

## **Chapter 2 – Choral Conducting Literature Review**

This chapter will review texts which focus on choral conducting. Section 1 of this review begins with a discussion of practice-based and scholarly conducting texts relating to the role of a choral conductor. Following this, texts relating to “voice-centred” conducting practices are examined. A definition of the term “voice-centred” is proposed, followed by a review of texts pertaining to: choral-vocal pedagogy; warm-ups; and vocal health research.

Due to the fact that literature exists pertaining to conducting of both instrumental and choral conducting, it is important to make clear that this thesis focuses on choral ensembles. Therefore, literature relating primarily to choral conducting will be reviewed in this chapter, with instrumental conducting literature referenced only when strictly necessary (e.g. to give historical context to “Maestro Writing”).

### **2.1 Choral Conducting Literature**

The role of a choral conductor is a contested concept. Practitioners and researchers alike hold varying conceptions of the role and its accompanying responsibilities, and the literature available to conductors in training is therefore wide-ranging with authors advocating varying and sometimes directly opposing approaches to the job. As Paul Head notes,

“[t]here is no such thing as the definitive choral methods book, largely because choral methods courses tend to vary tremendously in scope and content from one

situation to the next...A brief comparative analysis of any two choral methods books will quickly illustrate [that s]uch content of the books appears to be assembled at random, with the implicit bias of the author as to what topics should be presented and to what depth” (Head, 2002, p.12).

As suggested by Head (2002), the body of choral conducting literature is extensive but not necessarily cohesive. The definition of what choral conducting means in theory and in practice is not agreed upon, and authors often define the conductor role in their own way and offer guidance on how to enact the role according only to their own experience and resulting biases. The available literature consists of both practice-based texts and scholarly research and falls broadly into four categories, three of which have been previously identified in Jansson’s doctoral thesis (Jansson, 2013):, “Maestro Writing” (*Ibid.*, p.44), how-to guides, and individual studies. In addition to these, a fourth category, holistic models, has been added to this review to account for the emergence of research conceptualising conducting as an integrated set of functions, of which Jansson’s research forms a part.

## **2.1.2 Practice-based literature**

### **2.1.3 “Maestro Writing”**

Maestro writing is the oldest form of conducting literature (Faberman, 2003; Jansson, 2013). The term “Maestro Writing” (Jansson, 2013, p.44) refers to texts written by eminent conductors after a prestigious, often lengthy career. These are frequently semi-autobiographical in nature and will usually describe the author’s individual approach to

conducting. The authors of texts in this category aim to write about conducting generally and offer insight from their own experience as opposed to writing a textbook for conductors in training. Berlioz's *Le Chef d'Orchestre – Théorie de son Art* (Berlioz, 1843) and Wagner's *Über das Dirigieren* (Wagner, 1869) are the earliest examples of this type of text (Faberman, 2003). Although written around the same time, these two texts are very different examples of maestro writing. Berlioz's treatise sets out clear guidelines on his preferred beating patterns and technique, whereas Wagner's writing advises on the interpretation of music as opposed to technical conducting matters. More recent choral maestro writing varies in a similar fashion with certain authors focusing on explaining their personal systems of technique (Jordan, 1999), whilst others choose to focus more closely on their own general philosophies of conducting (Blocker, 2004). In both cases these texts feature personal beliefs and anecdotes. These writings are therefore unlikely to be useful to beginners, rather they are aimed at conductors with some experience seeking further understanding of an experienced conductor's personal conducting philosophy or choral enthusiasts seeking insight into a maestro's experience of the role. Maestro writing offers wisdom based on years of practice and may offer guidance to conductors in training however these texts are necessarily specific to the author's individual experience in terms of culture, geographical location, musical genre, and gender identity. These texts have therefore been generated from particular life experiences and working contexts and should be read with these potential contextual limitations in mind.

### **2.1.4 How-to Guides**

How-to guides provide instruction for conductors in training and are often, though not exclusively, aimed at beginners. These texts are not based on scholarly studies and are instead usually written by experienced practitioners. How-to guides differ however from maestro writing in that these authors limit the biographical writing in these texts and instead attempt to simply provide practical guidance. Topics covered in how-to guides are therefore usually limited to practical matters as opposed to philosophical approaches to conducting. Although there is no standardised content for a how-to guide, authors may cover topics such as (but not limited to): recommended beating patterns (McElheran, 1989); suitable warm-up exercises for choirs (Brewer, 2002); rehearsal activities (De-Lisser & Peckham, 2015); overviews of the vocal anatomy and advice on its use (Hill et al., 2007); score preparation (Madura Ward-Steinman, 2009); and/or the logistics of setting up and running a choir (Brewer, 1997).

As introductory texts, how-to guides may be of particular use to beginner conductors. There are however a smaller number of how-to guides which attempt to cover topics in a more in-depth fashion and are aimed at a range of experience levels, from beginner to professional (McElheran, 1989). This type of text however does not offer a comprehensive approach to the conductor's role and instead focuses on practical, individual skills for use during rehearsal and performance. They do not tend to focus in depth on any 'soft skills' such as communication skills or leadership, or any philosophical approach to the conductor's role. As with maestro writing, how-to guides are written based on the author's conducting

experience and the instructional contents of these texts are again therefore contextually specific.

## **2.2 Scholarly literature**

### **2.2.1 The Need for a UK-Based Perspective**

The majority of research relating to choral conducting has previously been carried out in the US and tends to take a quantitative, conductor perspective-centred approach (Jansson, 2019). A small body of European research exists, with a small amount of research being carried out in Scandinavia and, to a much lesser extent, the UK. (Jansson, 2013). It is still the case however that American choral research makes up the bulk of available scholarly writing on choral conducting to date (*Ibid.*).

It is therefore the case that although there has been a growing interest in the study of choral conducting over the past 60 years, the bulk of the research produced has gathered data from US-based choirs and conductors. Researchers carrying out these studies most frequently recruit college or high-school based choirs and conductors as participants (Jansson, 2019). These studies are therefore based upon a choral culture and system which is different to the one participated in by many singers in the UK (Haygood & Scheibe, 2015; Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011; Voices Now, 2017). Therefore, whilst this literature is useful and will be discussed below, I argue that it is currently not necessarily generalisable to a UK-based conductor's experience and further research is needed which focuses directly on the UK choral community's needs.

### **2.2.2 Individual Studies**

The majority of the scholarly research on choral conducting is made up of studies that explore individual aspects of conducting practice, as opposed to a broad overview of the conductor's role. These studies tend to focus on issues such as: gestural skills (Grady, 2014; Gumm, 2012; Litman, 2006; Manternach, 2012; Vieth Fuelberth, 2003); general musical and aural skills (Howard et al., 2013; Jordan, 1987; Powell, 1991); repertoire choice and score preparation (Persellin, 2000); acoustics and/or choral spacing (Daugherty et al., 2019; Ternström, 2002); rehearsal planning and/or practice (Brunner, 1996; Stamer, 2009; Zielinski, 2005); pedagogical skills/approaches (Corbalán et al., 2019; Jucevi et al., 2008); warm-up techniques (Cook-Cunningham & Grady, 2018; Garcia et al., 2016; Glover, 2001; Manternach et al., 2017); and choral vocal health (Doherty & van Mersbergen, 2017; Kirsh et al., 2013; Rosa & Behlau, 2017; Weiss, 2001). The next section of this chapter will explore the literature pertaining to the conductor's approach and actions. Issues relating to vocal health and voice use in the choral rehearsal will be discussed later in this chapter.

