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Five Recent Sightsinging Texts

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FIVE RECENT SIGHTSINGING TEXTS [1]

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A sightsinging textbook can serve many different purposes. It may provide materials for students to prepare or sing at sight, may guide students and teachers through levels of skill development, and can offer guidelines and suggestions for practice and performance. In selecting a sightsinging text, instructors will want to consider how many of these purposes a book fulfills and how specifically it does so.

Some teachers seek curricular guidance from a sightsinging text, and do best to choose from what might be called "firm" texts, those that clearly subscribe to specific methods and levels of development. At the other end of the spectrum are teachers committed to a particular sightsinging curriculum and to the specific types of materials used in that curriculum. These teachers have two choices when it comes to texts: 1) a "firm" text that closely adheres to that curriculum (if this is possible); or 2) a more adaptable text that is flexible enough to allow the reordering and perhaps reinterpretation of its materials.

These two choices represent opposite poles of a continuum. At one end, a teacher may use a sightsinging text in much the same manner as a theory teacher uses a traditional harmony text: the book will lay down rules, and it will order and schedule events during the course. At the other end of the continuum lie sightsinging texts that are analogous to anthologies for analysis used in theory classes: with them, a teacher must determine the sequence and pace at which the materials will be presented.

Most texts fall somewhere between these two poles. In each of their many features, they exhibit certain amounts of prescription or mere presentation, rigidity or malleability. Similarly, sightsinging teachers' styles usually fall between the two styles described above. In an effort to help teachers decide how each text might fit into their plans, I will point out where the many features of five recent sightsinging texts[2] lie on this continuum.

The five sightsinging texts investigated in this article are: the third edition of *A New Approach to Sight Singing* by Sol Berkowitz, Gabriel Fontrier, and Leo Kraft; the third edition of *Music for Sight Singing* by Robert Ottman; the fourth edition of *Sightsinging Complete* by Bruce Benward; *Music for Sight Singing* by Thomas Benjamin, Michael Horvit, and Robert

Nelson; and *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis* by Leland D. Bland. All of these books have been published since 1985. The three that have been reissued in new editions during that period are all well-ensconced in theory classrooms across the country; the two newcomers have yet to be fully tried and tested.

All five assume a similar degree of musical knowledge, in Robert Ottman's words, "some of the simplest aspects of music theory: knowledge of the staff, clef signs, major and minor scales and key signatures, and in rhythm, knowledge of note values and time signatures."[3]

In discussing the purposes of sightsinging, all of the authors cite its application to performance. As Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson put it, sightsinging instruction enables the student "to translate symbol into sound with speed and precision."[4] Bland more vaguely refers to how "this instruction somehow improves musical performance and listening skills."[5] Ottman, Benward, and Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft also emphasize the importance of sightsinging in a broader sense: its contribution to what Ottman calls "the ability to 'hear mentally,' that is, to know how a given piece of music sounds without recourse to an instrument."[6] Benward refers to the ability to sing unfamiliar melodies at first sight as "only a means to an end." He feels that the ultimate goal is "to look at a score of music (any music) and be able to hear it in your mind without having to sing or play it outloud [sic]."[7] By promoting sightsinging as a means to an end and not an end in itself, Benward places the discipline in its proper perspective. Berkowitz, Fontrier, and Kraft perhaps say it most elegantly: "Music does not live on paper. To bring it to life there must be an instrument that can sing, an ear that can hear, and a sensitive musical mind that can sing and hear in the silence of thought."[8]

BERKOWITZ

The third edition of *A New Approach to Sight Singing* by Sol Berkowitz, Gabriel Fontrier, and Leo Kraft is divided into five chapters: "Melodies"; "Sing and Play"; "Duets"; "Themes and Variations (Unaccompanied)"; and "Themes and Variations for Voice and Piano." These are followed by a group of Supplementary Exercises that "focus upon various technical problems" (p. 292). The order of chapters has been slightly rearranged from the revised edition, and the chapter for themes and variations with piano has replaced a chapter entitled "Improvisation Studies" in the previous edition. The Melodies chapter occupies more than one-third the book, and the authors feel "the bulk of class time will probably be devoted to it" (p. x).

Each chapter is divided into four sections: "Elementary"; "Intermediate I"; "Intermediate II"; and "Advanced." The idea behind this division is

that one semester of a four-semester sightsinging sequence should cover the material found in the corresponding sections of all the chapters.

The exercises are carefully graded according to difficulties of pitch and rhythm. This gradation calls for special attention. In Section I, the pitch materials progress from stepwise motion through skips contained in the I, IV, and finally V chords. Major and minor modes are introduced early in this section, and so is the alto clef. The metric material in Section I begins with simple duple, triple, and quadruple meters, with quarter or half notes as beat units; compound meters are represented by six-eight meter only. The rhythms include duple and quadruple division of the beat, the dotted beat, rests, and one-beat anacruses.

Section II begins with skips to tones in the V7 chord, quickly followed by "skips of all diatonic intervals" (p. 31). Chromatic neighboring and passing tones are included, as are modulations to the relative major and dominant. The section ends with a number of melodies in Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian modes. The metric and rhythmic materials introduced in this section are compound triple and compound quadruple meters (with only one meter sign—six-four meter in number 85—containing a lower number other than eight), triplets dividing one beat, ties, half-beat anacruses, and half-beat and quarter-beat syncopations.

Section III introduces some more difficult skips: those larger than an octave and those to chromatic pitches. Some melodies in this section outline or imply secondary dominants and the V9 chord, and the flatted sixth scale degree is included in the major mode. Quintuple meter makes its first appearance here, as do the dotted quarter-beat and triplets dividing one-half of a beat.

