

# HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL CHOIR DIRECTOR

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES  
THAT WORK



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# Assessment Strategies that Work

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## ***Student Musical Knowledge***

### Written Theory

- Musical Terms & Symbols
- Solfège Identification
- Pitch Identification
- Key Signatures
- Time Signatures
- Triad Identification
- Interval Identification

### Listening Skills

- Tonal Dictation
- Rhythmic Dictation
- Intervals
- Triad Recognition

## ***Student Performance Skills***

- Components of Singing
- Tonal Patterns
- Rhythm Patterns
- Repertoire Singing Tests
- Sight-Reading Tests
- Vocal Pitch Exercises
  - Major Scale
  - Minor Scales
  - Major Scale in Thirds
  - Major Scale in Fourths
  - Triads

## ***Create a safe environment for individual singing***

- Start with a positive pep talk about giving them ownership
- Begin with examples that are not for a grade
- Never punish students by making them sing individually
- Lots of praise and rewards
- Random Small Groups:
  - brave souls & chicken hearts
  - clothing colors
  - rows
  - sections
- Practice, Practice, Practice
  - More Groups: partner 1, partner 2
- Student support system during assessments

# Vocal Pitch Exercises

## Major Scale in Thirds

Do Mi Re Fa Mi Sol Fa La Sol Ti La Do Ti Re Do

Do La Ti Sol La Fa Sol Mi Fa Re Mi Do Re Ti Do

## Major Scale in Fourths

Do Fa Re Sol Mi La Fa Ti Sol Do La Re Ti Mi Do

Do Sol Ti Fa La Mi Sol Re Fa Do Mi Ti Re La Do

## Triads in the Major Scale

Do Mi Sol Mi Do Re Fa La Fa Re Mi Sol Ti Sol Mi Fa La Do La Fa

Sol Ti Re Ti Sol La Do Mi Do La Ti Re Fa Re Ti Do Mi Sol Mi Do

## Melodic Minor Scale

La Ti Do Re Mi Fi Si La La Sol Fa Mi Re Do Ti La

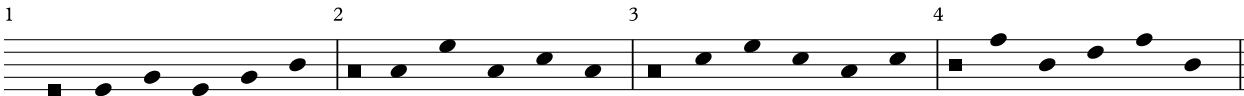
## Melodic Minor Scale Exercise


*sempre staccato*

la ti do re mi fi si la sol fa mi re do ti la

# Daily Sight-Reading Exercises

## Tonal Patterns

1. 

2. 

## Rhythm Work

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

## Mini-Melodies

1. 

2. 

# Sight-Reading Assessment

Listen to three examples of students sight-reading and assign an assessment grade.

## Student Example 1



✓ = Correct Measure

- = Incorrect Measure

P = Pitch Error

R = Rhythm Error

Measures: \_\_\_\_\_

Flow: \_\_\_\_\_

Key: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Example 2



✓ = Correct Measure

- = Incorrect Measure

P = Pitch Error

R = Rhythm Error

Measures: \_\_\_\_\_

Flow: \_\_\_\_\_

Key: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Example 3



✓ = Correct Measure

- = Incorrect Measure

P = Pitch Error

R = Rhythm Error

Measures: \_\_\_\_\_

Flow: \_\_\_\_\_

Key: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

# Assessment Tools

## Triads


### Triad Identification (5 pts.)

Identify each triad.




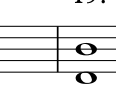
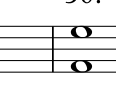
41.	42.	43.	44.	45.
				
A. I B. ii C. iii D. IV E. V	A. V B. vi C. vii° D. I E. i	A. ii B. II C. III D. I E. iii	A. vi B. vii° C. I D. iv E. IV	A. III B. iii C. ii D. II E. vii

## Intervals Chart

U												
0	1	2										12

### Intervals (5 pts.)

Identify each interval.

46.	47.	48.	49.	50.
				
