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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY

Developing the skill of note interpretation in choral music-an action research carried out with the Masvingo Teachers College Choir

by

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my beloved mom, family and the love of my life whose interests and enthusiasm in my work have often contributed more than they are aware of.

May God bless you all………

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop the skill of note interpretation in choral music. The research was qualitative in nature which prompted the researcher to use an Action Research as there was a problem which she wanted to solve. The focal point was on three research questions which the researcher formulated. Observations were done to identify where most choirs fail when interpreting notes in choral music. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to the choir coordinator and the choristers who were sampled out from the choir. Twenty four choristers were used to fill in the questionnaires and twelve choristers for the interviews. The selection of the sample of choristers was done using the stratified random sampling. Major elements in music were outlined that choristers should be familiar with in order to come up with the correct not interpretation. These elements affect in some way, how the song will sound. The study pointed out that each note is approached differently. The study also revealed the effectiveness of using instruments and group works in the interpretation of notes in choral music. Recommendations were also outlined on what choir coordinators and choristers should in order to come with the correct note interpretation. Notation comprises of many aspects that other researchers can help to give light on that the researcher has not touched.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1

1.0 The Problem

1.1 Background

In Zimbabwe choral music has taken a vital role in the people's lives. Educational institutions perform choral music at official functions as well as gatherings. It is also promoted by the Education Sports Arts and Culture through the annual choral competitions of primary and secondary schools. Tertiary institutions both colleges and universities meet in September for choral competitions through Research and Intellectual Expo. Different churches perform choral music to add worship to their services and some churches like Methodist, AFM, Anglican to mention but a few are seen engaging into choral music competitions. All these competitions will be having one set piece which the choirs will be competing on at different levels. The music will be in staff notation or tonic solfa notation. However, even if those choirs do perform, one will find out that not all choir coordinators would have trained their choirs. Sometimes 80% of these choirs would have been trained by other people who are not even professional music teachers.

It is during these choral competitions that the researcher discovered that even though choirs are given the same piece of music to interpret, there tend to be many different songs coming out. This shows that certain choral groups cannot interpret the notes correctly as written on the score and hence the researcher set out to rectify this problem with an identified choir where she was on attachment. Swanwick (1994) posits that the interpretation of notes is intended to provide guidelines to stakeholders on the interpretation and application of the legislation administered by the commissioner.

Freedman (2013) advocated that the pitch of notes should sound exactly as the sound produced by the keyboard, piano or any tuned instrument. Roe (1983) asserts that one should understand the durability of the note. Freedman (2013) points out that the time signature specifies how many beats or pulses are to be contained in each bar and which note value is to be given one beat. There are different sources that outline the elements of music which help to come up with the

correct note interpretation in choral music. It is however for the coordinator to be well versed with these elements in order to come up with the correct note interpretation in choral music.

However the researcher discovered that most of the sources wrote about elements of music in general and not specifically on the development of note interpretation in choral music. The researcher therefore wants to compile a document that specifically outlines the development of note interpretation in choral music. This document will also serve as a source people can refer to on the development of note interpretation in choral music.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This research focuses on the development of note interpretation skills in choral music.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Why is it important to articulate notes correctly in choral music?

1.3.2 What are the main music elements that are essential in choral music interpretation?

1.3.3 What approaches can be implemented or employed in the interpretation of:

1.3.3.1 Rhythm

1.3.3.2 Pitch

1.3.3.3 Meter

1.4 Significance of the study

This research is going to be a very important tool not to me only but to a number of people that include choir coordinators, choristers, adjudicators, composers as well as the people who are interested in choral music.

Choir coordinators will also use this project as a resource centre. They will get solutions when they face similar problems in line with note interpretation in choral music. The choir coordinators would not face similar problems since they would have been rectified by the researcher.

Choristers are the major beneficiaries since they will effectively learn to interpret the notes correctly. Participants in this project would be groomed into the choral music. They will be different from other students who would not have been able to be involved in this project.

Composers of choral music will also find this document very useful. They will identify where they might be failing to arrange the notes as they should be following the composition rules.

The researcher is going to get essential skills on how to interpret a music score that will help tackle problems when teaching choral music. The researcher will also acquire some research skills such as questioning techniques, interviewing and many more. I can also earn a living from conducting staff development workshops of choral music note interpretation at different levels.

1.5 Definition of terms

1.5.1 Choral music

Bukofzer (1974) views choral music as music that is composed for a choir. He also said choral music is known as music of several voice parts.

1.5.2 Chorister – Hawkins (1998) defines a chorister as a member of a choir.

1.5.3 Conductor

Poggi (2002) views the choir conductor as the leader of a cooperative group, whose role is to provide technical instruction and also to motivate singers, provide feedback, express the pleasure of music.

1.6 Limitations

The nature of research is already limiting by just dealing with one choir from tertiary institution who can read music living out primary school choirs who cannot read music. The choir had many females than males. This made some of the females to sing tenor which is a part supposed to be sung by males. The tenor produced by male voices is better than to the one produced by female voices. The other drawback is that respondents tend to answer questionnaires based on the information they got from internet and text books not from what they can do or they already

know. This made the data collected by the researcher to be biased. The type of research is an action research which seeks to solve problem. The major hitch within this research was that the choir continued to receive new choristers. This was because of the programme offered by the College, the 2-5-2 programme. The students would have two terms in their first and last resident at college the other five terms will be of Teaching Practice.

1.7 Delimitations
The research is confined to Masvingo Teachers' College choir which is a tertiary institution. It is living behind the primary and secondary school choirs who would have covered limited theory of music as compared to those in the tertiary institutions.

The other hindrance is the number of sessions I intended to take with the choir that were not met. I planned to have at least three sessions every week with the choir, but the time which was given to students was limited. This was so because the programme the students are doing demands their time a lot. The superiors pointed out that, students have fourteen more subjects to attend to apart from music. They only wanted us to have choir training when there are functions like graduation, Tertiary Institutions Festivals of Arts Zimbabwe (TIFAZ) and Research and Intellectual Expo (RIE). This made us to have only two choral sessions per week after normal lectures.

1.8 Conclusion
In this chapter the writer was looking at background of the problem, statement of the problem, research questions, beneficiaries, limitations and delimitations. Having understood of the background of the study, the next chapter will reveal the contributions made by authors who have taken studies of a similar nature.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at reviewing the literature pertaining to the area of the study. It aims to provide an insight into the research topic by outlining contributions supplied by different authors in trying to develop the skill of note interpretation in choral music. The researcher will be looking at literature that is relevant to the problem understudy. Theoretical framework of the chapter will be looked at as the research progresses to assist the researcher.

2.2   Major elements in choral music

2.2.1   Pitch

Gagne (2012) asserts that pitch is one of the most fundamental aspects of music. William (2009) concurs with the above sentiment as he says that pitch may be the most important perceptual feature of sound. He goes on to say music without pitch would be drum beats, speech without pitch processing would be whispers, and identifying sound sources without using pitch would be severely limited. This shows that pitch is one of the major elements in choral music as it gives the identity of the sound.

Macdemortt (2008) asserts that pitch is the perceptual correlate of periodicity in sounds. According to Klapuri (2006) pitch is an insight property of sounds that allows their ordering on a frequency-related scale. He continues to say pitch is the quality that makes it possible to judge sounds as "higher" and "lower" in the sense of associating them with musical melodies. Patterson et al (2010) advocated that pitch is a major auditory attribute of musical tones, along with duration, loudness, and timbre. According to the American National Standards Institute (1978), pitch is the auditory attribute of sound according on which sounds can be ordered on a scale from low to high. However the above definitions seem to leave the aspect of measurement of pitch being included by Miller and Shahriari (2002:25) as they say "pitch is a tone's specific frequency level, measured in Hertz". Pitch can therefore be defined as the highness or lowness of sound that is measured in Hertz.

The choir need to understand the aspect of major scales and chromatic scales that makes pitch in order to come up with the correct note interpretation in choral music. They should be able to identify the accidentals within a major key and minor keys. Mathew (2006) suggested that one should be equipped with some of the basic musical knowledge and begin the journey as an educated musician thus learning the major scale, major arpeggio and basic intervals. Pitch is made up of a diatonic scale and chromatic scales (William 2009). Whittal (2008) asserts that a chromatic scale is the set of twelve pitch classes and is made up of semitones whereas a diatonic scale is a scale with eight notes of different pitches. Diatonic scales are the major scales and natural minor scales (Whittal 2008). They have seven notes of different pitches and the eighth note is an octave high to the first note. A scale has to have eight notes for it to be a complete scale. For example using the scale of C major which is a clean scale, the notes will be arranged like C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C. The first and last notes are the same but they are at different pitch levels.

Whittal (2008) asserts that diatonic scales are the ones that give the natural modulator scale with no dissonances whereas in a natural minor scale there is some dissonance when played on a keyboard. A minor scale does not produce the correct sound of a modulator scale. It does not start from *d* to *d* but it starts from *l* whereby its scale will be *l-t-d-r-m-f-s-l*. A person has to scrutinize the key of the song whether it is a major or minor key, before attempting to sing. This gives the room to identify accidentals in their correct keys. If there are questionable accidentals within a key one has to know that the key is a minor key. For example:

The above melody has a key signature of D major but there is an accidental within the melody which is on A. This shows that the above melody is a minor key which is B minor. If the melody had no accidental it was going to be a D major.

Benward and Saker (2003) agrees that a chromatic scale is a musical scale with twelve pitches, each a semitone above or below another. These are enharmonic equivalent notes which bear different names but sounding exactly the same. For example when playing on a keyboard the button for $C^{\#}$/ *de* is the same button for D^{b}/ *ra* in the chromatic scale.

Extracted from piano lesson made simple (on line)
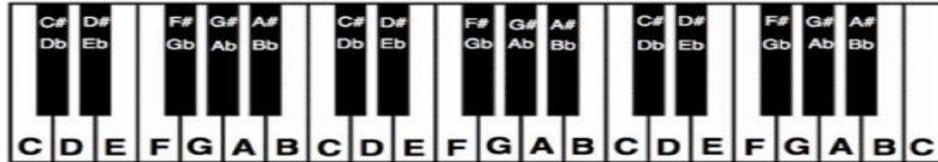
Most people are used to the major scale whereby when they find a chromatic within a song they tend to miss interpret the chromaticism. The miss interpretation of chromatics leads to the miss interpretation of the song. This implies that when one is interpreting pitch, should be faithful to give the highness or lowness a note deserves. To avoid the miss interpretation of chromatics the choir should do the chromatic scale always as their part of rehearsal (Thomas, 2008). A chromatic scale is not like a diatonic or a natural minor that letters look the same when accenting or descending.

<u>**A chromatic scale in ascending order**</u>
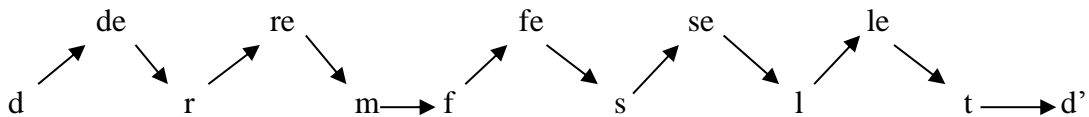
<u>**A chromatic scale in descending order**</u>
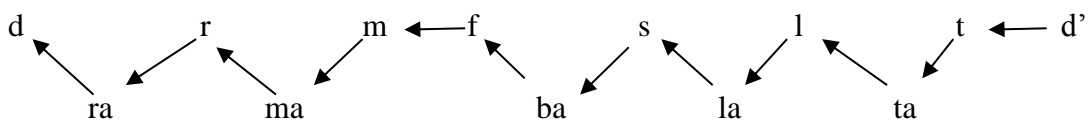
The use of pitch correction instruments like key board, piano can be used to avoid the miss interpretation on chromatic notes. Human voice is not always specific, so the researcher normally used a keyboard when she was not sure of the pitch she was to give. Also, each person has his/her own tone that can make a choir to produce three or more tones in every part. It is the duty for the coordinator to choose the tone that suits the song and make the choristers copy it. This is where the aspect of blending and balancing will be worked out.