The individual studies category of literature encompasses a wide range of studies that employ a variety of methods, although the majority of these studies utilise quantitative methods (Jansson, 2019). Examples of these include studies on the potential for conductor gesture to impact levels of vocal tension in singers (Fuelberth, 2003), or the effect of verbal and non-verbal instructions given by conductors on a choir's volume level (Skadsem, 1997).

A large proportion of these studies gather data from stakeholders other than conductors such as singers or audience members. The results presented may therefore be relevant across a broader range of contexts than the experience-based writings within the maestro writing or how-to guides categories. In spite of this potentially broad range of applications, their focus on individual aspects of conducting practice such as gesture or score preparation does not offer a broad overview of the conductor's role. As Jansson notes, "[t]he American style of methodology provides as complete a picture as possible of all the technical aspects of conducting - the gesture in its minute detail, how to deal with poor intonation, effect dynamic variation, etc. - and often leaves little for the gestalt conductor" (Jansson, 2013, p.52). That is to say that this type of atomistic research into individual conductor functions fails to explore the interdependent nature of conducting skills or encapsulate overall approaches to this practice. It is therefore of interest to explore the scholarly literature which examines conducting practice from a broader, or 'holistic' point of view.

### **2.2.3 'Holistic' models of conducting**

Texts which take a holistic perspective of the conductor's role make up only a small proportion of the available literature. As Jansson notes, choral research taking a holistic perspective on conducting is relatively scarce and approaches vary between researchers (Jansson, 2013, p.52). That said, there has been a slow but growing move toward viewing conducting from a broader point of view, including non-musical 'soft skills' such as leadership as part of the role. Taking a holistic perspective on the choral conductor's role allows "the [researcher's] interest not to be overly focused on methods, but to embrace how a practice works and what meaning it has for all people involved in the particular

context” (Durrant & Varvarigou, 2008, p.73). Among the authors writing from this broader perspective, there are two notable researchers who have gone as far as proposing holistic models of practice for conductors, and whose work merits further discussion.

### **2.2.3.1 Colin Durrant**

Colin Durrant is an internationally recognised choral conductor and conducting tutor, with a research career spanning 27 years (Durrant, 1994). He is the principal conducting tutor with the Association of British Choral Directors, the conductor of the University of London Chamber Choir and the Imperial College Choir, London. He has also previously been employed as the Programme Leader for Postgraduate Studies in Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London; the Director of Choral Activities, New England Conservatory, Boston, USA; the Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Maryland, USA and the Principal Lecturer in Music & Music Education, University of Roehampton (Durrant, 2019).

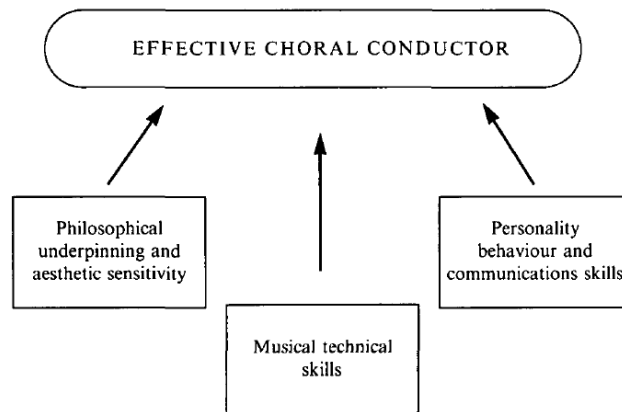
Modelling effective choral conducting has been a concern of Durrant’s for over two and a half decades. In Durrant’s work, the development of a model of the “super-model conductor” (Durrant, 2018, p.83) is the focus, that is to say that Durrant aims to develop a rubric of attributes that the ideal conductor would possess and use in their work. Durrant’s longevity as a choral researcher is unusual if we accept Grant and Norris’ assertion that “[t]he most persistent problem remaining is that relatively few choral music educators continue any form of research beyond their doctoral dissertation. Thus, ongoing patterns of research employing any level of sophistication of method are extremely scarce” (Grant &



Norris, 1998, p.48). His work has also been used as the basis for other holistic approaches to choral research (Jansson, 2013, 2018). It is therefore of interest to explore the evolution of Durrant's research over the last 27 years.

### **Durrant's Holistic Model of Effective Choral Conducting**

In 1994, Durrant first undertook a review of existing text-based conducting materials and studies, and used this to produce a model of an effective choral conductor (Durrant, 1994). This model formed the basis of much of Durrant's subsequent work which has largely involved refining and validating this model (Durrant, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2018). During the course of his research and practice, Durrant's proposed model of effective choral conducting has undergone revision however the basic underlying structure remains consistent. In 1994 Durrant first proposed that an effective choral conductor's role, and therefore their training, could be divided into three broad areas. The diagram below (Figure 1) shows the results of Durrant's initial review of the conducting literature, categorised into 3 separate sets, namely: Philosophical Underpinning and Aesthetic Sensitivity; Musical Technical Skills; and Personality, Behaviours and Communication Skills.



**Figure 1 - Durrant's initial model of effective choral conducting (Durrant, 1994, p.61)**

In his review of the literature which forms the basis of these categories, Durrant notes a number of core themes which led to his development of the 3-category model. Within the first category, Philosophical Underpinning and Aesthetic Sensitivity, the primary focus of texts appears to be on conductor preparation, rehearsal skills, and performance considerations (Durrant, 1994). In relation to the literature falling into the second category, 'Musical Technical Skills', Durrant's conclusions are similar to those noted previously in this chapter (see p.36) relating to individual studies, in that he notes a heavy focus on beating patterns and score study in conducting texts (Durrant, 1994). Within the third category, 'Personality, Behaviours and Communication Skills', Durrant notes a focus within the literature on the interaction between choir and conductor, and the potential for a reinforcement of one another's behaviour (positive or negative) to occur in a rehearsal setting.

These three categories form the basis of the model proposed by Durrant in all future publications on the subject of training choral conductors. Although in subsequent work

Durrant makes alterations to the content of this model, the primary constant in its development is this 3-part structure (Durrant, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2018; Litman, 2006; Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011).

Durrant's most recent iteration of the model is shown below in Figure 2. This version of the model displays not only the broad categories of skills he deems necessary in a conductor, but also specific examples of skills in each area which he proposes should be developed.

<b>Durrant's "supermodel" conductor</b>	
<b>Philosophical Principles Underpinning Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A knowledge of the choral repertoire</li> <li>- A knowledge of the human voice</li> <li>- An image of the music prior to rehearsal</li> <li>- An awareness of the aesthetic potential of the music</li> <li>- An understanding of the nature of the conductor's role to take responsibility for the singers collectively and individually</li> </ul>
<b>Musical Technical Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate aural and error-detection skills</li> <li>- The ability to give clear intentions through appropriate gesture</li> <li>- The ability to demonstrate accurately and musically</li> <li>- A recognition of the importance of warming up voices</li> <li>- Strategies for establishing the character of the music at the earliest opportunity</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal Communication Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The capacity to create a positive non-threatening environment</li> <li>- The capacity to communicate clearly and unambiguously</li> <li>- The desire to encourage healthy singing through avoidance of situations...that will induce tension</li> <li>- The capacity to enable choral and vocal development</li> <li>- The ability to make singers feel confident and comfortable</li> <li>- The skill to pace rehearsals effectively</li> <li>- The expectation of the highest standards possible</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 - Durrant's model of a "supermodel" conductor (Durrant, 2018)**

## **Pedagogical Elements of Durrant's Model**

Durrant is particularly clear about the pedagogical element of conducting, stating that “conducting, certainly in the rehearsal context, is essentially teaching” (Durrant, 2018, p.77).

