Rehearsal planning guide for Teach Me, O Lord by Thomas Attwood:

overall tips, objectives, standards taught and first lesson plan

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Knowledge Objectives: things students should know

Composer:

Thomas Attwood (1765-1838)

- English
- Classical period
- Chorister starting at age nine, trumpeter in Royal Band
- Student of Mozart, friend of Mendelssohn
- Organist at St. Paul's Cathedral
- Married with 6 children
- Died at his home while composing and buried in the cathedral crypt beneath the organ

Text:

Psalm 119:33

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I will (shall) observe (keep) it to the end.

Skill Objectives: things students should be able to do after learning this piece

- Clear diction
- Natural shape of phrases
- Slight emphasis on downbeat
- Ms. 8-10 syncopation

Affect Objectives: things students should feel and help others feel through the music

Discuss with students:

- How can we convey the meaning of the psalm in our performance?
- "And I shall keep it," is often repeated over and over again. Why? How can we bring out this part of the text with phrasing and dynamics?

PLAN

Spots to anticipate rehearsing:

1. Sing through melody (soprano line) from ms. 5-18 as a group
2. After practicing phrases separately, rehearse "like with like"
    a. Ms 5-8 SATB
    b. Ms. 11-12 ATB: have students clap and say rhythm before singing
3. Ms. 18-22 low voice → high voice effect
4. Ms. 26 and 48 subito piano
5. Ms. 31 S vs. ATB echo effect

6. Ms. 36-39 bring out tenor
7. Ms. 44 D flat in bass
8. Ms. 47 fermata and breathing together

FIRST LESSON PLAN EXAMPLE

Warm ups:

Rhythmic - Divide class in half. Have one half clap the quarter notes and the other half clap the rhythm in the ATB part of ms 11, stomping on the downbeat rest, then "ssh" ing on rest, then with a silent rest. Switch the halves so everyone gets to try the syncopated rhythm.

Breathing - sing ascending and descending pentachords on O (as in Lord) and AY (as in way) vowels

History:

"Who here has heard of Mozart? Guess what, Thomas Atwood knew him in person and was his student!" Show students a slide or two with biographical information about Atwood.

Text: Speak the psalm text, enunciating clearly!

Rehearse:

1. Sing through the first phrase's melody (soprano line) 5-12 all together, then sopranos alone. Then, rehearse each section's part separately ms. 5-10 before putting together 5-10.
2. Rehearse syncopated part in ms. 11-12.
3. Jump to ms. 47-end.

Listen and respond:

Listen to recording while following along with the score. Ask students: What do you like about the piece? What do you like about the performance? What part was the most interesting, and what part looks like it might be the most challenging?