



**Title:** Getting a Word in Edgewise: A Feminist Critique of Choral Methods Texts

**Author(s):** Julia Eklund Koza

**Source:** Koza, J. E. (1994, Fall). Getting a word in edgewise: A feminist critique of choral methods texts. *The Quarterly*, 5(3), pp. 68-77. (Reprinted with permission in *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(5), Autumn, 2010). Retrieved from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>

*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.*

# Getting A Word In Edgewise: A Feminist Critique Of Choral Methods Texts

By **Julia Eklund Koza**

*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

Last fall when I was asked to teach an undergraduate choral methods class for the first time, I was faced with the exciting challenge of putting together a reading list for a new course. Even though choral music is one of my specialties, my attention has been focused elsewhere in recent years, so I was eager to catch up on the latest developments in the field. I examined choral methods sources published in the ten years ending in 1992 searching for two types of materials: articles suitable for inclusion in a reader and textbooks. What started out as an exciting adventure, however, ended in disappointment as I discovered that the years have brought little change in thinking among choral music educators. I also realized that I cannot go home again.

The newer textbooks were remarkably similar in design and intent, not only to each other, but also to the one I had used as a student 20 years ago. They addressed a standard list of topics, including conducting technique, vocal pedagogy, choral repertoire, voice testing, seating arrangements, and the history of choral music. The periodical articles focused more narrowly on a single aspect of choral teaching/conducting, but the range of topics resembled that found in the textbooks. As a feminist, I was troubled by topics and issues these texts did not address, by the omissions that came to light when I

asked, "Who is not at the table and what is not being discussed here?" It was quite clear, for example, that almost no attention had been given to diversity issues.

Taken collectively, these texts provide insight into current thought in choral music education. Because this thought helps shape future teachers' beliefs and actions, these materials should be examined carefully and thoughtfully. I decided to do just that, and thus, a search begun for very different reasons ended with an analysis of every reference to gender appearing in the materials published during the ten-year period from 1982 through 1992.<sup>1</sup> After reading the texts, I formulated a list of untouched, but critically important gender-related topics that need to be placed on the choral music education agenda. In the next several pages, I will lay out this list.

I do not pretend to have universally applicable answers to the questions that discussions of diversity issues inevitably will raise. Rather, I am suggesting that the conversations must begin. Furthermore, I recognize that talk about diversity should extend beyond gender to address race and social class, as well as other social constructions of difference. In this article, I will use gender as a case study, even though the agenda I suggest also has implications for other components of the complex social-relations web. Before I turn to my list, I will briefly describe several general characteristics of choral methods texts that contribute to their inadequate coverage of gender and will point out evidence indicating that current texts are strongly influenced by masculinist discourses.

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*Julia Eklund Koza is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on issues of race, class, and gender in music and music education.*

## Problematic Characteristics in Choral Methods Texts

Media specialist John Fiske claims that “generic characteristics” or “conventions” in news reporting can assist in promoting ideological intents. An adaptation of Fiske’s concept is useful when thinking about choral methods texts; assumptions and conventions guide the content of these texts and contribute to their ideological work.<sup>2</sup> Some generic characteristics or conventions contribute to the perpetuation of sexism. For example, the texts I examined were constructed as how-to-do-it manuals, apparently on the assumption that experts can divine formulaic models, which work in all circumstances for all teachers and students. Authors presented a static, finished model of teaching; a single, seamless image of the ideal choral experience. This construction creates the impression that consensus exists about what constitutes good teaching and that there are no issues in choral music education generating heated debate. In this ideal choral world, there is no messiness, no loose ends, no conflict or disagreement. In formulaic models the seams, or possible points for change, become almost invisible.

Formulaic recipes for good teaching and monolithic models of choral music education, however, may diminish awareness of the existence of other worlds, opinions, and equally viable ways of teaching. Consensus models tend to silence voices. Antonio Gramsci theorized that hegemony is perpetuated by convincing the oppressed that oppressive practices are commonsensical and natural.<sup>3</sup> If we apply Gramscian thought to the texts’ convention of representing teaching as formulaic, we can argue that these texts perpetuate hegemony by promulgating the perception that current practice, regardless of how inequitable or problematic, is commonsensical and natural, and the best way to teach. Business-as-usual practices that tend to

work to the detriment of girls and women are thus naturalized.