Gagne (2012) points out that discrimination thresholds for the pitch interval between two notes are measured by presenting listeners with two pairs of sequential tones, one after the other, with the pitch interval larger in one pair than the other. He goes on to say the listener's task is to identify the larger interval. To distinguish this ability from mere frequency discrimination, the lower note of one interval is set to be higher than that of the other interval (Gagne, 2012). This helps in assessing audiation which the researcher found very effective when she was teaching her choir. She made the choir to do an octave chant using different keys. She would play a note and chorister will pick the key and start to do the chant using the 'Ah' syllable. This was an exercise which was done to train choristers to pick the correct key and also to train the voices to reach high notes. Thomas (2008) asserts that matching pitch and playing in tune is one of the fundamentals of music common to every music performance. He points out that some basic ideas for building pitch matching skills include, playing a series of pitches to students and have them attempt to echo them with their voices. He went on to say one should begin with two or three pitches. He encourages the use of scalar patterns when starting then arpeggios and later mixed. The coordinator is also encouraged to play two pitches and have the students identify which one is higher than the other.

Roe (1983) postulates that voice does not have the capacity for accuracy or nicety of tone that instruments have. This is the reason that makes singers to go off key when performing. Mathew (2006) advices that for those who are unable to catch the pitches that are being played in the practice music, or who are unable to sing in a correct tune at all, should try to hum before singing the note that they need. He goes on to say one has to play a certain note on a musical instrument either a piano, guitar, keyboard and keep that note sustained while trying to hum to the correct pitch. Once one is certain that the resonating sound from the instrument matches the sound being hummed in the head, then, can open the mouth and sing that note out using an 'Ah' syllable.

Mathew (2006) points out that by holding one note; you are working to keep both the pitch and volume steady throughout the phrase. He further point out that when one is singing, he/she should listen to the tone. This idea is very effective to the choristers who have challenges with audiation thus reproducing the sound that was produced. The group that the researcher was working with had some individuals who had some challenges in reproducing the sound that was produced or picking the correct pitch that was produced by the keyboard. She used this technique of playing a sustained pitch. She did this in almost every rehearsal to cater for those who had pitch deficiency.

Another technique that can be used to maintain the correct pitch is to make the choir sing a melody using different keys. This is to help the choir when attacking low notes so that the voices will not be drowned and singing high notes so that voices will not clip when approaching high notes. Mathew (2006) asserts that we all have a natural vocal range that we can sing, but most of the time, we are not able to reach our full potential because we do not exercise our lowest and highest notes as often as we should. Gagne (2012) argues that for most women, the A below middle C is a good place to start; men can start on an E or an F, or in a comfortable lower part of their range. She goes on to say one should continue singing the exercise, moving up by half-steps until you reach a comfortable high part of their range, but not reaching for the top, then go back down. She pointed out that as one change the vowels, the airflow inside the mouth shifts and alters the tone. Coward (2003) asserts that vowels affect the choral tone and if sung incorrectly, can create tension in the singer. This will lead to the suffering of intonation. The choir can use the technique of darting on notes in order to produce consonants properly.

During the rehearsal if a voice part moves above the staff for any length of time, sing down an octave to save voices especially for sopranos (Mathew, 2006). Huffman (2013) points out that during initial stages of learning, singers should never sing louder than forte, as they can tire voices and compromise rhythmic accuracy. William (2009:102) postulates that one may notice that the pitch stays in tune when you have more breath and goes flat as your breath runs out. To address this, he suggests keeping the breath steady past the end of the phrase, as if planned to go longer. He went on to say that breath should be prevented from fading out by reserving air as you begin. William further points out that another problem of not getting the pitch correctly is when one sings whilst finding the note. To overcome this habit, one should breathe deeply into his/her

abdomen while counting to three. Choristers are encouraged not to over-breathe while inhaling, as that adds tension. This will be done to let the ribs expand. William came up with a circular motion that is breathing in, pause, sing, and repeat. He warns choristers not to think of notes as high or low pitched but just as frequencies, for muscles to adjust. This is psychological. I noted that choristers struggle when they are approaching high notes especially soprano. After telling them that those notes are just natural as other notes and they should not think them as high when approaching them. When the brain registers a note as high, choristers struggle but when registered as natural they could sing without any problem.

When students master the concept of pitch the coordinator then need to teach the students about intonation. The online music dictionary Dolmetsch defines intonation as the "degree to which a pitch of a note heard is what is correct, but not to the degree that the note heard is the wrong note". Gopala et al (2012) define intonation as the pitches used by a performer in a given musical piece. This implies that each note has its own pitch and one can be biased on the pitch he/she produces. Mathew (2006) asserts that one cannot produce the required intonation by hitting on high notes. When approaching the high notes the choir needs to slide over those high notes not hitting on them. This will help the choir to maintain the key of the song at the same time avoiding the clipping of voices which might make them to sound as if they are screaming. Tone contrast can also be used when approaching high notes, thus the change of tone (Patterson, 2010). This can be used to avoid going out of key when approaching certain notes.

2.2.2 Rhythm

A music note has different mechanisms that a performer should be enlightened with. Kevin (1995) propounds that there are three characteristics of a single note which are pitch, intensity and rhythm. This shows that rhythm is one of the major elements in choral music. Kevin went on to say rhythm is the most important element of music because anybody can understand and enjoy rhythm. This is so because not everyone can sing in tune or understand harmony but we all can get the rhythm. Coward (2003) points out that rhythm is exalted to a high position. This shows that performers should be able to interpret rhythm correctly in a given piece of music as rhythm provides the frame of the song.

According to Davis (1951) rhythm is everything concerned with time and beat in music. Kevin (1995) defines rhythm as a strong, regular repeated pattern of movement or sound. Gordon (1971) postulates that rhythm in music is the placement of sounds in time. Sadie (1988) defines rhythm as the subdivision of a span of time into perceptible sections; the grouping of musical sounds, principally by means of duration and stress. Levitin (2006:15) postulates that "rhythm refers to the duration of a series of notes and to the way that they are grouped together into units". To shed light to what the scholars have said rhythm has to do with time or frequency in which the song should flow. Rhythm can therefore be defined as the grouping of notes which helps in the flowing of music.

Rhythm as an element of music plays a vital role on note interpretation in choral music. Martineau (2008:12) advocates that rhythm is the component of music that punctuates time, carrying us from one beat to the next. This shows that when rhythm is interpreted correctly, choristers will know where to breath and where not to. This will lead to the correct phrasing of the song. Coward (2003) postulates that phrasing appeals exact careful marking of the breathing places so as to source a natural grouping of the words.

Kevin (1995) propounds that rhythm occurs when we have a number of musical sounds that may have variances in their duration and intensity. This shows that music notes are not formed with one type of rhythm. There are different kinds of rhythms in music which one should be able to interpret and give the correct time values to those rhythms. Gordon (1971) divides his definition of rhythm into three basic elements which are tempo beats, meter beats and melodic rhythm. He further postulates that tempo beats provide the foundation and the steady beat makes us able to play melodic patterns. Velankar (2013) postulates that tempo beats implies to the number of beats per minute whereas Jeff (2003) affirms that melodic patterns is the arrangement of musical scales in music. This shows that choristers should be able to tell the speed of the song and how many beats to be played in a minute. Kevin (1995) asserts that a steady tempo beat is vitally important for students to be able to perceive rhythm. He further points out that this concept is usually termed as the beat of the music. This shows that rhythm determines the tempo of a melody. The use of metronome or the clicking of a clock is helpful to keep the steady beat. Gordon (1971) reiterates that melodic rhythm is the one that forms the musical pattern that

corresponds to the rhythm of the text of the song. This reflects that every song has a unique pattern which it flows that the choristers should be able to interpret.

Creston (1964) contemplates rhythm as the organization of duration in organized measure. He further pin points four basic aspects of rhythm which are meter, pace, accent and pattern. According to Kevin (1995) pattern refers to the division of a beat into smaller sections, which makes up rhythm. He also says accent plays an important role in shaping the rhythm as they articulate rhythmic groupings. Britannica (online) postulate that the heaviest accent falls on the first beat of the measure and the weaker beats are the ones that follows. This shows that notes within a bar are not emphasized the same way. He went on to say it is the accent that determines where the measure begins. Creston (1964) considers accents to be part of the underlying rhythm of the music, and not an extra embellishment of the melody.

Kevin (1995) views Creston's terms of "pace" and "meter", as similar to Gordon's concepts of tempo beat and meter beat. He went on to say meter beats and tempo beats are fundamental to melodic rhythm, and melodic rhythm is fundamental to the tonal aspects of music. Without rhythm, melody would be difficult to organize and therefore difficult to perceive and conceptualize (Gordon, 1971). This shows that when interpreting a score of music a performer should be able to interpret the rhythm correctly in order to come up with the correct note interpretation that forms the correct melody.

Kevin (1995) argues that the issue of teaching rhythm is further complicated by the fact that there are two regularly used systems of rhythm names which are the European and the fractional system. He continues to say the European system is of semibreves, crotchets, minims, quavers, which originated from the Latin and the fractional system of half note, quarter, eighth are regularly used in Australian schools. Therefore the coordinator has to be aware about these terms before attempting to interpret a music score. The European system is normally used on staff notation and the fractional system normally used on tonic solfa notation. It is very important for the coordinator to be able to interpret these two notations in order to come up with the correct note interpretation in choral music.

Staff notation

Tonic Solfa   d :   r | r   :   r | d :   t, | d :   ‖

The correct note interpretation is when one has also interpreted correctly the rhythms of the notes. There are different approaches choir coordinators can implement when teaching their choirs in order to interpret the rhythms correctly. Kevin (1995) asserts that the teaching methodologies of Kodaly, Orff and Suzuki all rely on teaching rhythm first as sound, before any notation is introduced. In the Kodaly Context (1981), Choksy says the teaching order is always sound to sight, concrete to abstract. She goes on to advocate that teaching of rhythm concepts should be achieved through mimicry, such as having the students copy the rhythm clapped or tapped by the teacher. This shows that choristers should be able to identify a certain rhythm through hearing before they are shown the note. Kevin (1995) concurs with this sentiment as he said this technique is very useful for teaching beginners. The researcher also discovered that this technique is very effective. She used it when she was teaching her choir she was doing research with. The choristers had a problem of matching the correct rhythm when it is in a performance. The researcher asked choristers to tap the rhythms as they were singing. This helped to give the correct value of the notes and also on the articulation whether the rhythm is an on beat or an offbeat.

Kevin (1995) postulates that the teaching methods of Orff involve using speech patterns to introduce rhythm. Notation should be introduced right from the beginning together with speech patterns for which rhythmical notation is sufficient so that the child may jot down any rhythmical or melodic idea that occurs to him (Orff, 1956). Kevin (1995) agrees that Orff's style of speech patterns are an excellent rhythmical tool for teaching rhythm, and fundamental to the system. He went on to say when students see a particular rhythmic pattern, they associate it with the words they have been taught, and thus are able to audiate the sound of the rhythm effectively. Audiation is defined as the hearing of sounds that are not physically present through recalling, prediction and conception (Gordon, 1971). This implies that when the coordinator is reading the words of a

song, should try to say them suiting with their rhythm. For example the word chocolate corresponds with four semiquavers.

cho co la te

One should not say them as crotchets. Moomaw (1984) posits that Orff's method emphasizes on creativity, improvisation and rhythmic patterns like body percussion osinati and imitation. This method fosters students' self-discovery that will lessen work to the choir coordinators in trying to teach them rhythm in choral music.

Kevin (1995) went on to say the teaching of rhythm is given the most important emphasis in Dalcroze eurhythmics. In the Dalcroze methodology, children are taught to internalize rhythm through movement. Campell and Kassner (1995) concurs that this method teaches the students the concepts of rhythm structure and musical expression using movements. This allows students to gain physical awareness and experience of music through body movement. Before choir coordinators can start to teach a crotchet they should let students experience the value of a crotchet through movement. The coordinator can even use an activity of imitating digging for choristers to understand the value of a minim. Kevin (1995) borrowing Dalcroze's method postulates that movement to music begins at a very early age, generally with no musical notation where students are taught to equate rhythms with specific movements. Dalcroze cited by Campbell and Kassner (1995) propounds that the eurhythmics become the foundation for raising each person's musical sensitivity to its fullest potential. The writer noticed that the Dalcroze method is very effective in teaching rhythm as it allows students to improvise which is an important skill in music. This method also helped when the writer was interpreting the performance directions on a music score like largo, andante, allegro and many more. She used the bride's step on her wedding, father going to work and the speed of a person who is late for something as examples of daily movements, deriving from Dalcrose' method. The students could not forget that when they are approaching on a largo they will think of the bride on her wedding. This made the music sessions to be very enjoyable to students.