In Durrant's opinion, viewing the conductor as an educator means that the job involves more than simply shaping the sound the choir makes. Durrant cites Green and Gallwey's book *The Inner Game of Music* in which they advocate that, to ensure a person gains maximum benefit from anything they do, they maintain an awareness of:

- the quality of their experience whilst they are participating
- what they are learning as they participate
- how close they are coming to achieving their goals (Green, Barry; Gallwey, 2015, as cited in Durrant, 2018)

Green and Gallwey argue that focusing on the feelings of participants in a learning situation heightens their receptiveness to feedback which aids motivation and speeds up the learning process, thus enhancing enjoyment and improving the chances of performance goals being reached (Green, Barry; Gallwey, 2015). Durrant therefore essentially argues that including pedagogy in the role of a conductor is mutually beneficial for conductors and singers.

Singers benefit from the conductor's attentiveness to them, thus improving their receptiveness to the conductor's feedback and demands. The conductor therefore benefits from increased singer responsiveness and an improved quality of musical output.

The potential for choral conducting to constitute a pedagogical act will be discussed further later in this thesis, for now however it is noted that Durrant's model, which itself is the first model of its kind, i.e. a holistic model of choral conducting, positions the role of a choral conductor as that of an educator.

### **Knowing-in-Action and Leadership**

In addition to the skills outlined in the model above, Durrant also argues that conductors must be competent and experienced enough to anticipate musical issues, react to live feedback from singers, and act to ensure that participants' needs are met in the moment (Durrant, 2018, p.76).

Durrant links this simultaneous receiving of feedback and reacting appropriately to Donald Schön's theory of "knowing-in-action" (Durrant, 1996, 2018). Schön uses the phrase knowing-in-action to refer to the *demonstration* of knowledge by practitioners. This is knowledge which, although it is clear from their actions the practitioner clearly possesses, they cannot always articulate verbally. He defines it as "the sorts of know-how we reveal in our intelligent action – publicly observable, physical performances like riding a bicycle and private operations like instant analysis of a balance sheet. In both cases, the knowing is *in* the action. We reveal it by our spontaneous, skilful execution of the performance; and we are characteristically unable to make it verbally explicit" (Schön, 1987, p.25). Skilled choral singers may, for example, show this in adjusting the vowel sound they form and the volume level they produce in order to fit into the texture of a choir.

Schön's reference to a practitioner's difficulty articulating how and why they instinctively employ a particular skill is clearly relevant to conductors.

“Knowing when, for example, to concentrate on a particular technical detail of a small musical passage in a rehearsal, or when to go for a more holistic feeling of the whole piece, is an example of a knowing-in-action moment that enables a conductor to respond to the needs of the choir there and then” (Durrant, 2018, p.76).

It is worth noting that this difficulty for conductors in verbalising a rationale for their actions in rehearsal or performance may be a significant reason for the lack of extensive literature discussing non-musical or non-methodological conducting skills such as leadership or communication. It is feasible that a conductor with some experience could, for example, prescribe a set of gestures that are likely to keep a group of singers in time or influence the quality of sound they make. It would arguably be more difficult for a conductor to compose a comprehensive set of guidelines that would provide instruction on how, for example, to react quickly to interpersonal problems arising within a group or how to notice when singers are becoming bored and regain their attention. As Schön puts it, “Whatever language we may employ, however, our descriptions of knowing-in-action are always *constructions*. They are always attempts to put into explicit, symbolic form a kind of intelligence that begins by being tacit and spontaneous” (Schön, 1987, p.25).

Durrant's discussion of knowing-in-action is compelling but interestingly he does not include any items in his model which explicitly reference this notion of “continuous quick decision-

making” (Durrant, 2018, p.76). It would perhaps not be appropriate to add tacit knowledge which practitioners would have difficulty in articulating to a model of skills which he intends to be useful to conductors in training. In spite of this, elements of this tacit knowledge are arguably found in other skills mentioned in the model. I would argue that displaying attributes outlined above in Figure 2 such as “The capacity to create a positive non-threatening environment; The ability to make singers feel confident and comfortable; [and] The skill to pace rehearsals effectively” (Durrant, 2018, p.92) are all skills that could be considered displays of knowing-in-action. However, these might equally be considered elements of effective leadership. It is certainly true for example that leadership theorists using Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory consider it a leader’s responsibility “to make every follower feel as if he or she is a part of the in-group and, by so doing, avoid[] the inequities and negative implications of being in an out-group”(Northouse, 2016, p.142). This is comparable with Durrant’s assertion that conductors should “create a positive non-threatening environment [and] ...make singers feel confident and comfortable”(Durrant, 2018, p.92).

Although explicit mention of leadership is not included in the latest revision of the model, leadership skills are arguably still of concern to Durrant and form part of his conception of an efficient choral conductor. The definition of leadership and scholarly theories related to leadership and conducting will be discussed more fully in chapter 4, however at this point it is sufficient to note that a number of core elements of Durrant’s model could be considered leadership skills.

## **Durrant's Contribution - Conclusions**

During more than two decades of research and practice, Durrant's modelling of the necessary knowledge and skills for choral conductors has been revised and updated many times. It is clear however that the core principles that Durrant advocates – a clear philosophical underpinning, musical technical skills, and interpersonal communication skills – remain as the fundamental foundation on which his research and teaching sits. He is clear that his conception of effective choral conducting includes pedagogy and that including this teaching in choral rehearsals will result in mutual benefits for conductors and singers. He also argues that his three suggested core principles will not alone produce an exceptional conductor. In addition, a conductor must also be responsive to the needs of their singers as they arise during rehearsals or performances. In negotiating these moments and displaying knowing-in-action, and/or elements of leadership, conductors demonstrate more than practical musical skills and instead approach conducting 'holistically'.