A second problematic general characteristic of these texts is their reliance on the assumption that music and music education can and should be free of ideological intent, that neutrality not only is prudent and proper but achievable. No text openly acknowledged the assumptions guiding its creators; however, choice of content and manner of presentation nevertheless reflected the assumption that music education and ideology are (or should be) separate spheres.

The separation of content from ideology has its roots in the scientific movement, which has strongly influenced educational thought in the twentieth century. Choral directors are taught to assume that their role is to teach art, which is defined as musical content transcending the mundane confines of ideology. The neutrality myth masks the reality that educational systems, as well as the production and consumption of art, are intensely political ventures; neither music nor music teaching is transcendent.

A contemporary view acknowledges that music and music education are deeply rooted in ideology. This recognition leads to consideration of who is best served or most harmed by prevailing ideologies and the practices they generate. Traditional discourses, in contrast, not only overlook issues of race, social class, and gender, but also offer tacit approval of such skirting.

A third characteristic of choral methods texts is the authors’ presentation of directors/teachers and students as raceless, genderless, and classless aggregates. Textbook authors appear to assume that generic directors/teachers and students exist and will respond similarly to the global prescriptives set forth in the texts. Thus, authors fail to recognize the culturally induced differences that characterize educational experiences of groups and

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individuals who do not fit the generic student model, a construct fashioned largely by and after White, middle-class, Euro-American, Christian males. As feminist Lana Rakow writes, we as educators and students:

... do not shed our identities at the door with our coats. We enter those rooms as humans situated as subjects and objects of discourses that give us the identities we claim for ourselves and that are assigned by others. We cannot set aside the social relationships of the larger world — a world in which classifications of gender, race and class are among the most paramount...<sup>4</sup>

Talk of generic students and generic teachers eclipsed discussions of diversity, specifically of gender. When gender was occasionally mentioned, nearly all space was devoted to issues and knowledge by and about males. Such domination of space is one sign of masculinist discourse; in previous research I observed similar domination in music education journals from the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Thus, current texts resemble their predecessors in their reliance on masculinist discourses that tend to produce exclusionary choral practices.

Who is not at the table and what is not being discussed in choral methods textbooks and articles? Clearly, girls and women have been relegated to the margins or completely ignored. Ironically, choral music education is a curricular area heavily populated with female students. Unfortunately, given current power relations, a female majority appears to carry little weight when discursive space is parceled out. I suspect that if males were in the majority and the texts devoted nearly all space to boys and men, such a pattern probably would be deemed only right and natural. Apparently the majority does not rule, however, when that majority is female.

Masculinist domination of discursive space and the excription of girls and women were evident, for example, in the texts' accounts of the history of choral music and in their dis-

cussions of the changing voice. Chronologies of choral style were presented almost exclusively in terms of the contributions made by men and boys. If present at all, references to females usually consisted of statements indicating that females did, or did not, participate in choral singing during a particular historical era. Clearly, monocultural definitions of choral singing contributed to this oversight and exscription. Even within the European high art tradition, however, women participated in ensemble singing in some settings from the earliest times.<sup>6</sup> Recognition of this reality was lost in global pronouncements such as one by Kenneth Miller, who wrote that "vocal music in the Renaissance was essentially sung by men and boys."<sup>7</sup> As Jane Bowers and Judith Tick have pointed out, the invisibility of women in renderings of music history does not mean women were absent from music's historical past.<sup>8</sup> Feminist scholars have worked for many years on restoration and reclamation projects that inscribe women into music history; however, no evidence of this work appeared in choral methods texts.

Exscription of women also characterized discussions of the changing voice. Although several sources recognized that males and females both experience a voice change at adolescence, the female voice, if discussed at all, was covered in one or two sentences. By contrast, entire chapters often were given over to males. In some cases, it was not clear whether the term "changing voice" was intended to refer to both sexes or solely to boys. At other times, there was slippage: nonspecific terms were revealed to apply specifically to males. For example, Kenneth Phillips wrote, "The adolescent changing voice has concerned choral music educators for many years, and all choral educators should discuss the voice change and its ramifications with preadolescent and adolescent boys."<sup>9</sup> In this instance, the phrase "adoles-

cent changing voice” appeared to refer to both sexes until the reader reached the end of the sentence and realized that Phillips probably was talking solely about males. The fact that this nonspecific phrase occurred in a section headed “Keeping Boys Singing” provided further evidence of the meaning Phillips intended.