In the final section, the tenor clef appears. In addition, various pitch configurations involving the flatted supertonic and mixed major and minor modes as well as quartal, octotonic, whole-tone and augmented-triad pitch collections are presented. Rhythms in this section include octuple division of the beat and double dotting. Changing and complex meters are introduced here, as are simple septuple and compound quintuple meters.

The supplementary exercises are designed to emphasize specific musical figures taken from other contexts. They are built around individual scales, modes, chords, or chromatics and offer extra work for students with specific difficulties.

There is certainly enough material in Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft to keep a sightsinging class busy for four semesters, and the balance among the four sections seems to map appropriately onto those semesters. Although some teachers may disagree with the order of presentation of certain skills or concepts (e.g., the introduction of the tenor clef as late as the fourth section), the book follows a logical path that is not unduly far from that

traveled by many sightsinging books or theory texts. However, the order of presentation is fixed and there is no provision for introducing materials out of sequence, so instructors bothered by the order outlined above might consider adopting another text.

The authors are frequently careful to signal the introduction of new materials. They write: "To facilitate an orderly sequence of learning, the Third Edition introduces a number of topic headings. Each is followed by a short group of melodies focussed on a single topic. Immediately after, there is a longer group of melodies in which all topics presented up to that point are reviewed" (p. x). These topic headings amount to individual sentences, such as "the following three melodies include triplets" (p. 30), which are inserted before exercises that contain new material. The headings are helpful to the student who likes to know what's going on, and to the teacher who may use them to coordinate sightsinging lessons with the teaching of theoretical concepts.

Occasionally, however, new concepts are introduced without topic headings. For example, the dotted quarter-beat (i.e., a dotted sixteenth note in four-four meter) is first included in number 323; triplets dividing one-half a beat (i.e., sixteenth-note triplets in four-four meter) appear first in number 370; octuple division of the beat (i.e., thirty-second notes in two-four meter) is included in number 465; double dotting appears in number 514; compound quintuple meter is used in number 531; alternating simple and compound meters are first included in number 564; the complex meter 3+3+2/8 is used in number 569; the double meter signature 4/4 + 3/4 is used for number 591, and 2/4 + 3/4 is used for variation 5 of theme and variation number 13; melody number 585 focuses on the augmented triad.

In addition to instances where concepts appear without topic headings, in at least one case a concept appears before its topic heading: changing meters are heralded by a heading at number 519, but this device first appears in number 470.

While every minute detail need not be spelled out in a sightsinging manual, I wonder why authors who are generally so careful to introduce new challenges in a didactic manner do not do so in certain cases. To make matters worse, the table of contents is quite taciturn regarding these subject headings, forcing the reader to thumb through the book in search of particular musical figures. No subject headings appear in any part of the book except for the "Melodies" chapter, making the search for specific materials even more difficult in those areas.

Two other omissions warrant discussion. First, this text exhibits a clear prejudice towards certain meter signatures. In simple meters, the quarter note is used almost exclusively as a beat unit; in compound meters, the bottom number of the meter sign is almost always eight. A smaller number

of examples use the half note as a beat unit, usually in alla breve context, and the authors restrict the alla breve symbol, ¢, to its modern usage representing only two-two meter (p. 3), although it can also represent four-two meter.[9] Of the 593 exercises in the Melodies chapter, fewer than 50 use meters other than those just described, and many of those occur in the context of complex or changing meters. My concern here is that students should understand rhythm and meter as systems of proportions that may be represented by many beat units. For example, they should not read four-eight meter as a crippled, smaller version of four-four; they should see all quadruple meter signs as ways of representing a single condition.

The second significant omission is that of the Lydian mode. It appears only once: in the form of a scale in the supplementary exercises. Its absence from a text that includes Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian melodies is puzzling.

Every exercise in the book has been composed by the authors. They explain: "We find that we are able to strike a particular level of difficulty and focus on specific problems more effectively by writing material to meet the students' needs than by using melodies drawn from the literature" (p. ix). While this seems like a sound argument, I am troubled by any approach to music that does not include a single note of "real" music in it. Certainly, those of us who teach sightsinging find it necessary at times to invent exercises that focus on specific musical figures. However, it seems reasonable to expect a sightsinging text to include actual literature containing such figures. These figures must exist in the literature, else why are we drilling them? I can find only one valid reason for inventing melodies in such a text: if the concept we are trying to teach is contained in literature that is at first too difficult, then perhaps specifically composed exercises might progressively lead up to such literature. However, I believe that an entire manual of more than 300 pages spanning at least two years of a college education should not be a prelude to all of music literature itself.

Nonetheless, the music in Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft contains many features of real music. Performance indications are included in every exercise, and phrasing, articulation, tempi, and dynamics are indicated.

Musical terms appear in Italian, German, French, and English. Each page contains a number of such terms, which appear without translation. Appendix I provides a glossary of more than two hundred terms found in the text; this encourages students to look up (and remember) these terms. Similarly, Appendix II contains brief explanations of fourteen musical symbols.

A few guidelines for performance are laid down in Chapter I. The first is to establish the key: "The tonic note of the key (rather than the first note of the melody) should be played on the piano or the pitch pipe and sung by

the student" (p. 3). It is certainly crucial for a sightsinging student to learn how to establish a key, but there is no reason for restricting this skill to occur always from the tonic pitch. Musicians must be able to establish a new key from any scale degree, especially, besides the tonic, the third and fifth. Obvious applications of this ability include a vocal audition in which only the starting pitch is given, and singing the so-called "distant" modulations found particularly in Romantic and Neo-Classical music (e.g., C major to A-flat major). A survey of the literature will reveal that starting notes in the former and pivot tones in the latter fall frequently on scale degrees other than the tonic. Perhaps the next edition of *A New Approach to Sight Singing* might include some exercises specifically composed to teach this skill.

Another guideline for performance involves establishing the tempo. The authors suggest beating time "as a conductor does" (p. 3): a useful technique for maintaining a strong sense of both tempo and meter.

