

PART I

Academic Foundation and Unit Standards for Choral Work in the Primary School

Chapter 1

RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1 Background Information

South Africa is currently restructuring its education system and replacing the old traditional “content-based” system with the “outcomes-based” (OBE) system. South Africa’s outcomes-based education at school level is reflected in the document *Curriculum 2005*. The conversion to the outcomes-based approach has been implemented since 1998 in various learning areas (subjects). *Curriculum 2005* addresses school education (Grades R – 12), but the first unit standards required to be formulated for the OBE approach are only from Grade 9 upwards. Details of outcomes-based post-school education are not yet available, and the Higher Education Sector is still actively debating its future with the Education Department and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

SAQA dictates that unit standards for all learning areas have to be generated for the implementation of the outcomes-based education system. Because of lack of funding, Professor Caroline van Niekerk, Head of Music Education at the University of Pretoria, was instrumental in forming the MEUSSA team. MEUSSA is an acronym for “Music Education Unit Standards for Southern Africa”. The team consists of 18 master’s and doctoral researchers whose assignment is to develop unit standards for the various fields in music. Proff. van Niekerk and van der Mescht lead the team.

The MEUSSA researchers’ task of developing unit standards for music(s) in South Africa, based on thorough in-depth research, have to meet the academic standards of the University of Pretoria in order to obtain a masters or doctoral degree. All the team members are regarded as experts in different fields of music and are dedicated to

generating unit standards that are nationally relevant and internationally competitive. This project could prove to be of immense value to music education in this country and could serve as a catalyst for related studies in other countries.

Participation in Choral Singing in South African schools has, to date, largely been regarded as an extra-curricular activity for which neither choristers nor teachers receive due recognition or status. A comprehensive, balanced and sequenced choral framework/curriculum/learning programme/syllabus for primary school choirs does not exist.

It is a common occurrence that the person who directs the Primary School Choir, is not a music specialist, but a general classroom teacher, who, more often than not, does not have adequate training or expertise for the task. The choir direction is thus often ineffective, without innovation and not to any significant purpose. The fundamental problem is inadequate and inefficient training of teachers. There is also a lack of regular in-service training courses of an extended nature.

There are a few American and English books available that address the challenge of choral directing in *primary* schools specifically. These books, however, are often difficult to obtain and are exorbitantly expensive due to the weak South African rand. (For an explanation of evaluating the cost of text books in terms of the purchasing power of local currencies, refer to 1.5 “The South African Cost Factor”, below.) The circumstances and backgrounds referred to in the books are, furthermore, not always applicable to the South African milieu.

There is no common foundation or framework for all choirs from various different cultures throughout South Africa and at all levels of development, i.e. from the foundation phase at school, right through to tertiary level.

1.2 Personal Motivation

This researcher's primary interest is in successful, practical work with children of primary school age, and especially within the context of choral singing, with all the benefits this can hold for their holistic development. As a member of the MEUSSA team, the author intends to make a contribution in choral music education.

1.3 Research Question

How can curricular recognition be given for choral singing in South African primary schools?

The research question above is subject to the following sub-questions:

- How can the choral director in the Primary school be guided in a constructive and meaningful way to address the issue of quality in structuring a comprehensive, balanced and sequenced choral programme?
- How can a formal procedure for assessment of results be provided to ensure greater accountability to the choral director, choristers, parents, school governing body, government educational administrators, and the community at large?
- What support (resource) material does the general classroom teacher (who is responsible for the Primary School Choir) need to direct the choir effectively, with innovation and purpose. Furthermore, how can this essential support material, that addresses the challenge of choral directing in South African primary schools specifically, be made readily available at an affordable rate for a South African teacher?
- How can a common foundation or framework for all choirs throughout the country and at all levels of development be generated?
- Are there critical cross-field linkages/articulation possibilities with other learning experiences and career opportunities; and if so, what are they?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study sets out to design Choral Unit Standards and their associated Assessment Criteria for Choral Singing at the level of the Primary School. This should enable choristers/learners to earn curricular recognition and academic credits for their participation, thereby gaining acknowledgement of and support for their significant and substantial involvement. In addition to this, the following aspects are also addressed:

- Effective choral guidelines, giving clear and explicit explanations of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that the choristers should gain from a worthy choral programme.
- Assessment criteria for choirs jointly and/or choristers individually, which will provide greater accountability to stakeholders.
- Support material for primary school teachers that they may require for the effective and purposeful directing of the School Choir. Students at tertiary institutions who are studying choral methods and choral conducting, should also find the support material applicable and helpful. This material is designed to serve as a practical guide for teachers to assist in more effective and innovative choral directing practices. In addition, accessible, affordable and useful material, applicable to the South African situation is designed.
- Choral Unit Standards that will apply to all cultural groups and every level of development. This will contribute to a common foundation for all choirs in South Africa.
- Critical cross-field linkages/articulation possibilities with other learning experiences and career opportunities.

1.5 The South African Cost Factor

Currently the price of the following books that are available in English on choral directing in the primary school is as follows:

- *Teaching Kids to Sing* by Kenneth H. Phillips \$39.00
- *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears \$27.95

(These prices are in American dollars and were obtained from Van Schaik bookstore in Hatfield, Pretoria.)

Should one wish to purchase these books in South Africa from Van Schaik bookstore, the prices in South African rands would be as follows:

- *Teaching Kids to Sing* by Kenneth H. Phillips R980.00
- *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears R805.00

(These prices are in South African rands and were quoted by Van Schaik bookstore on 17 October 2001.)

In evaluating the cost of text books in terms of the purchasing power of local currencies, it is expedient to use a tool such as “burgernomics”. *The Economist*, a British publication, established “burgernomics” as an informal basis of comparison in 1986. This basis of comparison is upgraded annually. The Big Mac hamburger, sold in 120 countries around the world with more or less the same recipe, is used as a “currency” to determine the relative cost of goods. In pursuing this basis of comparison, the following becomes evident:

Country	Book Price	Big Mac price	Big Macs/book	Multiple
USA	\$39.00	\$2.54	15.4	101B15.4
RSA	R980.00	R9.70	101	= 6.6

Table I - 1-1a Comparative price analysis of the book *Teaching Kids to Sing* by K.H. Phillips

Country	Book Price	Big Mac price	Big Macs/book	Multiple
USA	\$27.95	\$2.54	11.0	82.9B11.0
RSA	R805.00	R9.70	82.9	= 7.5

Table I - 1-1b Comparative price analysis of the book *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears

The Big Mac prices were obtained from *The Economist* (Big Mac Currencies 2001).

- Table I - 1-1a, above, shows that in the USA *Teaching Kids to Sing* by K.H. Phillips would cost 15.4 Big Mac burgers as against 101 in South Africa.

- Table I - 1-1b, above, shows that in the USA *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears would cost 11.0 Big Mac burgers as against 82.9 in South Africa.

By dividing the “burger cost” of these books (Big Macs/book) in South Africa by the cost in the USA, we see the multiples of 6.6 and 7.5. This is the number of times the books are more expensive in South Africa than in the USA. These multiples indicate the high cost of imported goods in South Africa, largely as a result of our weak currency. As is evident, these prices are well out of reach for most choral educators in South Africa. A South African publication of similar size and content can be produced at a considerably reduced sum, and **Part II** of this thesis can be published and made available to choral educators.

1.6 The General Music Appraisal Programme

The Unit Standards for Choral Singing are linked to the General Music Appraisal Programme (GMAP) which has been generated by Grové (2001). The rationale for the GMAP is to provide the opportunity for all learners to acquire general music skills and knowledge in a wide variety of music styles and practices. This particular thesis addresses the practical implementation of the basic skills and knowledge in choral music.

Activities in the choral programme should reinforce and build upon music-specific concepts and general music skills learned in the GMAP. Table I - 1-2, below, by Grové (2001: 3-11), is a two-dimensional summary (mapping) of the actual three-dimensional MEUSSA model, which illustrates the components of the MEUSSA model. The grey areas indicate the sections that are covered within the GMAP, while the pink section indicates the focus area of this specific study, namely Choir Performance as a practical extension and implementation of the GMAP. The areas within the GMAP are as follows:

- Conceptualising (knowledge),
- Contextualising (style),
- Listening,
- Analysis, and
- Notation.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels imply the inclusion of specific assessment criteria.

