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It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.

Music Education's Professional Beginnings in America: Early Eighteenth-Century New England Singing-School Teacher Qualifications and Program Goals

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The decade of the 1720's in New England marks music education's professional beginnings in America. In that decade, almost a half-century before William Billings became active as a singing-school teacher, Boston's controversial "regular singing" movement reformed American psalmody through singing schools (Temperley, 1981). The controversy will not be discussed; it has been well treated by others who have revealed the reformers' aims for singing schools and explored the specific instructional objectives printed in tune-book introductions. Britton (1989) recounted the teaching principles found in the writings of late eighteenth-century singing teachers. The qualifications of early eighteenth-century Boston singing-school teachers and these teachers' program goals, however, deserve further analysis, if only to establish more firmly the thread that bound Billings and his followers to old-country musico-religious values and the mechanisms through which singing-school teachers conveyed these to the young.

An account of program goals—the purposes behind the teacher's classroom plans—is needed to complete the picture of early American music education. Program goals are the mid-level purposes that, in this case, connect the objectives implied by specific early tune-book contents with the broad social aims for early singing schools.

We cannot assume that printed curricula reflect accurately the content of classes, especially in the arts. This caveat clouds

any historical analysis of music instruction. In the absence of participant-observers' reports that we can use to compare printed curricula with typical practice, we must assume that program goals from the 1720s singing-reform movement, as today, would reflect classroom instruction more faithfully than do the specific activities printed and implied in tune-book instructions.

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The time constraints on these early teachers (10 to 14 evening sessions over a two- to three-week period) do not support the assumption that tune-book contents, as presented in print, were learned in singing schools. The singing school teacher's function was to reverse thoroughly entrenched and well-loved singing habits that the reformers declared were unacceptable. Given that daunting task, these teachers would have had little choice but to narrow their focus to music-reading instruction and use any motivation techniques that would result in students' progress toward this end.

In this article, the singing-school teacher's qualifications and program goals in singing schools as articulated by early

eighteenth-century writers will be discussed. The assumption is that these goals, as stated, were distillations of early eighteenth-century singing-school teachers' experience and formed the basis of their classroom activities from the 1720s until Billings emerged as an exemplary singing-school teacher in the 1770s.¹

Singing-School Teacher Qualifications

Cotton Mather was singing-reform's most powerful social and religious advocate in the 1720s. He stated that the most important reason for singing Psalms rather than chanting them was that singers could acquire a richer, deeper understanding of Psalm texts (1718, 1721). In this he followed Calvinist as well as Augustinian doctrine. Symmes (1720, 1723) and other writers also argued for reform, and Tufts (1723 and later editions) and Walter (1721 and later editions; 1722) wrote and arranged tune books to achieve Mather's vision of a reformed psalmody.

Surprisingly, these men did not include as an important part of their agenda the systematic development of qualified singing-school teachers. There were singing schools already in existence around Boston by the early 1720s (Thacher, Danforth, & Danforth, 1723). Their effectiveness was supported by reform leaders, and reformers apparently saw no reason to suggest that these teachers should possess qualifications different from those they already had.

Mather's call for a deeper understanding of biblical texts through competent singing was reflected in Chauncey's (1728) description of the kind of skilled singer likely to be chosen as a singing-school teacher. Chauncey advocated testing the singer's knowledge of biblical admonitions that singing should be skillful, his insight about the texts of the songs, and his acquaintance with "... the true rule and manner of performance" (1728, p. 26). In addition to these cognitive attainments, Chauncey noted later (p. 36) that performance technique—singing skill—was needed as well.

But the reformers expected all singers to read music. Singing-school teachers, then, were chosen from those who were

sufficiently musically literate to be convincing teachers of music reading. Walter (1721), the writer of the first music-instruction book written in America (Gates, 1988), defined the literate singer by analogy:

We don't call him a reader, who can recite memoriter a few pieces of the Bible, and other authors, but . . . cannot tell ten words in a page. So is not he worthy of the name of a singer, who has gotten eight or ten tunes in his head, and can sing them like a parrot by rote, and knows nothing more about them, than he has heard from the voices of others; and show him a tune that is new and unknown to him, can't strike two notes of it (p. 2).