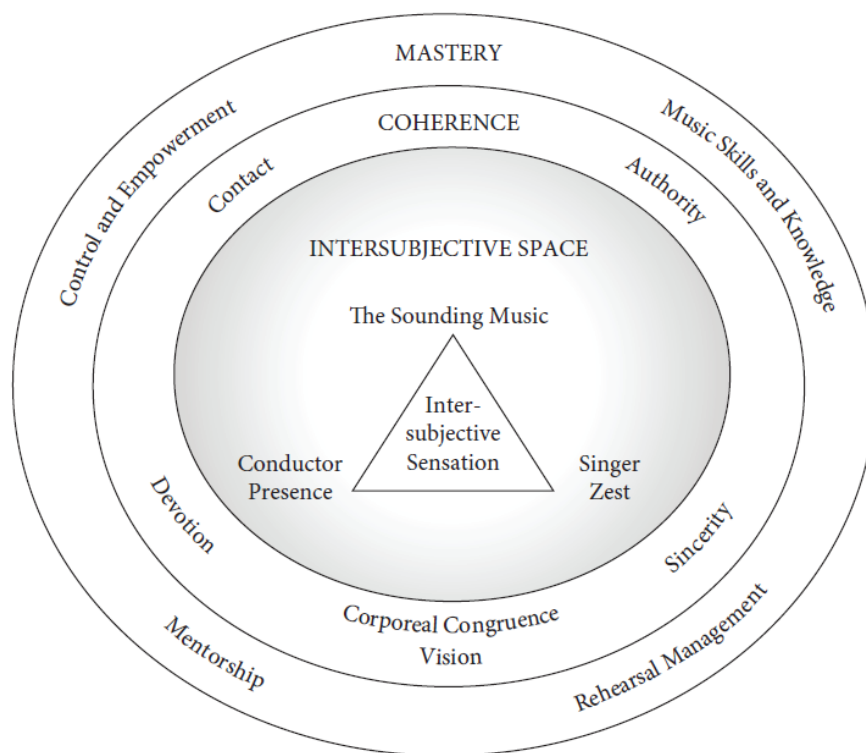
### **2.2.3.2 Dag Jansson**

Dag Jansson is a conductor and associate professor in arts management at Oslo Business School. Following a career in business specialising in telecom and media consulting, in 2008 Jansson retrained as a musicologist and began a research career focusing on the role of a choral conductor (*Featured Author - Dag Jansson, 2020*). Jansson identifies what he believes to be significant gaps in the conducting literature, all of which have also been identified previously in this review:



“Scientific research on conducting is a more recent phenomenon, and three important observations can be made on conducting research from the last few decades: (1) it is predominantly US based; (2) it is pedagogy-oriented (mostly in a high school and college setting); and (3) with few exceptions, it takes a “reductionist” view, isolating some particular angle, which is investigated by a quantitative approach” (Jansson, 2019, pp.865-866).

In response to this, and in common with Durrant, Jansson examines conducting from a holistic perspective. He argues that conducting should not be examined as a set of individual actions and skills, but instead as a group of interrelated dimensions of practice that can be modelled. However, Jansson takes an alternative approach to Durrant in that, as opposed to viewing the conductor as an educator, he adopts a leadership perspective and views the conductor as the leader of a group of singers. The most visible similarity between the two researchers’ work is Jansson’s development of a three-part model of conducting which is acknowledged to build on and complement Durrant’s earlier model (Jansson, 2019). Jansson’s “enactment model” (*Ibid.*, p.867) shows his conceptualisation of choral leadership as a three-layered phenomenon. This model is shown in Figure 3, below.



**Figure 3 - Jansson's Enactment Model of choral conducting (Jansson, 2019, p.875)**

Although the themes contained within the model may appear different to Durrant's (shown above in Figure 2) at first glance, the enactment model contains many similarities to Durrant's model. Where Jansson's model refers to "Musical Skills and Knowledge" (*Ibid.*), Durrant's refers to "Musical Technical Skills" (Durrant, 2018, p.92). "Corporeal Congruence" (Jansson, 2019, p.875) is linked closely to "[t]he ability to give clear intentions through appropriate gesture" (Durrant, 2018, p.92). "Vision" (Jansson, 2019, p.875) might be linked to "[a]n awareness of the aesthetic potential of the music" (Durrant, 2018, p.92). Jansson acknowledges similarities between the models however also points out that the perspective from which each model views conducting differs, stating:

“The enactment model and Colin Durrant’s (2003) “super-model conductor” also have many themes in common. The difference is the viewing angle; Durrant’s model is a comprehensive set of “must master” attributes of a conductor, whereas the enactment model captures how these attributes are perceived by the choral singers and made meaningful in the music-making act. Naturally, these two perspectives have significant overlaps” (Jansson, 2019, p.874).

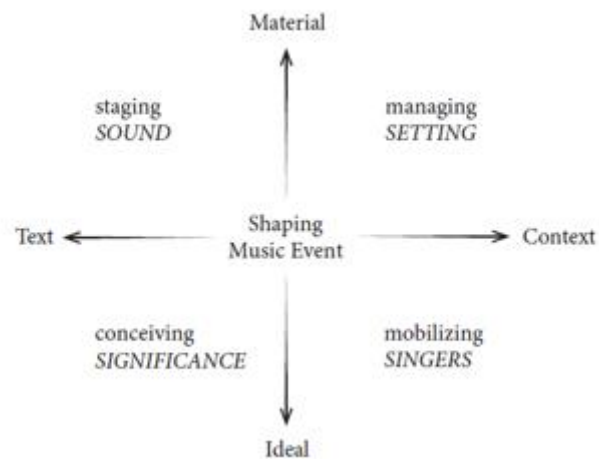
Jansson therefore positions his enactment model of musical leadership as the result of an examination of the impact of conductor functions in the music-making moment, as opposed to an examination of the overall leadership role a conductor might play in a choir.

Jansson differentiates his approach further from Durrant in using Ladkin’s model of “leading beautifully” (Ladkin, 2008, p.33) to structure his work. Jansson bases his three layers of musical leadership, namely: mastery; coherence; and intersubjective space (Jansson, 2013, p.358) on Ladkin’s three-part theory of embodied leadership which comprises mastery, congruence, and purposefulness (Ladkin, 2008). This results in Jansson’s model differing in structure to Durrant’s.

Jansson views conducting as an act of embodied musical leadership, and in addition to using Ladkin’s beautiful leadership theory to structure his work, also draws on Weick’s writing on sense-making to interpret his analysis (Jansson, 2013; Weick, 1995). Jansson does not utilise what he refers to as “organizational leadership” (Jansson, 2019, p.881) theory, that is

leadership theories which model leadership within organisational management or business settings. Jansson instead argues that the goal-orientated nature of organisational leadership theory is not a useful lens for exploring musical leadership due to “the fact that art is ultimately an open-ended process that does not seek unambiguous expression or final closure in terms of understanding” (Jansson, 2019, p.881). In so stating, Jansson focuses on music-making and/or performance as the end-goal of choral activity. This is also strongly implied in his assertion that there “is a limit to how far we can take the parallel between organizational leadership in general and musical leadership. Despite all of the outwardly set goals of a musical ensemble, from performance quality to financial control, music-making is stuck (and blessed) with being its own reward” (*Ibid.*). It is therefore important to note that, for choirs where music-making is only one part of the group’s purpose, or where music-making is a means to another end, Jansson’s model of musical leadership may not be transferrable to their circumstances.

Results of Jansson’s initial study (Jansson, 2013) produced both the enactment model shown above, and also a “legitimacy model” (Jansson, 2013, p.349) which demonstrated his participants’ perceptions of the difference a conductor can make during music-making as compared to an ensemble which does not have a conductor. This model positions the conductor as a sense-maker in the choral situation with responsibility for: staging sound; managing setting; conceiving significance; and mobilising singers. These responsibilities are mapped onto the model as shown in Figure 4, below.