Regarding solmization, the book explicitly endorses no particular method but advises the student to "sing some definite syllable for every note the better to control quality and intonation" (p. 3). Implicit endorsement of the movable do system might be gleaned from the four texted exercises in the book. Two of these four employ solmization in their texts using the movable-do system. However, the authors do briefly describe the use of fixed do, movable do, numbers, and the neutral syllable "la." They state: "A musician is expected to know the system in common use wherever he may be; therefore, the student should master more than one of these techniques" (p. 4). But in what period of time? Students at the level of this book are in dire need of a system—a means of interpreting the sounds and symbols they are dealing with. To ask such a student to switch between (let alone master) two truly different systems courts disaster. Changing from movable do to numbers is a manageable and profitable exercise; changing from movable do to fixed do—which use the the same labels to mean quite different things—will confound even the best of students. Perhaps when students have achieved a proficiency level equal to the challenges of the fourth section, earlier material might be reinterpreted through a different system, but at the earlier stages a unified method of approach is warranted. Indeed, none of the texts reviewed here endorses a particular system. This places them all closer to the role of anthology than text, since a sightsinging text subscribing to neither fixed nor to movable do is similar to a harmony text not recommending the use of Roman numerals over lead-sheet type chord symbols.

In summation, *A New Approach to Sight Singing* consists of examples composed by the authors and ordered in a rigid sequence.

SIGHTSINGING TEXTS

OTTMAN

The sequence of events in Robert Ottman's *Music for Sight Singing* is similar to that in Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft. The twenty-one chapters of musical excerpts are grouped into four parts, "each corresponding to one semester of the usual four-semester theory sequence" (p. xi). Those four parts are titled as follows: I. Diatonic Intervals as Used in Scale Lines and in the Tonic and Dominant Triads; II. Other Uses of Diatonic Intervals, The C Clefs, The Dominant Seventh Chord; III. Chromatic Lines and Modulation, Syncopation, The Medieval Modes; IV. More Difficult Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns, Twentieth Century Materials. At the outset, the treble and bass clefs are used. The alto and tenor clefs are introduced early in the text and occur frequently thereafter. The melodic material moves from scalar to chordal, and from diatonic to chromatic. Diatonic skips to members of the tonic chord are introduced first, then to the tones of dominant, subdominant, and supertonic triads. Skips are then included that have "other intervallic implications" (p. 93). These are skips to nonharmonic tones and from one chordal implication to another. The diatonic material ends with skips to tones of the dominant seventh chord. Chromatics are first introduced as passing and neighboring tones. The V of V is then introduced, as is modulation to the dominant in the major mode, followed by a number of other secondary dominant chords and modulations to closely related keys. Subsequent melodic materials include modality, other chromatic intervals, remote modulation, and a few pantonal and atonal melodies. The progression of rhythmic materials is similarly straightforward: from simple to compound to complex meters, and from duple to quadruple to other divisions of the beat, including syncopation and hemiola. New rhythmic and metric configurations are first introduced in special rhythmic exercises. Ottman suggests that the single-line variety of these exercises should be performed on rhythmic syllables, and he offers two-part exercises that may include hand-tapping of one or both parts.

The above rhythmic and melodic materials are interleaved in the text, yet there is an independence of these materials that allows instructors to reorder their presentation to a certain degree. Thus, for example, even though quadruple division of the beat is introduced in chapter 8 and the dominant seventh chord is first fully presented in chapter 10, the first thirty-six melodies in chapter 10 contain no quadruple division, and are clearly labeled as such. Indeed, many new materials are first introduced in simple contexts, followed by the re-introduction of previously-learned materials. There is much truth in Ottman's claim that "the student will be able to study one problem, rhythmic or melodic, at a time and progress steadily from the easiest material to the most complex" (p. xi). This feature allows many

different instructors with various ideas about the sequence of learning to use Ottman as a source for sightsinging materials. On the other hand, an instructor seeking guidance from this text in terms of designing a syllabus or a curriculum might be disappointed by its flexibility.

The second edition of *Music for Sight Singing* declared, like the first, that "none of the material has been written expressly for sight singing" (p. v). The third edition has maintained this orientation towards the literature of composed and folk music, with the exception of the aforementioned rhythmic exercises and thirty-two examples composed by the author for a new first chapter containing entirely stepwise music. Some instructors will find this chapter helpful, particularly in acclimating students to the discipline of solmization. All subsequent chapters contain actual music literature drawn from a wide variety of sources. A majority of the excerpts in the first half of the text are folk melodies, whereas the later chapters include a majority of pieces written by Western art composers. Any instructor preferring either folk or Western art music should find enough useful material in the text's 1096 examples.

Symbols and terms are included in the music that indicate phrasing, articulation, tempi, and dynamics. The third edition has added a final chapter entitled "Foreign Words and Musical Terms," a glossary of more than one hundred Italian, German, and French words found in the text. This is a welcome addition; as with Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, an instructor may require students to refer to this glossary so that they may thereby retain more of these terms.

Ottman, too, offers some brief guidelines for performance. He cautions observance of meter and key signatures, and—like Berkowitz, Fontrier, and Kraft—tells the reader to "play the tonic note, but no other, immediately before singing" (p. xviii). Once again, it seems unnecessarily restrictive to develop in students the ability to establish a key from only the tonic note. Indeed, *Music for Sight Singing* itself contains a section entitled "Remote Modulation," in which some subsequent key areas are reached through tones other than the new tonic.[10] Certainly, some preparation for the skill of establishing a tonic from other tones would be welcome before this point. Other guidelines spelled out by Ottman include scanning the melody for melodic figures, especially the scales and intervals under current study; attention to phrase markings, with an eye and ear towards cadence points; and the use of conducting to foster steady, continuous performance and the ability to read through mistakes. He cautions: "When stopping and repeating, your performance is not sight singing!" (p. xviii). Certain chapters are preceded by short discussions of some other techniques that may aid in sightsinging. For example, Ottman points out that students should locate on the staff the tones of particular chords (especially

those of the chord under current study) before beginning to sing. Other brief discussions cover secondary dominants, the C clefs, and metric changes to name a few. These discussions are only long enough to serve as indications of what type of material is to follow; on several occasions, the author refers readers to his *Elementary Harmony: Theory and Practice*[11] for further information. However, due to the flexible nature of the material contained in *Music for Sight Singing*, correlation with most theory texts is easily possible.