The duties of singing leaders in churches were well known. From the first *Bay Psalm Book* (Cotton, 1640), it was noted that one musical task of singing leaders (usually the church's clerks) was to set the tune's pitch according to the following directions:

First observe how many *Notes* compass the *Tune* is. Next the place of your first *Note*; and how many *Notes* above and below that: so as you may begin the *Tune* of your first *Note* as the rest may be sung in the compass of your and the people's voices, without *Squeaking* above, or *Grumbling* below (p. 419, 1698 edition, italics his).

Besides being skillful at "pitching" and "lining out" tunes, leadership abilities were also prized. Tufts said of church singing leaders that "... great Regard ought to be had in the Choice or Appointment of Persons to this Service, that they be such as are skillful, that they may with a becoming Courage lead their Brethren in singing the Songs of the LORD" (1723, p. 3). This brief advice about the courage of singing leaders (along with their knowledge of psalmody and their music-reading skill) presumably applied also to singing-school teachers. Surprisingly, little was written about them directly.

Singing-school teachers were not universally held to be above reproach, despite their religious affiliations. Rowe, writing to the colonies from England

(1722), cautioned that singing-school teachers were crassly commercial, and their services weren't really necessary if parishioners would buy his numerical music notation system instead. Some congregation members objected to singing schools on the grounds that singing teachers were "lewd and loose persons" who led young people to neglect family devotions in favor of the more sociable surroundings of the singing schools. Symmes (1723, p. 6) countered their objections by pointing out that some social activities of youth had much more potential for harm than singing schools did. Singing-school teachers, according to Symmes, were more benign influences on young people than many other kinds of associates.

Most reformers advised that those who could sing well and knew how to read music should be selected as singing-school teachers (e.g., Symmes, 1720), and that ministers should lead the effort to establish singing schools. In regions where no singing-school teachers could be found, school masters were to fill this role. Apparently, any adult male who put himself forward as a singing-school teacher would have met with little dispute if he could sing tunelessly and read music.

Program Goals

The earliest American Psalm tune collection—the ninth *Bay Psalm Book* (Cotton, 1698) with its 13 tunes—had scant instruction for reading the compiler's musical notation. The other musical materials in English available to singing-school instructors were imported from Britain. Sternhold and Hopkins's (1562) treatise was often bound with metered Psalms. If British compilers of the late 1600s included more complex instructions for singing, however, it was usually Playford's. Many of these psalters found their way to America through Boston.²

Some seventeenth-century American scholars wrote on music theory, but these writings were lost in the Harvard library fires, and no instructional materials based on these writings survived, if any were written at all.

What seemed to motivate Walter and Tufts to compile tunes with instruction by

1721, however, was not the absence of American instructions for singing; rather, it was the lack of Psalm tune repertoire known by Americans and the low-culture taste reflected in their continual singing of those few tunes they did now. Only a few of the *Bay Psalm Book's* 13 tunes were used in 1720 (Symmes, 1720; Walter, 1721; Temperley, 1981). By contrast, Walter's 1721 book contained 24 tunes in three parts. Tufts's 1723 book contained 34 tunes in two parts, and his 1726 book contained 37 tunes in three parts. These men were rapidly expanding the tune repertoire. This repertoire was apparently expanded further by singing-school teachers, especially those using Walter's books, by having advanced singing-school students copy additional tunes and arrangements in its blank pages.³

Paradoxically, because the solution to the singing problem was music reading, the choice of what notation system to teach was left to each singing-school teacher. Several notation systems, some quite unorthodox, were introduced. The *Bay Psalm Book* (beginning in 1698) used the British practice of four-syllable (fa-sola) notation added to regular (white mensural) notation: A line of letters "f," "s," "l," or "m" (for fa, so, la, mi) appeared under their corresponding notes. Tufts (1721) replaced standard notation on the staff with these letters, a practice that established American foundations for the development of shape-notes at the turn of the next century.

Beginning with his first edition, Walter used white mensural notation, but he had the engraver make a round seventh-scale step (called "mi") in explanatory introductions of scales rather than use the diamond shapes of the other notes of the same scale (1721, p. 10).⁴

Rowe (1722) numbered the staff lines from the bottom and used the numbers, without the staff, instead of fasola syllables, for notation. His system, a fixed-do variant, was not widely used in America. The reformers' writings did not communicate a preference for one or another notation system.