I have offered a few examples of excriptions that relegate women to the margins. In recent feminist theorizing the margins sometimes have been depicted as spaces of resistance and safety. I argue, however, that being in the margins or completely omitted from choral texts is not beneficial for girls and women. For example, silences may lead to the mistaken assumption that issues specifically and directly affecting the female majority do not exist. To lay to rest such assumptions, I will spell out concerns that must be brought to the table but never were mentioned in the sources I examined. Many of these issues are difficult ones for which glib answers will not suffice. The topics I will discuss include repertoire issues, double standards, power relations in choral ensembles, problems experienced largely by girls, and the masculine as the ideal.

### **Repertoire Issues**

#### **The Politics of the Canon and Definitions of a Choral Music Experience**

In current debates over canon, questions are being raised about definitions of legitimate knowledge, or cultural capital. These debates extend beyond the issue of what constitutes good music to include such political questions as whose music is considered legitimate, who decides whose music is legitimate, and who stands to benefit or lose from specific decisions.<sup>10</sup> Related questions focus on what and whose singing will be deemed a genuine choral experience.

The choral texts did not enter into the debate. Rather, they employed narrow and monocultural definitions of good choral music and of legitimate choral experience. Almost without exception, the texts canonized Western, Euro-American music, relying heavily on compositions by dead, White, Euro-American males. The limits of their adventurousness were vocal jazz and music for show choirs. Other styles, when they oc-

asionally were mentioned, appeared to have been altered to fit a Euro-American choral model; for example, ironed-out renditions of Black spirituals were popular.

One myth accompanying the traditional canon is that the world’s “best” choral music has been written for mixed ensembles or for groups composed of boys and men. This myth often serves as justification for continued use of an exclusionary canon. Monocultural definitions of a choral experience inform this myth. Choral music really means ensemble singing. Women throughout the world sing, often in groups, and the misconception that there is little good music for women’s ensembles emerges from a narrowness of vision about what constitutes a choral experience.

The question of how sexism, racism, and elitism inform aesthetics is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say, however, that taste is a social construct informed, as Pierre Bourdieu has argued, by social arrangements of the culture constructing the definition.<sup>11</sup> Power relations are revealed in decisions about whose knowledge is legitimate; thus, a choral canon that excludes works by and for women reflects and reinforces unequal gendered power relations. Therefore, it can be argued that the canon unproblematically presented in these texts creates difficulties for girls and women.

A few authors mentioned factors to consider when choosing repertoire, but the suggestions dodged equity issues. For example, Gordon H. Lamb listed several criteria for selecting music, including whether the conductor can teach it, whether students will learn something from it, and whether it can be performed successfully. He then named quality composers, all of whom were male.<sup>12</sup> Lamb’s criteria are sound but insufficient. Like other authors, he said nothing about selecting music from a variety of genres not usually included in the choral canon. No text underscored the importance of selecting music by women composers.

Since the traditional canon largely was unchallenged, there were no practical strategies for enriching or reshaping it. Because these how-to-do-it manuals offered no advice to directors/teachers who choose to challenge the canon, pioneers will need to weed

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through the problems and possibilities on their own. Because there was no discussion of canon as contested ground, there was no representation of the canon as dynamic and ever changing.

### **Gendered Musical Styles**

A second repertoire issue the texts failed to address is the tendency among directors/teachers to program music for single-sex ensembles that reinforces and reinscribes sex stereotypes. Musical styles and genres have become gendered. In twentieth-century America, for example, a major portion of the choral music for women's groups has consisted of slow ballads; lullabies; love songs; songs about nature; and soft, "sweet," diatonic pieces; such music reflects a traditional, White, middle-class definition of femininity. By contrast, pieces about adventure, travel, and drinking — lively, fast, loud, action music — often have been selected for boys. Not only did the texts overlook the potential problems arising from gendered fare, but some of them also advised teachers to use gendered music to lure singers, customarily boys, into choir.<sup>13</sup> Texts advocating such tactics indicated that gendered music should be selected because it is what girls (or more commonly, boys) want to sing, but they did not question why the sexes may derive pleasure from different styles of music.

The assumption that essential differences between the sexes account for divergences in musical preference may have influenced the reasoning presented in the texts; such deterministic explanations overlook the politics of desire, however, as well as the relationship between those politics and power. Rather than being a lure, gendered music may deter some boys and girls because it epitomizes societal pressure to conform to restrictive constructions of gender. This possibility was not considered in the texts.