MUSIC SKILLS			MUSIC KNOWLEDGE		
CREATING	PERFORMING	APPRAISING	KNOWLEDGE Conceptualising	STYLE Contextualising	NQF LEVELS
Improvising	Idiophones	Conceptualising (Knowledge)	Melody	S.African Music	8 : A
	Membranophones		Rhythm	Art Music	7 : S
Arrangement	Aerophones	Contextualising (Style)	Dynamics	Indian Music	6 : S
	Chordophones		Texture	Folk music	5 : E
Composition	Electrophones	Listening	Timbre	Popular Music	4 : S
	Vocal	Analysis	Harmony	Jazz	3 : S
Technology	Group/Ensemble	Technology	Form	World Music	2 : I
Notation	Theatre	Notation	Tempo	Technology	1 : N
Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Notation	Notation	ABET : G

Table I - 1-2 Components of the MEUSSA Model (Grové 2001: 3-11)

Below is a graphic illustration (Figure I - 1-1) to demonstrate the link-up with the Music Education Unit Standards for Southern Africa (MEUSSA) model as well as the GMAP. This graphic mapping was designed by Grové and is titled “Practical extension of the GMAP in choral singing” (2001: 5-8).

The choir functions as a performance group or ensemble, thus its presence as a “performing” aspect in the model. Choir performance is an extension of the GMAP as the aspects that make up the core cluster thereof, namely listening, analysis, conceptualising, contextualising and notation, are applied practically in choral singing. However, choral singing also has an additional set of choral-specific criteria that are not necessarily applicable to general music practices. These will be addressed and formulated in unit standards for choral singing.

The Choral Unit Standards will be formulated on widely accepted choir-performance criteria and are as follows (in no specific order of priority):

The Relationship between Choir Performance and the General Music Appraisal Programme

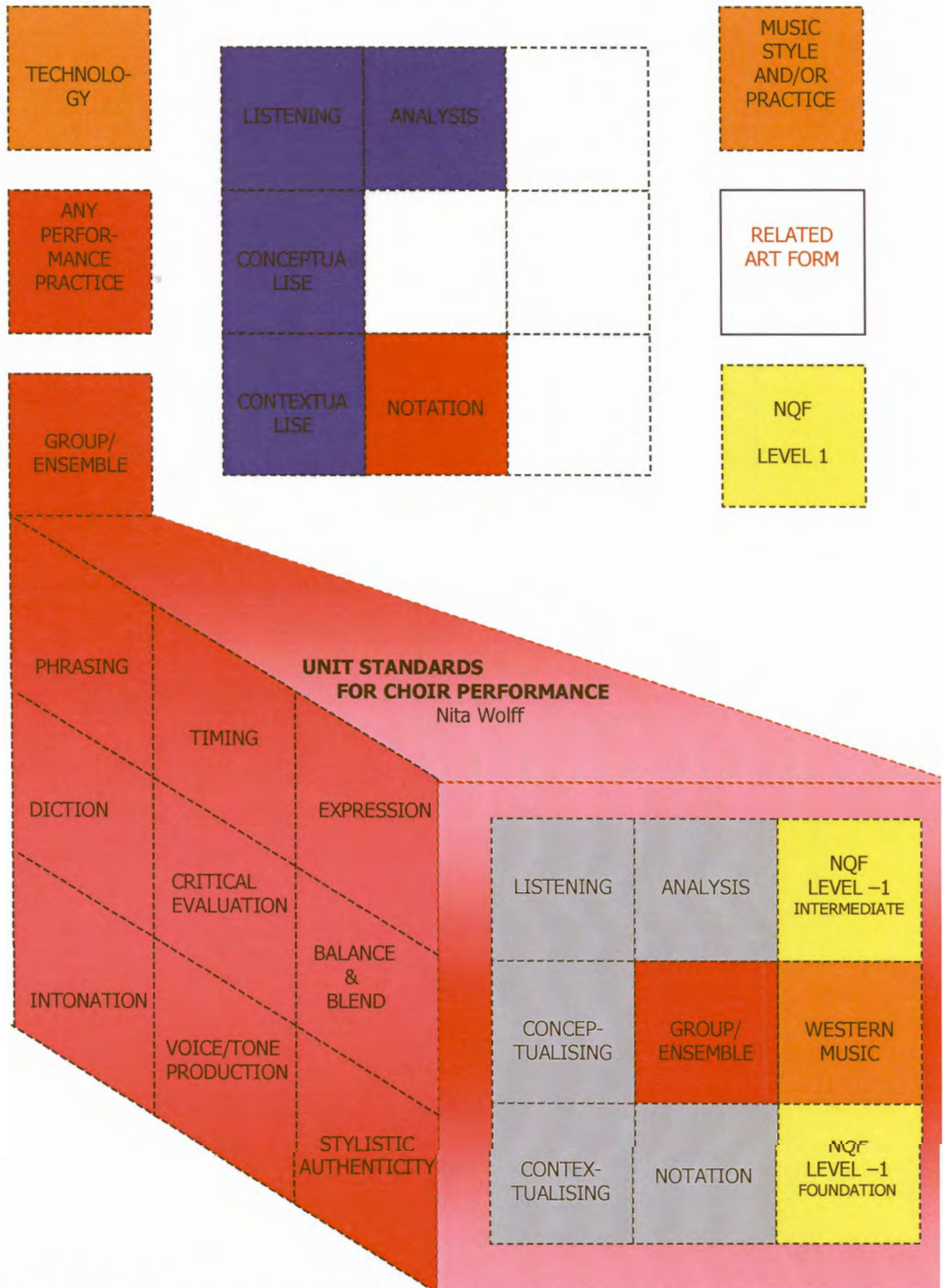


Figure I - 1-1 Practical extension of the GMAP in choral singing (Grové 2001: 5-8)



- Intonation,
- Phrasing,
- Diction,
- Voice/Tone Production,
- Balance & Blend,
- Stylistic Authenticity,
- Expression,
- Timing, and
- Critical Evaluation.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

In this thesis, a specific choral curriculum/syllabus is not offered. However, the combination of the Generic Unit Standards with the mapping of the route to be followed (support material) in order to implement the standards in a comprehensive choral programme, provides the teacher with sufficient coordinated guidelines to be able to proceed.

In the light of the author's training and teaching experience of a predominantly Western music approach, the thesis has a largely Eurocentric bias. This does not intend in any way to denigrate the value of non-Western music. The scope of this thesis, however, does not allow for the inclusion of the vitally important and necessary supplementary material, which is obviously required for a balanced South African choral programme. Additional research by adequately qualified and suitable person(s) is urgently required. Two co-members of the MEUSSA team, Zabalaza Mthembu and Vinayagi Govinder, are currently doing research on singing. Mthembu is doing research on African Choral Music and will write the required material for African Choirs. Govinder is formulating Unit Standards for Indian Music. Artistic elements and aesthetic responses transcend cultural differences and the cultural diversity of South Africa offers a vast resource for interesting choral singing and participation.

This thesis focuses on vocal development and choral art in general; hence music-reading skills are beyond the scope of the thesis. Choral singing in schools is viewed as an extension of the General Music Appraisal Programme (GMAP) where learners are taught aural skills and music literacy. Whilst music literacy is considered important in the choral programme, it is assumed that learners are taught aural skills and music literacy in the General Music Appraisal Programme (Grové 2001).

1.8 Target Groups

This thesis addresses three main target groups, namely:

- The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which requires Generic Unit Standards for various disciplines;
- Students in training at tertiary academic institutions, who are intending to direct choirs at schools, i.e. pre-service education and training (PRESET); and
- Choral directors of primary school choirs, i.e. in-service education and training (INSET).

The *Generic Choral Unit Standards* and the *General Outcomes*, supplied in this thesis, are the same for all the cultural groups in South Africa. They are also applicable to all levels of development, i.e. starting in the Primary School right through to Tertiary level. *The Specific Outcomes* and *Range Statements and Assessment Criteria* will vary from one cultural group to another and will be modified for different levels of development by future research.

Apart from the above main target groups, there is much in this thesis which can prove of use to church and Sunday schools or the many choirs attached to a variety of community institutions. Whether teachers are completely untrained, “semi-specialist” or even “specialist” music teachers, the accessibility of relevant teaching material is always useful. The material produced in this thesis can be made available to interested parties within the South African context at a more affordable rate than imported publications.