Unlike the variety in notation systems, there was remarkable unanimity in the instructional materials for "tuning the

voice". Students were to sing scales, arpeggios, intervals (mainly thirds and fourths ascending and descending through a scale), and expanding intervals in several keys (do, re, do, mi, do, fa, do, so, etc; also descending patterns), using whatever notation system was in the book. Both Walter and Tufts prefaced their tune compilations with instructions for reading music and such exercises for "tuning the voice".

From current shape-note practices (Kelton, 1984) and from Cheney's account of late eighteenth-century singing-school practices (see Keene, 1982, pp. 25-28), we can assume that students sang the introductory material and then the tunes themselves, using the notation system learned in the introductions, before singing the tunes with words. In addition, students were probably required to memorize whatever musical terms and principles were given in the introductions and to recite them in lessons. There is no known early eighteenth-century evidence to support these conclusions, however.

The assumption that prefatory instructions and exercises may not have constituted the curriculum of the singing schools should be tested. Judging from the frequency of their new editions, Tufts's and Walter's books were used as popular resources for singing-school activities. Tufts's instructions were brief and could have been learned in the time allotted; Walter's were longer and more involved.

If tune-book introductions based on Playford (Walter, primarily) did not constitute the curriculum of early eighteenth-century New England singing schools, what did? The earliest participant observations of singing schools were written much later in the century. Cheney's memories of the slow instructional pace of late eighteenth-century singing schools (in Keene, 1982, pp. 25-28) and the relatively large amount of materials contained in tune books after 1721 lead us to doubt that all of this material was covered.⁵

We can only conclude that time constraints required that singing teachers attend to the most basic program goals: applying some of this expanded tune repertoire to metered psalms, "training" the

voice by singing scales and related materials, leading students to decipher the notation used by the tune-book compiler, and teaching compilers' musical terminology and other notation practices. Both Walter's (1721) and Tufts's (1726) tune books were in three parts, clearly implying that singing-school teachers were also expected to teach part singing, at least to advanced students.

The most concise definition of program goals for singing schools of the 1720s came in the middle of the decade. Danforth and Eells (1725, p. 4) defined skill in singing as the possession of three competencies, paraphrased below:

1. An acquaintance with (knowledge of) traditions.
 - a. keys and notes (tonal center and pitch names)
 - b. "chords and dischords" (basic harmony)
 - c. how to rise and fall gradually (sing scales, intervals, and arpeggios)
 - d. how to keep time and control pitch durations
 - e. how to make proper closes (phrase ends)
2. A musical ear
 - a. ability to distinguish pitches
 - b. ability to perceive quickly that which is incorrect or unmusical
3. A tunable voice
 - a. ability to match pitches
 - b. ability to sing "in tune"

Teachable items in this list (all of 1) and cognitive and psychomotor content (2 and 3) probably constituted the program goals and occupied the students of early eighteenth-century singing schools. The aptitude-related characteristics listed in 2 and 3 support those in 1, making Danforth and Eells's description a well-considered curriculum foundation. Danforth and Eells noted that harmony and melody are the essence of singing (p. 8), and singers should know something of theoretical harmony. After all, they continued, only three of the seven pitches are used in chords; the correct selection of these three results from learning. Practice increases the discriminatory powers of singers, they advised (p. 6). The information required for singing instruction was available, and community leaders should promote its use (p. 13).

Danforth and Eells's program goals seem more manageable than the instructional objectives implied by tune-book introductions.

Comments and Conclusions

We don't know how the rhetoric of singing reformers such as Mather and Symmes affected singing-school teachers' work. Because it supported singing schools, the rhetoric at least gave legitimacy to music teachers' efforts to establish singing schools. Furthermore, the existence of an unorganized opposition group that Symmes (1723) called "A.R.S.s" (anti-regular singers) provides some evidence that this rhetoric did acquaint leading citizens with the social and religious benefits of singing schools, and that it did make clear to citizens that singing from notation was the singing-school teacher's proper goal for students.⁶

The integration of social aims and professional means in American music education was perhaps never so complete as it was then. As the eighteenth century progressed, however, rhetoric about aims and singing-school teachers' practice lost some of its cohesion, and rhetoric and practice took on separate lives of their own. As Britton comments on this situation for Billings's era (1989, p. 38), "What did it matter that the philosophical concepts of an age of reason were not completely in accord with things as they were (in music teaching)?"

