



# Inclusion in A Cappella



How to Make Awesome Music While  
Providing a Welcoming Environment for All



# Diversifying Exercise

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- Take a minute to write down 3-5 songs that your group performs the most often. What do they have in common?
- Now, think of 1 or 2 songs that are dissimilar to those that you would want to add to your rotation. What is different about them?

# What do you mean "Inclusion?"

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- In this context, "Inclusion" is:
  - Providing a welcoming atmosphere for everyone, regardless of gender, sex, sexuality, age, race, religion, et al
  - Creating an opportunity for both audience and performers to find new experiences in music and in each other
  - Diversifying repertoire and styles to reflect the larger global music community
  - Moving dialogue between peoples, cultures and experiences forward through music
- "Inclusion" is not:
  - Completely changing repertoire or style
  - Appropriating a style or culture inauthentically
  - Easy

# Why is this guy talking to me about inclusion?

- Brian Clements, MMus
  - AEA Georgia State Representative
  - Choral Director, Douglass High School Atlanta
  - Former director, Northview High School - Vocally Charged
  - Gay-Straight Alliance Sponsor
  - Member, Atlanta Freedom Bands
  - Student advocate on inclusion and equal rights in the schools
- Thesis study on LGBTQ Inclusion in the Music Classroom submitted for consideration at GMEA 2018 and for publication

# “LGBTQ Inclusion in the Music Classroom”

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- Literature study covering anything published in major music and music education publications regarding LGBTQ issues, discussion of the issues that face LGBTQ students and educators and how educators handle (or don't handle) covering these issues or advocating for their students.
- Research turned up anecdotal and empirical evidence of the impact the arts can have on students, especially those who are marginalized.
- Evidence of educators hiding who they are for fear of reprisal.
- Evidence of bullying, harassment and physical and emotional abuse surrounding LGBTQ students.

# Applications beyond the Research

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- How do we take a desire for change and actually implement it?
- How can a performance group become an advocate for change?
- What is necessary to create an inclusive atmosphere for performers, audience and educators alike?
- What steps can we take that are appropriate for the age of our performers/audience?
- How can we extrapolate research to include other marginalized groups?

Ok, you've got my attention...now what?

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- Today we'll touch on:
  - Finding ways to diversify performances.
  - Discovering new sources of music that are culturally appropriate.
  - Supporting marginalized groups in our community through performance and acceptance.



Who originally performed this song?



# Diversifying Exercise 2

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- Do you enjoy listening to a specific a cappella group in a genre or style unlike your own? Who?
- How far outside of your musical comfort zone are you willing to go?

# Why is inclusion important to my group?

- Encourage new performers
- Gather new audiences
- Expand horizons musically and culturally

# Wait...what was that about standards?

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Standard 1: Singing alone and with others a varied repertoire of music.

Standard 4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.

Standard 5: Reading and notating music.

Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing and describing music.

6a: Analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices.

Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

# Authenticity & Musicianship

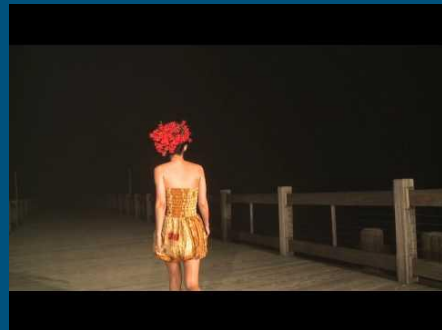
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- Appreciation vs. Appropriation
  - Why are we performing the song?
  - Do we understand the background or history of the song?
  - Are we performing it in a relevant and culturally appropriate way?
- Quality music, quality arrangements and quality musicianship - ALWAYS!!
  - Earthsongs, World Music Press, The Vocal Company
  - Arrangers you trust with the material, not just the first person a major retailer points you to or that guy you found online.

# Areas for Diversifying

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- **Composer/Original Performer**
  - Are you hearing the same songs by the same artists?
  - Is there an artist from an underrepresented area that we can highlight and set ourselves apart?
  - Search outside the Top 40 or classic hits.
- **Musical Style**
  - Choose at least 1 song in a style that varies from your standard rep, but ensure that QUALITY remains the goal.
- **Country of Origin**
  - Check out hits from other countries/regions on Spotify, Billboard
- **Heteronormativity**
  - Gender-swap the lead singer without changing pronouns
  - Seek out non-heteronormative performers/lyrics



# Sing This, Not That

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LGBTQ-friendly Artist: Lady Gaga

Obvious Choice: Poker Face

Inclusive Choice: Born This Way

LGBTQ-friendly Artist: The Indigo Girls

Obvious Choice: Galileo

Inclusive Choice: The Power of Two

LGBTQ-friendly Artist: Tracy Chapman

Obvious Choice: Fast Car

Inclusive Choice: Gimmie One Reason

LGBTQ-friendly Artist: Macklemore

Obvious Choice: Thrift Shop

Inclusive Choice: Same Love (or just go with She Keeps Me Warm by Mary Lambert)

Other Pop-tions (see what I did there)

I Kissed a Girl by jill Sobule

Forrest Gump by Frank Ocean

She by Jen Foster

Nirvana by Sam Smith

Grace Kelly by Mika

Raise Your Glass by Pink

Smalltown Boy by Bronski Beat

# Dos and Do Nots

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- DO perform songs arranged by those who understand a culture or style.
- DO NOT perpetuate a negative stereotype.
- DO remember that culture is fluid and all forms of music are valid for performance.
- DO NOT incorporate religious items into costumes.
- DO engage with other cultures on more than an aesthetic level
- DO give credit where credit is due

# Takeaways

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