1.9 Research Methodology

This study is based on (in no order of priority):

- Wide choral listening experience to both live and recorded music with a specific focus on the formulation of acceptable standards of choral singing practice;
- Attendance of numerous in-service choral workshops and courses;
- An extensive media survey involving the following sources:
 - Articles in educational journals and bulletins;
 - Videos and tapes on choral technique and conducting;
 - Books on choral technique and conducting; and
 - Internet web sites.
- Action research involving:
 - Informal interviews with fellow-teachers (whose task it is to direct the school choir) and surveys of their need of easily accessible and affordable material regarding choral directing and conducting; and
 - Personal experience teaching children in the relevant age-groups, and from a wide variety of cultural/religious/racial backgrounds.
- Collective expertise of the MEUSSA team. This involves regular team meetings and debates with other team members as well as access to the considered opinions of the National and International Critical Friends;
- Original thought and creative work required to generate the unit standards.

A positive derivative of generating Choral Generic Unit Standards lies in the process itself. One is inevitably compelled to question the value of the choral programme:

- to contemplate, deliberate and critique what is perceived to be important and why; and
- to clarify expectations.

After the difficult and time consuming task of generating the Choral Generic Unit Standards, a core formulation of the essential knowledge, values and skills had been reached. From this the “backwards process” to considering the necessary curricula/support material/learning programmes/syllabi was engaged in. The advantage of working this way around was that the fundamental evaluation was first done of what was

of greatest importance and what children should learn in choral singing, before a more detailed exposition of content and its progression was undertaken.

1.10 Layout of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts:

Part I, *Academic Foundation and Unit Standards for Choral Work in the Primary School*, involves the essential preliminary information about the study in chapter 1, *Research Outline*. This is followed by chapter 2 which comprises a literature review of books on choral training as well as a brief history of children's choirs in the second half of the 20th century. Chapter 3 consists of the Choral Generic Unit Standards' framework and chapter 4 has a section on the vital issue of "assessment", as well as "critical cross-field linkages".

Part II is the *Support Material for the Choral Educator in the Primary School*.

This is laid out like many choral conductors' handbooks, from the beginning stage of "Starting a Choir" in Chapter 1, through to "Concert Preparation" in Chapter 7.

Part III, *Conclusion*, comprises the *Conclusions and Recommendations* related to this study as a whole. This is followed by an appendix which is a summary of the core structure of the General Music Appraisal Programme (GMAP). The list of sources is at the very end of the thesis where it is most easily referred to.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF CHORAL TRAINING, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S CHOIRS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

The literature discussed in 2.1 and 2.2 in this chapter, refers to books of the variety required by teachers needing comprehensive texts in which they can find information on all, or most of, the aspects on which they require information or assistance. The vast majority of sources consulted for this thesis have been articles in educational journals and bulletins as is evident in the list of sources. Some of these articles are discussed under 2.3 “Summary of Trends in Choral Music Education and a Brief History of Children’s Choirs in the Second Half of the 20th Century” at the end of this chapter. This background chapter serves to place this thesis in the context of developments and trends in the second half of the 20th century, and to discuss the literature which influenced the generation of both the unit standards and the support material.

2.1 Choral Directing Books Specifically Aimed at the Primary School Level

The following list of only four books has specifically been written for the director of the primary school choir and has proved to be most useful for the purpose(s) of this thesis. These books are listed in alphabetical order, according to the authors’ surnames:

- *Lifeline for Children’s Choir Directors* by Jean Ashworth Bartle (1988);
- *Directing the Children’s Choir* by Shirley W. McRae (1991);
- *Teaching Kids to Sing* by Kenneth H. Phillips (1992); and
- *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears (1985).

The first two books on the list (Bartle and McRae) are currently both out of print. The above four books will now be discussed individually.

2.1.1 *Lifeline for Children's Choir Directors* by Jean Ashworth Bartle (1988)

Jean Ashworth Bartle is a Founder Member and Music Director of the internationally acclaimed Toronto Children's Chorus. In this publication she addresses school, church and community or professional children's choirs in a practical and anecdotal style. The colloquial writing allows for easy reading by the non-specialist choral facilitator, but detracts from the academic stature of the work. The chapter headings are as follows:

- *Before You Begin;*
- *Developing the Child's Voice;*
- *The Uncertain Singer;*
- *Diction;*
- *Musicianship;*
- *Conducting Children's Choirs;*
- *The School Primary Choir;*
- *The School Junior Choir;*
- *The Junior Church Choir;*
- *The Community, or Professional, Children's Choir;*
- *Questions Most Frequently Asked;* and
- *And Finally....*

Extensive repertoire lists are supplied with some teaching plans for specific songs. There is no back-of-book indexing, which makes it difficult to find specific topics for research purposes. The layout of the headings in the book is such that one has to consult several different chapters should you need information about a specific topic: *Rehearsal Techniques*, for instance, appears in four different chapters under that heading.

According to personal communication, a new book by this author, on the same subject, is in publication and due to be released towards the end of 2001. It will be interesting to see whether the tone of this new book will in any way differ from the

approach in the 1988 publication, in addition to new aspects which may be introduced.

2.1.2 *Directing the Children's Choir* by Shirley W. McRae (1991)

This is a well-written, concise resource book for all children's choral educators, and especially the choral director of a church-based children's choir. The book is divided into eight chapters:

- Chapter one, *Promoting and Organizing the Children's Choir*, gives many helpful suggestions to formulating a rationale, recruiting choristers, auditioning singers, and setting up the choir in general.
- Chapter two, *Music and Children in the Church*, deals with church-based children's choirs.
- Chapter three offers valuable information about the personal and musical characteristics of children at different levels and the implications for the choir. The different levels discussed are:
 - the pre-school child (4-5 years),
 - the primary child (6-7 years),
 - middle elementary child (8-9 years), and
 - the upper elementary child (10-11 years).
- In chapter four the author discusses Orff Schulwerk and Kodály pedagogies and their usefulness for the children's choir.
- In chapters 5-8 there is practical information on vocal technique, rehearsal strategies and conducting, to name but a few.

This book is aimed specifically at church choir programmes and is the ideal resource book for this purpose. Choral educators in schools may find some of the material superfluous or irrelevant.

2.1.3 *Teaching Kids to Sing* by Kenneth H. Phillips (1992)

The author stresses the importance of implementing a systematically graded vocal technique method to help children to learn to sing confidently. This is in addition to “the song approach” to teach children to sing. In “the song approach” the choristers learn to sing by singing songs. The main consideration is “expression”, and technique, as such, is relegated to a secondary place, if it is implemented at all.

There has been undue emphasis on “the song approach” in the second half of the 20th century. So much so, that the pre-World War II “bel canto” style, which emphasised the mastery of singing technique before song, has just about become obsolete in the training of children’s choirs. In “the song approach”, the acquisition of song repertoire often becomes more important than the development of singing technique itself. Prospective teachers are usually not trained in vocal pedagogy and are therefore ill-equipped to deal with the problems encountered in teaching children to sing.

“The song approach” has the advantage that it involves children in singing. The only harmful feature arises when “the song approach” emphasises acquiring repertoire, and *completely* ignores developing singing technique. Phillips certainly does not plead for a return to the early days of vocal drill, but stresses the importance of teaching children good, healthy singing habits and adopting a more balanced approach between song acquisition and child vocal pedagogy.

The research-based text is most informative and of immense value to teachers and conductors who work with children’s voices. Phillips demonstrates the feasibility of group voice training for children as a complement to “the song approach” which is generally employed in class music situations and choirs. He maintains that the use of the singing voice is a learned, complex skill.

Because successful, good voice production depends on correct, efficient breath management, Phillips stresses the primary importance of teaching children breath management skills. He suggests that breath control training is an effective way to

improve pitch accuracy and also significantly affects range. “If nothing else is done in the way of child vocal training, children should, and can, be taught to breathe properly” (1992:15).

The book does not, however, offer a comprehensive approach for a choral programme. Topics that are not covered in the book, for instance, are:

- Organisation and management of choral programmes, like promotion, public relations, recruitment, budgeting, structuring, assessment, etc.;
- Conducting technique and related issues;
- Choral repertoire and style; and
- Rehearsal techniques.