Colonial American singing-school teachers were presumably those who could manage program goals such as those articulated by Danforth and Eells in singing schools. Supported by important church leaders early in the reform movement, these teachers taught new tunes from the expanded repertoire, they taught students how to use whatever notation they knew themselves and how to sing scales and arpeggios. Gradually, early eighteenth-century singing-school teachers reformed American psalmody through singing schools. This met the aims of Cotton Mather and other reformers.

Unlike today's music educators, however, early colonial Boston singing-school teachers left no evidence that they had an agenda for music instruction other than

that defined by these reformers. The professional results of this lack of a separate agenda have proved troublesome. These early singing-school teachers, partly because what they did was successful, established a limited role for American music teachers—a stance that was reactive to the extra-musical aims of others rather than proactively based on goals such as achieving a more comprehensively musical population. The absence of a discipline-based alternative agenda from these early singing-school teachers reinforced social leaders' expectations that American institutions should support music teachers when the social leaders agreed that music instruction could help them implement social goals. In early Boston, these goals were to improve citizens' religiosity, if not their morality.

If warranted, this begs several other socioeconomic questions about American music education that need further analysis. For example, is the corollary to the above supportable? That is, does institutional support for music teaching wane when there is no clear social agenda that has a role for music? Or does some other idea explain the phenomenon of fluctuating institutional support for music instruction? Were there social as well as pedagogical differences between Tufts's and Walter's approaches to music reading—the former practical and quickly learned; the latter, by comparison, more subtle and difficult to learn?

Does social stratification—in the music profession or in our society, or in the social connection between these—account for the tenacity of both approaches well into the current era (Gates, 1988)? Does being musically literate stigmatize someone socially as does "too much skill" in music performance (see Britton, 1989, 36-38)? More than curricular foundations were built in Boston during the 1720s; American music education's socioeconomic roots were planted there, too. □

Notes

1. See Britton, 1989, for an account of late eighteenth-century singing teachers and their methods. No evidence exists that there were female music teachers in this era. In fact, although women were urged to sing, early Boston singing reformers expressly forbade them from teaching singing (see Gates, 1989).

The feminization of school music teaching began almost a century later, with Sarah Glover in England as a pioneer in this movement.

2. Because they were to be sung, biblical texts were rendered by translators in metered verse, resulting in wide variations of scholarly and poetic quality. Judgments of the adequacy of metered translations were made primarily on scholarly grounds, but aesthetic criteria were used as well, most effectively by Walter (1722). Since these translations were meant to serve practical religious and instructional purposes (learning to read), attention was paid to the principle that everyone who could read should find them understandable. Watts (1720, p. 6-7), presented his simplified metric translations with condescending apology.

3. All of the manuscripts in Walter editions I have seen were written in white (or black) mensural notation rather than fasola or other notation. Since none of these manuscripts is convincingly dated, and since the tune books we have for study survived many generations of careful use, it is unwise to assume too much about the conditions under which the manuscripts were made. It is equally possible that their makers were in choral societies whose leaders urged members to copy tune arrangements from a master copy to save paper and money. The most convincing evidence, albeit circumstantial, that these manuscripts were early creations is that Walter's tune books were bound with blank pages in the last half of the book. This suggests that this practice was known to Walter and accommodated by his publishers.

4. See Gates, 1988, for facsimiles of these three notation systems.

5. Until 1721, when Walter's and Tuft's music instruction books were printed, singing schools apparently relied either on instructional material based on Playford or the musical knowledge of someone who put himself forward as a singing teacher. The other Psalm books contained few instructional hints about the music to be used and daunting complexities of poetic meter in the text source's translations (see Inserra & Hitchcock, 1981, p. 19). In Walter's *Grounds and Rules* . . . (beginning in 1721) principles of melody and harmony are given, nay of which correspond with highly schooled practice codified by musicians like Rameau (1971 [1722]).

6. Reasoned Chauncey (1728), "Logic teaches to reason well, navigation to sail well, geometry to measure well, but only music (notation) teaches to sing well" (p. 20).

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