### **Sexist or Misogynistic Lyrics**

One unasked question related to gendered repertoire is whether and how to teach sexist or misogynistic lyrics and roles. The choral

repertoire is filled with problematic examples, some of which appeared in the texts as highly recommended works. For example, Miller, among others, listed Offenbach's "Neighbors' Chorus" as a noteworthy piece of literature.<sup>14</sup> Not one source recommending the piece, however, addressed the issue of its text. This work, from the comic opera *La jolie Parfumeuse*, is a light-hearted patter song in which a group of neighbors asks a man why he looks so sad. The group wants to know whether he has quarreled with his lover and at one point asks,

Did she keep you waiting? Did she break your date?  
Please elucidate, please elaborate!  
Did she treat you badly, was she very bad?  
Did she make you mad? Are you very sad?...  
Did you beat her, try to choke her till you made her pout?...  
Did you beat her and choke her and knock her all about?<sup>15</sup>

A high school choir director told me she does not teach this piece because she believes some students lack the maturity to recognize that violence against women is not a laughing matter. Thus, it appears that some practitioners are more sensitive to potential problems with lyrics than were the creators of the methods texts.

Although Miller indicated that directors/teachers should carefully scrutinize lyrics, he did not specifically list sexism or misogyny as factors to consider; rather, he appeared to have been concerned about community response to musicals with explicit lyrics:

But a decision about the language and text should be made early in the planning process. Communities sometimes differ considerably about the type of libretto which will be regarded as suitable for performance by high school students, and this point can become a problem if the particular musical show being considered is not approved by a variety of people in the community. Sometimes a libretto can be adapted and made more suitable by making minor changes in its language, but there are also people who feel that there should be no editing.<sup>16</sup>

Miller presumably was not talking about *The Sound of Music* or *My Fair Lady*. The latter musical, however, is the tale of an avowed misogynist who sings: "I'd be equally as willing, For a dentist to be drilling, Than to ever let a woman in my life!" and who changes his mind only after he falls in love with a woman whom he has reshaped to match his specifications of the ideal.<sup>17</sup> Maria, in *The Sound of Music*, proves that a woman's place is at home. Too wild for the convent, she matures when she becomes a governess, wife, and mother. My generation grew up on these musicals, which may seem innocuous by some standards; however, presenting them to yet another generation without question or critique reinforces male hegemony by rendering it commonsensical and natural.

Every decision, including the all-too-popular one of ignoring sexist lyrics, has costs and rewards. Most decisions serve some groups or individuals better than others, and thoughtful consideration needs to be given to the question of who is likely to gain and who to lose from the choices made. There are many ways to deal with sexist or misogynistic lyrics and roles other than to ignore them, but alternatives become viable only when sexism and misogyny are regarded as serious problems. Contrary to popular myth, choosing alternatives that address these problems does not inevitably result in censorship.

### **Double Standards**

#### **Admission to Elite Ensembles**

Another problem the texts did not address is the potential for double standards to develop as a result of the current shortage of males in choral music programs. For example, shortages may lead to the privileging of males in recruitment and admission practices. A prestige hierarchy exists among types of choral ensembles. In coeducational high schools and colleges, the most selective ensemble is usually a mixed choir. In an effort to balance the mixed group, directors/teachers may be less selective about the boys admitted. Typically, such choral programs also have a women's chorus for those who are younger or deemed less capable; occasionally, a small men's ensemble exists. This hierarchical arrangement may create inequities. Under these circumstances, freshman

and sophomore girls may be relegated to the women's chorus, which is considered less prestigious, while boys of the same age are welcomed into the elite group. Usually, the policy of expecting younger girls to wait their turn is unwritten.

The following anecdote describes a typical situation. Several girls entering a local high school had spent years in an outstanding children's choir but were told that as girls, they would need to wait until they were sophomores before they would be considered for the concert choir. Yet, freshman boys were being admitted. The girls quietly joined the women's chorus, but privately they expressed disappointment at being assigned to an ensemble that did not challenge them and was not taken seriously either by the teacher or by most members of the group.

One consequence of being excluded from the elite group is loss of experience. For example, when compared to other choral groups, the select group may be invited to perform more often and to travel. Such experience is part of the informal mentoring that may open doors of opportunity for students. Some critics of affirmative action argue that American society, including its schools, is and should remain a meritocracy, but the differential treatment of boys and girls in choral recruitment is a clear example of schooling that does not operate on meritocratic principles. Only a few voices are championing change, but even the slightest leveling of the playing field elicits outcries from critics when that leveling helps girls and women. There appears to be little complaint about unequal standards that benefit boys.