Choral educators who are looking for material on vocal techniques, however, will find this book most useful.

2.1.4 *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* by Linda Swears (1985)

This is a most informative, useful publication with practical suggestions for primary school choral teachers. The reader gains insight into the development of the child voice and the book is divided into three main sections for easy referencing:

- Section One deals with *Building a Choral Music Program for Children* and provides functional and practical suggestions for, amongst other things:
 - The philosophy of the children’s choir, setting goals and objectives and starting a choir;
 - Gaining administrative, staff and community support;
 - Financing;
 - Recruiting choristers; and

- Understanding the development of the child's voice and many techniques to effect the development of the child's voice to its fullest potential.
- Section Two is titled *Developing a Fine Children's Choir*. It offers many suggestions and activities in achieving a good choral sound and teaching children the basics of:
 - good posture,
 - breathing,
 - diction,
 - tone quality,
 - balance and blend,
 - intonation, and
 - singing expressively.

It also offers practical suggestions to teach part-singing.

- Section Three, *Planning for Successful Rehearsal and Performance*, offers suggestions for organising the successful choral rehearsal for children. Concert preparation and detailed step-by-step planning from start to finish is furnished. The selection of appropriate repertoire is made easier by the provision of several lists of suitable repertoire, with levels of difficulty indicated. In the last chapter, developing conducting skills are discussed and guidelines for selecting and working with an accompanist are also included.

This handbook offers useful guidelines for the implementation and development of an effective choral programme in the primary school.

2.2 Books on Choral Directing Aimed at Secondary and Tertiary Levels

The books which are discussed below were not as generally useful as the above list, and are not specifically aimed at the choir in the primary school, but they did provide specific

insights into particular aspects. These nine books are listed in alphabetical order, according to the authors' surnames:

- *Kick-Start Your Choir* by Mike Brewer (1997);
- *Choral Music: Methods and Materials* by Barbara A. Brinson (1996);
- *Choral Conducting: Focus on Communication* by Harold A. Decker and Colleen J. Kirk (1988);
- *Conducting Choral Music* by Robert L. Garretson, 7th edition (1993);
- *Choral Director's Rehearsal and Performance Guide* by Lewis Gordon (1989)
- *Group Vocal Technique* by Frauke Haasemann and James M. Jordan (1991);
- “*Die Groot Afrikaanse Koorleiersgids*” edited by Salóme Hendrikse (1991);
- *Comprehensive Choral Music Education* by John Hylton (1995);
- *We Will Sing!* By Doreen Rao (1993); and
- *Choral Music Education* by Paul F. Roe (1970).

2.2.1 *Kick-Start Your Choir* by Mike Brewer (1997)

It would be more apt to refer to this publication as a “booklet” as it consists of a mere short 32 pages. It was written by Mike Brewer, director of the National Youth Choir in the United Kingdom. The chapter headings are as follows:

- *The voice in the classroom;*
- *Starting a choir;*
- *Getting young people to sing;*
- *Sound gestures and conducting;*
- *Programme planning and repertoire;*
- *Preparation and rehearsal;*
- *Basic vocal techniques;*
- *Troubleshooting.*

There are a few useful hints to be found in the book but the discussion of topics is superficial and not treated in depth at all. Jaco van der Merwe reviews Brewer's book as one of two "new" publications in the journal, *The South African Music Teacher* (Van der Merwe 2001: 30). "Kick-start Your Choir" was first published in 1997; hardly a "new" publication in the year 2001. Van der Merwe states that: "Although it is a slim publication (32 pages), it presents a treasure trove of ideas and practical strategies on almost every aspect of choral directorship" (Van der Merwe 2001: 30). It is far-fetched to describe this publication as a "treasure trove of ideas and practical strategies on almost every aspect of choral directorship". Firstly, with regards to the "treasure trove" claim, there are very few (if any) profound or new, innovative statements made in the book that could be considered as "treasures". Secondly, there are numerous aspects of choral directing that are not discussed in the book in any way whatsoever. Despite this discrepancy, van der Merwe states that there are "ideas and practical strategies on almost every aspect of choral directorship". With regard to organisation and management of choral programmes, Brewer either barely mentions, or does not discuss at all aspects like the following: strategies for promotion, budgeting, equipment, purchasing of music, recruitment, structuring, public relations, auditions, selection and placement of voices, seating arrangements – to mention but a few areas that are not dealt with in the book. The chapter on "Basic Vocal Techniques" provides little guidance. Style considerations are not dealt with at all and selection of repertoire only warrants a brief discussion.

For study purposes the book offers the researcher very little indeed. The book may, however, serve as reading material for informal, casual or entertaining purposes.

2.2.2 *Choral Music: Methods and Materials* by Barbara A. Brinson (1996)

The book is designed for use by directors of choirs, primarily at the Secondary school level and for students at tertiary institutions studying the art of choral

conducting. Choral conducting literature is significantly enriched by this publication. The methodology is made functional and practical, and valuable guidelines are supplied. The chapters are divided as follows:

- *Philosophical Foundations,*
- *Recruitment and Retention of Singers,*
- *Auditions and Placement of Singers,*
- *Development and Evaluation of a Choral Curriculum,*
- *Repertoire,*
- *Programming Music,*
- *Musical Analysis and Score Preparation,*
- *The Rehearsal,*
- *Behavior Management in Rehearsal,*
- *Vocal Techniques and Musicianship Skills,*
- *The Changing Voice,*
- *Pop Ensembles and Musical Productions, and*
- *Management of a Choral Program.*

This comprehensive publication provided most useful general resource material for this thesis. The section on seating arrangements in the chapter *Auditions and Placement of Singers* was especially informative.

2.2.3 *Choral Conducting: Focus on Communication* by Harold A. Decker and Colleen J. Kirk (1988)

The book was reissued in 1995 by Waveland Press. Both authors have been hailed as eminent choral conductors of exceptional artistry and both are excellent pedagogues. The book is divided into seven chapters:

- *Relating Gesture to Musical Expression;*
- *Preparing for Music Making: Score Study;*

- *Creating Music with the Choral Instrument;*
- *The Rehearsal: Aesthetic Performance;*
- *Developing the Choral Instrument;*
- *Developing Musical Skills and Responsiveness;* and
- *Selecting Repertory and Building the Concert Program.*

Choral conducting students at tertiary institutions and seasoned conductors who wish to refresh their skills, will find this book most informative and enriching. The only area that is not covered extensively in the book is “organisation and management”. The authors do not, for instance, discuss topics like a financial budget, the purchasing of equipment or gaining support and public relations. This omission, however, is insignificant if one considers the considerable attention to all the other areas that are covered.

2.2.4 *Conducting Choral Music* by Robert L. Garretson, 7th Edition (1993)

Garretson’s enduring and perpetually popular book (as shown by the number of editions), has been used extensively by students of choral methods classes since it was first published in 1961. It is aimed, particularly, at the conductor of the high school choir. The book is divided into eight chapters:

- *Conducting Techniques,*
- *Tone and Diction,*
- *Maintaining Vocal Health,*
- *Children’s Voices and the Boy’s Changing Voice,*
- *Style and Interpretation,*
- *Rehearsal Techniques,*
- *Programs and Concerts,* and
- *Planning and Organization.*

There is a wealth of valuable techniques and useful, practical information contained within this comprehensive, easy-to-understand book and the body of the choral conducting literature has been positively enriched by this publication. The sections on *The Singer's Posture and the Circulatory System* and *Achieving Correct Diction* were most informative.

2.2.5 *Choral Director's Rehearsal and Performance Guide* by Lewis Gordon (1989)

Gordon offers basic coverage of vocal fundamentals with a traditional approach to posture and breathing. He discusses vocal hygiene and how to “work around” some common ailments. He covers the skill of conducting in depth, and divides this particular aspect into four sections:

- *Establishing Rudiments of Conducting;*
- *Developing Expressive Conducting Technique;*
- *Learning Music;* and
- *Polishing and Interpreting Music.*

In the chapter *Developing Authentic Style* he covers the periods from the Renaissance right through to the 20th century and gives general guidelines regarding expression. In the chapters *Conducting Rehearsals* and *Preparing for Performance* there is a multitude of practical, useful hints to enhance the choral programme.