Ottman also suggests a number of methods of solmization, although he endorses no single one. In the first chapter, which contains melodies only in the major mode, he briefly describes the use of movable do, numbers, letter names, and the neutral syllable "la." He relegates the mentioning of fixed do (a system conceptually equivalent to singing letter names) to a footnote. When the minor mode is introduced in chapter four, he lists the advantages and disadvantages of the la-based and do-based minor systems, once again indicating no preference.

Readers familiar with the previous editions of *Music for Sight Singing* will find several major additions to this one. More than two hundred rhythmic exercises have been added to aid in the introduction of new rhythmic configurations. In addition, more than two hundred other melodies have been added throughout the text, expanding the amount and scope of the material. The aforementioned first chapter is now included, offering a number of stepwise melodies. Other new sections focus on chromatic harmony and twentieth-century techniques. One typographical error is apparent in this new edition: melody #781 (p. 216) is attributed to "Vivardi."

So, in contrast to Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, Robert Ottman's *Music for Sight Singing* consists largely of actual musical excerpts, and these excerpts are chosen in such a way that they may be used in various sequences.

BENWARD

Bruce Benward has taken a somewhat different approach in dividing up the materials in *Sightsinging Complete*. Benward offers sixteen units, each consisting of six sections. The sections, A through F, each contain a particular type of material, so that, for example, Section C in any unit will always contain intervallic drills. This organization is markedly different from that found in the third edition,[12] where the number and sequence of sections varied from unit to unit. In the current edition, the headings for the six sections are as follows: (A) Shorter and Easier Melodies to be Sung at Performance Tempo; (B) Tonal Melodies for More Comprehensive Study;

(C) Intervals; (D) Melodies for Interval Singing; (E) Two-, Three- and Four-Voice Excerpts; and (F) Rhythm. This concentration of materials into sections allows instructors to focus class time on or to de-emphasize certain aspects of the text—a valuable feature. In addition, individual students who need extra work on a particular topic may concentrate on that section in various units. Sections A, B, and E contain exercises and excerpts similar to those found in all of the texts discussed above. Section F consists of rhythmic "modules" that may be practiced in an atomistic fashion or strung together to form longer rhythmic exercises similar to those in Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson or the new edition of the Ottman. There are, however, no two-part rhythmic exercises. Sections C and D are unique in this group of texts in that they emphasize an intervallic approach to sightsinging. By virtue of the book's design, these non-tonal, intervallic exercises are interlaced with what some instructors may feel is more easily grasped tonal material. This design also allows an instructor who does not subscribe to combining these two types of materials to eliminate the intervallic exercises or delay their study until later in the curriculum.

However, the intervallic approach of Sections C and D creeps into Sections A, B, and E. These three sections, which consist of tonal materials, progress at first in a fashion similar to the other texts already discussed. In the first two units, Benward presents stepwise melodies, then introduces skips to members of the tonic triad. In Units 3 through 7, he departs from this approach, which is oriented towards scale degrees and harmonic function, and instead restricts the materials by interval type (i.e., only skips of P5, P4, M3, and m3 are included). This hybrid approach may have some validity, but Benward himself admits that "a descending perfect 4th from scale degrees four to one is easier than from six to three..." (p. x). Why, then, use intervals as a means of grading these materials? Benward tells the student: "When you learn that from C to E is the same distance as from F to A or G to B your problem is diminished considerably. Learning to sing intervals . . . is an absolute must" (p. ix). While this example may carry a certain amount of force in C major, what about its appearance in, say, F major? The interval from G to B natural in this context carries with it a function—and therefore a "feel"—quite different from the other two; for proof of this, ask any student working hard to complete Unit 3 of this book to sing these three intervals in the context of F major. *Sightsinging Complete* contains tacit acceptance of this fact: the raised fourth scale degree is not presented in any tonal context until Unit 8. But even in their diatonic context, the above intervals are each imbued with their own tonal functions that set them apart from each other. While I agree with Benward that "the disciplined identification of intervals in a melodic context will pay handsome dividends in an enhanced grasp of tonal music and an even greater

reward when music of the twentieth century is encountered" (p. x), I also wonder whether this is the most efficient manner in which to present such study. Interval size is not a crucial factor in determining difficulty of perception or audiation in a tonal context. One might assume that this extends to sightsinging as well. A number of studies point to the conclusion that context determines the difficulty of a melodic skip.[13] Merton Shatzkin writes: "This suggests that difficulty with intervals may be more than a matter of just their width," among other things.[14] He questions those ear-training methods that "still concentrate on interval perception outside, rather than inside, a context."[15] A much more important factor is the scale degree of the pitch skipped to. As a simple example, singing or identifying skips to the tonic pitch would be relatively simple, regardless of the size of the skip, when compared with skips to, say, the fourth scale degree or to chromatic pitches. Benward himself makes this point in cautioning that a student "should be able to pause anywhere in a melody and sing the tonic . . . pitch immediately" (p. ix). Harmonic context is also important: skips within chordal configurations, once taught and understood, are usually easier than skips to non-harmonic tones. As for the value of interval study as applied to non-tonal music, the benefits are obvious. Sections C and D are good as a means of leading up to such music; however, other texts might do the job better in one specialized volume, and with an emphasis on real music literature.[16]