The Kordaly method cited in Choksy (1999) points out that moving rhythms are more child related than sustained ones. He goes on to say the quarter note may be related to children's

walking pace and eight notes to their running. These are the rhythms of every person in day to day live which can easily be understood quickly. The prime objective of this method is to instill lifelong love for music in students and fun. Choksy went on to say, through uninhibited movement to the beat of the music children learn to internalize movements to these rhythms. When the visual element rhythmical cell is presented to them, they can equate it to its movement, and therefore its sound. Kevin (1995) states that the use of mnemonic devices such as syllabic devices used by Kodaly and Dalcroze, as well as applying words to rhythms, such as used in Orff, is useful in teaching rhythm.

Palmer (1997) points out that the goal of interpretation is to convey the meaning of the music. Kamien (2008) stresses that a performer needs to understand the implication of rhythm used in a piece of music in order to deduce its meaning. Brandel (1976) asserts that rhythm influences the mood of the song. There are two main terms that determine the character of rhythm which are diminution and augmentation. According to Brandel (1976) diminution rhythms are short and running notes whereas augmentation are longer note values. Honea (1988) asserts that a diminution ought to show boldness. This implies that diminution rhythms result in heavier, resold and bold moods. Honea further affirms that any time the singer wants to succeed at diminution should practice passagio. This shows that the technique to be used when interpreting diminution rhythms is the passagio technique. Schute (1980) postulates that passagio generally refers to the transition of voice from one register to another. When a song has diminution rhythms, one needs to do the dramatic singing which is associated with the opera singing (Titze, 1992).

Augmentation rhythms are associated with the legato style of singing and light tone is to be used (Brandel 1976). Titze (1992) asserts that legato indicates that musical notes are to be played or sung smoothly. Brundel (1976) went on to say one should slide over the notes or phrases. This shows that choirs should not hit the notes when performing as hitting the notes might affect the taste or mood of the song. Huffman (2013) propounds that on dotted rhythms, dots are dropped or decayed then a rest is inserted in place of the dots. He went on to say the dynamic should diminish somewhat through the dot so that the shorter note following the dot can be accented. This implies that if a score has a dotted crotchet, the level of sound differs when prolonging the note. A dotted crotchet is equivalent to three quavers. The level of sound on the first two quavers will be the same but the last quaver will be fading such that the next note will high in

terms of the level of sound. Brundel (1976) postulates that when a note functions as an anacrusis that is the pickup, should be accented slightly. This implies that any note apart from the first note in a bar should be approached in a sliding manner.

There are many techniques that choir coordinators can use in the teaching of rhythm during choir training. Coward (2003) advocates that means are adopted to secure the control of accents and stresses regular and irregular that each distinctive phrase maintains its individuality while note interfering with the other parts. Jackson (1963) prefers foot tapping as it involves more extensive muscular action, and there is less emphasis on the arithmetic. Research by Boyle (1970) found that foot tapping significantly improved the rhythm reading ability of high school band students. Kevin (1995) asserts that the tapping foot gives the student an excellent concept of the true beat, such as the whole beat. The researcher found the method of tapping rhythm very effective in interpreting notes as it allows the stressing of, on and off beat. The students could feel the flow and the beat of the song.

To shed light to this Jackson (1963) advocated that clapping or tapping phrases is a technique often used by band directors when learning new pieces. He went on to say there is need for activities to be used in conjunction, such as tapping the foot while clapping, or singing the rhythm while clapping the beat. Coward (2003) concurs with the above sentiment by saying clapping the rhythm before singing can be beneficial. This will make the choristers to feel the rhythm in their bodies before even singing. This feeling will help to guide the choristers to interpret the notes correctly. The choristers can be asked to tap, node the rhythms as they will be practicing such that everyone could identify where there will be a miss interpretation of the rhythm.

According to Jackson (1963) conducting is an excellent way of learning about rhythm and meter, and this technique is often used in Dalcroze eurhythmics. Through learning conducting, students gain an excellent understanding of the strong and weak beats of a bar, and also a good sense of the true beat. During practice not all chorister would have mastered the correct rhythm interpretation. It is therefore the duty of the conductor to stress the beats with his/her hands. The conductor should have the song in his/her hands that the choristers could follow. Where there is an offbeat, the conductor should clearly show that. Orff (1956) postulates that metrical beats are also included, that is the relationship of strong and weak beats in different time signatures.

2.2.3 Meter

Kamien (2008) asserts that music speaks to us through a re-creator that is a musician who makes the printed music sound. The composer generates musical notes, ideas and writes them on paper. The performer's task is therefore to bring the composer's ideas into real life. The metric device is one of the devices that a performer should be able to interpret correctly in order to bring out the composer's mind.

According to Scholes (1977) metric devices provide with the pulse, meter hence the time signature of the song. It is therefore the duty of the choir coordinators to be able to interpret these devices in order to come up with the correct note interpretation. Hoist (1963) postulates that the concept of metre in music derives in large part from the poetic metre of song and includes not only the basic rhythm of the foot, pulse-group or figured used but also the rhythmic or formal arrangement of such figures into musical phrases. All indications of mater are subject to the interpretation of the composer and of the performer (Onmusic Dictionary).

Meter or metre is a term that music has inherited from the rhythmic element of poetry (Latham 2002). Scholes (1977) defines meter as the number of lines in a verse, the number of syllables in each line and the arrangement of those syllables as long or short, accented or unaccented. MacPherson (1930) postulates that a definition of musical metre requires the possibility of identifying a repeating pattern of accented pulses that is a pulse-group which corresponds to the foot in poetry. Frequently a pulse-group can be identified by taking the accented beat as the first pulse in the group and counting the pulses until the next accent (Scholes, 1977).

Kevin (1995) propounds that human speech, poetry and music moves in patterns of twos and threes. Therefore the essential concept of rhythm is the idea of meter beats that is the division of the tempo beat into two or three. There are two types of time signatures which are the simple and the compound time signature.

Compound metre, or compound time is a metre in which each beat of the measure divides naturally into three equal parts that is, each beat contains a triple pulse (Latham, 2002a). He went on to say compound time is associated with lilting and dancelike qualities. American Heritage (2011) defines lilt as cheerful or lively manner of speaking in which the pitch of the voice varies

pleasantly. Merriam dictionary defines lilting as a rhythmical swing or cadence that is cheerful. This implies that a choir when performing a song that is in triple time should perform in a cheerful manner using lighter tone. Latham (2002) points out that triple time is a time signature characterized by waltz or swing. The time signatures for triple time include $^3{}_4$, $^6{}_8$, $^9{}_8$ and $^{12}{}_8$. Lathan went on to say, the difference between the above times signatures is the strong beats that consist each measure. Brandel (1976) postulates that in a $^3{}_4$ measure, the first beat is the strong beat, whereas the second and third are softer. In $^6{}_8$ measure one is a strong beat, four is slightly strong beat and the other beats are not emphasized. This shows that articulation of a note is very important parameter in note interpretation. Keegan (2010) asserts that articulation is the way we make breaks between notes and the frequency with which we do it. With different articulations of notes in different time signatures shows that each signature gives a different feeling to the music it is being used in.

The implication of songs with triple time signatures is that the song has to be solemn, tender, light, passionate and dolce. In light moods the technique of approaching the phrases or individual is the sliding technique (Brandel, 1976). Light moods are associated with the legato style. Piano (online) posits that legato is an Italian word which means tied together. This entails that when performing a song with triple time; musical notes should be played or sung smoothly. That is, the performer sings from note to note with no intervening silence. Latham (2002) asserts that $^3_4$ time signature is also used to convey the mournful mood. It has come to light that different time signatures with their attribute determine the mood hence the tone to be used in a performance. This shows that performer can tell the mood of the song even before attempting to sing. This helps the performer in interpreting the notes, as he/she would have already read the mind of the composer.

Onmusic Dictionary postulates that simple meter (simple time) can be defined as a meter where each beat in a measure can be subdivided by two. $^2_4$ time is associated with a march that is used by soldiers (Piano Lesson (online). Middle School Initiatives (online) posits that double time is used by soldiers when marching quickly. This implies that a performer is to perform with vibrancy or energy a music piece with $^2_4$ meter. Kamien (2008) advocated that the time signature determines the mood or character of the song. This time signature requires resolute, bold moods hence a different tone like heavier tones because one will be bold when marching. The vibrato or glottal singing should be used on marching time.

Kevin (1995) asserts that it is true that accents really do affect our perception of meter. He went on to say the metric accent is important, as it helps musicians relate to time signatures and their effective meanings, and gives us the skills to be able to superimpose complex rhythms. It is important to understand the normal structure of natural accents occurring in a bar, especially if we wish to understand syncopation (Kevin, 1995). Merriem (1999) asserts that syncopation is musical rhythm in which stress is given to the weak beats instead of the strong beats. Most choir coordinators seem to ignore the aspect of strong and weak beats in music. The choir is left articulating the notes in same way. Brown (1978) propounds that accurate singing requires identification of the starting point and absolute duration of each note. Latham (2002) advices that the crusis beat is approached abruptly whereas; the anacrusis beat is approached in a sliding manner. The crusis beat is the beat found at the beginning of the bar and the anacrusis beats are any other beats within a bar. It is vital that a teacher have an excellent grasp on these concepts for them to be able to communicate them effectively with their choristers.

Notes in choral music need a variety of stresses to show how they belong together. Waterman (2001) asserts that how notes are grouped together affects how they are to be stressed. He went on to say all the historical evidence suggests that two notes joined into a couplet should have the first note more stressed than the second like a trochee. This means that though notes are the same if they are beamed they will be stressed differently.

Levy (1995) points out that there is no single ideal interpretation for a given musical piece but every performance involves some kind of interpretation or analysis. A score of music though it has some performance directions, it has some hidden meanings which a performer has to figure out. This calls for a performer to analyze the music asking himself further questions after understanding how notes belong together. Meyer (1973) postulates that there is no single ideal interpretation for a given musical piece but every performance involves some kind of interpretation or analysis. Waterman (2001) asserts that playing in strict rhythm is appropriate only for march-like music, and even then the quality of rhythm can be subtly varied to sound solemn or pompous, funereal or resolute or bouncy. Most other music requires some flexibility to a greater or lesser degree (Palmer, 1977). This implies that other time signatures apart from $\frac{2}{4}$ time, performers are free to venture into different expressions they think will suite the song. Waterman (2001) propounds that music notation is not capable of indicating rhythmic subtleties,

and because composers know better than to try to 'prescribe' rhythmic freedom, performers need to be alert to this issue. This is brought to light by Palmer (1997) when he said differences in interpretation can account for why the same musical score is performed differently by different performers or why the same performer may perform a piece differently on separate occasions.

2.3 Relevance of group work

The effectiveness of teaching note interpretation is attributed to how the concept is put across to the choristers. Choir coordinators or conductors should note that individual differences make choristers grasp concepts differently. However group activities are another way of choristers to learn from imitating their peers. The choir coordinator can divide the choir into four parts which are soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

Mutasa and Willis (1995) define group work as the teaching approaches based around people working together collaboratively and paying attention to tasks. This implies that choristers will be working together, helping one another on the task they would have been given or problem encountered. For example, the choristers can help one another in mastering the notes and words of the song at the same time implementing the correct pitch and rhythms to the notes whilst they are in their groups. This shows that group work is a particular technique the coordinator can use to help learners grasp the concepts through a combined effort to achieve a desired goal. Dawson (1988) asserts that group work is based around people working together in one soul. This shows that when choristers are in their groups they will be having one spirit as a part unlike when they will be singing as the whole choir.

When the researcher was teaching note interpretation to the tertiary students, the choristers had this problem of singing the melody of another part though using their voices. She later divided the choir to sing in their individual parts so that they can follow their own lines. At the end the choir managed to maintain their melodies even if they will be singing together as the whole choir.

Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) state that people remember group discussions better as group work fosters learning and comprehension. Davis (1993) agrees with this sentiment by saying students working in small groups have a tendency to learn more of what is taught and retain it

longer than when the same material is presented in other instructional formants. This helped the four parts to master their own lines during choral sessions with the group I was working with. The problem of copying other parts' lines which might lead to miss-interpretation of notes was avoided through this. The choir coordinator can always use this method if his/her choristers have a problem of copying other parts.