**Figure 4 - The legitimacy model (Jansson, 2019, p.870)**

The legitimacy model again refers specifically to the music-making moment as opposed to the legitimacy of a conductor as an overall musical leader of a group across an extended period of time. Jansson acknowledges that an alternative approach to examining the conductor’s role is feasible, saying:

“This is not to reject that we are also affected by aspects of leadership outside the immediate present moment, like prior knowledge about the conductor’s stylistic preferences, reputation, and public image. Of course it is true that the conducting phenomenon could be investigated primarily via social structures and processes, but an inquiry devoted to what musical leadership is and how it works must start with what it means for the individual singer in the musicmaking situation” (Jansson, 2019, p.868).

Jansson’s close examination of the choral conducting phenomenon is based on his study of the impact of choral conducting through qualitative interviews with singers. Jansson’s

original work in this area involved interviewing 22 musically educated and experienced singers based in Norway (Jansson, 2013). Jansson's focus on the singers' perspectives is unusual given, as Jansson puts it, "the absence of the impact view, specifically the singer experience as a source of insight into how conducting works" (Jansson, 2019, p.866) in the conducting literature. Jansson argues strongly that, whilst underrepresented in the literature, the perspective of singers on the conducting act is of critical importance in response to the abundance of maestro-writing and other texts which, instead of investigating the consequence of conductor behaviour, "inevitably attend[] to the intended reality, as [they are] oriented towards what needs to be done to achieve certain results" (*Ibid.*).

Jansson has gone on to explore further the validity of his enactment model, blending this with Durrant's modelling of a "super-model conductor" (Durrant, 2018, p.83) in quantitative studies which examine conductors' perceptions of their own level of skill in the areas featured in the model, and the perceived importance of each of these competencies in their practice (Jansson et al., 2019a, 2019b). The list of competencies were used as survey items in a questionnaire utilised in 2 studies, one sampling conductors (N=249), based in Norway (Jansson et al., 2019a) and the second comparing the results of the Norwegian study to responses to the same questionnaire in Sweden (N=344) and Germany (N=47) (Jansson et al., 2019b). It is interesting to note that, despite Jansson's positioning of the conductor as a leader, both of these studies were published in music education journals.

In these studies Jansson concludes that conductors perceive the existential competencies in the model to be of most use in their work, and musical technical skills, particularly gestural skills, to be of less importance in their practice (Jansson et al., 2019b). He also finds that conductors tend to rate aspects of practice that they perceive to be personally highly competent in to be of more importance in their work, whilst those that they feel less competent in are rated as less important. He suggests that this may indicate that conductors “make use of what they have and avoid what they lack” (Jansson et al., 2019b, p.351) and therefore the rated importance of competencies in practice are at least partially contingent on conductors’ personal strengths and weaknesses. This finding implies that centring the perspective of conductors in choral research may result in a limited overview of the conductor’s role, and that further data collection from the singers’ perspective, that is to say those impacted by a conductor’s actions, may enhance any holistic modelling of the conductor’s role.

Overall in this work Jansson concludes that, across the geographical contexts sampled, there is general agreement among conductors over which competencies are most important in their work although it is acknowledged that the study’s scope does not extend to detailed cross-cultural comparison. He does however point to differences in perceived competence between conductors who have conducted choirs of more/less advanced musical levels and between those who are more/less experienced as conductors (Jansson et al., 2019b). In view of his conclusion that the level of perceived ability will influence a conductor’s use of a competency in their practice, this suggests that although there is some consensus over which competencies are most important to conductors, further research on the role of the

conductor in groups which are less advanced musically and those led by a wider range of choral leaders in terms of length of experience may be useful.

## **2.3 Voice-centred conducting**

The second section of this chapter will focus on voice-centred choral conducting texts. A definition of the term voice-centred will be outlined first and a review of texts which address voice-centred aspects of the choral conductor's role will follow this. The three categories of voice-centred literature reviewed are: choral-vocal pedagogy; warm-ups; and choral-vocal health.

### **2.3.1 *Voice-centred* – a definition and rationale for this focus**

The body of literature relating to a choral conductor's role outlined earlier in this chapter makes reference to a wide range of functions and capabilities which are expected of conductors. As shown in the review of 'holistic' models, it is possible to group this range of functions/capabilities into categories of aspects of choral conducting. Both Durrant and Jansson refer to three separate categories in their models, broadly dividing their models into philosophical, relational and musical considerations. Within both models however, references to voice-centred considerations, that is to say considerations which are *only* relevant in relation to voice work, are apparent. Examples of these considerations include: "The capacity to enable choral and vocal development" (Durrant, 2018, p.92); "A recognition of the importance of warming up voices" (*Ibid.*) and "Vocal Technique" (Jansson, 2018, p.39). These examples specifically relate to conducting functions which have a vocal



aspect and could be considered as distinct from non-vocally-centred considerations which could relate to non-singing functions such as “The ability to make singers feel confident and comfortable” (Durrant, 2018, p.92) or “Control/Empowerment” (Jansson, 2018, p.39).

This is not to say that there is no overlap between voice-centred and non-voice-centred areas of choral conducting. Holistic models of choral conducting suggest that distinct elements of the role may be identified but that in practice “their place in the overall...model is more important than the substance of each competence itself” (Jansson, 2018, p.28).

With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the placement of voice-centred elements of conducting practice differs between Durrant and Jansson’s models. Jansson places vocal technique only in the “Musical-Technical Mastery” (Jansson, 2018, p.39) layer of his model, whereas Durrant makes reference to voice-centred capabilities in all three sections of his conducting model. Although these authors broadly agree that conducting can be considered as having three elements, they disagree on the placement of the voice-centred content of these elements.

It is therefore of interest to explore further the voice-centred conducting literature and how other authors discuss this topic.

### **2.3.2 Voice-centred choral conducting texts**

Unsurprisingly, within the literature reference is made frequently to voice-centred elements of choral conducting. Within this literature however, three broad categories of voice-

centred choral conducting literature have been identified in which authors focus *exclusively* on voice-centred aspects of conducting. These three categories, namely: choral-vocal pedagogy; warm-ups; and choral-vocal health, will be reviewed below.

### **2.3.2.1 Choral-vocal pedagogy literature**

The first category of literature to be reviewed will be choral-vocal pedagogy, that is to say texts in which authors set out methods for teaching vocal technique to choral singers in group settings. This category is distinct from solo-vocal pedagogy which refers to texts relating to the instruction of singers on an individual basis. It is important to be clear on this point, as there has been much debate in the past over the suitability of solo-vocal pedagogy for group instruction (Beachy, 1969; Ferrell, 2010).

The conductor's role in training choral voices has long since been a subject of debate (Beachy, 1969). Much debate has centred on three areas:

Firstly, some choral conductors are not trained singers or singing coaches and this lack of training and experience may leave these practitioners poorly prepared to deliver vocal pedagogy (Smith & Sataloff, 2003). This has led to debate over whether or not choral conductors should be taking on the role of choral-vocal pedagogue (Beachy, 1969; Emmons & Chase, 2006).

Secondly, within the choral-vocal pedagogy literature, advocated methods of teaching vary considerably and, in certain areas, contradict each other (Cottrell, 2017) leaving conductors with incomplete or, in some areas, inaccurate information about teaching vocal skills (Emmons & Chase, 2006). This has led to debate over whether or not choral conductors can be expected to be adequately prepared for delivering choral vocal pedagogy (Daugherty, 2013; Ferrell, 2010).