The isolation of musical parameters into Sections A through F is not, and cannot be, complete. Any book that might purport to contain completely independent tracks of tonal, intervallic, and rhythmic figures could not contain any music in which these elements were combined. Thus, Sections A, B, and E in each unit of *Sightsinging Complete* assume a certain mastery of the rhythmic materials from previous units. This eliminates much of the freedom seemingly gained by separating the book into individual parameters. Occasionally, rhythmic materials appear that have yet to be introduced in the text. Two examples of this include (1) half-beat values, which are introduced in Section F of Unit 3, but appear before that, in Section B of Unit 2, and (2) the triplet, which is introduced in Section F of Unit 5, but is used in Section B of Unit 3. Benward freely admits that he "has yet to discover a purely objective rating system for determining the difficulty level of a melody" (p. x). This is, however, no excuse for not introducing new melodic and rhythmic configurations in a gradual and obvious manner.

Sections A, B, and E are comprised mostly of music literature, with a lesser number of examples composed by the author in the early units, which distill the musical figures under study at those points. As in Ottman, the excerpts are drawn from both folk and Western art musics. Although Benward claims that some of the melodies in the later units of Section D are

not contrived (p. x), I could find no examples of actual literature in any units of that section. The materials for Sections C and F are necessarily contrived, being atomistic and isolated drills. Here, then, is a generally sensible combination of artificial and actual music: composed by the author only when necessary and leading directly into the study of real music literature. In *Sightsinging Complete*, this method breaks down only in the failure of Sections C and D to progress into actual music.

Many, but not all, of the melodies in Sections A and B and the later units of Section D are printed with performance indications. Phrase markings appear over many of the melodies, but marks of articulation are practically nonexistent. The inclusion of dynamic indications is sporadic, and there seems to be no logical reason for their exclusion from some examples, such as Romantic excerpts, and inclusion in others, such as folk songs. In general, more of them would be welcome. Tempo indications are given either in the form of metronome markings or as foreign terms. A brief glossary, new in this edition, contains the definitions of these terms, which number fewer than 100. For no apparent reason, Section E is nearly devoid of performance indications. In occasional cases where appropriate, reference is made to peculiarities of style or notation.

Benward discusses some guidelines for study and performance under the heading "Helpful Strategies" (p. ix). Aside from the usual suggestions, he recommends isolation of "reference tones" (scale degrees 1, 3, and 5), the ability to sing the tonic pitch at any time during an exercise, and the practice of "mind singing" (i.e. audiation). He suggests conducting only if the instructor recommends it.

With regard to solmization, Benward discusses the features, advantages, and disadvantages of fixed and movable do and number systems, each with and without chromatic inflections. This discussion (p. xi) is well-balanced and clear, but his presentation of the actual systems themselves (p. xii) is at times incomplete (e.g., there is no mention of la-based vs. do-based minor) and at other times obscure (e.g., the inclusion of "12 tone fixed" and "12 tone moveable" numbers—does anyone really use these systems in sight singing?). He is right on target, however, in stating that "only a positive rationale or system, clearly understood by all students, and enforced at all times will suffice" (p. xi). He leaves the choice of a particular system up to the instructor (p. xii), but seems to orient himself towards a movable-do type of approach in telling the student that syllables or numbers are useful because "it is important to 'know' the scale degree of all melody notes and communicate that information to your instructor—as well as to yourself" (p. ix). Only moveable do or moveable numbers will do this directly.

A special feature of this book is the addition of chord symbols (e.g.,

Am, F#dim., B7) above some of the melodies. While Benward claims that using these symbols should foster a "sensitivity to harmonic backgrounds" (p. xi), some instructors may feel that it should ultimately be the reader's responsibility to determine the harmonic implications of a melody, and that including these chord symbols does this work for the reader. Others may find the use of a symbology associated with popular music inappropriate when connected with the literature of Western art music. Still, the inclusion of these symbols may at least serve as a starting point for the discussion and implementation of some form of harmonic thinking.

Sightsinging Complete is more flexible than Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, but not as flexible as Ottman, and consists of a combination of actual and contrived musical examples.

BENJAMIN

Yet another form of division is found in Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson's *Music for Sight Singing*. It is divided into three units: 1) Common Practice Techniques: Diatonic; 2) Common Practice Techniques: Chromatic; and 3) Twentieth-Century Techniques. The authors suggest that this material may be spread over a two- or three-year curriculum, depending on whether a separate course is provided for twentieth-century materials (p. ix). The units are divided into parts, each of which introduces new materials. These materials are clearly identified in headings of one or a few sentences. The exercises consist of three types: unpitched rhythmic exercises, pitched preliminary exercises, and melodies. The rhythmic exercises focus on specific rhythmic and metric configurations; the pitched preliminary exercises focus on melodic and harmonic figures. These preliminary exercises are quite rigorous, being somewhat analogous to those mechanical exercises found in so many instrumental methods books.

The exercises are graded in a fashion similar to Ottman and Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, with a notable difference in the gradual introduction of rhythmic complexity. The first few pages consist of "unmetered" (perhaps more accurately, "unbarred") exercises. For the first 26 pages, only notes of one or more beats are employed. The next section introduces duple division of the beat, followed shortly by quadruple division (the authors refer to these as "2:1 and 4:1 subdivision"). It takes one-third of Unit I to reach this point; clearly the authors have found it useful to present rhythmic division in such a careful manner. Like Ottman and Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, the first melodies are entirely stepwise, but before progressing to skips among members of the tonic triad the text introduces skips of thirds and fourths to all scale degrees in sequential contexts.