Thomas (2008) postulates that the singing voice is very personal, as it is a part of the person's body and therefore a part of their self-image. Thomas (Ibid) went on to say asking students to sing alone immediately produces insecurity. When teaching choral music, teachers should allow the students to master the song first whilst singing with others before asking choristers to present alone. This will help choristers to have confidence in themselves. Also this will also help choristers not to hesitate even if they are in the right direction. When the researcher moved around listening to the groups, she had some individuals she wanted check on. These were the choristers that had problems when they were singing alone. She found out that those choristers were singing correctly as they had some people to lean on. Thomas (2008) postulates that choristers with high aptitude figure it out for themselves, those with average aptitude pick it up from the high achievers. This shows that choristers should be allowed to work in their small groups for them to learn from others. Davis (1993) points out that group work allows people to gain a more accurate picture of how others see them. Choristers on average aptitude will always try to do better as they will not want others to point fingers at them.

Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) state that group tasks should be integral to the course objectives. This means that what choristers will be doing in their groups should complement with the objective the coordinator would have set. For example if the coordinator wants the choir to master the notes the choristers should not switch to dynamics which will be out of way of the objectives. Herman, Aschbacher and Winters (1992) suggest that a good rubric consist of clear and logical categories that explain what the instructor is assessing and the point value for each point. Hornby (2008) asserts that a rubric is a scoring tool that is used to evaluate and assess a set list of criteria and objectives. Herman et al (1992) went on to say choristers should not just be sent to groups without a clear objective they are to achieve. This practise ensures that both choristers and the coordinator will be satisfied with the end result and makes the group process a more objective learning experience. Rubrics are very useful for evaluating group work and

increase the chances of student success (Finson and Ormsbee, 1998). Freeman and Greenacre (2011) stress that every group member should be aware of goals and objectives of the group and assign specific tasks r responsibilities to teach members.

2.4 Relevance of instruments

Roe (1983) asserts that the voice does not have the capacity for accuracy or nicety of tone that the instrument has. The voice covers only a limited range which might cause the choir not to articulate the correct pitch of the note as required unlike when playing the same note on instruments like piano, violin, organ and many more. Roe (1983) asserts that the choir director should always be aware of any pitch inaccuracy and should analyse the discord and try to find out the possible causes of the problem and prescribe the appropriate remedy quickly and efficiently. Freedman (2013) advocated that the pitch of notes should sound exactly as the sound produced by the keyboard, piano or any tuned instrument. This implies that when the choir miss-interpret a note in terms of pitch, one should refer to a pitched instrument to correct the pitch.

The use of appropriate and relevant instruments seen as the media is a pivot role of a successful choral session. Pitch correction instruments that include piano, keyboard, and guitar are quite relevant when doing choral music. Roe (1983) asserts that the choir director should always be aware of any pitch inaccuracy and should analyse the discord and try to find out the possible causes of the problem and prescribe the appropriate remedy quickly and efficiently. Freedman (2013) advocated that the pitch of notes should sound exactly as the sound produced by the keyboard, piano or any tuned instrument. Pitch is the relative highness or lowness that we hear in a sound. Sound can be described as having a definite or indefinite pitch. Miller and Shahriari (2002) reiterate that a definite pitch can be measured in Hertz whereas an indefinite pitch cannot be measured. These definite pitches are the ones that produce melodies and harmonies. They further went on to say definite pitched instrument produces sounds at fixed frequencies that are constant at each position. This implies that when the choir miss-interpret a note in terms of pitch, one should refer to a pitched instrument to correct the pitch.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main thrust of this chapter is to outline the methodology that the researcher had used. There will be a discussion on the design that the researcher had used in her research which is an action research. Justifications of the observation, questioners and interviews as instruments used in the research will also be looked upon. The data collecting procedure and analysis are also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

Weper (1992) regards a design as a plan that is used by the researcher in an effort to increase a study's worthless. Blakstad (2008) reiterates that a design is the structure of any scientific work that gives and systematizes the research. Therefore according to Nachmias (1996:99) a research design is viewed as the "the scheme that enables the investigator come up with solutions to problems and guides him/her in various stages of the research". Trochim (2005) asserts that research design "provides the glue that holds the research project together. The research design that the writer opted to use is an action research that is qualitative in approach for her research.

3.2.1 Action Research

Dooley (1995) entails an action research as a practical approach to professional inquiry in any social situation aiming to solve the problem. Kemmis cited in Woods (1998:35) defines action research as, "a systematic process of learning by carefully observing the character and consequences of what one does with the tripartite aim of improving ones' own practices and improving the situation in which these practices and improving the situation in which these practices are carried out". Kennis et al (1996) in line with the above sentiment view action research as a systematic process of teaching by carefully observing the character of what one does with the aim of improving the situation. Action research can be defined as "an approach in which the action researcher and a client collaborate in the diagnosis of the problem and in the

development of a solution based on the diagnosis" (Bryman and Bell, 2011:414). This entails identification of a problem and then tries to find possible solutions in order to bring change. The researcher discovered that certain choirs could not interpret the notes correctly in choral music. She then identified a certain choir to train in order to find ways of solving the problem of note interpretation in choral music.

Best etal (1993) see action research as a systematic objective analysis and recording of controlled observations that lead to development of generalization principles or theories resulting in prediction and possible ultimate control of events. Eichelberge (1989) postulates that an action research provides with intended variable room to look at the lesson. This implies that one can change the concepts to be used in order to solve the problem. It motivated the researcher to think carefully and imaginatively to overcome the problem using the resources available to improve note interpretation in choral music. Cohen and Mannion (1994) propound that and action research is a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher was making a continuous analysis on the method she was using in her research so that the problem could be solved. She incorporated the use of group works, instruments with the aim of achieving the objective of the research. Action research requires a very observant person who keeps a vigilant eye on changes of the behavior of students.

This type of research has its merits as well as demerits. Journal of Science (2009) points out that teachers develop a deeper understanding of students, the teacher learning process and their role in the education of both teachers and students. The researcher after her research had understood the capabilities of each individual chorister in terms of how they interpret music. Action research is an ongoing process and its strategies can be widely applied. Mills (2011) action research fosters a democratic approach to education that is promotion a process of testing new ideas. However, Nixon (1981:5) posits that "action research is an intellectually demanding mode of enquiry which prompts serous and often uncomfortable questions about classroom practice".

Action Research Cycle

Donald, Lazarus and Lelwana (2000) concurs that action research is a cycle. Cook and Lesley (2011) are of the opinion that action research is spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and repetitive self-evaluation. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) action study is a participatory study consisting of spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. This implies that the researcher starts by planning then teaches at the same time observing and lastly reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. From this reflection a revised plan is made in order to initiate a change. In this research the researcher managed to do three cycles.

3.3 Population and Sample

Best and Khan (1993:13) view population as "any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common" that are of interest to the researcher. Errocker (1981) defines population as a group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analysed. From these definitions, one can say a population is a group of people extracted by the researcher for research. The researcher opted to use the students from Masvingo Teachers College choir. She chose this population because these were the students who were accessible as they were already in the choir which the research was focused on it.

According to Barg and Gall (1996:20) "sampling is the process of selecting a sample from defined population". Laintech (1994) asserts that a sample is a limited number of people chosen from a larger group. This implies that sampling procedure refers to choosing a group from a

population to act as respondents during a research. In this case the researcher selected forty choristers from the choir and also the choir coordinator which she had dealt with in her research.

With the above information in mind, the researcher used purposive sampling when she selected the choir coordinator to work with. Crosman (2006) posits that a purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. She went on to say non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. From the three lecturers in the Music department, the researcher chose the choir coordinator as he was the one who already know about training choral music. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling.

The choristers were sampled using the stratified random sampling method. The researcher used stratified random sampling as it involves dividing the population into various subgroups. Out of forty choristers, the researcher divided the choir into four groups of soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Six choristers from each of the part were selected using simple random sampling to fill in the questionnaires. Two choristers from each part were also selected using simple random sampling to answer the interview questions. This enabled he researcher to identify the mistakes made by each pupil and therefore find the possible solutions. This also helped me to identify the actual problem of an individual of failure to interpret the notes correctly.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

As the researcher was doing her work related at the mentioned institution, she produced a letter of seeking consent to do her research. She was given the consent to do her research using the institution choir because it was one of her duties to train the choir. The names of the interviewees and those who filled the questionnaires were said to remain anonymous.

3.5 Research Instruments

Action Research can involve a variety of qualitative methods, these can include, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, interviews and many more. The practitioner may decide to

use more than one method in order to triangulate data. In this research, the researcher used observation, questionnaires and interviews.

3.5.1 Observation

The researcher had chosen observation to be her first instrument in order to observe the choir training sessions and perceive how the choir coordinator teaches his/her choir. The researcher took a month from January to February observing the choir sessions. A total of five sessions were observed. This was to note the behavior of choristers during sessions and difficulties encountered by the choristers and choir coordinator.

Copeland (1974:35) views observation as watching carefully or paying attention to have physical experience. Marshall and Rossman (1999) said, observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behavior and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study. This implies that observation involves the acquisition of knowledge through watching carefully or studying how someone performs a certain activity. This helps one to have a depth understanding.

One can choose to be a participant observer or an onlooker depending on the nature of the research. White (2000) postulates that there are two ways the observation can be carried out named participant observation and non-participant observation. The researcher was a participant observer as she was the one who was trying to develop the skill of note interpretation to the choristers. Spradley (1980) points out that participant observation is a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. This supports why the researcher had chosen this method as the research is qualitative in nature. Laurier (2008) assets that participant observation is a method that is built out of two familiar parts which are observation and participation. He went on to say observation of spatial phenomena has been a central glaciers or the traffic flows of citie spaces whereas participation is a form of involvement, or association, in a group, practice or events. In this research the researcher observed how the choir coordinator trained the choir and how choristers' behave during these choir sessions. She then participated in trying the help the choir on the note interpretation in choral music.

Borg and Gall (1989) point out that an observer employs predefined observation forms for the research. In this research the observation guide was designed in appendices for recording the behavior of choristers during choir training. The recorded information on the guide helped one to evaluate delivery of note interpretation. This helped in finding ways of solving the problems encountered.

There are a number of problems associated with observational research. McLeod (2015) affirms that observation can be very time consuming. There is a limited time frame of at least six months that a researcher needs to take note of when conducting this kind of research. A potential disadvantage in conducting observational research is the ethical dilemmas inherent in observing real life situations for research purposes. Being an observer in an etic perspective, might not be able to cope with the ethics of the society one is doing the research. Spradley (1980) asserts that observation can be viewed as being subjective because the researcher will look on what she wants and leaving other aspects that are important.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

Since this research has been described as being qualitative, the questionnaire method was considered to be suitable method for collecting data. The questionnaire method was the second instrument the researcher used as they highlight some of the aspects that might have skipped during the observations. This instrument also provided some answers which the researcher could get through observation. The questionnaires were distributed in March and gave respondents a period of two weeks before the follow up. Twenty four questionnaires were distributed to choristers, six from each part and also the coordinator (see appendix). The researcher left the questionnaires with the respondents to complete and then collected them at a given dates.

Labotive and Hagedom (1981) describe the questionnaire as an instrument that is comprised of a series of questions or items. These items are the ones filled by the respondents. Whites (2000) in line with the above sentiment view questionnaire as a series of questions providing a number of alternative answer from which the respondents can chose. This indicated that the researcher had to set questions upon the methods she use on developing the skill of note interpretation. This also

helped me in finding ways of solving the problem of note interpretation. The questionnaires proved the ability to focus on a wide range of topics and purposes.

There are two types of questions in the questionnaires namely open ended and forced choice (Charles 1988). In the open ended questions, respondents explain their views in their own words and in closed ended questions; they only give one word answer which might be true/false or yes/no. The researcher came up with two separate questionnaires, one for the choristers and the other for the coordinator (see appendix 3). The questionnaires had both closed and open ended questions.

Limitations by this instrument could be that information collected could be subjective. The respondents may have a bias due to his/her own interpretations of the expressed opinions. Questions can also be suggestive thereby influencing the opinions of the respondents. Another serious criticism of the questionnaires is failure to provide a deep enough true picture of the opinions and feeling of respondents (Born and Gall 1989). Therefore it implies that there is no room for probing to unclear responds and also follow ups of some directions made by the respondents. This shows that the researcher and respondents should create enough time to explain the views made to each other.

3.5.3 Interviews

The third instrument the researcher used in collecting data is the interviews. The researcher designed an interview guide with questions which were open ended in nature. The questions were meant to probe the interviewees' opinions.

