson or in a collegiate "class voice" environment.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will explore song texts and how to bring personal interpretation to their singing.
- Students will observe how diction and dynamics yield expressive and dramatic communication.

MATERIALS:

- A piece of music for study

PROCEDURES:

1. To help approach music interpretively, ask a student to recite the text of a song as though he or she were reading a poem.
2. Recite the text while the accompaniment is played.
3. Ask the student to create an improvisation based on the written text to be spoken over the accompaniment. This monologue exercise can venture into all aspects of character development: who, what, where, and why. Encourage the student to be creative and fanciful.
4. For practice of legato and vowel clarity, have the student sing only the vowels of the text in rhythm.
5. Ask the student to read the song text, emphasizing only the important words and calling special attention to nouns and verbs.
6. Ask the student to analyze the song's dynamics and rhythm. Can the student relate these compositional devices to the meaning of the text? Call attention to how dynamics and rhythm create mood, tone, and drama.
7. Ask the student to locate unfamiliar words in the text and define them. Ask the singer to identify any words employing onomatopoeia, or the use of simile and metaphor or other literary devices. If the text is in a foreign language, ask them to translate it.

EXPLORATION:

1. Having a deep understanding of the literal and historical context of a text enhances interpretation. Ask the student to research the origin of a text. Who wrote it, when, why, and for whom or what?
2. Giving a text a personal connection brings it to life. Ask the student to create a character, time frame, situation and reason for singing the song. This exercise can incorporate information that the student finds during research.
3. Videotape the singer performing the piece of music. Ask him or her to analyze this performance for clear diction, expression and communication. As part of the self-evaluation, name goals that were accomplished and goals to improve upon in future performances.
4. Have the student perform the piece for a group of peers. If the student seems comfortable hearing constructive criticism, ask listeners to offer their impressions of the performance regarding clarity of text through diction and presentation.

ASSESSMENT:

- Can the student form a personal idea about the music?
- Does the student have a working knowledge of the origin and content of the text and music?
- Can the student clearly communicate the text vocally and dramatically?