The subsequent tonal materials are introduced in a traditional sequence: chordal follows melodic, chromatic follows diatonic, and so on. However, the book continues beyond the traditional into twentieth-century materials. Unit 3 is unique and valuable in its careful gradation of modern musical elements. A few of the techniques introduced here include pandiatonicism, polytonality, quartal harmony, serialism, syncopation, complex division of the beat, complex or irregular meter, and polymeter. The authors have composed nearly one hundred pages of exercises that present these techniques. In addition, twentieth-century notational innovations are included, such as Haupt- and Nebenstimme indications, cut-out staves, time-line and proportional notation, and fan-like beams indicating an accelerando or ritardando. Sadly, not one excerpt from the established literature is included as a raison d'etre for these materials.

The order of presentation for the entire book is considered fixed by the authors. They write: "It is important that some material from each section of each unit be covered, and in the proper order" (p. xi). This is in contrast to the Ottman, which allows a certain amount of reordering when presenting new concepts. Nonetheless, the authors state that their book "may be used with a wide variety of theory texts currently available" (p. xii). For this purpose, they understandably suggest their own *Techniques and Materials of Tonal Music*.[17] While there is nothing startlingly unusual about the order of presentation in *Music for Sight Singing*, its strict sequence of materials might make it difficult to integrate with certain theory texts. For example, Allen Forte's *Tonal Harmony in Concept and Practice*[18] introduces the concept of the secondary dominant before that of the seventh chord (on pp. 99 and 136 respectively) whereas Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson introduces the dominant seventh chord on page 31, well before secondary dominants are presented on page 135. This should not necessarily be perceived as a flaw on the part of either book; one should merely be careful in selecting a companion volume for Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson.

Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson confront a problem encountered in the texts discussed above: which are better, specifically composed exercises or actual examples of music literature? They write: "In those texts that consist primarily of music from the literature, the examples are neither consistent in quality nor are they carefully graded. Students frequently find themselves confronted by material too difficult for their skills at a given point. Those books that consist primarily of original exercises are often lacking in musicality and stylistic variety and aptness" (p. ix). Those statements notwithstanding, Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson consists mostly of exercises written by the authors. Music literature is presented in the form of part music that appears in special sections spaced throughout the text. These excerpts comprise less than one-fifth of the book's music and are taken

almost exclusively from the genre of vocal music. Instructors wishing to use actual music literature will still find it necessary to supplement this text with more "real" music, especially from instrumental works.

None of the unpitched rhythmic exercises or the pitched preliminary exercises contains any performance indications. However, the contrived melodies and the excerpts from the literature are provided with many indications for tempi, dynamics, articulation, and phrasing. Any terms that appear in foreign languages also appear in the glossary, which contains nearly 200 entries.

The authors feel their book "does not depend on any particular singing system" (p. xvi). They list, as options, the use of numbers, a neutral syllable, or fixed or movable do. The only system about which they give any detail is movable do, listing major, minor (la-based only), and chromatic scales using this system (p. xvi). They briefly discuss its merits and weaknesses, saying that "tonally oriented systems, such as movable do and numbers, work very well in primarily diatonic contexts; however, they lose their efficacy in highly modulatory materials and most twentieth-century idioms" (p. xi). They do suggest the singing of letter names in studying an unfamiliar clef—one valuable application of the fixed do system.

Other guidelines for performance include the use of conducting while singing, a steady tempo and rhythmic accuracy, the isolation of rhythmic and pitch difficulties, reading ahead, analysis (motivic, harmonic, etc.), and attention to intonation, performance markings, style, continuity, and phrasing. Indeed, the four pages of "Suggestions to the Student" (pp. xiii-xvi) are crammed full of such recommendations. These pages discuss many of the skills we hope to develop in our students; there are dozens more. Yet, seeing merely these enumerated on paper makes learning to sight sing seem impossibly daunting. Perhaps what is needed are exercises that isolate and drill each of these skills.

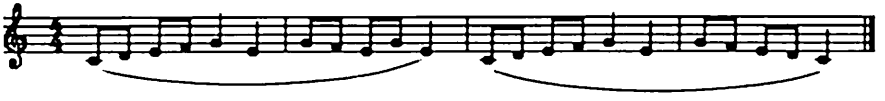
In conclusion, Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson's *Music for Sight Singing*, like Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, is fixed in its sequence of presentation. It includes some actual literature in the form of part music, but consists mostly of contrived musical exercises.

BLAND

Among all of the books reviewed here, Leland D. Bland's *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis* takes the boldest approach to the study of sightsinging. The book's main contributions lie in two areas: the constant distinction between structural and embellishing tones, and an awareness of horizontal connections between temporally separated pitches. Both of

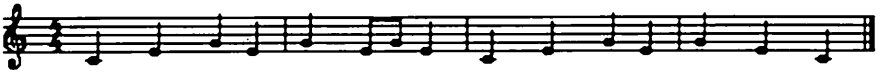
these contributions are made with the intention of facilitating the task of sightsinging. Many of us who teach sightsinging would agree that attention to harmonic tones and delayed resolutions plays an integral role in the discipline. Indeed, it seems that Leland Bland has systematized what we often tell our students in an informal way. Making these ideas part of the main focus of the text aims at maintaining their level of importance throughout an ear-training course.

Bland makes his distinctions between structural and nonharmonic tones in the form of "reductions" written on staves below the melodies. These reductions are a central part of each chapter's discussions. At times, readers are then asked to write out their own reductions as an aid to sightsinging; at others, the process is implicit. The reductions are intended to be sung, and this makes me regret that they are all unrhythmicized. For a student's performance to benefit from the underlying structure of a melody, that student should feel the rhythmic placement of the structural tones For example, on page 53, Bland presents melody #13:



which he reduces as:

This reduction might be better presented to the student as:



The book's material appears in the form of examples, exercises, and melodies. The examples are often clear illustrations of the ideas discussed above. For instance, after the sounds of the members of the tonic triad have been established in the students' ears, Bland suggests approaching an example that contains a leap from D up to B in D major by thinking of the

B as "a whole step above the fifth of the D major triad, rather than as the interval of a sixth above the preceding note D" (pp. 68-69). The reduction below this example shows the D and A as structural tones with the B as an embellishing tone.