Katin and Cannel (1957) in Marshal and Rossman (1999) view interview as a conversation with a purpose. Cook (1960) in Chivorce (1994) found an interview adaptable in the sense that the face to face set up gives the interviewer a chance to read the facial expression or any other body language that cannot be expressed on the paper. The face to face set up allows the researcher to probe more on the interviewees such that other questions that were not answered during the observations and questionnaires might be answered through this instrument. Probing is also done if the expression the interviewee shows that he/she is not sure of what she is saying. Borg and Gall (1989) assert that the interview method produces immediate feedback. This does not allow

some questions to be left hanging, because unclear questions may be explained and made clear. The method permits following ups that enable one to get more data and greater knowledge.

Although the interview method was so useful in this research, however the data collected cannot be quantified. The respondents also may want to please the researcher that will end up giving biased information. However the interview caused a lot of inconveniences to the interviewees as they had a packed program with their academic work.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

As highlighted in the research instrument item, the researcher used observation, questionnaires and interviews. The researcher took eleven months to collect the data needed for the research. This was so because the nature of this research required much time whereby at least of six months are required. The observation was done for two months as from February to March. This was to identify the actual problem where most choirs miss on note interpretation. The questionnaires were distributed early March and were collected in mid-March. The respondents were given a period of two weeks to fill in them before the follow ups and interviews were then done August. The actual action of developing the skill of note interpretation started from March to December as the research was an ongoing thing of solving the problem. All the data collected were done in person and not through the phone calls.

3.7 Conclusion

The main thrust of this chapter was to show the methodology that the researcher had used in her study. Observation, questionnaires and interviews were seen to be very relevant in this research though they had some disadvantages of their own. It also reflected some ethical considerations that the researcher had implemented. The next chapter is going to focus on data presentation and analyses.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of data collected from questionnaires, interviews and observations is going to be presented under the three research questions which the researcher had formulated. The researcher is going to use questionnaires to present the data. The presentation will be in form of graphs, pie charts and also some short summary to the data that cannot be placed on graphs or pie charts. The data will be presented in its row form and then analysed.

4.2 Research Question 1: Why is it important to articulate notes correctly?

4.2.1 Data from Observation

4.2.1.1Question: How does the coordinator teach his/her choir songs with notes?

The coordinator gives the music scores to the choristers for them to study it before trying to interpret. He then demonstrates how to sing the notes whilst the choir is listening. The choristers will then imitate what they would have heard from the coordinator whilst reading from their scores.

4.2.1.2 Question: How do the students respond to the audiation?

Some students are able to reproduce the sound produced by the instrument but the majority cannot reproduce the sound that would have been played on the key board or pitch pipe. When the coordinator gives the pitch, the whole choir will hum their part pitch so that even those who cannot pick the pitch from the instrument will sing using the required pitch. The students who cannot pick the pitch from the instrument will copy those that can. The problem of singing the wrong pitch also comes when there are chromatic notes and bigger intervals between the notes

4.2.1.3 <u>Question:</u> How much time is given to the training of choir?

The choir is not given much time for training. Superiors say students have many other subjects they do besides music. They had other fourteen subjects they should attend to. The choir training is done when there are competitions or if there is a performance that requires choir. The training of choir should be an on-going thing not waiting only for performances

4.2.2 Data from Questionnaires

The researcher distributed twenty four questionnaires to the choristers of which six questionnaires were given to each part. The coordinator was also given another questionnaire with different questions from the choristers.

4.2.2.1<u>Question:</u> Which type of notation are you able to interpret?

Fig 1   <u>Showing Data of Type of Notation that can be interpreted</u>
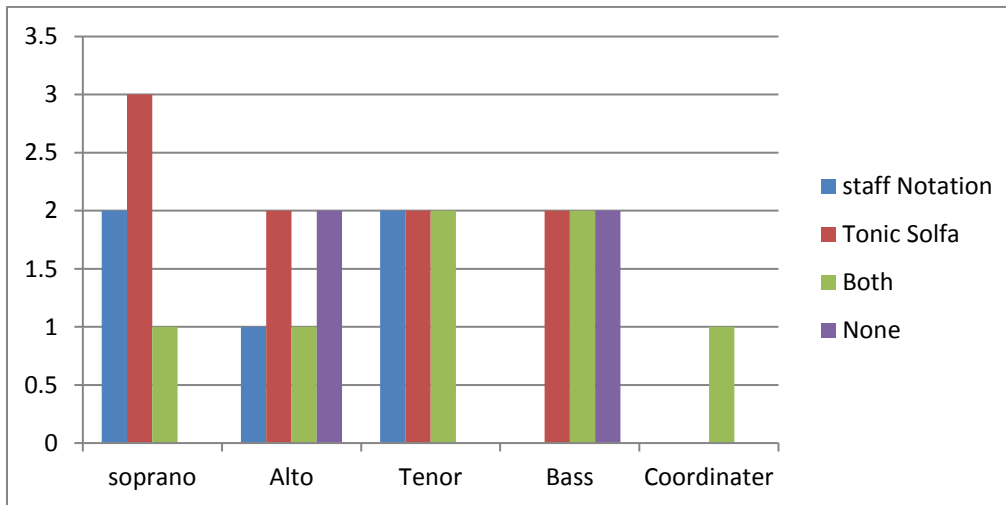
The researcher distributed twenty five questionnaires to the choristers including the choir coordinator. Six questionnaires were distributed to each part, soprano, alto, tenor, bass and one to the coordinator. For soprano and tenor all the choristers can interpret at least one notation unlike in alto and bass where we have some individuals who are not able. However, when the choristers were asked to elaborate these notations they were confusing staff notation and tonic solfa.

4.2.2.2 <u>Question:</u> How do you understand the aspect of note interpretation?

Five of the choristers and the coordinator assert that note interpretation is sounding the given notes as they should sound on the modulator scale and giving them the correct note values as they are clapped when doing rhythm. Three of the choristers only identified note interpretation as giving the correct pitch to the notes and the rest of the choristers could not even define what not interpretation is.

4.2.2.3 <u>Question:</u> a) Is it important to interpret the notes correctly in choral music?

Fig 2 <u>Showing the importance of interpreting notes correctly</u>
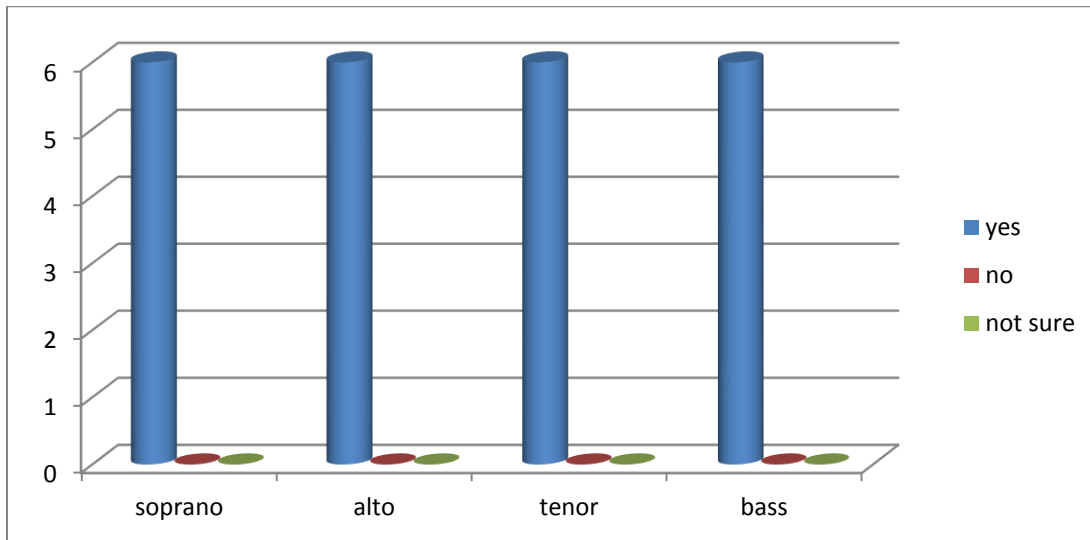
The graph shows that all the respondents are of the view that pointed out that it is important to interpret the notes correctly.

<u>Question:</u> b) Why do you say so?

The findings on this research question shows that all the twenty four respondents pointed out that it is important to articulate notes correctly. Ten of them went on to say, when the notes are interpreted correctly, the choir will be able to articulate the song correctly. If there is a miss interpretation of notes during the course, some choristers can identify where the miss interpretation had occurred and the remedy would be done before it's too late. The words would then sound at the correct pitch and correct note values.

4.2.2.4 <u>Question:</u> What are your attitudes towards choral music?

Eighteen choristers from the findings find choral music very interesting and really enjoy it. Six choristers pointed out that choral music was a compulsory part of their main subject hence they had no choice. If they had another choice, they would not have chosen choral music as their discipline.

4.2.3 Data from Interviews
The researcher interviewed eight choristers and the coordinator. Two choristers were from each part.

4.2.3.1 <u>Question:</u> What level did you reach with theory of music?

The research results show that three of the choristers hold the ABRSM certificates of grade one to five. Two other choristers pointed out that they have certificates on theory of music from grade one up to grade three. The rest of the choristers do not know which level they have reached as it is their first time to do theory of music at the college. The coordinator asserts that, he understand theory very well as he did Music up to the Masters level.

4.2.3.2 <u>Question:</u> Sing the first 4 bars of Soprano on Kasaleni Ubugwelegwele song?

Pie Chart 1 <u>Showing practical of note interpretation on the song Kasaleni Ubugwelegwele</u>
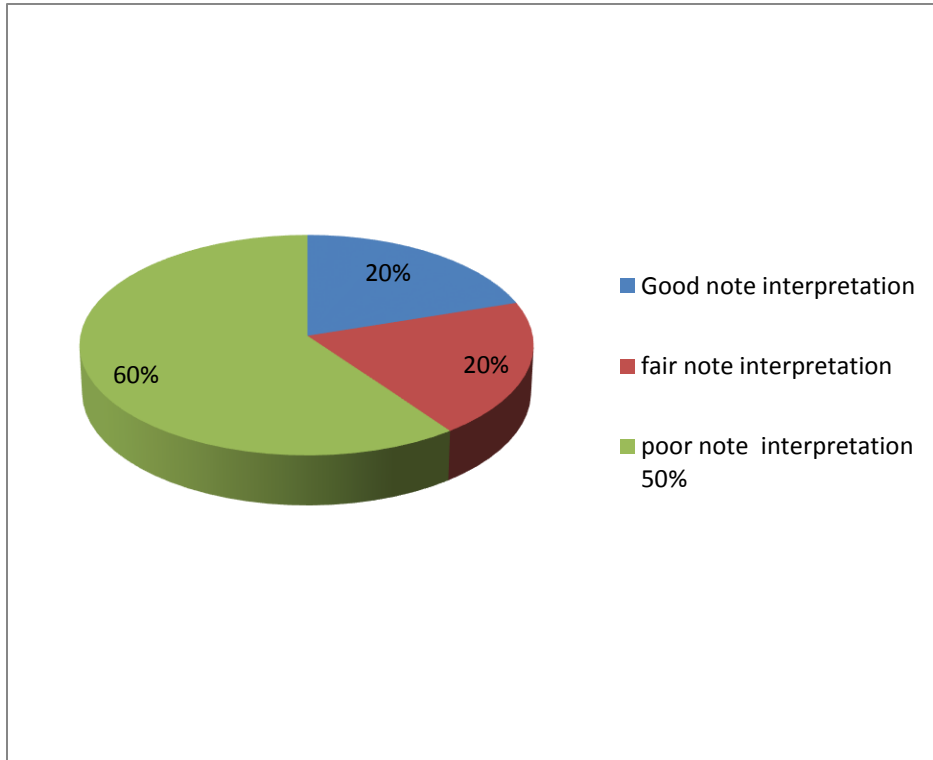
As shown on the above pie chart, out of ten choristers who were asked to sing the above mentioned song three choristers could interpret it without any challenges. The other two can interpret though they have some challenges and the rest cannot.

4.2.3.3 <u>Question:</u> How much time do you give to the choir training?

From data gathered from the interviews, the coordinator pointed out that, choir training sessions are only done when there are some competitions or performances. For example they would train choir in preparation for TIFFAZ and Research & Intellectual Expo (RIE). He went on to say, this is so because the higher authorities say that the students have a tight programme. It is a 2-5-2 programme which gives pressure to the students. The students are expected to be concentrating more on the examinable events.

