

Innovative Strategies for Choral Warm-Up and Rehearsal

Musical First Aid or Long-Term Ensemble Skill Development?

James Jordan

Professor and Senior Conductor
Westminster Choir College
Princeton, New Jersey

Contact

email: jjordan@rider.edu

Twitter: [@Jevoke](https://twitter.com/Jevoke)

Sponsored by GIA Publications, Inc.



Chicago, Illinois

Innovative Strategies for Choral Warm-Up and Rehearsal

Musical First Aid or Long-Term Ensemble Skill Development?

“If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always gotten.”

—Andrew Carnegie
from the Foreword,
The Conductor’s Gesture,
Eugene Migliaro Corporon

1. The Major Pedagogical Question

- Premise: We need to move away from choral rehearsal first aid in our rehearsals and move toward long-term music learning and music skill teaching.

“We give meaning to music by audiating the context of the music.”
(p. 5)

—Edwin Gordon
in *Preparatory Audiation, Audiation,
and Music Learning Theory*

“Visualize Gordon’s work as concentrating on building a strong foundation of basic skills: tonal patterns and rhythm patterns—aurally and in notation...and upon these basic skills, the monuments of music—literature, structure and style, aesthetic listening, performance, composition, and conducting are built. Many music educators focus on the monuments of music achievement and lose sight of the importance of a solid foundation. Gordon’s premise was if we build a strong foundation, the monuments will be easier to erect and will be stronger in the long run.”

—Richard Colwell
in *Development of MAP and ITML: Is Music
Learning Theory an Unexpected Outcome?*
ISAME 2015

“We do not take meaning from music. Music hears us; we do not hear music. We give meaning to music, and music in return sensitively guides us to a better understanding of our total selves and our environment. Moreover, audiation allows us to make sense of what is being heard in music, anticipated or not.” (p. 36)

“Audiation of intrinsic elements of music must precede any attempt to teach music understanding through verbal descriptions.” (p. 37)

—Edwin E. Gordon
in *Learning Sequence in Music* (2007)

2. Removing the Grid

- How do we remove the grid?

“We must teach musicians off the grid. We must free musicians from the entanglement of notation. The optics of the musical score are the real problem. We must unwrap the notation in such a way so that it no longer encumbers us.”

—James Whitbourn
Choral Institute at Oxford, 2015

3. Teaching Audiation: Listening and Kinesthetic Awareness

4. The Miracle of Harmonic Rhythm

- Re-orient WHAT Your Choir Hears FIRST and Responds To!
- Listening Harmonically or Listening to TUNE?
- Harmonic Rhythm – the Perceived Speed of How Fast or How Slow Musical Sound Is Moving Forward

5. Teach Harmonically at All Times!

- The Illogic of Teaching by Interval – The *Sol-Mi* Paradox as an Illustration
- Never Teach out of Harmonic Context. Never Teach a Part at a Time.

6. Teaching Intonation

- The Power of the Dominant
- The Unstable SECOND DEGREE

7. Removing the Grid: Teaching Phrasing and Line

“Thus, what we see in notation is really only incidental. We audiate music, but read and write notation.” (p. 124)

“Before students are expected to follow a conductor as they read notation, they should experience performing in small ensembles without a conductor, or following a conductor without reading notation, or both. As a result, they will learn to audiate as they read and perform, and, thus, attend to conductors more musically.” (p. 295)

“Notation by itself is incomplete. It primarily indicates less important elements of music. Dynamic markings and tempo markings only suggest how a composition is to be interpreted. Moreover, weight and flow, which make style and expression in music possible, cannot be indicated with accuracy or objectivity in notation.” (p. 124)

—Edwin E. Gordon
in *Learning Sequences in Music* (2007)