#### **Classroom Behavior and Attention**

Double standards of acceptable classroom behavior sometimes inadvertently creep into choral settings, in part because of deterministic constructions of masculinity and femininity, and in part because boys are few in many choral programs. Essentialized constructions of masculinity may lead to a "boys will be boys" attitude that, combined with a genuine desire to keep boys singing, may lead to inequitable practices. Few teachers will admit to bending the rules for boys or to accepting behavior from boys they never would accept from more expendable girls; ideology and

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practice may be in conflict, however.

The documented tendency for teachers to devote more time and attention to boys may be an even greater problem in choral ensembles, where shortages of boys are common, than it is in other classrooms.<sup>18</sup> Shortages often translate into smaller, weaker, less experienced boy's sections, which will need more time and attention if the music is to be well learned. Girls, whose musical parts may be less challenging and who by virtue of their numbers may learn the music more quickly, may find themselves spending considerable time in choir being ignored. Future directors/teachers need to be aware that classroom dynamics are complex, gendered, and often inequitable. Being aware of problems is the first step toward finding configurations that will be more helpful for girls.

### **Power Relations in Choral Ensembles**

Another shortcoming of the texts was their unquestioned presentation of hierarchical power relations as the standard and norm in choral ensembles. Support for a hierarchical model was evident, for example, in descriptions of the role of the director/teacher, whose charge was depicted as one of controlling others or being "in control." Conductors were portrayed as indispensable experts, who justly call all the tunes: what to perform, how to perform it, where, and when. Support of hierarchical power models also was evident in the occasional discussion of classroom management.

Some feminists contest the representation of hierarchical power models as commonsensical and natural. They express concern that top-down power models may train students for passive compliance and obedience. Such training may not be helpful for students, especially for girls. Deference to authority — which historically has been male — has played a significant role in the perpetuation of male hegemony. In his book *Power Over Power*, David Nyberg character-

izes Americans as appallingly obedient.

Nyberg supports his observation with evidence from a study conducted by Stanley Milgram:

Stanley Milgram's empirical studies... have shown that an appalling number of "average" Americans easily give away control of their own behavior and become utensils for carrying out the wishes, the "orders," of presumed "authorities" whom they have agreed to obey without coercion of any sort.<sup>19</sup>

One answer to the question of how Americans learn to be compliant may be that schooling, including the training given in musical organizations, provides many lessons.

In addition to critiquing hierarchical power structures on the grounds of their potential impact on students, feminist directors/teachers may reject such structures because they themselves are uncomfortable wearing a mantle of power they perceive to be an oppressive vestige of an outmoded regime. Women directors/teachers who favor and adopt traditional regimes may have difficulty exercising the power they believe is due them because students have not been socialized to accept women in the role of "the boss."

Along with feminist critique of hierarchical models has come recognition that there are other useful ways of thinking about power; power relations can be fostered that place less emphasis on obedience and deference to authority. Feminist scholars have formulated alternative definitions of leadership, emphasizing collective power and power through collaboration. These alternatives merit consideration and represent yet another issue that needs to be brought to the table for discussion. Emphasizing students' agency and recognizing that students gain valuable experience from using power effectively — from making choices and decisions — may be part of an educational agenda that turns away from unquestioned acceptance of top-down models.

Dynamic models of power relations recognize that students always have power; by contrast, unexamined acceptance of a hierarchical, control model may lead to disregard

of the complexity that characterizes power relations. As the poster caption says, "Control is an Illusion"; power is never total:

Refusal to respect authority is the power over power which is present in the minds of all persons. Individual refusal to respect authority is not the same sort of power as organized refusal, but the two share a principle: Power itself is delegated through consent, and without consent power inevitably is reduced to force, and thus eventually it is lost.<sup>20</sup>

Teaching future directors/teachers that they have and rightfully are entitled to a power defined as control may not be in the best interest either of teachers or students. Thus, these texts may be inviting directors/teachers to invest in a vision of power that not only is masculinist but also bankrupt.