Thirdly, there has been debate over whether or not teaching methodologies based on solo vocal technique are suitable for choral singing where singers are often asked to alter their solo technique to maximize uniformity of sound within the choir (Kirsh et al., 2013) or simply asked to “blend” (Miller, 1996, p.2) their voices with others. This has led to debate over not only whether or not pedagogical methods based on solo training methodologies can be used to deliver choral-vocal pedagogy (Beachy, 1969), but also whether or not choral conductors should be delivering choral-vocal pedagogy to singers also participating separately in solo training, as is often the case, particularly within school or university based choirs (Miller, 1996).

Despite debate over the issues outlined above, there is a growing expectation, particularly in the US where conductor-educators lead credit-bearing choral classes, for choral conductors to offer some form of vocal training to singers (Ferrell, 2010). The National Association of Schools of Music, which sets the national standards for degrees in music and music-related subjects at both undergraduate and graduate levels in the US currently stipulates that students of choral conducting must be proficient in vocal pedagogy to attain

a master's degree (*National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2019-20*, 2020).

Alongside this growing acceptance that choral-vocal pedagogy will form a part of the choral conductor's role, vocal pedagogy methodologies designed specifically for use in choral group settings as opposed to solo lessons have been developed.

The work of Wilhelm Ehmann and Frauke Haasemann is an excellent example of this type of literature. Their writing on the role of a voice builder (Ehmann & Haasemann, 1982) has been used as the foundation of many other choral-vocal pedagogy texts (Haasemann & Jordan, 1991; Jordan, 2005; Smith & Sataloff, 1999). Ehmann and Haasemann worked together as conductor and soloist of the Westfälische Kantorei in Herford, Germany and developed a role for Haasemann as a 'voice builder' for this choir. This role was first described in Ehmann's 1958 publication *Chorische Stimmbildung*, which was later revised to include 2 additional chapters after his work with Haasemann to become *Handbuch der Chorischen Stimmbildung* in 1981. This was translated and published in English as *Voice Building for Choirs* in 1982. The role of a voice builder has been described as "a specialist with training in vocal pedagogy and choral conducting, an advocate for the amateur choral singer (Smith & Sataloff, 1999, p. 206)". A voice builder's role is to work alongside the conductor, offering specialist vocal advice to the choral singers during the course of the rehearsal process in order to improve the overall sound produced and to improve singers' knowledge of vocal technique.

Following on from this, voice building has been further developed by a set of authors advocating for the use of choral-vocal pedagogy within choral rehearsals and the merging of

the role of voice-builder and conductor so that the conductor fulfils both roles simultaneously. After Ehmann's death in 1989, Haasemann continued the voice building work which she had begun with Ehmann and began working with James M. Jordan who was, at that time, Chair for Music Education at the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, Connecticut. Together, they produced the *Group Vocal Technique* set which comprises a book, video and set of flashcards. In compiling this set the authors attempted to improve upon the work started by Ehmann and Haasemann and formalise this into "the first effort to organize the teaching of Group Vocal Technique into a method for providing vocal instruction to "amateur"<sup>1</sup> choirs" (Haasemann & Jordan, 1991, p.xvi). In his preface to *Group Vocal Technique* Jordan describes the authors' intentions as being "(1) to provide documentation of Group Vocal Technique and serve as the first source of such an approach to choral "vocal" education and (2) to provide the choral conductor with a practical resource of written materials that can be used with choirs" (*Ibid.*). Jordan also went on to produce *Evoking Sound: The Choral Warm-up*. Although this title refers to warm-ups which will be discussed as a separate category of literature, this text "builds upon the concepts presented in *Group Vocal Technique*" (Jordan, 2005, p.xx) and provides techniques for teaching vocal skills as opposed to just warming up voices it is therefore included in this section of the review. Around the same time, the translator of *Chorische Stimmbildung*, Brenda Smith, collaborated with otolaryngologist Robert Sataloff to produce *Choral Pedagogy* (Smith & Sataloff, 1999) and later *Choral Pedagogy and the Older Singer* (Smith & Sataloff, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> "The word "amateur" is used to describe choral singers who sing in choral ensembles but lack professional instruction in the private studio" (Haasemann & Jordan, 1991, p.8).

Although developed by separate teams of authors, as shown in Figure 5 below, the contents of the above texts can be shown to share common core concepts, namely posture, breathing, resonance and articulation.

	<i>Voice Building for Choirs</i>	<i>Group Vocal Technique</i>	<i>Evoking Sound: The Choral Warm Up</i>	<i>Choral Pedagogy, Chapter 15 Voice Building for Choirs</i>
<b>Posture</b>	Section A—Posture	Finding the singing voice Relaxation Expanding the vocal tract Relaxation of the jaw, tongue and lips Opening of the space in mouth and throat Posture (standing and sitting)	Relaxation Alignment and Body Awareness Relaxation of the Vocal Tract: Relaxing the Jaw, tongue, and Lips Creating Spaciousness (Use of the Sigh)	Relaxation/ Posture/ Warm-ups
<b>Breathing</b>	Section A—Breathing	Breathing Activation of the diaphragm Exhalation Inhalation Support	Breathing Exhalation and Inhalation Support	Breathing: Inhalation to phonation
<b>Resonance/ registers</b>	Sections A & B —Voice Building	Resonance/Placement Dynamics <i>Crescendo/Decrescendo (messa di voce)</i> Register consistency Range Extension High Range Low Range Flexibility (runs) Execution of leaps Finding the Falsetto Voice for Men Finding the Head Voice for Children and Young Women Ear Training for Choirs Vowel Modification (for blend, intonation)	Resonance General Resonance Specific Resonance Vowel Development Hierarchy Register Consistency Dynamics <i>Crescendo/Diminuendo (Messa di Voce)</i> Range Extension Upward Range Extension Downward Leaps	Resonance
<b>Articulation</b>	Section C— Development of choral sounds	STYLE: Medieval/Renaissance STYLE: Baroque STYLE: Classic STYLE: Romantic STYLE: Modern  <i>Legato</i> <i>Staccato</i> <i>Martellato</i> Accents, <i>Sforzati</i> Rhythmic Development Diction: Vowels ( <i>Diphthongs</i> , Latin, Italian, German, French) Consonants	Legato Staccato Martellato Diction Teaching Principles	

Figure 5 - Relationships between contents of voice building texts (Ehmann & Haasemann, 1982; Haasemann & Jordan, 1991; J. M. Jordan, 2005; Smith & Sataloff, 1999)

It is therefore fair to surmise that voice-building as a form of choral-vocal pedagogy consists of four core areas: posture; breathing; resonance; and articulation. Within these areas, particularly within ‘resonance’, there are many sub-categories however the contents of these categories broadly overlap between texts.

Early in Ehmann and Haasemann’s work, they make it clear that voice-building should be used only for the cultivation of *choral* vocal skills saying “[c]horal voice building is an emergency system: one cannot expect to create a group of solo singers through these added technical skills. It is not possible to improve major individual vocal problems (tremolo, difficulties caused by nodules on the vocal cords etc.) by group vocal techniques. Private voice instruction should be suggested for the correction of such deficiencies (Ehmann & Haasemann, 1982, p.x)”. This assertion is shared by all following voice building texts (Haasemann & Jordan, 1991; Jordan, 2009; Smith & Sataloff, 1999, 2012).