A. M4 B. P4 C. M5 D. P5 E. m4	A. M3 B. m3 C. M2 D. m2 E. M4	A. P5 B. M2 C. D3 D. A4 E. P4	A. M3 B. m3 C. M7 D. M6 E. m6	A. P8 B. M7 C. m6 D. M6 E. m7

## Vocal Pitch Exercise - Individual Singing Test

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	SCORE
<b>Solfège</b>	The student sings the vocal pitch exercise without any errors.	The student sings the vocal pitch exercise with an isolated error.	The student sings the vocal pitch exercise with frequent and/or repeated errors.	Very few correct solfège patterns.	
<b>Pitch</b>	Virtually no errors. Pitch is very accurate.	An occasional, isolated error; but most of the time pitch is accurate and secure.	Some accurate pitches, but there are frequent and/or repeated errors.	Very few accurate or secure pitches.	
<b>Hand Signs</b>	The student performs the vocal pitch exercise without any errors in hand signs.	The student performs the vocal pitch exercise with an isolated error in hand signs.	The student performs the vocal pitch exercise with frequent and/or repeated errors in hand signs.	Very few hand signs used.	
<b>Tone Quality</b>	Tone is consistently focused, clear, and centered throughout the range of exercise. Tone has professional quality.	Tone is focused, clear, and centered through the normal range of the instrument. Extremes in range sometimes cause tone to be less controlled. Tone quality typically does not detract from the performance.	Tone is often focused, clear, and centered, but sometimes the tone is uncontrolled in the normal range. Extremes in range are usually uncontrolled. Occasionally the tone quality detracts from overall performance.	The tone is often not focused, clear or centered regardless of the range, significantly detracting from the overall performance.	

<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>
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## Individual Performance Assessment - Repertoire

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	SCORE
<b>Pitch</b>	Virtually no errors. Pitch is very accurate.	An occasional, isolated error, but most of the time pitch is accurate and secure.	Some accurate pitches, but there are frequent and/or repeated errors.	Very few accurate or secure pitches.	
<b>Rhythm</b>	The beat is secure and the rhythms are accurate for the selection that is being sung.	The beat is secure and the rhythms are mostly accurate. There are a few duration errors, but these do not detract from the overall performance.	The beat is somewhat erratic. Some rhythms are accurate. Frequent or repeated duration errors. Rhythm problems occasionally detract from the overall performance.	The beat is usually erratic and rhythms are seldom accurate, detracting from the overall performance.	
<b>Diction</b>	Student articulates clearly and the text of the music is understandable.	Student articulates the words somewhat clearly and the text can be understood most of the time.	Student is sometimes articulating the words but the text is often not discernable.	Student rarely articulates the words and the text is not discernable.	
<b>Tone Quality</b>	Tone is consistently focused, clear, and centered throughout the range of the voice.	Tone is focused, clear, and centered throughout the normal singing range. Extremes in range sometimes cause tone to be less controlled. Tone quality typically does not detract from the performance.	Tone is often focused, clear, and centered, but sometimes the tone is uncontrolled in the normal singing range. Extremes in range are usually uncontrolled. Occasionally the tone quality detracts from the overall performance.	The tone is often not focused, clear or centered regardless of the range, significantly detracting from the overall performance.	
<b>Breath Support</b>	Student is breathing properly and supporting the tone to the best of his/her ability.	Student is usually breathing properly, but occasionally does not support the tone to the end of each phrase.	Student sometimes breathes properly and only occasionally supports the tone to the end of each phrase.	Student is rarely breathing correctly and never supports the tone to the end of each phrase.	

<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>
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## **Music Diagnostic Exam 50 total points**

**Part 1 Listening Part A: Tonal Dictation & Rhythmic Dictation:** The student will listen to a series of musical notes played on the piano. The student will be able to identify the musical pattern played from the patterns provided on the exam.

**Part 2 Listening Part B: Triads & Intervals:** The student will listen to triads played on the piano. Any major, minor or diminished triad may be played. The student will be able to identify the quality of the triad played. The student will listen to examples of an ascending broken two note interval. The student will be able to identify the interval by ear.

**Part 3 Musical Symbols:** The student will be able to identify the name and meaning of a variety of musical symbols.

**Part 4 Musical Terminology:** The student will be able to identify a variety of musical terms related to tempo, dynamics, change in tempo, style, and articulation.