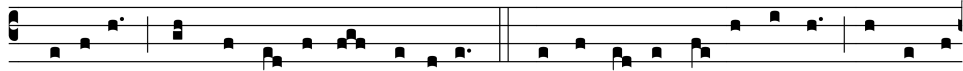
- What Chant Always Knew About Music Learning
- Phrasing Rules Derived from Chant (excerpted from *Discovering Chant*)
 1. Never add weight ONTO or INTO descending pitches.
 2. Sign THROUGH the tops of phrases.
 3. Listen to everyone else BUT YOURSELF.
 4. Repeated notes hover and are NEVER pressed or pushed forward!
 5. Subliminally teach resting tone of modality. TONALITY is set each time the ensemble begins a chant.
 6. Teach your choir to LISTEN TO THE ROOM.
 7. Chant teaches intonation BECAUSE chant is harmonically based acoustic music!

SOLO

FULL



1. Ve-ni, Cre - á - tor Spí - ri - tus, Men - tes tu - ó - rum ví - si - ta: Im-ple su - pér - na



grá - ti - a Quae tu cre - ás - ti, pé - cto - ra. 2. Qui dí - ce - ris Pa - rá - cli - tus, Al - tís - si -



- mi dó - num Dé - i, Fons ví - vus, íg - nis, ca - ri - tas, Et spi - ri - tá - lis ún - cti - o.



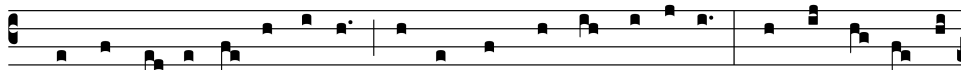
3. Tu sep - ti - fór - mis mú - ne - re, Díg - tus pa - tér - nae déx - ter - ae, Tu ri - te pro - mís -



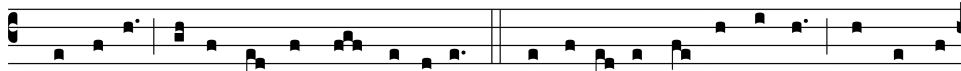
- sum Pá - tris Ser - mó - ne dí - tans gút - tu - ra. 4. Ac - cén - de lú - men sén - si - bus, In - fúnd



a - mó - rem cór - di - bus, In - fír - ma no - stri cór - po - ris, Vir - tú - te fír - mans pér - pe - ti.



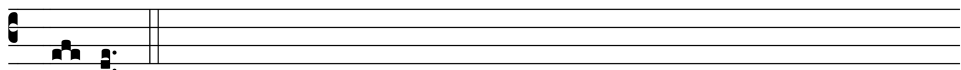
5. Hó - stem re - pél - las lón - gi - us, Pa - cém - que dó - nes pró - ti - nus: Du - ctó - re sic te



práe - vi - o, Ví - te - mus óm - ne nó - xi - um. 6. Per te sci - á - mus da Pá - trem, No - scá - mus



at - que Fí - li - um, Te ut - ri - ús - que Spí - ri - tum Cre - dá - mus óm - ni tém - po - re.



A - men.

*Chant reprinted from Laudate! by James Whitbourn and Isabella Burns.
Chicago: GIA Publications. Used with permission.*

8. Breath Is the Upload: Choir Cannot Buffer and Be Allowed to Download by Choir!

- The Forgotten Miracle of Breath

9. Predictive Audiation by the Conductor

- All Musical Ideas Must Be Created and Uploaded in the Breath
- The Role of Conductor Breath:
 - Idea
 - Connection
 - Communication
 - Setting Off Synthesia Within and Between Singers

Annotated Bibliography

Conable, Barbara. *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body*. Chicago: GIA, 2000.

The basic tenets of Body Mapping applied to musical performance focusing on free, balanced movement.

Conable, Barbara. *The Structures and Movement of Breathing: A Primer for Choirs and Choruses*. Chicago: GIA, 2000.

Containing numerous anatomical drawings and clearly written language, this booklet is designed for daily use in choral rehearsals.

Gordon, Edwin E. *Learning Sequences in Music*. 2012 edition. Chicago: GIA, 2012.

