

Single-gender or Mixed-gender Choir at the Middle Level?

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A 2006 article indicated that 83% of responding choral music educators have more opportunities to attend to students' social and musical needs in single-gender choirs than they do in mixed-gender choirs.¹ However, it is important to acknowledge many middle level choral music programs are limited to mixed-gender settings, and thus, choosing music to fit the range of early adolescent male singers is critical for success.

SAB voiced repertoire is an option frequently considered for mixed-gender choirs at the middle level. This music can seem logical, based on numbers, balance, and skill level, but assigning all male students to a single part should be deftly avoided. The baritone tessitura in SAB music is often too high for the true middle school baritone and too low for the true middle school cambiata singer. Singing out-of-range for extended periods produces bad vocal habits, vocal stress, negative musical experiences and attitudes.

¹ McClung, Alan. (November 2006). Master Teachers in Middle-Level Choral Music: Pedagogical Insights and Practices. *Choral Journal*. Oklahoma.