Similar to the other books' authors, Bland states that "aside from fundamentals, the use of this book requires no special background or training for either the student or the instructor" (p. vi). But which fundamentals are assumed? A certain amount of knowledge is necessary for students to recognize the harmonic outlines and structural goals in the melodies. My guess is that the phrase "no special background or training for either the student or the instructor" refers to no special training in Schenkerian analysis, which this book certainly does not require. In fact, training in strict Schenkerian analysis might, at times, hinder reception of the book's message; at the very least, the sight of so many open note heads (see p. 110, for example) is enough to disturb most Schenkerians. Bland does, however, clearly explain his use of open and closed notes: "The notation in the reductions in this book is adapted from analytical techniques associated with Heinrich Schenker. Open notes indicate harmonic tones. Beginning with the section on passing tones, closed notes will designate nonharmonic tones, or embellishing tones" (p. 48, footnote). Beyond that, there is something distinctly non-Schenkerian about reduction at the foreground level without reference to a background structure. Bland's version of reduction is more a mere combination of Fux and Rameau than a derivation from Schenker. This is not necessarily a flaw. As a technique for approaching the accurate sightsinging of certain melodies, it succeeds. However, its claim of direct connection with the theories of Heinrich Schenker might tend to misrepresent that theorist's important contributions in the minds of students studying this book.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters. The first, "Rhythmic Organization in Music," spans forty-six pages and presents all of the rhythmic and metric concepts needed for the entire book. This chapter contains several hundred rhythmic exercises that advance from the beat and its simple division to such complexities as syncopation and asymmetrical and changing meters. Although all of this is presented in the first chapter, Bland clearly intends this chapter to serve as a reference and extra drill during the study of the subsequent chapters. Chapters 2-12 all carry headings that refer only to pitch (e.g., Chapter Six: "Chromatic Variables in the Major Mode"), but each of chapters 2-8 also introduces specific new rhythmic configurations. Thus, even though at first glance chapter one seems to isolate the parameter of rhythm, the text is locked into a specific progression of pitch and rhythmic material. Bland recognizes this inflexibility, stating that "the material is designed to be taken in sequence from

chapters 2 through 14" (p. vi). He does allow some latitude: "The order of some of the later chapters may be rearranged to suit individual needs" (p. vi). This presumably refers to chapters 9 through 12, which introduce no new rhythmic materials. An instructor considering this text for a sightsinging course would do well to give some thought to the order of its materials. That order is fixed, and the course must follow it.

The pitch material progresses through melodies that contain the primary triads (chapters 2-5), chromatics (chapters 6-7), the dominant seventh chord (chapter 8), and modulation and modality (chapters 11 and 12). Chapters 9 and 10 discuss melodic contours in an attempt to help students see and hear connections between tones separated by as much as several measures. Chapters 13 and 14 contain melodies with "complex" tonal and rhythmic figures, such as large leaps, enharmonicism, and changing meters.

The rate and manner of progression through these materials warrants some discussion. Skips to members of the primary triads in the major mode are introduced in a careful and gradual fashion over the span of 80 pages. In contrast, only 24 pages are then allotted for the presentation of chromatics in the major mode, which are categorized as being only neighbor tones, passing tones, or appoggiaturas. There is no discussion of functional, nonmodulatory chromatics such as those found in applied dominants, and no melodies that contain such figures are included. The minor mode is not introduced until after this point, at chapter 7, more than one-third of the way through the book. Its introduction is unceremonious—rather surprising considering its conspicuous absence up to this point—and emphasis is instead placed on the functions of chromatics in the upper tetrachord. Immediately following are melodies that incorporate unannounced rhythmic complexities, chromatics, and skips among chords that have not even been discussed in the context of the minor mode. Considering the fixed order of materials in this text, these omissions alone might cause an instructor to reject the book. But even more peculiarities of sequence follow. The dominant seventh chord is withheld until chapter 8, long after the introduction of some difficult chromaticism, such as the lowered sixth scale degree in the major mode, and after some advanced rhythmic figures, such as syncopation and triplets. Again, some instructors will find the delay problematic when coupled with the book's strict ordering. In addition, the alto and tenor clefs don't make their first appearances until chapter 10; instructors wishing to include them earlier would be forced to supplement the text.

To sum up the ordering of pitch materials in *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis*: at first they are restricted to the primary triads in the major mode, chromatics are then introduced, followed by the minor mode,

dominant-seventh chord, c-clefs, modulation, and then modality. Instructors preferring that sequence of presentation and looking for a text that offers a structural view of sightsinging might consider *Sight Singing through Melodic Analysis*. For those seeking a structural view with another succession of events, this book is not likely to be adaptable enough to fill the bill.

Despite Bland's claim that "it may be coordinated effectively with a number of theory texts or approaches" (p. vi), the issues raised above bear heavily on the choice of text and approach. Certainly, a structural approach to harmony would parallel *Sight Singing through Melodic Analysis* most closely. Even so, consider the order of events in one structurally oriented text, Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter's *Harmony and Voice Leading*.[19] Aldwell and Schachter include fairly little chromaticism until long after the introduction of seventh chords, and the minor mode is presented almost immediately after the introduction of the major mode. Instructors might wonder how effectively Bland's sequence would coordinate with *Harmony and Voice Leading*.