The family of voice-building texts above are some of the most comprehensive examples of choral-vocal pedagogy methodologies however this type of pedagogy is not limited to texts that call themselves voice-building and some choral organisations have produced their own bespoke choral-vocal training schemes. In the UK the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) runs the *Voice For Life* training scheme (Duffy et al., 2012) and the Kodály Institute in Hungary offer a *Practical Guide to Choral and Individual Vocal Training* (Verburg, 2018). These systems however overlap broadly with the voice-building literature.



The *Voice for Life* scheme divides the “Using the voice well” (Duffy et al., 2012, p.1) chapter into five sections:

1. Posture
2. Breathing
3. Tone and range [i.e. resonance and registers]
4. Diction [i.e. articulation]
5. Performance

Although the *Voice for Life* scheme includes ‘performance’ as a fifth category of skill, the content of this fifth section relates primarily to the set of vocal skills which have been learned by the singer in areas 1-4 and are to be assessed by the conductor running the scheme during their performance. This does not constitute a fifth area of vocal skill taught in this scheme and *Voice for Life* therefore aligns well with voice-building texts in terms of structure.

The Kodály Institute’s *Practical Guide to Choral and Individual Vocal Training* (Verburg, 2018) also largely falls into the four areas identified in the voice-building literature:

<b>Posture</b>	Releasing vocal tension Flowing movement exercise Mouth position for vowels Releasing tongue tension Releasing jaw tension Opening the jaw (1) Opening the jaw (2)
<b>Breathing</b>	Breathing exercise
<b>Resonance/registers</b>	Improving head voice Increasing vocal resonance (1) Increasing vocal resonance (2) Resonance exercise (1) Resonance exercise (2) Finding head voice Dropping larynx
<b>Articulation</b>	Pronunciation letter D Pronunciation of vowels in singing

**Figure 6 - Relation of elements of Practical Guide to Choral and Individual Vocal Training (Verburg, 2018) to the 4 identified areas of focus in voice-building texts**

The RSCM's *Voice for Life* scheme and Kodály Institute's choral-vocal pedagogy scheme are clear examples of systems of choral-vocal pedagogy. These schemes have been chosen in particular for review here due to their widespread use in the UK where the focus of this research project lies. It is however acknowledged that other examples of this type of work exist. The decision to highlight these schemes above other examples was based on the relative prominence of the RSCM and Kodály Institute schemes in comparison to other curricula. The *Voice for Life* scheme is used widely across the UK (although the scheme is also running in Ireland, France, North-West Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and America (*About the RSCM*, 2018)) and the Kodály approach has been adopted by the National Youth Choir of Scotland as their methodology of choice (*NYCoS*, 2020).

Whilst the pedagogical systems discussed above represent formalised methodologies for teaching vocal skills to choral singers, many other texts also advocate that conductors should teach vocal skills to singers, such as the how-to guides discussed earlier in this review. Hill et al. for example dedicate a short chapter at the end of their how-to guide to “Voice Production and Projection Exercises” (Hill et al., 2007, p.67) and Brewer outlines “Basic vocal techniques” (Brewer, 1997, p.23) to teach to choirs. These how-to texts will often offer practical methods and vocal exercises as part of their guidance but are on the whole less focussed specifically on teaching vocal technique and more generally focused on the overall function of conductors than voice-building texts. Within the voice-centred content of the how-to guide literature however the four broad categories of posture, breathing, resonance, and articulation also cover the range of exercises and techniques usually discussed and therefore the content of these guides broadly aligns with the voice-building literature.

Voice-building literature and choral-vocal pedagogical schemes therefore respond directly to all three areas of debate outlined above (see section 2.3.2). The first area of debate, that conductors may be unprepared to teach vocal technique, is countered by the presentation of concrete exercises and explanations that conductors may use to teach vocal skills to their singers. The second area, that methods of teaching singing vary and therefore conductors are left with incomplete methodologies from which to teach is countered by the consistent focus on four areas of vocal technique, i.e. posture, breathing, resonance/registers, and articulation. The third area of debate, that teaching methodologies based on solo technique are unsuitable for choral-vocal teaching is countered by the assertion in all voice-building

texts that these methodologies are not designed to produce solo singers, but are designed specifically to enhance *choral* singing skills. This is not to say that voice-building represents a perfect model of choral-vocal pedagogy, that all voice experts will approve of the techniques and exercises outlined in this literature, or that all conductors are aware of this work and use it in their practice with singers. These pedagogical methodologies do however represent a robust response to some previous concerns about choral-vocal pedagogy alongside the growing expectation that conductors will carry out this teaching.

### **2.3.2.2 Warm-ups**

Arguably the most apparent voice-centred activity in a choral rehearsal, the choral warm-up is the focus of a large body of choral literature. There is some overlap between warm-up materials and choral-vocal pedagogy materials and, in many cases, an expectation that choral-vocal pedagogy will be taught as part of the warm-up process (Brewer, 2002; Emmons & Chase, 2006; Glover, 2001; Heizmann, 2003). This section of the review will therefore focus on literature pertaining specifically to warm-up procedures however it is acknowledged that some practitioners may view warming-up and choral-vocal pedagogy as the same process and there therefore may be some overlap in concepts addressed.

Whilst many authors writing about choral warm-ups advocate for the use of warm-up exercises in choral practice and provide examples of warm-up exercises to be used in this practice, there is some divergence in opinions over:

- What the purpose of a warm-up is/if a warm-up is necessary in choral singing
- What format a warm-up exercise should take

- If/how a choral warm-up differs from a solo warm-up

Whilst the abundance of choral warm-up exercise books and writing on this subject suggests that warm-ups feature heavily in choral practice, there are a number of conductors “who posit that choral singers actually have little need to warm up, that the music itself will train requisite skills, and that only the greater demands placed upon soloists require a warm-up” (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p.183). Whilst the warm-up process is “often slighted” (Huffman & Cooledge, 2003, p.1), the literature generally suggests that “most people consider a warm-up essential” (Barr, 2009). Others still advocate for “*consistently elaborate warm-up sessions*” (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p.185, citing Shaw, 1948). Among those who do advocate that a warm-up is necessary, the general consensus is that the process should enable singers to move from their previous state outside of the choral setting to a state in which they are ready to sing. Some authors go further than this and suggest that warming-up voices reduces the risk of vocal fatigue or injury and/or may affect vibrato rates leading to improved tone quality (Kirsh et al., 2013). There remains however some general disagreement over exactly what a warm-up process should achieve (Glover, 2001).

Descriptions of the ideal format and contents of a warm-up sequence vary considerably throughout the literature. Warm-up procedures described generally tackle some/all of the following areas:

## **Physical**

### **- Vocal exercises**

Many warm-up sequences described involve stretching and engaging the muscles that form the vocal apparatus. This is achieved through phonating, often within a small range that is gradually increased. Scales and arpeggios are commonly advised to be useful in this work. Some authors advocate the use of tongue twisters and alliterative phrases in order to engage the muscles involved in articulation.

Justification for this work is often made by reference to sports players and athletes who warm up their bodies before engaging in vigorous movements (Emmons & Chase, 2006; Glover, 2001; Heizmann, 2003; Hoch & Sandage, 2018; Olesen, 2010).