This is the standard text detailing all aspects of Music Learning Theory and is recommended for clarification of any MLT principles. Of interest are the sections on audiation and discrimination and inference learning.

———. *Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities*. 2001 Revision. Chicago: GIA, 2001.

The instructional “bible” for mastering and understanding the pedagogy of teaching tonal and rhythm patterns.

———. *Rhythm Register Book One*. Revised edition. Chicago: GIA, 1990.

———. *Rhythm Register Book Two*. Revised edition. Chicago: GIA, 1990.

———. *Tonal Register Book One*. Revised edition. Chicago: GIA, 1990.

———. *Tonal Register Book Two*. Revised edition. Chicago: GIA, 1990.

The tonal and rhythm register books contain sequential patterns for Learning Theory Activities as part of the general music classroom or ensemble rehearsal warm-up. For those wishing to go beyond the pattern training in this resource guide, these books provide content for enrichment exercises.

———. *Roots of Music Learning Theory and Audiation*. Chicago: GIA, 2011.

———. *Untying Gordian Knots*. Chicago: GIA, 2011.

In this compilation, Dr. Gordon devotes one page to each of the major themes of Music Learning Theory. It is an excellent resource for clarifying terminology and specific concepts and vocabulary used in Music Learning Theory.

Haasemann, Frauke, and James Jordan. *Group Vocal Technique*. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1991.

———. *Group Vocal Technique*. DVD. Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1989.

For those wishing an in-depth course in not only Group Vocal Technique but also Teaching Technique, while dated, this text and DVD are the prime resource for learning the essentials of Group Vocal Technique.

Holt, Michele, and James Jordan. *The School Choral Program*. Chicago: GIA, 2008.

This rich resource contains a chapter explaining Harmonic Immersion Solfege.

Horstmann, Sabine. *Choral Vocal Technique*. Accompaniment edition. Chicago: GIA, 2013.

Professor Horstmann, a student of Frauke Haasemann, presents an exciting collection of vocal exercises and canons with accompaniments to teach vocal technique.

Jordan, James. *Choral Singing Step by Step: Eleven Concise Lessons for Choral Ensemble Use*. Chicago: GIA, 2011.

*This resource distills the central principles of vocal technique in a small book that is designed for use by beginning singers. Interfaces with the larger volume *The Choral Rehearsal* (GIA).*

- . *Discovering Chant*. Chicago: GIA, 2014.
This book is an essential book for those wishing to learn the pedagogy of chant. Book comes with a CD of recorded chants so conductors can become musically literate in chant.
- Jordan, James. "Music Learning Theory Applied to Choral Performance Groups." In *Readings in Music Learning Theory*, edited by D. Walters and C. Taggart. Chicago: GIA, 1989: 168–182.
An early article by Dr. Jordan on applying the Music Learning Theory of Edwin Gordon to the choral rehearsal.
- . *Rehearse! A Guide and Card Pack to Improve Choral Teaching*. Chicago: GIA, 2009.
*This quick study guide to rehearsal techniques is a precise condensation of the majority of principles presented in *The Choral Rehearsal*.*
- . *Sound as Teacher*. Chicago: GIA: 2015.
This book is a comprehensive guide to teach conductors a multi-dimensional way of listening INTO choral sound.
- . *The Choral Rehearsal, Vol. I*. Chicago: GIA, 2007.
This volume is a resource of rehearsal techniques with accompanying explanations of the techniques presented.
- . *The Choral Rehearsal, Vol. II*. Chicago: GIA, 2007.
This volume deals with the atmosphere of the choral rehearsal and score analysis techniques, including vocal score analysis presented in this volume, Hillis "colorized" score marking, Herford analysis, Laban Movement Score Analysis, among others.
- . *The Choral Warm-Up: Methods, Procedures, Planning and Core Exercises*. Chicago: GIA, 2005.
This book contains the foundational pedagogy as pioneered by Frauke Haasemann. In this volume, Dr. Jordan builds on her basic pedagogy with accompanied exercises that support singing within harmonic structures as well as physical movement to support and reinforce vocal technique.
- . *The Conductor's Aural Tutor*. Chicago: GIA, 2006.
This text teaches conductors to hear "on the breath" singing and to differentiate resonances in choral sound. Is a self-tutorial volume.
- . *The Musician's Soul*. Chicago: GIA, 2000.
This book is the foundation for the human things that need to be part of the choral rehearsal process.
- Jordan, James, and Marilyn Shenenberger. *Ear Training Immersion Exercises for Choirs*. Teacher's Edition. Chicago: GIA, 2004.
This volume presents harmonized exercises to prepare the choir's audiation for all the modes. Several of these exercises were quoted in this book.
- Jordan, James, Nova Thomas, and Mark Moliterno. *The Musician's Breath: The Role of Breathing in Human Expression*. Chicago: GIA, 2011.
This book deals in depth with using breath as a pedagogy for rehearsal to facilitate audiation.
- Shenenberger, Marilyn, and James Jordan. *Introductory Harmonic Immersion Solfege for Individuals and Choirs, Book 1: Major Tonic, Dominant and Subdominant*. Teacher's Edition. Chicago: GIA, 2007.
Harmonically supported method for learning to audiate tonic, dominant, and subdominant patterns using an auditory approach.
- Swain, Joseph P. *Harmonic Rhythm*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
A text for those wishing a more detailed explanation of harmonic rhythm.