**Part 5 Pitch Identification:** The student will be able to identify the proper note(pitch) name when given an example with notes on the treble clef staff or the bass clef staff.

**Part 6 Key Signature Identification:** The student will be able to identify the major key of a musical selection by looking at the sharps or flats at the beginning of the example.

**Part 7 Time Signature Identification:** The student will be able to identify the proper time signature when given a musical example. The student must determine the number of beats per measure and which note receives the beat.

**Part 8 Solfege Identification:** The student will be able to identify where the solfege "Do" is located on the staff in any major key, then identify the proper solfege syllables that correspond with the musical notes provided.

**Part 9 Triad Identification:** The student will be able to identify the root position triad written on the staff in any major key. The student must be able to determine the major key, the solfege of the notes in the example and therefore the proper triad name and quality. (For example: Tonic, Major)

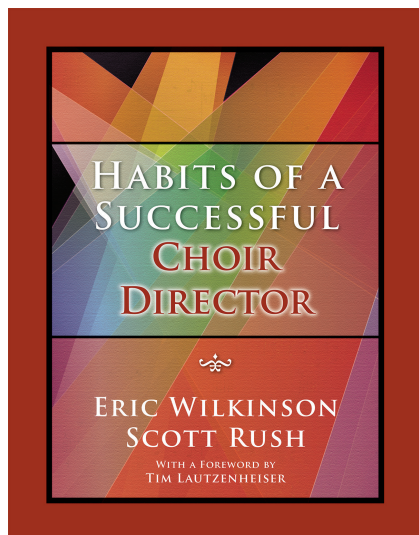
**Part 10 Interval Identification:** The student will be able to properly identify the interval between two notes on the staff. They will be able to provide the correct quantity and quality of the interval. (For example; M2 or Major Second)



Eric Wilkinson is the director of the Wando High School Choir program in Charleston, South Carolina and is co-author of "Habits of a Successful Choir Director" as well as "Habits of a Successful Choral Musician" both published by GIA Publications. Wilkinson's choirs have consistently earned superior ratings at state and national choral festivals and have performed at Carnegie Hall, St. Peter's Basilica, Washington National Cathedral and Pearl Harbor. Under his direction the Wando Choirs have premiered new choral works by Ēriks Ešņvalds, Michael John Trotta, and David Brunner. His pursuit of excellence in teaching and conducting has taken him to London, Vienna, Varna, New York City, and Medomak, Maine.

Wilkinson has served on the SCMEA All-State committee for ten years and chaired the audition process for four years. Wilkinson's choirs have been invited to perform for SCMEA and ACDA conventions. He is a National Board Certified Teacher and was awarded the prestigious *Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award* in 2007. He has also received the SCMEA *Outstanding Young Music Educator Award* and been named *Teacher of the Year*.

Wilkinson earned his BA from the University of New Hampshire and MM from the University of South Carolina. He and his wife, Emily Wilkinson live in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina with their two daughters Mary Catherine and Julia.



## Habits of a Successful Choir Director

*Wilkinson and Rush have created a fantastic “go-to” resource for choral directors who are looking for new ideas, checklists, and reminders for successful day-to-day operations within a school setting. This practical and insightful book should be on every choral director’s shelf!*

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American Composers Forum National Board of Directors

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*Habits of a Successful Choral Musician is a resource for both choir directors and choral singers that builds music fundamentals (sight-singing and ear training) and vocal functions (from posture to tone). This book has provided a clear and well-organized pedagogy that is helping my students to improve in all facets of being a choral musician.*

— Alan Davis, Director of Choirs, Hemet High School, Hemet, CA

*Habits of a Successful Choral Musician by Eric Wilkinson and Scott Rush is a fantastic resource for choir directors who seek to develop all levels of singers. The book provides a pedagogical approach to teaching voice building, rhythm work, tuning exercises, sight-reading, theory exercises, and suggestions to nurture the entire musician. I love how this one method book covers multiple aspects of musicianship, rather than having to use multiple books to build each individual skill.*

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- Includes a sequential format that leads to the mastery of reading rhythms and, ultimately, to musical sight-singing. Provides chorales and other ensemble exercises for the development of tone quality, ensemble sonority, and musicianship.
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