

Since antiquity, intellectual concepts have been divided into seven liberal arts known as the Quadrivium and Trivium. The seven subjects, when studied together, prepared for the more elevated pursuit of studying theology. Music was listed among the four higher arts, along with: math, astronomy and geometry.

Within the concept of the seven liberal arts, stands my philosophy that music is one of several pursuits of enlightenment. It plays a crucial role in our development as mammals with consciousness in the fact that it is a discipline and an intellectual subject while also behaving as a form of expression and descriptive medium for our species.

I believe that all students should study music, for the same reason that our modern Core curriculum ascertains such focus in the 21st century mode of education: our adult lives benefit from its study. We benefit from self-discipline, community engagement, and expression. A choral setting not only provides a setting which offers all three mentioned above, it provides it in a setting which allows individuals to present their most intimate instrument to a communal setting: their body and specifically their voice. Aside from dance, no other art form requires that person give so much of themselves with so much personal exposure.

Choral music allows a student to study by merely being present mentally, spiritually and physically. There is no mandatory costly instrument to purchase, there is no equipment. A student may choose to obtain additional music training but could also make music with their voice without cost. Therefore, choral music is perhaps the most inclusive form of musical expression. In this form we are able to see expressive humanity at it's most diverse and therefore it's most authentic presentation of self. All ages, all religions, all races, all ethnicities, all intellects, all income demographics may participate in their own way.

I believe that choral music can be a democracy, when a truly inspired leader is able to give power back to those presenting art through their voices. Choral music does not require a leader but tends to lean on one for the sake of organization and guidance. A conductor must remember that their place is not essential but is simply there for the good the group. Choirs have performed with great success sans conductor, yet no conductor can perform without an ensemble. Our place as choral leaders is therefore precarious and must be remembered for what it is: a role of servitude to the score, to the ensemble, and to the audience. I believe that a strong choral leader embodies a sense of humility, academic excellence, and the desire to be an educator, not a monarch of a choral setting. I believe that the choral setting is one in which the voices are not mindless musical instruments but expressive conscious beings who must be given a sense of control over their artistic material.

It is frequently said that when singers perform together in an ensemble, their heartbeats sync to each other. I believe that this sense of humanity and unity is the primary focus of any music educator. Within that heartbeat lies the concepts of self-discipline, intellectual understanding, and artistic expression. Thus, music justifies its placement in the Quadrivium on

a modern level: it addresses all senses of human refinement. Choral music allows this to happen in a sense which affects the most wide-reaching community and allows us to also express our sense of diverse humanity. I believe that teaching a student to embrace choral music is therefore teaching a student to embrace their own place within a greater sense of community and within a greater cosmos.