2.2.6 *Group Vocal Technique* by Frauke Haasemann and James M. Jordan (1991)

Both Haasemann and Jordan studied and worked under the internationally acclaimed choral conductor Wilhelm Ehmann (1904-1989). Frauke Haasemann

(1922-1991) was renowned as one of the world's authorities on choral conducting and is also recognised as one of the world's experts in the field of group vocal technique. Haasemann and Jordan have produced a comprehensive package of accessible, practical material for teaching group vocal technique to choirs. The package includes a book, a video and 300 vocal exercises on separate cards (vocalise cards). The set largely replaces the earlier Ehmann and Haasemann publication, *Voice Building for Choirs* (1981).

The choral director's task will be greatly advanced and enriched by this valuable publication. There is unfortunately no back-of-book index referencing, which makes finding specific topics difficult. This deficiency, however, is minor in comparison with the enormous benefit that the book offers.

2.2.7 “Die Groot Afrikaanse Koorleiersgids” edited by Salóme Hendrikse (1991)

This South African publication, in Afrikaans, contains a wealth of information, direction and guidance for choral directors of several different types of choirs. Twenty of the country's top experienced choral directors have contributed to this auspicious book. There are two chapters on the choir in the primary school: the chapter on the choir in the Foundation phase was written by Mariana le Roux and Magriet Louw; and the chapter on the choir in the Intermediate phase and the regional choir, contributed by Tinus Kühn. The book is, unfortunately, currently out of print. It would be a great advantage if the book is translated into English so that it is accessible to a wider readership.

2.2.8 *Comprehensive Choral Music Education* by John B. Hylton (1995)

The book is intended for use by conductors of secondary school, college and community choirs and students at tertiary institutions preparing for a career in

choral conducting. It is indeed a “comprehensive” publication on the topics typically contained in a choral methods class. The book offers a wealth of practical, functional guidelines and techniques on the following topics:

- *Building Tone,*
- *Rehearsal Planning and Techniques,*
- *Performance,*
- *The Score,*
- *Style in Choral Singing,*
- *Administration of the Choral Music Education Program,*
- *Planning for Special Events and Specialized Ensembles,*
- *Comprehensive Choral Music Education,* and
- *The Choral Profession.*

The chapter on *Developing Conducting Skill* was especially useful as resource material for this thesis.

2.2.9 *We Will Sing!* by Doreen Rao (1993)

This is a performance-based textbook for pupils, aged nine and above, and their classroom teachers. Teachers have not always viewed musical understanding necessarily as something that was inherently part of musical performance. “Today we know that when students perform musically, they are *demonstrating their knowledge* – they are *singing their understanding*” (Rao 1993: xiv). When the choir performs the music with skill and understanding, the choristers are *thinking-in-action* and singing their understanding of the music. Rao has written a functional, practical, systematic curriculum which may be adaptable to many different choral environments.

Unfortunately there is no back-of-book indexing, which makes it difficult to consult the book for research purposes.

2.2.10 *Choral Music Education* by Paul F. Roe (1970)

This book has been widely used by students of choral methods at tertiary institutions ever since its publication in 1970. It is aimed, particularly, at the choral music educator in the high (secondary) school. The book is divided into three main parts.

Part One consists of three chapters relating to matters that involve the music teacher in the context of the school itself:

- *Promotional Activities and Recommendations for Scheduling and Curriculum;*
- *Organizing the Singers,* and
- *Extra-Class Responsibilities of the Teacher.*

Part Two includes:

- two chapters on *Vocal Fundamentals,*
- a chapter on *Sight-reading,* and
- a chapter on *The General Music Class and some Junior High Problems.*

The material covered in the two chapters on vocal fundamentals is written in such a way that the reader can readily understand the principles.

Part Three includes:

- *Conducting,*
- *Class Control and Rehearsal Techniques,*
- *Style and Musical Traditions,* and
- *Performances.*

Roe advocates a rehearsal design in which the rehearsal opens and ends with something the choristers like and enjoy singing. This is either preceded or followed by vocal

exercises to warm up the voices and sharpen the ears. The middle portion of the rehearsal is devoted to:

- the presentation of new repertoire; and
- the slower paced, detailed and analytical work on contest or concert material.

He also suggests alternating the music being rehearsed according to the style, familiarity and degree of difficulty; i.e. frequently changing the pace of the rehearsal.

The book contains a myriad of clear, practical suggestions and realistic advice for the prospective choral teacher.

2.3 Summary of Trends in Choral Music Education and a Brief History of Children's Choirs in the Second Half of the 20th Century

The purpose of this summary is to provide an overview of published articles on choral music education that might reveal trends in the field and their relevance to the South African situation. This is followed by a brief history of the development of children's choirs in the second half of the 20th century. Lastly, Philip McLachlan's influence on choral singing in South Africa is discussed.

2.3.1 Children's Singing and Vocal Pedagogy

Ever since the second half of the 1980s there has been a steadily increasing interest in children's vocal development. The following researchers have contributed a great deal of information in the areas of children's vocal development, range, and singing ability.

Graham Welch (1985) conducted research on how children learn to sing in tune. He refers to children who cannot sing in tune as "poor pitch singers". He concludes that the inaccurate singer needs "Knowledge of Results" (KR) and a

variety of experience in order to learn to sing in tune. He proposes a schema theory of how children learn to sing in tune.

Betty Bertaux (1989: 92) states that singing is a learned skill and that: “The number of out-of-tune singers is greatly reduced as awareness and control of the operation of the vocal instrument increases”. In order to teach accurate singing, teachers are encouraged to use the aural/kinesthetic feedback loop. This involves a process whereby the singer continually makes vocal adjustments to auditory information. She suggests that there is a hierarchy of technical skills and a sequence of activities designed to help children to develop control of the vocal instrument. The hierarchy is as follows:

- breath management;
- connecting breath to sound;
- exploring vocal registers;
- controlling pitch levels of sound;
- producing a specific pitch;
- exercising the muscles of articulation and tone modification; and
- producing specific pitches in time while articulating vowels, selected words, or a song text.

Bertaux postulates that the singers should become more aware of the sensation that they are experiencing when singing. “Tuned singing involves vocal-kinesthetic sensation that the individual has learned to associate with an aural perception of tone” (1989: 93). She gives the following suggestions for working with out-of-tune singers:

- Discontinue the use of piano accompaniments.
- Encourage individual singing.
- Do not sing along with students.
- Match group singing to the pitch range and key of the unskilled singer.

Kenneth Phillips has shown a significant interest in singing and vocal pedagogy with children and adolescents and has conducted extensive research in this area. His book *Teaching Kids to Sing* (1992) is reviewed in **Part I**, 2.1.3. He stresses the need for teaching of vocal technique (child vocal pedagogy) in the primary school. “The process of singing is complex, requiring many psycho-motor coordinations” (Phillips 1985: 22). The ability to sing does not necessarily develop automatically. Singing is a skill and it has to be taught. Phillips makes a plea for better training of prospective teachers in child vocal pedagogy at tertiary institutions so that they are better able to implement a plan for vocal development in the schools.

Beginning teachers are often at a loss even as to what constitutes a desirable singing quality for children’s voices. Added to this is the inability to know what to do in order to produce better singing results. Teacher training institutes must do a better job of preparing teachers in this most important area of child vocal production (Phillips 1986: 36).

Phillips and Aitchison (1997) found that the child’s singing voice could be cultivated and improved through the implementation of Phillips’ vocal instruction method (1992) that goes beyond the song approach. The development of breath-management skills has a direct relationship to singing performance in that vocal range is extended and pitch accuracy improved.

“The Effects of Psychomotor Skills Instruction on Attitude Toward Singing and General Music Among Students in Grades 4-6” (1998) is the second part of Phillips’ and Aitchison’s investigation (1997) and involves determining the relationship of psychomotor skills instruction to the learners’ *attitude* toward singing and general music instruction. As a result of their findings, they suggest that group vocal instruction should be implemented before children arrive in the intermediate grades (4-6).