4.2.3.4 <u>Question:</u> If you had the power to reschedule the time table, how will you schedule the time for choir training and why?

The choir coordinator pointed out that if he had the power over the time table, he would allocate at least one hour per day. This will make the choir to have enough time to practise. He illustrated that, if the choir has enough training time, other activities like voice training, sight reading will be mastered before they do the competition song. This will also save time when doing the competition song as every chorister will be able to do sight reading.

4.2.3.5 <u>Question:</u> Why is it important to articulate notes correctly?

The data gathered pointed out that three of the respondents highlighted that if the notes are articulated correctly; the choir will interpret the song correctly. People will easily identify anywhere there is any miss interpretation of notes. The other two choristers pointed out that when notes are articulated correctly before singing the words, the problem of de-teaching the wrong concept will be avoided. The other five choristers concurs with each other that when the notes are mastered correctly, the time to be used when putting words will be short than when notes are not well mastered. The coordinator also pointed out that when the notes are given the correct pitch and rhythm the choir will sing the song as expected by the composer.

4.3 Research Question 2: What are the main music elements that are essential in music interpretation?

4.3.1 Data from Observations

4.3.1.1 <u>Question:</u> What does the coordinator emphasise on when training the choir?

The observations made by the researcher reflects that emphasise is placed more on the articulation of correct pitch, rhythm and harmony though other elements of music are looked upon as encountered.

4.3.2 Data from Questionnaires
The researcher distributed twenty four questionnaires to the choristers and six questionnaires were given to each part which are Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass.

4.3.2.1 Question: Which are the three music elements you think are very important in the teaching of choral music?

Amongst the twenty four questionnaires distributed to the choristers, six questionnaires were given to each part. The choristers were asked to list three music elements they think are very important in teaching choral music. **Table 1**below represent the findings.

Table 1 <u>Showing Findings on the essential music elements in choral music</u>

	Rhythm	Pitch	Meter	Harmony	Melody	Texture	
Soprano	4	5	2	2	2	3	
Alto	4	4	3	2	3	2	
Tenor	4	5	3	1	2	3	
Bass	5	5	2	1	3	2	
Total	**17**	**19**	**10**	**6**	**10**	**10**	**72**

Fig 3 <u>Showing Percentage Data Presentation on the essential music elements in choral</u>
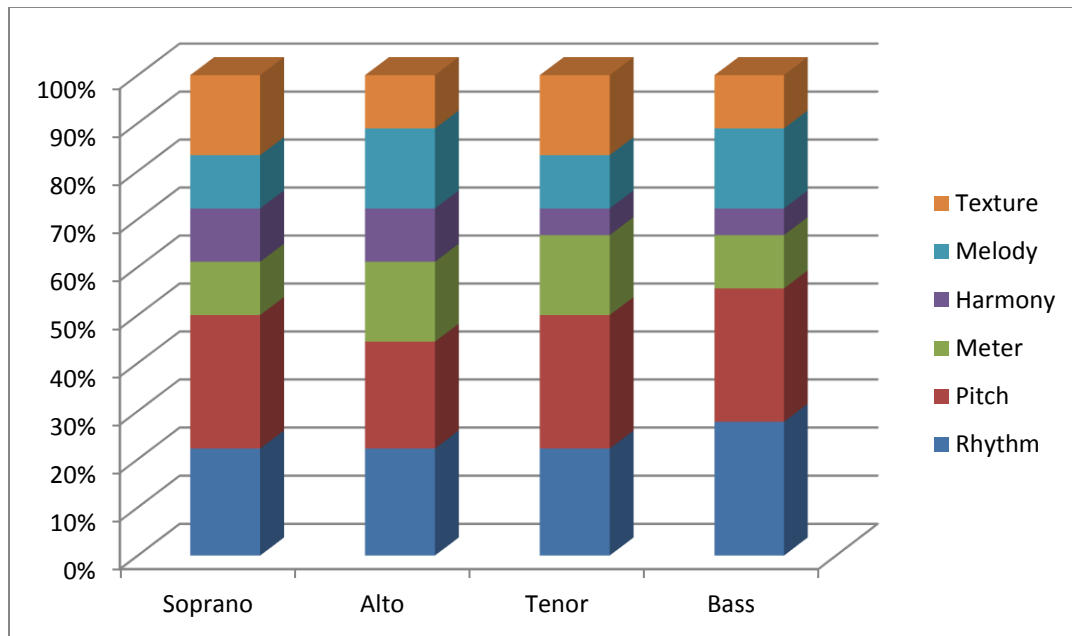
    <u>music</u>

The findings show that a larger number of choristers pointed out that pitch is one of the important elements in choral music. Rhythm is the other important element in choral music suggested by choristers. Meter, melody and texture have the same numbers in terms of choristers who view them as important elements in choral music. A smaller number suggests that harmony is also another important element of choral music.

4.3.2.2 Question: Why do you say the elements you have listed are the crucial elements when teaching choral music?

Pitch

All of the choristers who listed pitch as an important element in music pointed out that pitch contribute in giving the melody of the song. The choristers noted that it is important to get the correct pitch on the notes. The sound will be high or low as expected.

Rhythm

The findings show that ten choristers suggested that rhythm is one of the important music elements in choral music. They highlighted that the flow of music comes from the rhythm. It also differentiates singing and talking. The choir will always try to match the notes and the words to

the rhythm written on the music score. Seven of the choristers further pointed out that, rhythm alerts the choristers where there should pull and not and also where they should make a pause during the performance. They lastly suggested that it also helps to give the melody of the song.

Meter

The research results confirm that seven choristers pointed out that that meter enables one to see how music should flow. It specifies the length of a note in terms of number of beats. The other three choristers pointed out that the music score clearly outlines the length of all notes. Once one knows how long a quarter note should last, the tempo and timing of the entire score s already known.

Melody

The findings pointed out that ten choristers listed melody as one of the major element in choral music. They posit that, melody contains all of the other aspects of music which are pitch, rhythm, harmony, tempo and dynamics. This therefore directs how the music should flow as melody and words are the aspects people do when singing. They went on to say, melody is the only aspects of music that can truly stand on its own, and this is why it is so crucial to get it right.

Harmony

From the data gathered, six choristers speculated that harmony is one of the major element in music. They pointed out that, even if all parts sing notes correctly, if there is no harmony among the all four parts, the music will not be pleasant to listen.

Texture

Ten choristers nominated texture as an important element in choral music. They all pointed out that it provides the quality of the sound as it will be the interwoven of the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic materials in a piece.

4.3.3 Data from Interviews

The researcher interviewed eight choristers and the coordinator. Two choristers were from each part.

4.3.3.1 <u>Question:</u> When you are to train choral music, what will you emphasise on?

The data collected from the interviews pointed out that all the respondents argues that when training choral music, emphasise should be placed more on pitch articulation, rhythm and meter though other music elements will also be looked upon.

4.3.3.2 <u>Question:</u> Why do you emphasise more on the elements you have mentioned above?

The research findings pointed out that when the choristers master the correct pitch of the notes, vowels and consonants will sound as expected. The time values of the notes which is the sound duration is said to come from rhythm. This will make the choristers know where they should pull or make a pause. They went on to say this rhythm is the one which makes the melody of the song. If rhythm is not well mastered, the melody of the song will be distorted. The research findings also highlighted that meter alerts how music should flow as it specifies the length of a note in terms of number of beats in a bar.

4.3.3.3 <u>Question:</u> What are the other factors you think should be taken into consideration when training choral music to come up with the correct not interpretation?

The coordinator pointed out that as one interprets a music score one will not find only notes on the score but will convey a message through the words of the song. The words should be pronounced correctly which is diction, so that the message and pronunciation should be clear. The dynamics on the score should also be interpreted correctly as they convey the mood of the song.

4.4 Research Question 3: What approaches can be implemented or employed in the interpretation of: i) Rhythm

ii) Pitch

iii) Meter

4.4.1 Data from observations

4.4.1.1 Question: Which methods are used by the conductor to articulate intonation?

The choir coordinator always use try to use the modulator scale in trying to articulate intonation but, this method sometimes make them to miss interpret the note for example where they want to sound **t₁** they will sound it as **t₂**.

4.4.1.2 Question: How does the coordinator teach the aspect of time values to the choristers?

The findings made from observations replicates that time values are taken from the rhythm aspect in theory. The choristers are told how the notes should last as on the rhythm tree. For example a song in Tonic solfa, when the notes are arrange like:

m: m . f | s : - | s :   f . m | r : - | r :   r . m | f : - | m : m . r | d: -

The choir will sing the melody following the rhythm of crotchet, two quavers and a minim

4.4.2 Data from Questionnaires

4.4.2.1Question: How do you teach the aspect of note interpretation to your choir?

The coordinator pointed out that the choir is told to sound the note values as they should sound on the rhythm tree. If the note value is equivalent to a crotchet, the choir should give the correct note value to the note. If the choir had some challenges in interpreting the rhythms the coordinator will ask the choristers to clap that rhythm whilst singing.

4.4.2.2 Question: To what extend is the use of pitch correction instruments useful in the teaching of intonation?

The coordinator highlighted out that he always refer to the key board when he thinks there is some miss interpretations in terms of pitch.

4.4.3 Data from Coordinator's interview

4.4.3.1 Question: If you are given a score of music, which methods do you use to interpret the music written?

The coordinator pointed out that when interpreting a score, it depends with the level of the choristers. Some of the choristers can read music, but when dealing with those who have no background of music, the choristers should be told if the song is in staff notation, tonic solfa or both. Also when starting the song, the choir should know the time signature, key signature where *d* is the tonic note. He further went on to say the choristers should also understand the time values of the rhythms if the song is in staff notation.

4.4.3.2 Question: How do you teach the aspect of time values?

The coordinator pointed out that it depends with the notation which is being used. If the music is in staff notation, it is best to understand time values. When looking at rhythm, it is rhythm when it is not in the staff. In staff notation one need to understand the meaning of time values which is the sound duration. He said if rhythm is taken to staff notation, it now makes the melody where we need to understand the sound duration which is the rhythm of the song. He went on to

advocate that the students are taught these basics before the actual training of the choir so that they will understand how to interpret crotchet sound duration, minim, dotted quavers etc. These activities will be done the moment when the students are doing Theory of Music though the ones doing Music as their main subject have depth knowledge as compared to the students who are only in the Professional Studies classes.

4.4.3.3 <u>Question:</u> What are the other appropriate techniques you use to teach notes?

The coordinator pointed out that it depends with the level of students. Choristers need to understand if it is the staff notation or tonic solfa. He said transcription is also important for the choristers to understand it. The choristers need to understand the basics of transcription especially the dividers like the quaver dividers, minim dividers, crotchet dividers and many more. He pointed out that music is a language so it is important to teach the choristers how to read. As a coordinator, he will come in to help but not to start from the scratch. This will avoid the tendency of making the choristers pretend as if they are reading whilst they have just crammed what the coordinator would have said.

4.4.3.4 <u>Question:</u> Which methods can be used to articulate diction?

The coordinator highlighted that it is important to look for a resource person who can do the correct pronunciation of the words if the song is written in another language which the coordinator cannot speak. For example if the song is in Ndebele, the Karanga people might fail to pronounce the words correctly but a person who can speak Ndebele can do the pronunciation for him/her.

4.4.3.5 <u>Question:</u> When you face any challenges when trying to interpret a piece of music, what do you do?

The coordinator highlighted that if he faces challenges when interpreting the music, he had to find where he has gone wrong. He then has to research more on that problem or he can consult other colleagues to find out what exactly should be done. If the problem is coming out from how the song was arranged, one has to find out from the composer the correct thing. The composer might fail to peg the notes for example moving from *d* to *s*. The big intervals might be a mistake

in the composition from the composer. He pointed out that the main thing when one faces these challenges, one has to consult.

