

## **ADVANCING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SINGING**

# CAN CHOIRS INFLUENCE THE NATURAL

ABSTRACT
Some modern scholars believe that training the young male singer prior to the voice change can help to make the voice change easier, less stressful and possibly more gradual. (Williams, 2013; Leck, 2009; Phillips, 1996; Swanson, 1961). The following questions guided the process of this study:

Is it also possible to influence the end result of the change?
Can the singer maintain the strengthened falsetto during and after the voice change?
Is it possible to keep the alto/tenor access intact during the change so that the transition into an adult fach is easier or possibly more open?

CHANGE OF THE VOICE?

TYPES OF VOICE CHANGEBased on my past experiences, there are four different voice changes:*i.* the expanding range,*ii.* the gap between registers (two different parts – the soprano gap and the alto gap),*iii.* the decreasing range (down to approx. 5- 8 notes in the middle, alto/ tenor register) and*iv.* the boy who has nothing, and what he does have changes daily.I discovered that this method of teaching is only successful (that there is a seamless passaggio and baritone/tenor access) inboys with two of the four specific voice changes: the expanding range and the (soprano) gap between registers. In all cases, thetraining helped to increase the overall range and singing ability of the singer. Making the change and growth easier to controland understand.I would like to introduce the current research in this essay and suggest what is needed in order to further the understanding ofthe boy's voice change.

4. Is there a link between fachs before and after the voice change?
5. Can a method of training be developed to aid singers throughout the change and influence the end result?
6. Does the type or style of voice change play an integral role in determining the success of the seamless passaggio?
7. Is the type of voice change a direct reflection of the experience and technical knowledge of the singer prior to the voice change?

This study involved investigating voice change processes among many trained adolescent singers and four different voice changes were classified: the expanding range, the gap between registers (two different parts - the soprano gap and the alto gap), the decreasing range (down to approx. 5- 8 notes in the middle, alto/ tenor register), and the boy who has few notes and those seem to change daily. In the study we found that there is a seamless passaggio and baritone/tenor access in boys with two of the four specific voice changes: the expanding range and the (soprano) gap between registers. In all cases, the training helped to increase the overall range and singing ability of the singer, making the change and growth easier to control and understand.

### **OBJECTIVES**

*I.* To confirm the existance of four different voice changes of boys.

II. To monitor and compare the four different voice changes before, during and after the voice change.
 III.To examine the results of untrained singers (school choir only) with choral singers (in good to excellent community choirs) and with trained choral singers (soloist in good - excellent community choirs).
 IV To determine whether or not there is a g link between the individual training of choristers and the extension of the voice.

IV. To determine whether or not there is a a link between the individual training of choristers and the category of the voice change.

V. To verify the likelihood of predicting the adult fach before the voice change.
 VI. To establish and describe the best method of teaching boys before, during and after the voice change with the specific goal of connecting the registers and maintaining control and ease of alto/tenor register.
 VII.To find out at what age the vocal folds may be fully closed during healthy singing.