### **Problems Experienced Largely by Girls**

Several authors condemned the vocally abusive practice of assigning females to changed-voice parts, a practice sometimes employed when male singers are in short supply.<sup>21</sup> The most extensive coverage of this problem was provided by Timothy Mount, who argued that the "potential consequences — stunted vocal growth and permanent damage — are nothing short of vocal malpractice."<sup>22</sup> This was the only problem mentioned in the texts that is experienced exclusively or largely by female choristers; however, many others exist, among them are the glass ceiling, feminine socialization, and male-oriented teaching practices.

### **The Glass Ceiling**

Women who choose careers as professional musicians face myriad obstacles, not the least of which is a glass ceiling. In the face of this reality, it is important for directors/teachers to recognize the significant role they play as gatekeepers in students' musical growth and progress. Too often in the past, mentoring bestowed more generously on boys than on girls marked the first step in the creation of the glass ceiling. Good mentoring is important for all students, but it is especially critical for girls. Girls need role models and mentors who will offer support and help launch careers.

### **Feminine Socialization**

Dominant constructions of femininity may handicap women musicians. For example,

girls who are socialized to be sweet, passive, nice, and meek may need to revise or augment that socialization if they are to become expressive singers. How to accomplish such revision is a subject worthy of choral directors/teachers' attention.

As a teacher of single-sex middle school choral ensembles, I realized that all-girl organizations presented different challenges than did boys' groups, but the challenges were no less perplexing. Because discipline usually was not an issue, the girls often tackled more challenging music than did the boys. Yet, I also saw in girls more reticence to take risks or to sing out, more self-consciousness and less self-confidence, all of which sometimes hampered expressivity. I am not suggesting essential differences exist between the sexes. Rather, I believe that different socialization produces different results; the traditional White, middle-class ideal of femininity may not serve female singers well.

### **Lost In The Crowd: Teaching Practices That Benefit Boys**

The texts devoted considerable space to teaching practices that benefit boys, but similar attention must be given to the needs of girls. Choral ensembles tend to be large, and in mixed ensembles the boys may garner a huge portion of a choral director's/teacher's resources. Many boys have been socialized to get attention by being disruptive. Eager to minimize such disruptions, directors/teachers may adopt male-centered teaching strategies. Girls, who generally receive a different socialization, may be overlooked, ignored, or lost in the crowd, especially when they are in abundance. Choral directors/teachers who are concerned about these matters need to consider whether some teaching practices and learning environments tend to be more beneficial to girls than other practices are, especially if overcoming gendered socialization is a goal.

Several texts spoke of the potential benefits to boys of all-male organizations. Segregation by sex may create other problems; nevertheless, the possible advantages that girls may derive from single-sex organizations should be explored. All-female organizations will not be particularly helpful, however, if directors/teachers do not take girls or girls' ensembles seriously.

Not only do girls need attention, but they need beneficial kinds of attention. Outfitting female choristers in sequined strapless evening gowns may attract attention, but it is of a different and ultimately less beneficial sort than that received by boys.

### **The Masculine as the Ideal**

The masculine/male as the ideal was one unquestioned yet problematic concept present in several texts. For example, in matters of choral tone, the unchanged male voice sometimes was established as the standard for girls and women. In a discussion of Renaissance choral music, Shirley W. McRae wrote, "The choir tradition of England is greatly admired even today, and much of the beauty of the choral sound may be attributed to their continued use of children's voices, especially boys [my emphasis]."<sup>23</sup>

One source discussing authentic Renaissance tone sent conflicting messages about the advisability of using women to sing music from that era. Although the source stated that women should not be excluded, it indicated that vibrato was unacceptable. The author advised directors/teachers to use junior or senior high school students to achieve an authentic sound: "Obviously, women's voices should not ordinarily be excluded today. But it should be recognized that little or no vibrato was originally used in singing this music. Junior high and senior high school student voices are light enough that they can sound appropriate in singing this music..."<sup>24</sup> If adolescent singers are used, what part is left for adult women? The source implies that in extraordinary circumstances women should be excluded but does not articulate what such circumstances might be. In a later passage on music of the Baroque era, the same source once again obliterates females, in this case, girls: "Today we expect to employ women's voices in singing the soprano and alto parts [of Baroque music], but of course the possibility exists that a boy's unchanged voice could be used for a specific situation."<sup>25</sup>

The masculine/male was represented as the ideal, not only in some discussions of choral tone, but also in a listing of exemplary choirs, given by Sue Fay Allen: "Speak as often as possible of the great potential of the human voice, and play recordings that dem-

onstrate this potential — the Canterbury Boys Choir or the Kings College Choir come to mind immediately."<sup>26</sup> Both of these groups are composed solely of males. Treasuring all-male ensembles (e.g., boy choirs) above all others is an established practice in the Western high art choral tradition, and it is a part of the tradition that needs critical examination.