4.5   Action

4.5.1 First session
Singing the Zimbabwean National Anthem in Shona version

Pie Chart 2 <u>Showing note interpretation on the national anthem</u>
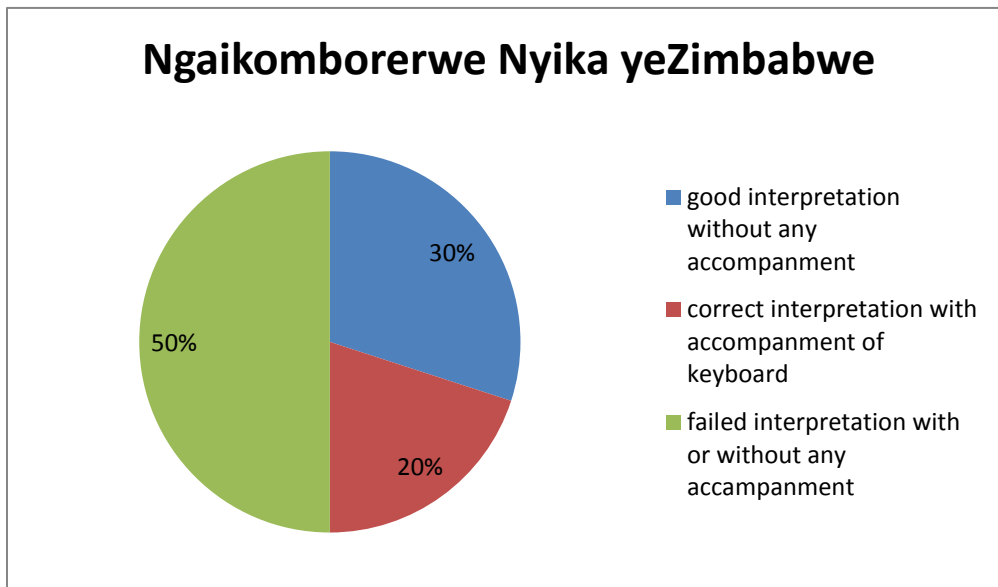
The pie chart represents all choristers sampled for the research. The data presented by the pie chart shows that choristers could not interpret the notes of the national anthem correctly. The researcher says so because the majority could not sing the song correctly without the accompaniment of the keyboard. Out of twenty four, only seven choristers could sing correctly. The researcher then asked seventeen choristers to sing with the accompaniment of a keyboard or a lead marimba. Only five choristers out of seventeen could follow the accompaniment and sing correctly.

Fig 4 Showing note interpretation of national anthem SATB
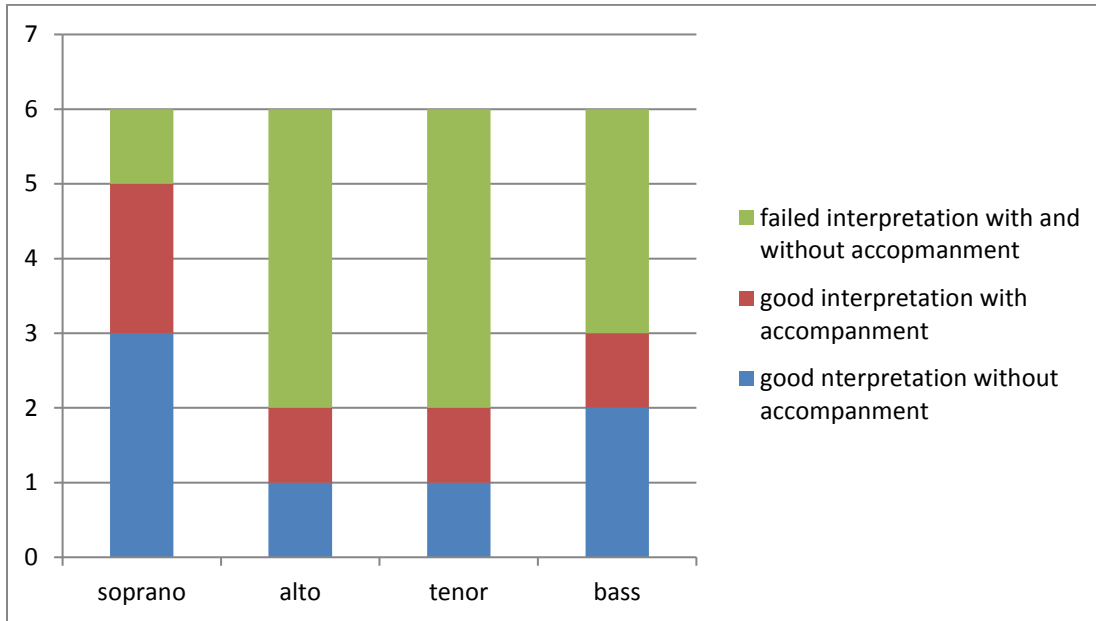
The findings from the first cycle reflects that the choir needs a strong remedial on note interpretation in music. This is so because the researcher discovered that there are some individuals who could not do the correct interpretation even being accompanied by a keyboard or the lead marimba in all the parts. The researcher discovered this as she was doing a practical assessment in a class room set up but mainly focusing on the sampled choristers. This shows the importance of doing the correct note interpretation at first as de-teaching becomes a problem. What a person would have mastered at first will be difficult to leave even if it is wrong. It clearly indicated that the researcher had a big task in front of her in trying to de-teach and teach the correct note interpretation of the song. This prompted the researcher to do another session in trying to improve note interpretation in choral music.

4.5.2 Second Session

In trying to help choristers to interpret notes correctly in choral music, the researcher chose another method that is the use of segments. The song was divided into two sections. Segment one was from bar one to bar eight and segment two was from bar eight to bar sixteen which is the end of the song.

Table 2 Showing note interpretation in segments

	Managed to interpret segment 1	Managed to interpret segment 2	Managed to join the two segments
S Chorister 1	✓	✓	✓
S Chorister 2	✓	✓	✓
S Chorister 3	✓	✓	✓
S Chorister 4	✓	✓	✓
S Chorister 5	✓	✓	×
S Chorister 6	✓	✓	✓
A Chorister 1	✓	×	×
A Chorister 2	✓	✓	✓
A Chorister 3	✓	✓	×
A Chorister 4	✓	✓	✓
A Chorister 5	✓	×	×
A Chorister 6	✓	✓	✓
T Chorister 1	✓	✓	×
T Chorister 2	✓	✓	✓
T Chorister 3	✓	×	×
T Chorister 4	✓	✓	✓
T Chorister 5	✓	×	×
T Chorister 6	✓	✓	✓
B Chorister 1	✓	✓	✓
B Chorister 2	✓	✓	✓
B Chorister 3	✓	✓	✓
B Chorister 4	✓	✓	×
B Chorister 5	✓	✓	✓
B Chorister 6	✓	✓	✓

The information shown by the table above shows that all the choristers could sing segment one. Two choristers from alto and also two from tenor could not sing the second segment of the song. However in all of the parts there are some individuals who could not join the two segments.

Overal interpretation in segments
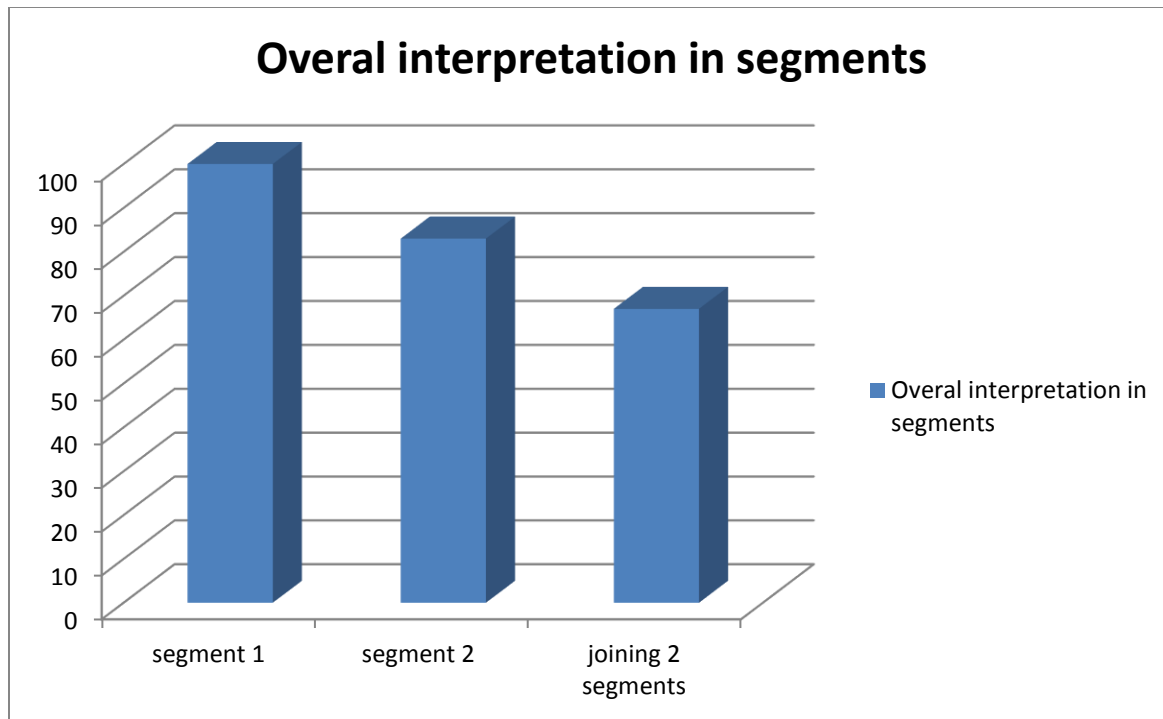
The data on the graph shows that all choristers could interpret the first segment of the song correctly. 78% of the choristers could interpret the second segment correctly without any accompaniment. 60% of the group could join the two segments and sung them correctly. However 40% of the choristers could not join the two segments moreover interpreting them correctly. The researcher had to implement another technique to help that 40% in note interpretation hence she thought of using group work.

4.5.3 Third Session

The researcher came up with group work as another technique to help choristers in note interpretation. Choristers were placed in their groups of SATB so that they will master their part correctly. They will benefit from their peers as they will be imitating one another.

Fig 5 <u>**Showing note interpretation in groups**</u>
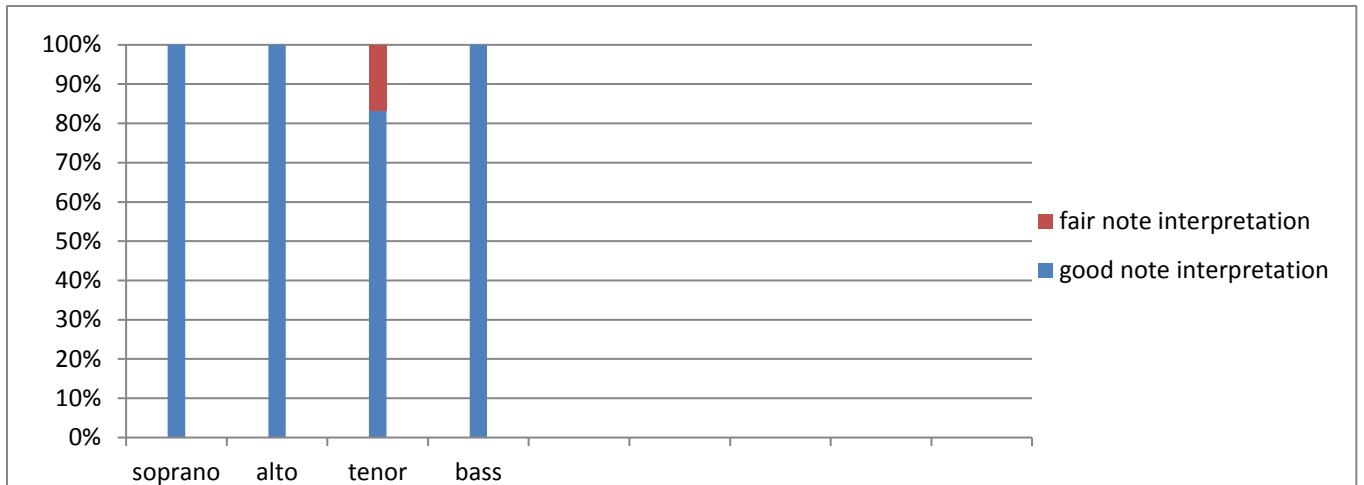
The graph above shows satisfactory results. All choristers could do the correct note interpretation except for one in tenor who did not do very well. The use of group had proved to be effective as the number of choristers who could do the correct interpretation is now 100% in all the parts.