#### INTRODUCTION

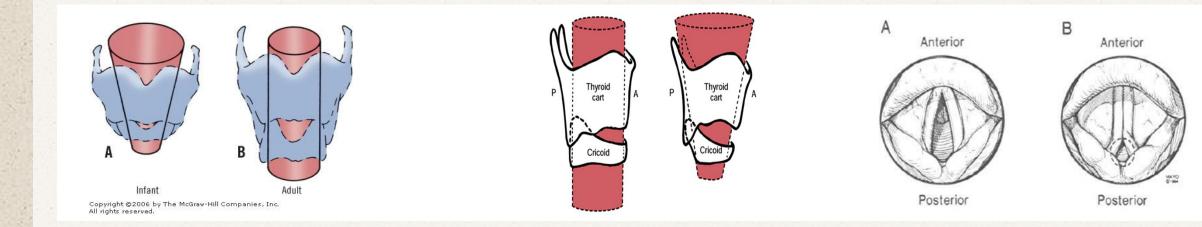
Several years ago while working with the Czech Boy's Choir in Hradec Kralove I was asked to prepare a young soloist for an audition to a local music conservatory. In the Czech Republic, at the age of 14, students must audition, test and interview for places in the specialized school of their choosing. One of the options for a young Czech musician is to go to a performance preparatory school. The competition is high and the jury expects the level of ability, skill and talent to be great. Unfortunately, for young male singers, auditioning as a singer at the age of 14 creates many challenges not faced frequently by adolescent girls with such extremity. It is generally expected that the male adolescent singer will have a stable, changed voice, which would be rare. When I was asked by my top soprano soloist if I would prepare him for his conservatory audition I was concerned. His superb musicality and skills would get him far and he would be an excellent candidate for a singing career in the future and I agreed to train him. When I heard him sing, I realized that he had full access to his soprano range minus a few notes on top he was accustomed to having; his voice was somewhat breathy, but not unhealthy, and there was a 5-note baritone register below with a gap in between the usual notes he used to sing as a soprano and the newly forming baritone sound. For several weeks I worked him through the gap, (from now on to be called the passaggio) and helped him to develop a tenor range that would suit some easy repertoire to be used in an audition. We worked on tone quality, creating a seamless passaggio, and developing the voice for what it was, as a whole. My student auditioned as a tenor in a somewhat stable, maturing voice and was accepted into the conservatory. As I continued to work with this student I witnessed several changes: the voice expanded, grew and reacted well to the overall, whole voice approach of teaching; the passaggio became almost unnoticeable when it moved into the easy and beautiful falsetto register; and the boy was able to sing tenor even though he produced the tone quality of a baritone. Now, he is finished his schooling, working as a professional singer and has access to both voice types. He prefers to work as a tenor. After this experience, it occurred to me that:

## Influencing the Change:

Investigating the development of a method of manipulating laryngeal development through adolescence.

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RESULTS •Result for highly trained SOPRANO GAP - highly trained ingers who require intensive singers raining through voice change Increased chances of ALTO GAP - highly trained singers who may/may not keep alto-tenor maintaing alto-tenor range after voice change access after voice change REGISTER GAP EXPANDIN RANG DECREASING RANGE UNPREDICTA BLE RANGE •Still under investigation • Result for untrained singer who uses lower Unlikely to easily build alto-tenor voice range range without training

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a. I should make use of and develop the entire range of the changing male voice

b. Maybe it is possible to manipulate the male voice into keeping the alto/tenor register with a seamless passaggio into the falsetto allowing the singer to choose which voice type they prefer to sing.

c. Further research is needed.

### THE CZECH BOYS CHOIR

The Czech Boys Choir from the city of Hradec Králové in East Bohemia, maintains the famous traditions of boychoir singing in the Czech territory as it began in the 13th century with the first boys' choir at the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague and continues in modern times with the boys choir established in Hradec Králové by Jiří and Květa Skopal in 1982. The Czech Boys Choir organization provides artistic training for boys from the age of three to adult, and consists of the professional touring SATB concert choir, the Young Men's Ensemble

and the training choir Zpěváček. Artistic Advisor, former Conductor and Founding Artistic Director is Jakub Martinec, new conductor for season 2013/2014 is Lukáš Jindřich. The concert choir closely cooperates with pianist Martin Fišl.

The choir regularly records for TV and radio, performs concerts in the Czech Republic and abroad, collaborates with renowned artists, ensembles and orchestras. Their repertoire includes both traditional and modern works of both Czech and international composers from all musical periods, large choral works, chamber music, folk songs and traditionals, contemporary music or choral arrangements of popular songs.

The Czech Boys Choir is recognized for its stable sound quality created by uniform voice training. The young musical ambassadors of the Czech Republic enjoy singing and bringing joy to the audiences around the whole world.

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7 years old

healthy range C4 - E5 concentration on breathing focus of tone developing range air present (glottal chink) **9** years old healthy range C4 - G5 concentration on further development of tone and quality of sound air present (glottal chink) **11 years old** heathly range A3 - A5 connecting breathing control to sound production developing range and proper placement air present (glottal chink)

**13** years old

healthy range G3 - B5 strengthening tone concentrating on control coloratura no air present in the sound beautiful and resonant sound **15** years old

healthy range D3 - A5 gap between E4 - A4 even out and connect registers top down approach through

gap developing of two registers separately and as a whole some air present



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