Joanne Rutkowski’s research (1990) describes a(n) instrument/tool to measure and evaluate the development of children’s singing voices. This is known as the

“Singing Voice Developmental Measure” (SVDM) and the following is an adaptation thereof:

1. *Presingers*: Children who do not sustain tones, but chant the text.
2. *Speaking-range singers*: Children who sustain tones and exhibit some sensitivity to pitch but remain within the speaking-voice range, usually a ($1\frac{1}{2}$ tones below Middle C) to c^1 .
3. *Uncertain singers*: Children who sustain tones but often waver between a speaking-voice range and a singing-voice range. When in singing voice, they utilize a range up to approximately $f^{\square 1}$ and seem to have difficulty lifting the voice above this pitch.
4. *Initial-range singers*: Children who have the use of the singing-voice range up to the register lift, usually to a^1 . At this stage, the children rarely drop back into speaking-voice range.
5. *Singers*: Children who are able to sing over the register lift, $b^{\square 1}$ and above, and have full use of their singing voices.

These categories are concerned with the singing voice but not the accuracy of intonation.

Levinowitz et al (1998) conducted a study to examine the reliability of Rutkowski’s Singing Voice Development Measure for use in the general music classroom, grades 1-6. Due to its reliability, they recommend its use in grades K-5 as a tool to evaluate the singing content standard of the USA National Standards of 1994. This could also be used in South Africa to assess children’s use of the singing voice.

Graham Welch and Peta White conducted research on “The Developing Voice: Education and Vocal Efficiency – A Physical Perspective” (1993) and found that early vocal habits learned in childhood persist into adulthood. Teaching children vocal technique has the effect, amongst others, of ensuring a more consistent configuration (or shape) of the vocal tract. That is “the jaw opening is more stable,

the velum is raised and the larynx is lowered to increase the resonance area, having the effect of lowering the upper formant frequencies” (Welch & White 1993: 153).

Moore’s research (1994) sets out to determine the effects of age, sex, and melodic/harmonic patterns on pitch-matching skills of children. He found that all harmonic pitch-matching tasks are not of equal difficulty. “Even the most skillful singers may find some pitch-matching tasks more difficult than others” (1994: 4). He suggests a task hierarchy for children’s part-singing.

Klinger, Campbell and Goolsby (1998) examined the effect of two instructional procedures for teaching songs by rote to children in grade 2:

- Song transmission through immersion, whereby the teacher presents the material by singing the entire song repeatedly and the children gradually learn the words, rhythm and pitches. This is also referred to as the “whole song method”.
- The teaching of a song using the phrase-by-phrase method. This involves the teacher presenting the song by fragmenting it initially and then gradually connecting song phrases toward the creation of a meaningful whole.

Klinger et al’s results show that children who were taught through the immersion method performed the song with greater accuracy than those who were taught through the phrase-by-phrase process. The immersion method provides greater musical and textual continuity.

2.3.2 Male Vocal Modelling with Children

Several researchers have studied the effect of vocal models on the pitch matching accuracy of children. Male choral educators who work with primary school children often face difficulties in providing an appropriate model for treble singers. Children have to transpose an octave higher in response to the male model’s

example and this may present a problem for accurate pitching. One dilemma the male choral educator has when working with children, is with regard to which register to use when modelling for the choristers.

Montgomery (1988) investigated the effect of a male teacher using his normal singing voice (modal register) in one class and a falsetto voice in the other class on children's ability to sing pitch patterns. All the subjects were significantly more correct in their responses when the vocal model was singing in a falsetto voice.

Green (1990) investigated the effect of vocal models (an adult male, adult female, and a child) on the pitch matching accuracy of children in grades 1-6. The most accurate responses were given to the child model and the least number of correct responses were elicited by the male model.

The purpose of the study by Price et al (1994) was to determine the effects of male timbre (both bass and tenor), falsetto, and sine-wave models on pitch-matching skills of 216 inaccurate singers in grades K-8. They found that children respond more accurately to vocal models than to instrumental ones (sine waves).

2.3.3 Choral Educator Competencies and Behaviours, Teaching Style and Methods, and Rehearsal Techniques

Patricia Bourne (1990) investigated the instructional techniques and strategies utilised by exemplary children's choral directors from community and public school settings. Other areas that were also investigated were: organisation of the children's choir; criteria for and selection of appropriate choral literature; and development of desirable vocal tone. This research provides the choral educator of the children's choir with valuable information.

Research by Hamann et al (1990) investigated the effects that the classroom environment had on the achievement of high school instrumental and vocal groups

in contest ratings. They found that pupils need to feel a part of the learning process and not function merely as passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge. The study of Hamann et al clearly indicates that classrooms that were more pupil-centred, promoted the highest levels of achievement. There should be many opportunities for pupil input, high levels of teacher support (caring), clarity of rules, and a variety of well-structured lessons and activities.

Gumm (1993) researched the teaching styles of secondary choral music directors, basing the study on teachers' perceptions of their own teaching. The primary purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive model. Common factor analysis of 134 teaching behaviour survey items was used to confirm eight dimensions of choral music teaching styles: Student Independence, Teacher Authority, Positive Learning Environment, Time Efficiency, Nonverbal Motivation, Aesthetic Music Performance, Group Dynamics, and Music Concept Learning.

Charles Schmidt (1995) examined 120 secondary school choristers' perceptions of teacher verbal approval and disapproval feedback in response to a student's vocal performance. The researcher's results indicate that the choristers are more likely to attribute success in choral music to internal reasons (effort and ability), rather than external reasons (teacher, task difficulty and luck). Approval feedback that is directed to student improvement (e.g. "That sounds much better than it did last week") appears to be more significant than norm-referenced approval (e.g. "You're doing much better on that exercise than other students I've had"). The researcher advises choral educators to be circumspect in the ways in which disapproval or negative feedback is used.

The purpose of Julie Skadsem's research (1997) was to examine the effectiveness of four instructional techniques – conductor's verbal directions, dynamic markings in the score, conducting gestures, and choir dynamic level – on individuals' singing of sudden dynamic changes in music. Her results indicated that verbal instruction had a significantly better influence on the singer's dynamic singing

responses than the other three modes of instruction. She cautions that the verbal instructions should be kept brief so as not to interfere with the flow of the rehearsal. Surprisingly, the instructional stimulus that received the lowest level of response was the conductor's gestural change. Skadsem recommends having students practise conducting gestures or other physical movements as they sing so that they might be encouraged to pay more attention to the conductor.

Dunn (1997) conducted research to observe performance improvement of seven choral music concepts across six 30-minute rehearsals, after sequential, structured task presentation. The study was also designed to examine the effects of teacher reinforcement on student attentiveness, performance achievement, and attitude. The subjects for this study were the choristers from two select high school choirs in the USA. Experimental treatment was implemented in that one choir received reinforcement (feedback) and the other no reinforcement (no feedback). The group that received teacher reinforcement, achieved higher scores from the judges than the group that received no teacher reinforcement.

These results support the idea that given equivalent amounts of teacher instruction and performance time, the addition of teacher academic reinforcement might produce better musical performances (Dunn 1997: 564).

Furthermore, choristers in the feedback group consistently had a more positive attitude toward the music, rehearsals, and the choral educator.

Davis (1998) investigated 83 rehearsals and four final performances of the beginning and advanced choirs in two high schools to observe the rehearsal of one musical selection in each choir from introduction to performance at an adjudicated festival. The researcher endeavoured to pinpoint how two accomplished choral educators with varied effective teaching skills brought about high musical achievement. Her findings show that as the performance improved in rehearsals, there was increased student rehearsal performance and increased educator "conducting only", i.e. "the conductors in this study provided more non-verbal communication during student performance time as students became more

proficient” (Davis 1998: 506). Furthermore, as performances improved, there was a decrease in educator instructional sequences per minute, and sequences ending with positive educator feedback.

The purpose of Yarbrough and Madsen’s study (1998) was firstly, to identify and define choral educator behaviours that create good rehearsals, and secondly, to determine how those behaviours succeeded in producing excellence in music performance. The subjects for the study were 89 university music majors. They were presented with seven videotaped choral rehearsal excerpts which focussed on the conductor/teacher. The subjects were asked to rate the conductor/teacher in each excerpt with regard to: use of rehearsal time, musicianship, accuracy of instruction, student attentiveness, student performance quality, overall teaching effectiveness, enthusiasm, intensity, pacing and personality.

As a result of their findings, the researchers state the following (Yarbrough & Madsen 1998: 477):

In choral conducting and methods classes we strongly encourage prospective conductors to maintain a fast pace, to allow singers maximum performance time, and to keep instructions brief and to the point. [...] Even tedious drill rehearsals can be successful in maintaining student attentiveness if approvals and eye contact are high and if teacher talk is efficient, accurate, and kept to a minimum.