SUMMER STUDY AT WESTMINSTER

Westminster Choir College of Rider University offers a comprehensive summer study program for conductors with courses such as:

The **CONDUCTING INTENSIVE**

www.rider.edu/ConductingIntensive

The renowned **CONDUCTING INSTITUTE**,
now in its 15th year

www.rider.edu/ConductingInstitute

The acclaimed **CHORAL INSTITUTE AT OXFORD**,
a partnership program with the GRAMMY-nominated
Westminster Williamson Voices-in-Residence

www.rider.edu/Oxford

Additionally, James Jordan offers an online course for credit or non-credit on Group Vocal Technique, the choral warm-up process, and the human aspects of the choral rehearsal. Information for this popular online course can be found at:

www.rider.edu/creativepractices

Or for further information,
e-mail [Scott Hoerl@rider.edu](mailto:Scott.Hoerl@rider.edu)

A complete categorized listing of all Dr. Jordan's publications can be found at:

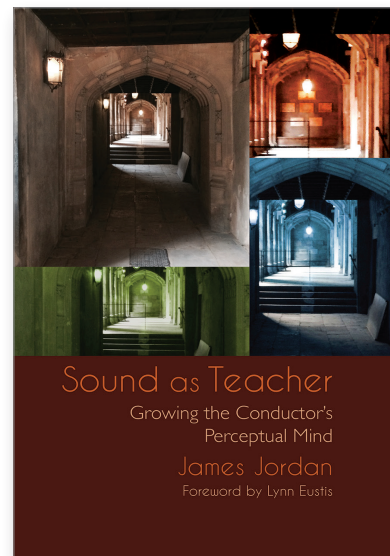
[www.giamusic.com/
music_education/james-jordan-evoking-sound-main.cfm](http://www.giamusic.com/music_education/james-jordan-evoking-sound-main.cfm)

SOUND AS TEACHER • JAMES JORDAN

In *Sound as Teacher*, James Jordan shares a new perceptual pedagogy for training conductors, which he discovered while teaching at the Choral Institute at Oxford, a program he co-directs with British composer James Whitbourn. This book focuses on imageries to guide conductors into a more multi-dimensional hearing process. The text outlines the framework of Jordan's teaching at the Choral Institute at Oxford.

