



Choir Virtual Learning

Women's Choir/Musical Textures

May 13, 2020



Lesson: May 13, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: Students will be introduced to different types of musical textures and be able to recognize them in music.

Bell Work:

Use this link <https://www.merriam-webster.com/> to define the following terms. Make sure you are looking at the definition that refers to music if the term has multiple definitions.

1. Texture
2. Unison
3. Homophony (Homophonic)
4. Polyphony (Polyphonic)

Today we will be discussing the different textures that help create the music we sing and hear each day.

Texture

Texture is defined as a pattern of musical sound created by tones or lines played or sung together. We can also think of texture as different layers of sound. Think about cooking. There are many different ingredients that all come together to make a great dish. Similarly, there are different types of textures that come together to create music. Let's take a look at 3 different types of texture in detail.



Unison (Monophonic)- Where Many are ONE!

The most basic form of musical sound that can be made is a unison or monophonic sound. A unison sound can take on different meanings in music.

1. If the same pitch is played or sung two times in a row, that is a unison interval. It is considered a perfect interval. Unisons, 4th's, 5th's and octaves are all perfect intervals.
2. Unison can be a tuning mechanism for instruments or voices. Many times bands and orchestras will play a unison pitch to tune before rehearsals or performances. Choirs will many times do the same, as well as sing their warm ups in unison to encourage listening and tuning.
3. Composers will write a musical passage where all instruments or singers will perform the same pitches. This is known as a unison line of music.

How Does it Sound?

Listen to the first 53 seconds of this clip. You will hear the beginning sung in unison.

Guided listening:

A. Listen for multiple people singing the same notes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkKnv0UYqXc>



Homophony (Homophonic)

Homophony is defined as many people, performing multiple parts (harmony), in the same or similar rhythm. (Many performers, multiple harmony parts, same rhythm)

You can see that this texture is more complex because we will divide many voices or instruments into multiple parts. In a women's choir, the most common division is SSA. In a mixed voice choir, the most common division is SATB. Vocal ensembles traditionally are only divided into 3 and 4 parts, however, sometimes composers will write 8-12 divisions depending on the piece and size of the group.

A piece is homophonic when you hear the ensemble singing the same rhythms in harmony.

How Does it Sound?

Listen to the second half of the clip we looked at earlier. This time you will hear each girl singing her own part creating the harmony. Additionally, you will notice they are singing the same rhythm. This is Homophony!

Take a listen and make sure you understand these elements of sound.

<https://youtu.be/YkKnv0UYqXc?t=53/>



Polyphonic (Polyphony)

Polyphony is defined as two or more independent lines performing simultaneously.
(Multiple people, multiple independent parts, multiple rhythms)

This is the most complex of all the textures. It is the hardest to perform because all of the parts are independent of one another and rarely line up. It takes a great deal of musicianship to do this well.

That said, it seems to be the most fun to sing once you have it down. This texture is predominant in Renaissance and Baroque music. There are some instances in pop and gospel literature where there are sections of polyphony.

How Does it Sound?

Check out this clip of another explanation of polyphony.

<https://youtu.be/teh22szdnRQ?list=TLPQMzAwNDlwMjBr8xRJarNYsQ&t=148>

Listen to this clip of a piece of choral music featuring polyphony. Listen for multiple lines of music being sung independently of one another. You will be able to hear the staggered entrances that help create this effect. This is known as points of imitation because each part is imitating the part that came before it. Polyphony ends at time marking 4:28.

<https://youtu.be/VI6dsMeABpU?list=TLPQMzAwNDlwMjBr8xRJarNYsQ&t=99>

Practice

Below are 2 songs that employ all of the textures we discussed today. See if you can identify when you hear the different textures.

- Monophonic/Unison- All members sing the same notes and rhythms
- Homophonic- Members are singing the same rhythm, but are singing in harmony.
- Polyphonic- Each section of the ensemble is singing their own individual line as all sections perform together.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsGz0nupRVQ>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6WlcDawNi4>



the MORE
YOU PRACTICE
THE BETTER
YOU GET

Examples in Pop Music

It's important to note that these textures are not just present in classical music, but are also prevalent in pop music as well. Here are a couple examples of the textures we discussed today found in pop music.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skAOb_EUE_M

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzFbgRcafSE>



Extra Practice

Go to youtube and search 2 of your favorite songs.

- What textures are used in those songs?
- Had you noticed them before this lesson?
- How will this knowledge inform your listening going forward?



Lesson Recap

Let's take a look and see what you know about textures based off this lesson.

1. What is texture?
2. Define Monophonic/Unison.
3. Define Homophony.
4. Define Polyphony.



Thank you!