2.3.4 Recruiting Choristers

Research by Mizener, “Attitudes of Third- Through Sixth-Grade Children Toward Singing and Choir Participation and Assessed Singing Skill” (1993), shows that girls have a more positive attitude toward singing and choir participation than boys. Both boys’ and girls’ positive attitude towards singing decreased steadily as the grade level increased. Mizener’s research indicates that most children like to sing under certain circumstances. The choral educator therefore needs to make use of these preferred singing circumstances to enhance positive attitudes to singing, like for instance using songs that are age- and grade-appropriate. Boys’ attitude to

singing may be strengthened and a more positive gender identification may be inculcated by identifying with men who are active in singing organisations in the community or participating in social singing activities. Singing experiences in the home have a significant relationship to attitude toward music, and children have a more positive attitude towards singing when the home environment supports singing activities. The choral educator should periodically inform the parent body and stress the importance of the favourable influence of participating in the choral programme. (Refer to **Part II**, 2.6 “Involving Parents”.)

Cooper (1995) observes that differences between boys’ and girls’ singing accuracy should probably not be attributed to gender alone. Other factors such as motivation and peer pressure may also have an effect.

2.3.5 The Mixed-Gender Children’s Choir

For centuries only boys’ voices were trained to sing in the churches and cathedrals of Europe and England. (Refer to **Part II**, 2.3 “The Changing Voice”.) In the second part of the 20th century, an innovative development was the establishment of children’s choirs that involved *both* boys and girls. The all-boy choir tradition, emulating the tradition of the Europeans, particularly that of the Central Europeans (e.g. the Vienna Boys Choir), and the British Cathedral Choir tradition, was the forerunner of the more recent mixed-gender children’s choir phenomenon. The mixed-gender children’s choir movement has grown from strength to strength and has become the norm rather than the exception in all of the Western World. Music educators discovered what a tremendously rewarding aesthetic instrument the mixed-gender children’s choir can be.

2.3.5.1 The Scandinavian Mixed-Gender Children’s Choir

Professor Erkki Pohjola, founder and director (1963-1994) of the world renowned Tapiola Choir from Finland, was instrumental in establishing a

mixed-gender choir of soprano and alto voices as a new artistic instrument in the Scandinavian countries. He established the Tapiola Choir in 1963 and developed it into one of the most highly acclaimed vocal instruments of our time. Pohjola is considered one of the leading personalities of Finnish music education.

In 1964 Pohjola attended the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference in Budapest. The conference demonstrated to what extent the Soviet bloc countries, Hungary in particular, had progressed in music education. He had the chance to meet Zoltán Kodály, the celebrated Hungarian champion of music education in the 20th century. Pohjola heard the children's choirs from Hungary and Bulgaria perform and was captured by the music which "bubbled out from the national musical culture. Practically all the songs were sung in the singers' own languages" (Pohjola 1992: 51).

At the Budapest ISME Conference in 1964 I realised that a new artistic instrument had been born, a 'mixed choir' of soprano and alto voices, with both boys and girls in the line-up. My work was carried along by this new current, one which has since happily become a worldwide flood (Pohjola 1992: 61).

From Budapest Pohjola travelled to Salzburg and attended a summer course at the Orff Institute, where he met Carl Orff. These encounters with the main currents of music education in the 1960s had a definite influence on Pohjola's work.

The Tapiola choir has produced several CDs under Pohjola's direction. The choir has prompted the international choral community to refer to their natural voice production based on the Finnish tradition as the "Tapiola Sound". The choir emphasises the singer's ability to blend with the other voices, but also values the individuality of a voice.

The basic element is the young singer's own voice, moulded by the vernacular. The ideal sound is that of a stringed instrument: it is warm, light and translucent, the phrasing is musical and the singing gives the impression of being easy and effortless. But the ideal sound of the Choir is not just one closely-defined concept; it is a combination of different choral timbres and is always adapted to the music being performed (Tapiola Choir: 2001).

The integration of singing, instrumental music and movement has since the choir's inception been one of the guiding principles of the Tapiola Choir. Each of the choristers entering the choir either plays an instrument already or is encouraged to do so. Choristers often act as soloists or accompanists to the choir. The performances are enhanced by movement and dance.

In 1971 Tapiola Choir won the illustrious and coveted Silver Rose Bowl in the BBC's "Let the Peoples Sing" competition. The choir has been on almost 60 international concert tours, visiting several countries in Europe, as well as Israel, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Kari Ala-Pöllänen has been the Tapiola Choir's conductor and artistic director since 1994. Tapiola Choir has made three CDs with Kari Ala-Pöllänen as the conductor.

The Children's Choir of the Royal Danish Academy of Music was founded in 1978 by Margrete Enevold. The choir serves as a practice choir for future conductors and teachers. Bente Colding-Jørgensen is currently the conductor of the choir. Since 1978 the choir has developed into one of the finest international children's choirs. The choir consists of 60 talented boys and girls, aged 10-16, who come from the Copenhagen area. There is a "Little Choir" of younger children, aged 7-10, that feed into the Children's Choir. The choir has recorded four CDs and they have recorded numerous radio and TV performances. They perform all over Denmark and have undertaken several tours abroad to countries like Norway, Sweden,

Scotland, Germany, USA, Israel, Argentina, Brazil, Greenland and Austria. (Children's Choir of the Royal Danish Academy of Music 2001.)

2.3.5.2 The American Mixed-Gender Children's Choir

In America the mixed-gender children's choir gained momentum with the moving performance of Doreen Rao's Glen Ellyn Children's Choir at the American Choral Directors' Association (ACDA) Bicentennial Celebration (1976). This was the first mixed-gender children's choir to perform at such an event (Friar 1999).

Early in 1979, ACDA began to discuss the difference between boy choirs and children's choirs. It was agreed that while choral repertory was in most cases a common quality, the European-based boy choir tradition, educational philosophy, rehearsal psychology, and social implications significantly differed from that of most American children's choirs in the schools, church, and community (Rao 1989: 6).

In 1979 the American Choral Director's Association formed the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs. Up to this stage, the children's choirs fell under the auspices of the ACDA Boy Choir Committee. In the 1980s and 1990s the mixed-gender children's choir movement grew from strength to strength in North America under the leadership of the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs, chaired by Doreen Rao. Their primary aim was to:

develop a *national awareness of children's choirs*: (a) as an instrument of artistic excellence; (b) as a resource basic to music education; and (c) as a means of reviving the joy of singing in American culture (Rao 1989: 7).

The ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs promoted the formation of children's choirs throughout the USA in community, church, and elementary school contexts. They encouraged distinguished American

composers to compose choral music for children's voices and prevailed upon choral departments and music education faculties at tertiary institutions to design courses pertinent to the treble voice children's choir. They were also instrumental in the formation of an ACDA National Honors Children's Chorus, representing children from throughout the United States to rehearse and perform at the Nashville convention in 1983. The ACDA Honors Choir at the National Convention received an enthusiastic standing ovation from the full Convention. In 1993 the San Antonio Convention celebrated the tenth anniversary of the honour choir concept, which was introduced in 1983.

ACDA members began to recognize that: (a) the children's choir represented the 'future of choral music' in America; that (b) attending to young choirs can be an *artistically* satisfying experience; and that (c) supporting the children's choir movement is an investment in the future of high school, college, and professional choral programs (Rao 1989: 8-9).

A joint effort by the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs and MENC produced the publication entitled *Choral Music for Children: An Annotated List* (1990). The committee consisted of five dedicated, experienced and inspired group of United States and Canadian teachers who direct children's choirs. Doreen Rao was the editor. The project was undertaken to provide choral educators with a sourcebook on choral repertoire with artistic merit and pedagogical value, suitable for the children's unchanged, treble voice choir. Furthermore, the ACDA developed one of the first professional resources in video format – *ACDA on Location, Volume 1: The Children's Choir with Doreen Rao and the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus*.