Sound as Teacher focuses on various independent but related paradigms for hearing "into" sound. The principles presented in this book are useful to all conductors and teachers, regardless of the level of the ensemble. Among the principles discussed:

- Developing the ability to hear "into" sound for components beyond correct pitch and rhythm
- Hearing sound as a fluid medium
- Hearing into the spiritual content of sound
- Where one looks affects an ensemble's sound
- How to connect with sound and people with the hands and body
- How to become aware of the neurological phenomenon of "feeling synesthesia"
- Visual imagery that immediately deepens a conductor's ability to hear "into" sound
- Relationship between generosity and gesture



G-8991 HARDCOVER, 194 PAGES \$24.95

LAUDATE Essential Chants for All Musicians • JAMES WHITBOURN

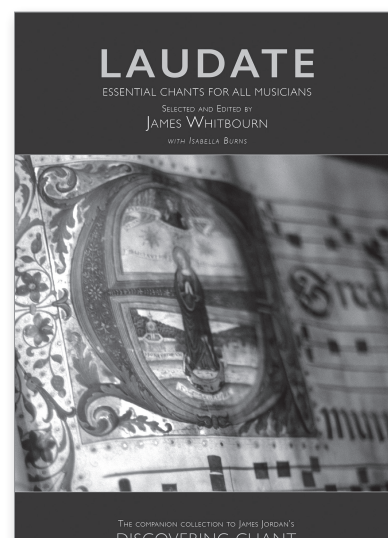
"One way or another, this is music that choral musicians have to know and understand just as a writer has to know the alphabet."
—James Whitbourn

Laudate is a collection of chants presented so all musicians—not only liturgists or specialist singers—can explore a repertory so rich and extraordinary that it has dominated and influenced musical composition for centuries, even to the present day.

Laudate is the companion volume to an important new pedagogical study of chant and its uses in teaching and performance, *Discovering Chant*, by Grammy-nominated conductor James Jordan. Dr. Jordan is Professor of Conducting and Senior Conductor at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. He is conductor of the Westminster Schola Cantorum and the Westminster Williamson Voices.

G-8812A SADDLE-STITCHED, 64 PAGES \$8.95

Audio files of all the chants in this volume are available for download at www.giamusic.com/laudate



THE CONDUCTOR'S GESTURE

A Practical Application of Rudolf von Laban's Movement Language

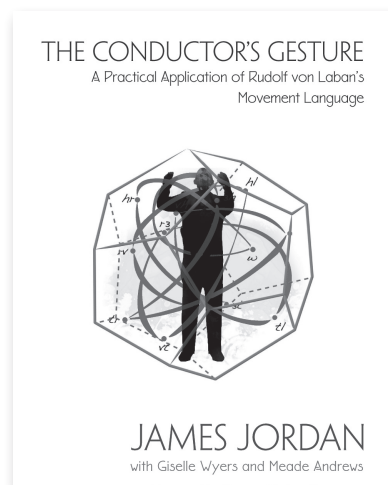
JAMES JORDAN WITH GISELLE WYERS AND MEADE ANDREWS

Foreword by EUGENE MIGLIARO CORPORON

The culmination of almost thirty years of research, writing, and teaching, this important book by James Jordan presents a vision of conducting gesture and technique as a movement language. In this comprehensive resource, Jordan applies the theories of movement education icon Rudolf Laban, as inspired by the pedagogical insights of Jordan's mentor and teacher Gail B. Poch. Each section is detailed through research, extensive discussion, and suggestions for study.

Dr. Jordan's pioneering research and writing on this subject will make this seminal volume an indispensable resource for the development of conducting technique and the foundation of many approaches to conducting pedagogy.

Also in this volume are contributions by Giselle Wyers and Meade Andrews. Dr. Wyers explores in depth the application of States and Drives, and makes direct applications to specific works in the choral literature. Dr. Andrews details a sequential curriculum for the practice and development of expressive conducting technique, all demonstrated on the 2.5 hour DVD included with this book.



G-8096 HARDCOVER, 362 PAGES WITH DVD \$45.00



GIA Publications, Inc.
7404 S. Mason Avenue • Chicago, IL 60638
Phone 800-442-1358 or 708-496-3800 • Fax 708-496-3828
www.giamusic.com