### **- Whole body**

Some authors advocate that singers should warm-up the whole body before singing, as opposed to focussing on the vocal apparatus in isolation. Exercises in this category include whole body stretches, back/shoulder massage, and gentle aerobic movement such as walking around or circling the arms. These are often justified by claims that singing requires the relaxation of bodily tension which is aided by these exercises (Heizmann, 2003; Hill et al., 2007; Jordan, 2005) or that movement exercises can increase blood flow and therefore increase oxygen and nutrient delivery to muscles necessary for engaging in the singing activities to follow, thereby increasing endurance and reducing discomfort (Williams, 2016).

## **Psychological**

- **Readiness to sing**

Some conductors may use warm-ups not only for preparing the body for singing, but also as a preparation for the singer psychologically. The warm-up might then “be seen as a part of a change in mental behaviour that could encourage the initiation of a flow state” (Williams, 2016, p.7). Exercises in this category vary but generally encourage singers to be aware of their actions and encourage “deliberate practice” (Williams, 2016, p.9).

- **Ensemble**

Some conductors aim to use the warm-up period as an opportunity to “instill [sic] in [their] singers the art of being an ensemble” (Huffman & Cooledge, 2003, p.1) or to establish “a strong link between choir and conductor” (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p.187). Exercises in this category include singing phrases of well-known songs in a staccato fashion to increase awareness of ensemble timing or holding sustained chords then shifting to a different key so each singer must change their own sung pitch whilst maintaining tuning with the other singers. These exercises are, by necessity, unique to choral warm-up sequences. Including these in a warm-up would be key in differentiating the process from solo warm-up procedures.

- **Aural/audiation skills**

Some warm-up procedures include tuning exercises that encourage singers to audiate or utilise aural skills. The term audiation refers to hearing sound in the mind in the absence of any sound occurring. This is in contrast to aural perception which is

the hearing of sound that is occurring in the moment (Gordon, 1985, p.34). This category of exercise lies on the boundary of warming-up and voice-building in that it could be considered developing musical skills however these exercises are often included in texts describing warm-up procedures so they are included for review here. Exercises in this category may involve the conductor giving a starting pitch and asking the singers to first audiate this pitch before echoing it back or to engage their aural skills by providing a tonic note and asking the choir to sing either of the other two notes forming the key's triad in a major or minor key.

Within the warm-up literature, reference is also made to cool-down sequences to be performed at the end of any singing session. These procedures appear less frequently in the literature than warm-ups, however where they appear they are often similar to the exercises described above, although they relate mainly to physical as opposed to psychological processes (Emmons & Chase, 2006; Smith & Sataloff, 1999). Exercises in this category include humming or singing vowel sounds on descending slides into the lower register or gentle stretches or neck and body massage.

As the review of the warm-up literature above shows, there is much variety on what conductors might consider part of a warm-up sequence. There is little consensus on what an ideal warm-up sequence would comprise, and some conductors reject entirely the necessity of a warm-up period before choral singing. It is therefore not possible to define a typical warm-up process other than outlining the general physical and mental principles above which are common to many of the warm-up sequences described in the literature. It is



perhaps possible only to say that a choral warm-up is simply “a series of instructor-led actions at the beginning of a class, rehearsal or before a performance” (Olesen, 2010, p.1) or “purely the preparation undertaken before the musician begins technical or repertoire practice” (Williams, 2016, p.1).

### **2.3.2.3 Vocal health research**

Much has been written about health and wellbeing in relation to choral singing, with benefits to participants having been found in terms of perceived wellbeing (Johnson et al., 2017; Joseph & Southcott, 2018) and physical health (Kirsh et al., 2013; Lewis et al., 2016). This section of the review however will focus specifically on the literature relating to vocal health as opposed to general health and wellbeing.

The conductor’s role in the care of singers’ voices is another subject that has caused some debate among the choral community. Certain practitioners believe that the “conductor is in *loco parentis* of singers’ voices. Singers expect this, even if they do not appreciate whether the ‘parent’ does or does not know what they are doing (Barr, 2009, p.143)”. Others however argue that “[t]he choral rehearsal, in turn, should be transformed into a series of rehearsal procedures, with the objective of placing **all** the responsibility for good singing clearly with the singers” (Jordan, 2005, p.23). There is no general consensus on the level to which a conductor has a duty of care for the singers’ voices.

Arguably, the level to which it may/may not be appropriate for a conductor to take responsibility for the vocal health of their singers might be affected by the choral singers' vocal knowledge level and ability to care for their own voice. It is however often the case that choral singers' only source of information on vocal hygiene and healthy voice use is the choral conductor (Cottrell, 2017). It has also been found that a large portion of singers, both amateur and professional, perceive their understanding of vocal function and care to be inadequate and show interest in improving their knowledge of voice care (Braun-Janzen & Zeine, 2009). Certain vocally abusive behaviours may be engaged in inadvertently by choral singers such as "singing too softly for blend, singing straight tone for blend, singing too loudly to carry a section, and singing outside one's comfortable pitch range" (Kirsh et al., 2013, p.786.e26). Behaviours such as these may contribute to vocal fatigue or laryngeal strain, particularly singing outside a comfortable pitch range (Kirsh et al., 2013). Whilst singing too softly, loudly or outside of a comfortable range may occur in solo singing, it is arguably more likely that these behaviours will occur in choral settings where the singer may have a perceived responsibility to ensure their sound fits within the choral whole, and tessitura within the repertoire may be determined by generic soprano/alto/tenor/bass ranges as opposed to being determined by their own solo choices. If we accept that choral singers may be more likely to engage in unhealthy vocal behaviours during choral singing, then the degree of responsibility a conductor has to choral singers is worth serious consideration.

There is an apparent lack of any standardised requirement placed on conductors in terms of their responsibilities to singers' vocal health. Daugherty (2013) summarises the current issues in this area well, saying:

“[u]nlike other professionals who graduate from accredited programs (e.g., lawyers, nurses, speech-language pathologists, athletic trainers, and beauticians) choral conductors need not pass a profession-wide, content specific board exam before they may work unsupervised with the physiology and bodily processes of singers...I know of no choral conductor-teacher who sets out intentionally to hinder the optimal vocal efficiency of singers in an ensemble or dispense inaccurate voice information. Yet, clearly, the expectations for our profession as a whole have been less than consistent and far from exacting ones when it comes to vocal pedagogy and voice care” (Daugherty, 2013, p.1).

## **2.4 Conclusions**

This second section of the literature review has defined 'voice-centred' aspects of choral conducting as any singing-related activity as distinct from other conductor functions. Voice-centred functions of conductors were noted as aspects of conducting which varied in placement within previous 'holistic' models of choral conducting. Three primary areas of interest were then identified within the voice-centred choral conducting literature, namely: choral-vocal pedagogy; warm-ups; and choral-vocal health. The review of these areas showed many areas of disagreement between authors, particularly: whether or not conductors should be teaching vocal technique to choral singers; the degree to which the choral-vocal pedagogy literature can be relied upon as complete/accurate; whether solo

vocal pedagogical systems can be used as the basis for choral-vocal pedagogy; the nature and purpose of choral warm-ups; and the degree of responsibility a conductor should take in the care of choral singers' voices. The multiple areas of debate identified in relation to voice-centred aspects of choral conducting provide a robust justification for further research in this area.