Newly formed children's choirs proliferated throughout the USA and the children's choir movement was steadily coming into its own. This has resulted in more published articles pertaining to children's choirs in professional journals like the *Music Educators Journal* and *The Choral*

Journal. The following are a few examples (in publishing chronological order):

- “A Responsibility to Young Voices” by Peggy Bennett (1986);
- “Writing and Arranging for Young Singers” by Mary Goetze (1989);
- “Choral Tone in a Children’s Choir – Its Description and Development” by Amy Chivington (1989);
- “Music in Worship: A Selected List for Children’s Choirs” by Eva Wedel (1990);
- “Elementary School Choirs and Auditions” by Janice Haworth (1992);
- “Our Best and Most Lasting Hope” by Samuel Adler (1993);
- “Children’s Choirs: The Future, the Challenge” by Linda Ferreira (1993);
- “Children’s Choirs: A Revolution From Within” by Doreen Rao (1993);
- “Building the American Children’s Choir Tradition” by Barbara Tagg (1993);
- “Michael Hurd’s Choral Cantatas for Children” by James McCray (1996);
- “Tuning Up for a Great Elementary Chorus” by Amy Chivington (1998);
- “Developing a Children’s Choir Concert” by Angela Broecker (2000);

Several pertinent research studies can be found in the *Journal of Research in Singing*, the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, and *The Journal of Research in Music Education*. (For an overview of published articles on research related to children’s choirs, refer to **Part I**, 2.3.1 “Children’s Singing and Vocal Pedagogy”, 2.3.2 “Male Vocal Modelling with Children” and 2.3.4 “Recruiting Choristers”, above.)

In January 1991, Malcolm Goldring, Music Inspector in the West Midlands, England, spent two months touring the United States and Canada

to study the training of children's choirs. He was looking for examples of good practice which might be applied in the United Kingdom to stop the decline of choral singing among young people there. He states that:

yes, we do have a wonderful and rich history of choral music in our cathedrals and larger parish churches, but this is but a veneer, below which the situation is very patchy indeed (Goldring 1992: 31).

He expresses the opinion that North America has a children's choir movement that is "underpinned with a strong philosophical base, with clear aims and objectives, and clear organizational structures to help carry these out" (Goldring 1992: 32). He visited approximately 20 children's choirs in the United States and America and was most impressed that every one of them had a structured rehearsal pattern with the choristers being prepared for the rehearsal with relaxation activities, posture control, and breathing exercises. He was also struck by the exceptional standards which the American/Canadian choral directors set for their choirs and the same high standards which the choristers set for themselves. He witnessed rehearsals that provided rich learning experiences for the choristers and was thrilled to hear "so many of your young people's choirs singing works which made great demands on their intellectual, literary, emotional, and musical resources (Goldring 1992: 33). He commended the North Americans for having managed to encourage composers and arrangers to write for young choirs and to persuade publishing houses to make the music readily available. He was also taken with the level of training that choral directors receive at tertiary institutions. The expanding children's choir movement in North America is certainly alive and well; so much so, that "children's choir directors have become one of the fastest growing constituencies in ACDA" (Tagg 1993: 7).

2.3.5.3 The English Mixed-Gender Children's Choir

For centuries the English cathedral choir tradition allowed the selection of boys only for performance of sacred music. This has changed in the last decade of the 20th century and it is now becoming common to find girls in these previously male dominated choirs or, alternatively to have a parallel girls' choir. Salisbury Cathedral was the first to have a parallel girls' choir in 1990. Cathedrals in Exeter, Wells, Norwich, York, Wakefield, Chester and Winchester now have parallel girls' choirs. Sarah Baldock directs a girls' choir at Winchester Cathedral. She says that:

We won't just be barging in with the girls. I have a deep sense that we will be joining an existing foundation and adding a dimension to it (Kay 1998: 30).

Cathedrals such as St Mary's, Edinburgh, and Manchester have mixed choirs.

Research has been conducted which suggests that it is not necessarily such an easy task to tell the difference between trained boys and girls singing the treble line in a choir. When Desmond Sergeant and Graham Welch of the British Centre for Advanced Studies in Music Education played recordings of boys', girls' and mixed choirs to a panel of experts, most were misidentified. Welch states the following:

We have a clear stereotype of a cathedral boy choir sound. What this study shows is that if girls have been trained in that tradition, we perceive that they sound the same as boys. Choirs who do not conform to this stereotype were mistakenly identified as girls. We conjecture that this difference is intimately connected to the choral director's approach: they can train girls to imitate the acoustic patterning of the male voice (Kay 1998: 31).

David Howard, Christopher Barlow and Graham Welch subsequently did research on "Vocal Production and Listener Perception of Trained Girls

and Boys in the English Cathedral Choir” (2000). The aim was to investigate whether or not listeners could perceive the difference between boys or girls singing the top line of snippets of traditional cathedral choral music. Either the girls or the boys sang with the lay clerks in the cathedral. It is clear from their research results that the ability to distinguish between the boys or the girls singing the top line is not necessarily such an easy task. There was considerable variation between the musical choral setting which the choristers were singing. Masking by the rest of the choir and/or organ accompaniment could have an influence on the listener’s ability to differentiate between whether the boys or the girls were singing the top line.

The Americans, Randall Moore and Janice Killian’s research also maintains that the ability to distinguish between trained boy and girl singers in a blind situation may be a more difficult task than centuries of tradition might have led us to believe (2000).

2.3.5.4 The South African Mixed-Gender Children’s Choir

As was mentioned before, the mixed-gender children’s choir movement grew from strength to strength in the second half of the 20th century throughout the Western world and has become the norm rather than the exception. This trend can also be discerned in South Africa, to the extent that most of the outstanding children’s regional choirs currently, are mixed-gender choirs. The following outstanding choirs (to name but a few) are examples of these mixed-gender Children’s choirs; and serve as role models for primary school choirs:

- Bloemfontein
- East Rand
- Highveld (Ermelo)
- Jakaranda (University of Pretoria)
- Kimberley

- North West (Potchefstroom)
- Pietermaritzburg
- Tygerberg
- West Rand.

2.3.6 Philip McLachlan's Influence on Choral Singing in South Africa in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Philip McLachlan (1916-1983) has repeatedly been called “the father” of choral singing in South Africa (Jankowitz 1990: iv). He initially studied in natural sciences at the University of Stellenbosch and obtained a B.Sc. degree in 1936 and two years later, a B.Ed. degree – both with distinction. Because of his interest in music, he also attended classes at the university's music conservatory. He completed two years of study in both organ and piano and one year of solo singing and theory.

In 1947/48 he studied school music and singing at the London Institute of Education and the Royal Academy of Music. He studied choral training with Kurt Thomas in the 1950s and this experience had a dramatic influence on his work. In 1962 he undertook a study tour of the USA and Europe. He was deeply impressed by the Roger Wagner Chorale and the Oberlin College choir in the USA, the Netherlands' Chamber Choir under the direction of Felix de Nobel and the boys' choir of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In 1968 he once more travelled to the USA where he attended the American Choral Directors' Association (ACDA) Conference and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). He also travelled throughout Europe in that year and attended the International Society for Music Education (ISME) Congress held in Dijon, France. These visits served as an additional shaping influence and added to his extensive experience in music education and choral conducting; experience which he put into practice with his own trend-setting choral and general class music teaching activities.

McLachlan was appointed as a Senior Lecture in Nature Study and School Music in the Faculty of Education at the University of Stellenbosch in 1954. In 1973 he became Associate Professor in School Music at the same university. McLachlan was also responsible for training senior music students in what was then called “Class singing and choral conducting”. He was a founder member of University Choir of Stellenbosch in 1936 and he became the conductor of this choir in 1955. This choir was ultimately received with great acclaim both in South Africa and overseas.

In his two chosen fields of school music and choral conducting, Philip McLachlan advanced to the forefront of South African musicians. His choral work established new standards of choral performance which have often been emulated but rarely equalled, and with his dynamic application to the cause of South African school music he contributed decisively to the establishment of international standards of class instruction. This energetic and lovable man became a prominent figure in the South African musical world to two generations which equally share the impress of his work (Malan 1984: 222).

The Afrikaans book *Klasonderrig in Musiek: 'n Handleiding vir Onderwysers* by McLachlan (1986), to this day serves as a valuable resource book for teachers of general class music, and also contains a substantial section on choral work.

McLachlan’s tremendous influence on choral music in South Africa is undisputed, so much so, that the South African Choral Society decided in 1983 to institute biennial choral workshops which they named after him. He was instrumental in establishing a fine choral tradition in South Africa which is continually growing from strength to strength.