### **Some Concluding Thoughts**

My analysis of the choral music texts revealed that women are not getting a word in edgewise. Issues of critical importance to women and girls should be discussed, and I have named various issues for which conversation is long overdue. Doubtless, some choral educators may find my suggestions threatening; they may argue that I propose to bulldoze a beautiful palace called the choral music tradition. A palace is a static image, however, and bulldozing implies destruction. I reject such imagery and propose instead a different vision of choral music education, one that is more dynamic. Choral music should and must continuously change in ways that will keep it thriving and growing. I also suggest more discussion of teaching as a problematic endeavor, as messy unfinished business, often fraught with conflict. I advocate more consideration of viable alternatives to business as usual, recognizing that every decision or action has consequences, and that alternatives themselves may have shortcomings. Finally, I urge those concerned with choral music education to acknowledge that we all are impoverished by sexism, racism, and classism; we may pay a dear price for unwillingness to recognize this impoverishment. One price may be choral music education itself. The world is changing dramatically, and that which cannot keep pace may be left behind. I cannot go home again, but perhaps we can build on fresh ground.

### **Notes**

1. I do not claim to have located every source published in the ten years; however, 32 sources were read, 19 of which made no reference to gender. For a list of the texts consulted, a description of procedures for generating the list of texts, and in-depth analysis of other dimensions of these texts, see Julia Eklund Koza, "Big Boys Don't Cry (or Sing): Gender, Misogyny, and Homophobia in College Choral Methods Texts," *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 4 (4)/ 5 (1) (Winter 1993/Spring 1994), 48-64.

2. John Fiske, *Television Culture* (n.p.: Methuen, 1987; reprint, London: Routledge, 1989), 282-285 (page references are to reprint edition).
3. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International, 1971), 12.
4. Lana F. Rakow, "Gender and Race in the Classroom: Teaching Way Out of Line," *Teaching Forum* 12 (1) (Dec. 1990).
5. For a discussion of the early texts, see Julia Eklund Koza, "The 'Missing Males' and Other Gender-Related Issues in Music Education: Evidence from the Music Supervisor's Journal, 1914-1924," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 41 (3) (Fall 1993), 212-232.
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8. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, "Introduction," *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3.
9. Kenneth H. Phillips, "Choral Music Comes of Age," *Music Educators Journal* 75 (4) (December 1988), 25.
10. This list of questions is an adaptation of one formulated by Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 7.
11. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard, 1984).
12. Gordon H. Lamb, *Choral Techniques*, 3rd ed. (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown, 1988), 172.
13. For a full discussion, see Koza, "Big Boys Don't Cry (or Sing)."
14. Miller, 257.
15. Jacques Offenbach, "Neighbors' Chorus," from the comic opera *La jolie Parfumeuse*, ed. Jan Meyerowitz, English text by Peter John Stephens (New York, Broude Brothers, 1954), 2-3, 6-7.
16. Miller, 259.
17. Frederick Loewe, "An Ordinary Man," from *My Fair Lady: A Music Play in Two Acts, Based on Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw*, adaptation and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner (New York, Coward-McCann, 1956), 57.
18. For a review of research on gendered classroom interaction, see *How Schools Shortchange Girls: A Study of Major Findings on Girls and Education* (Washington, DC: AAUW Educational Foundation and the National Education Association, 1992), 68-71.
19. David Nyberg, *Power Over Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 56.
20. Nyberg, 46.
21. See, for example, Timothy Mount, "Female Tenors ... How to Ruin an Alto," *Music Educators Journal* 69 (4) (December 1982), 47-48; Lamb, 167; and Sally Herman, "Unlocking the Potential of Junior High Choirs," *Music Educators Journal* 75 (4) (December 1988), 34.
22. Mount, 47.
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25. Miller, 155.
26. Sue Fay Allen, "The Potential of the Junior High Voice," *Music Educators Journal* 73 (3) (November 1986), 30. 

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For further information please contact:

The Historic Brass Society  
148 West 23rd Street, #2A  
New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.  
Fax/Tel (212) 627-3820