



Lesson: Rehearsing Breath & Phrasing

OVERVIEW

Students explore phrases in lyrics, music, and supported breathing within *Through All Things*

LEARNING GOAL

After individual exploration, students will be able to analyze and perform musical phrasing with full, sustained breathing

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

Student copies of:

- [The Lyrics of Through All Things](#) handout
- Music for *Through All Things*
- [Self Reflection](#) worksheet

PROCESS

1. Explain to students that just as language can be broken down into separate words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, in the language of music, notes are also grouped together into musical ideas that make sense. Groups of notes that make a whole musical idea are called phrases. Just as you pause at the period at the end of the sentence (or at the comma at the end of a long phrase or clause), a melody also often pauses slightly when it comes to the end of a phrase allowing for a natural place to take a breath.
2. Pass out the lyrics only handout and have students identify where they think the phrases are throughout the poem, placing a mark between each phrase.
3. Then have them look at the piece *Through All Things* and choose where phrases or breaths would be, by placing breath marks (') above the staff with a pencil. Note: The composer has been very thoughtful in creating obvious opportunities for breaths by sub-dividing the longer phrases.
4. Have students get into small groups and share their choices, discussing any changes they made once they saw the music; coming to a group consensus on where in the music the phrases and breaths would best be placed.
5. Reconvene with the full choir and have the groups share their choices for breaths making note of the long sustained phrases and repetition of phrases.
6. Once the class completes marking their scores with the same breath marks for phrases, have the entire choir speak the phrases while making sweeping arm movements.

7. Take a few of the longer phrases and practice by altering the speed of the phrase several times, challenging them to complete it within one breath.
8. Now translate this into singing the phrases, again using the sweeping arm movement to maintain the flow and sustain their tone.
9. Have students complete the Self Reflection worksheet to assess their understanding of breath and phrase.

EXTENSIONS

- Students could write their own poems (haiku activity) or lyrics with particular emphasis on the phrases
- Students could read published poems marking where the phrases are, and breaths should occur
- Expand on the concept of phrases by explaining that very short musical "words" that appear often in a piece of music can be called motives, motifs, or cells. Have students explore further the phrase forms in this piece or others.

THE LYRICS OF *THROUGH ALL THINGS*:

"LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY,
ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.

JULY 13, 1789." (EXCERPT)

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

- WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



SELF REFLECTION ON BREATH AND PHRASING

Name: _____ Class: _____

1. What did you notice about any differences in your breath between speaking a phrase and singing a phrase?
2. How was your breath affected when you sang high versus when you sang low?
3. Were there certain words or vowels sounds that seemed easier or harder to sing on long notes?
4. How do you know if you are breathing correctly with diaphragmatic breathing?