Every example, exercise, and melody in *Sight Singing through Melodic Analysis* has been composed by the author. Bland gives no reasons for not including literature—strange behavior in a book claiming to associate itself with Heinrich Schenker. Indeed, Schenker himself railed against a contemporary harmony text for just such reasons: "What he [the student] is yearning to see, the confirmation of theoretical propositions in examples from the works of the great masters, he looks for in vain in this book."[20] Schenker could just as easily have been writing about *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis*.

Bland suggests no methods of solmization, but includes the usual list of guidelines for performance (i.e., attention to clef, key signature, tonic, etc.). Phrasing, tempi, and dynamics are indicated for every melody, but no glossary is included for the translation of foreign terms.

Although Leland D. Bland's *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis* follows a rather rigid sequence of events and contains exercises composed only by the author, its primary contribution lies in its unique emphasis on a structural approach to the discipline.

SUMMARY

Some other issues must be addressed with regard to sightsinging texts. One of these concerns binding. Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft, Ottman, and Benward all employ a comb binding, which allows a book to lie flat on a desk, music stand, or piano, and even permits the reader to fold it so that only one page is exposed. Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson is paperbound, whereas

Bland is hardbound, and both of these books lie reasonably flat, although they are not as flexible as the other three. Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson's paper binding will probably not last as long as the others'. Certainly, Bland's hard cover will far outlast the others', but this may not be an issue for an undergraduate text; the hard cover thus seems excessive in terms of inflexibility and weight.

Another issue worth discussing is clarity of printing. In general, all of the publishers are to be commended for their clear, sharp printing of the music in these texts. Only Benward is slightly flawed in this area. The book is printed on somewhat shiny paper that tends to reflect under overhead lighting, and the symbols (especially accidentals) in some of the melodies are blurred to a small degree.

Still another issue involves the style of printing. Each of these texts uses its own consistent style of musical print. Even thought this consistency is predictable and economically practical, it is probably not the best pedagogy at the college level. It would be a better idea to expose students to many styles of music printing during sightsinging. I have seen good students who have become comfortable with a particular sightsinging text crumble when presented with, for example, an older Breitkopf & Haertel part. I would therefore like to argue for inconsistency in the publication of sightsinging texts; a variety of typefaces would allow for the overt discussion of notational discrepancies and the covert acclimation to these various styles.

Instructors must also consider the inclusion of multiple-voice exercises in each of these texts. Bland is entirely monophonic. This restriction results from the author's emphasis on melodic reduction, but it eliminates the possibility of ensemble singing. Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft and Ottman include duets, but no larger ensembles (although the Ottman does include some three- and four-voice canons). Benward and Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson contain excerpts with up to four voices. Only Ottman and Benjamin/Horvit/Nelson include text to be sung with some of their excerpts (discounting the four exercises texted by the authors in Berkowitz/Fontrier/Kraft).

In conclusion, all of the texts seem to follow a similar sequence of events. Bland is perhaps the least flexible in that it prescribes and details a structural approach to sightsinging, and is thus appropriate for only those who subscribe to this approach. The others don't adopt any particular approach, and thus allow teachers to use these texts like anthologies, drawing from them to supply examples and exercises to fit their own approaches. However, only Ottman and Benward allow a certain amount of freedom to reorder their materials in order to meet the needs of various curricula.

NOTES

[1]I wish to express my gratitude to Robert Hurwitz and Robert Trotter (University of Oregon) and to Stephanie Hollick (Pennsylvania State University) for their valuable suggestions concerning this article.

[2]Benjamin, Thomas, Horvit, Michael and Nelson, Robert. *Music for Sight Singing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); Benward, Bruce. *Sightsinging Complete,* fourth edition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1986); Berkowitz, Sol, Fontrier, Gabriel and Kraft, Leo. *A New Approach to Sight Singing,* third edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986); Bland, Leland D. *Sight Singing Through Melodic Analysis* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984); and Ottman, Robert. *Music for Sight Singing,* third edition (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

[3]Ottman, p. xvii.

[4]Benjamin, Horvit, and Nelson, p. xiii.

[5]Bland, p. v.

[6]Ottman, p. xvii.

[7]Benward, p. ix. This process, which Benward refers to as "aural imagery", has been dubbed "audiation" by Edwin Gordon in *Learning Sequence and Patterns in Music,* revised edition (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1977), pp. 1-4. Gordon makes a strong case against the former term. His reservations include the lack of a verb form for "aural imagery", and the implication that somehow images are involved. In its purest form, audiation is a completely aural experience: the mental creation or recall of sounds need not be tied to any visual images such as notation, or even shape. Indeed, audiation must at first take place separately from such visual clues in the process of music perception; in taking dictation, for example, one must be able to audiate musical material (remember it without regard to notation) before one may understand and finally notate it.

[8]Berkowitz, Fontrier, and Kraft, p. xi.

[9]Cf. Ottman, pp. 239-41.

[10]See, for example, melodies #1043 and #1047.

[11]3rd edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

[12]Benward, Bruce. *Sightsinging Complete,* third edition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1980).

[13]See, for example, Shatzkin Merton, "Interval and Pitch Recognition In and Out of Immediate Context," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29 (1981): 111-123; and Killam Rosemary N., Lorton, Paul V. Jr., and Schubert, Earl D. "Interval Recognition: Identification of Harmonic and Melodic Intervals," *Journal of Music Theory* 19 (1975): 212-234.

[14]Shatzkin, Merton. "Interval Recognition in Minimal Context," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 32 (1984): 6.

[15]Shatzkin, "Interval and Pitch Recognition," p. 112

[16]See, for example, Edlund, Lars. *Modus Novus* (Stockholm: AB Nordiska Musikforlaget/Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1963).

[17](Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979).

[18]3rd edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979).

[19]2 volumes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979).

[20]Schenker, Heinrich. *Harmony,* translated by Elisabeth Mann Borgese, edited by Oswald Jonas (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 176.