Pie Chart 3
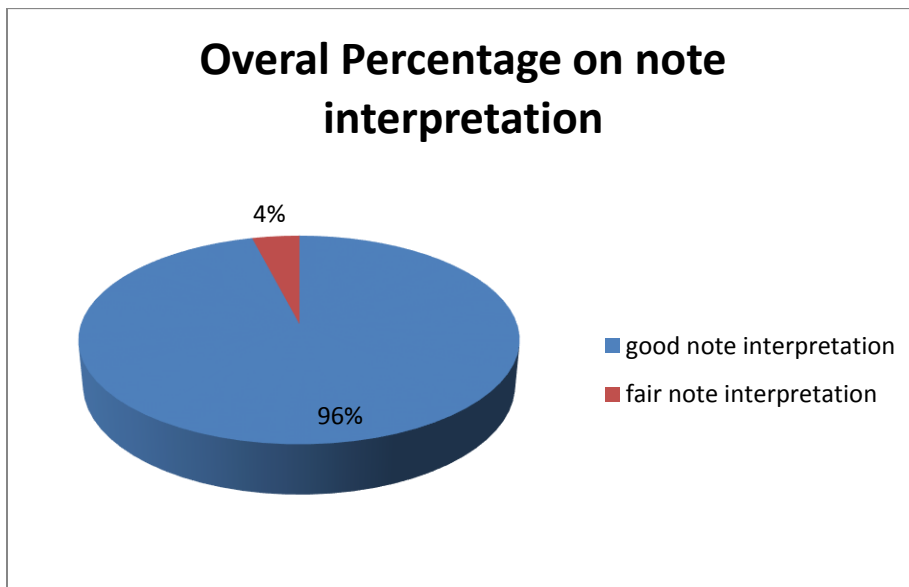
The results seen on the pie chart reflects that the majority of the choristers could now interpret the notes correctly. The one left was no longer bad as before. He could sing correctly but

sometimes would miss the notation and quickly goes back. He was not constant in his interpretations. This shows that media of instruments, dividing the song into segments and group work should be implemented when teaching note interpretation in choral music.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Summary, Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to conclude my research. It will focus on summarizing all the chapters and the findings I obtained in my research. Conclusions will be drawn from the findings and results of the data analysis. The researcher will also suggest some recommendations for further studies.

5.2 Summary

The first chapter focused on the background of the study. It laid as a skeleton of the whole research as it pointed out what was going to be done in the research. The background reflected that the researcher was motivated by the failure of certain choirs that failed to interpret the notes correctly. The statement of the problem stated the purpose of the study which was developing the skill of note interpretation in choral music. It did set the direction for the remainder of the study. The researcher formulated three research questions that guided her in achieving the objective of developing note interpretation in choral music. These were the questions which the researcher was trying to answer throughout the research. This chapter pointed out the potential value of the study and the people who will benefit from it. It reflected that it is not only the choristers and choir coordinators who will benefit from this research, but also the researcher herself. The researcher will be more knowledgeable in choral music. Factors that were beyond the researchers' control that might have affected the results of the study were also outlined. The other hitch pointed out was that the choir continued to receive new choristers that need to be trained from afresh.

Chapter two was focusing on the related literature to the study. The researcher talked about the major elements of music in choral music which are rhythm, pitch and meter. The chapter pointed out that if these elements are miss-interpreted they will affect the sound that should be heard. It also highlighted some components outlined by different sources that are found in rhythm that an interpreter should be able to interpret. There are possible solutions to improve the interpretation of rhythm that were outlined in chapter two. These possible solutions include tapping, clapping rhythms. Pitch as a major element in choral music that was also nominated, has some techniques

that one has to know. The approaching at certain notes differs from each other. The chapter pointed out that when approaching on high pitched notes, one should not hit on the notes but has to slide over the notes. This will help the choir to maintain the correct intonation and maintain the correct key. The chapter also pointed out that when a person just looks at a time signature could know the mood that the song requires. This is so because the time signature determines the mood of the song. It is the duty of an interpreter to know the implications of different time signatures on a song. The chapter also pointed the relevance of instruments in the teaching of note interpretation in choral music. Pitch correction instruments were said to help in the teaching of pitch and also the metronome for the rhythm and meter. The importance of group work was also outlined when teaching note interpretation. The chapter also pointed out what the coordinator should do when assigning the chorister into different groups.

Chapter three was mainly focusing on the methodology used in the research. The research design of the study which is action research was also justified in this chapter. It also pointed out why she had chosen the nature of this research in this research. The chapter pointed out that the research was a qualitative research as it was dealing directly with people. The chapter also described the population that was used in the research which is Masvingo Teachers' College choir. The sampling technique used by the researcher was also described. The samples were selected from the choir. The researcher used purposive sampling when she selected the choir coordinator. The choristers were sampled using the stratified random sampling method. The chapter also noted the ethical considerations that the researcher implemented. The researcher did not spell out specific names of the respondents. The chapter pointed out that the researcher used three research instruments in order to triangulate the data collected. She started with observation then goes to questionnaires and lastly interviews. This was because the questions that were not answered by another instrument will be answered by the next instrument. The chapter described how the data was obtained and the time lines. It out lined that the research took almost a year as it was about solving the problem. All the data collections were done during this period.

The data presentation and analysis were looked upon in chapter four. The researcher used the questionnaires to present the data. She selected the questions from the instruments that answered the questionnaires. Those questions from observations, questionnaires and interviews that answered research question one were presented on question one. Likewise on research question

two and three. Three research questions were the ones that were presented in this chapter. From the findings the researcher got from the data collected is that the, choristers fail to interpret notes in choral music because they have no strong background of theory of music. This shows that choir coordinators should not assume that their choristers know what rhythm, pitch or meter are. This chapter proved that the use of instruments and group works are effective when teaching note interpretation in choral music.

Chapter five serves to conclude the research. It gives a summary of every chapter as presented. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the findings and results of the data analysis. The conclusions highlighted that coordinators should do some basic music theories before attempting to interpret any music score.

5.3 Conclusions

The researcher discovered that it is very important to first teach the correct concept to the students in choral music. This is so because what a person would have mastered at first will be difficult to leave even if it is wrong. If people master the wrong concepts, it will take more time of the rehearsals in order to de teach the wrong concepts. It is better for the coordinator to first master the notes before trying to teach the choristers. The researcher discovered that this is effective as the conductor would be in a position to pick up where the choir would have gone wrong. I discovered that other students could do the correct interpretation after imitating others. It is better for the choristers to even learn songs through rote method than letting them do the wrong notation. In order for the choir to come up with the correct note interpretation, the choristers need to have a strong background of theory of music. This will serve time when interpreting notes and also choristers will be in a position to tell where they would have failed the interpretation of notes.

The researcher also discovered the effects of rhythm, pitch and meter in note interpretation. There is need to be more specific when it comes to the interpretation of these three elements. The note values of rhythms need to be specific as they will affect the interpretation of notes. A crotchet should be given a duration of a crotchet not of a quaver or minim. This will affect the flow of the song. They also should be in a position to interpret the tonic and staff notation to come up with the correct rhythm articulation. The coordinators should be aware of the

implications of short and long note values to the song. The character of rhythm determines the mood of the song. The researcher discovered that choristers could articulate the rhythm correctly when they were tapping their feet when they were singing.

When one is interpreting pitch, he/she should be faithful to the give the highness or lowness a note deserves. Failure to do that will lead to the note sounding at the wrong frequency hence miss interpreting the note. The researcher discovered that it is important for the choristers to be familiar with the modulator scale. This helped in note interpretation as most choristers could tell that the note on the modulator scale was sounded wrongly. The choristers also need to familiarise with different pitches. The coordinator can make the choir to sing a melody using ding different keys. This proved to the researcher that by so doing the choir will end up being able to maintain they key of the song as well as well as the good tone. Different authors have suggested on different ways to articulate notes. High notes need to approached in a sliding manner and note hitting on them.

The researcher also discovered that metre contributes to the mood of the song. The simple and compound meter affects the mood of the song differently in such a way that the tones used are also different. The triple time signature calls for solemn and tender tones where as in the duple time there is vibrant and resold. The articulations of notes within a time signature are also different. The first beat is strong than the other beats that follows.

The researcher came up with different techniques that included the use of instruments, segments and also group works in order to develop the skill of note interpretation in choral music. The use of pitch correction instruments proved to be more useful when teaching pitch. I discovered that after playing a note on a keyboard if I was not sure about that note, the choristers would pitch it correctly. Metronome also helped a lot in keeping the tempo of the songs. These instruments are accurate which makes them to be effective when teaching note interpretation.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations for practice
There is need for institutions to allocate more time to the choir training same as the time given to ball games. This will prove that choral music has the same value as any other activity done be it

at schools or colleges. Choir practice has to be an on-going thing and not just waiting on the time of competitions.

The choir coordinators should not use assumptions that every chorister can interpret notes correctly because he/she has a theoretical music background. The choir coordinators need to take choristers through some basic theories they think are of help before trying to interpret any score.

5.4.2 Recommendations for the study

There is still need for further research to develop the skill of note interpretation in choral music. In this research, the researcher looked on major elements in choral music. Notation comprises of many aspects that other researchers can help to give light on. The researcher also used instruments and group works as other ways that can be used in developing note interpretation in choral music. There are more other techniques that other researchers can look upon when developing note interpretation that people need to know.

This study only focused on tertiary institution where the choristers have a background of theory of music. Other researchers can also focus on other choral groups with no background of theory of music.

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APPENDIX 1

Letter of Consent

APPENDIX 2

Observation Guide

How does the choir coordinator teach his/her choir songs with notes?

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How does the coordinator teach the aspect of time values to the choristers?

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What does the coordinator emphasise on when training the choir?

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What techniques are used by the conductor when teaching the choir?

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Which methods are used by the conductor to articulate intonation?

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How does the choir conductor solve problems he/she encounters during teaching songs with notes?

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How much time is given to the training of choir?

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How do the students respond to the audiation?

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…………………………………..……………………………………………………………………………………

Questionnaires for Choristers

Age ………….

Gender

M	F

Academic Qualifications

……

……

Part sung in choir

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass

Have you ever participated in any choral group?

Yes	No

If the answer above is Yes, where?

Primary school	Secondary School	Church	Other

What are your attitudes towards choral music?

……

……

……

Why did you choose to become a choir member and not choosing any other activities done at the college?

………

………

………

Which type of notation are you able to interpret?

Staff Notation	Tonic Solfa	Both	None

Is it important to interpret the notes correctly in choral music? Yes/ No

Why do you say so?

………

………

………

Which are the three music elements you think are very important in the teaching of choral music?

………

………

………

Why do you say the elements you have listed are the crucial elements when teaching choral music?

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………

………

How do you understand the aspect of note interpretation?

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………

How do you understand the aspect of time values?

………

………

………

What are some of the problems or difficulties you face as a chorister during the choir training you think should be improved?

………

………

………

If you were to develop your own choir training programme, what would be your main emphasis?

………

………

………

These questionnaires are instruments used in conducting a research on choral music by Litah Takabvirwa, a BSC Honours Degree student in Music and Musicology at Midlands State University

Questionnaires for the coordinator

AGE ……………………………

GENDER

M	F

What is your level of knowledge for choral music?

....

....

Which type of notation are you able to interpret?

Staff Notation	Tonic Solfa	Both	None

How do you teach the aspect of note interpretation to your choir?

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How do you select your choristers and placing the voices in the proper sections?

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How much time do you give to the training of choir?

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If you had the power to reschedule the time table, how will you schedule the time of choir training and why?

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To what extend is the use of pitch correction instruments useful in the teaching of intonation?

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These questionnaires are instruments used in conducting a research on choral music by Litah Takabvirwa, a BSC Honours Degree student in Music and Musicology at Midlands State University

APPENDIX 4

Interview Guide for the co-ordinator

If you are given a music score, which methods do you use to interpret the music written?

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How do you teach the aspect of time values?

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Why is it important to articulate notes correctly?

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When you face any challenges when trying to interpret a piece of music, what do you do?

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What are the other appropriate techniques you use to teach notes?

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How much time do you give to the choir training?

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

If you had the power to reschedule the time table, how will you schedule the time for choir training and why?

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Before the rehearsals of the choir, are there any activities you do with the students? And why you do them?

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As a music lecturer and being the choir director, how can choral education be effectively integrated in the music lecturers? And why?

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Interview Guide for the Choristers

How were you selected to be in the College choir?

………

………

………

What level did you reach with theory of music?

………

………

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What are your attitudes towards music?

………

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…….

How do you interpret a song written on the score?

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What are the other factors you think should be taken into consideration with training choral music to come up with the correct note interpretation?

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………

If you were to develop your own choir training programme, what would be your main emphasis?

………

………

Appendix 5

Songs