

In all things, audiation.

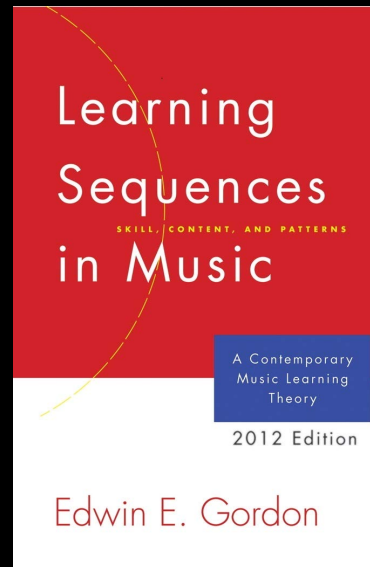
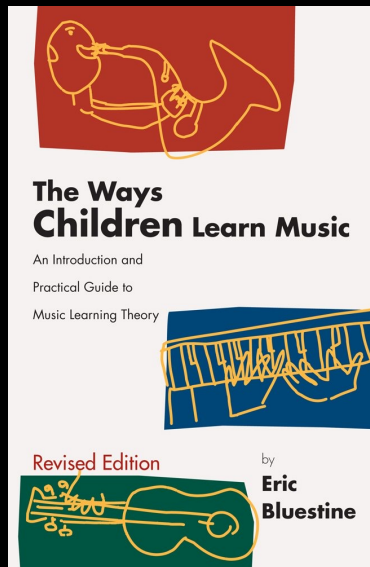
Stuart Chapman Hill, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education
Michigan State University
NCMEA Professional Development Conference
11 November 2024

PART 1 (now!):

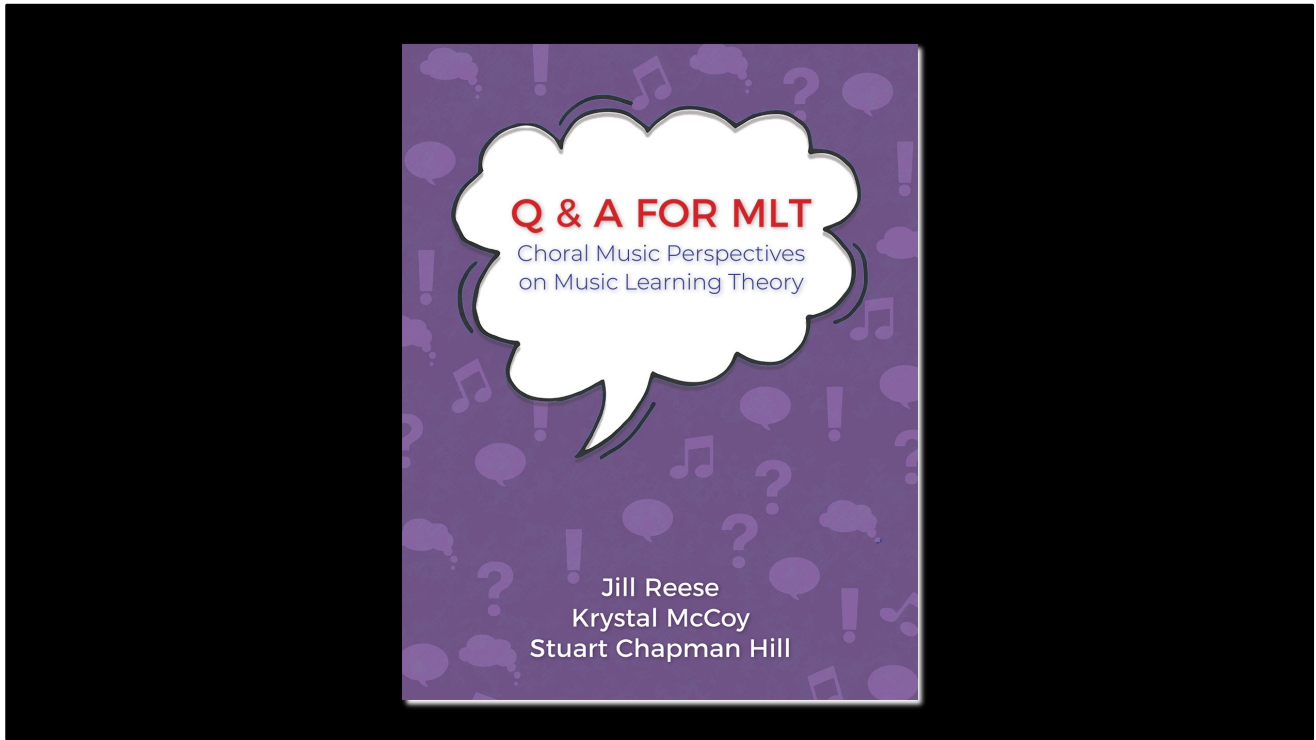
- Briefly discuss **concepts of MLT and audiation**
- Consider how to **focus on audiation in warm-ups**
- Consider how to incorporate **audiation-focused musicianship activities**

PART 2 (5:00!):

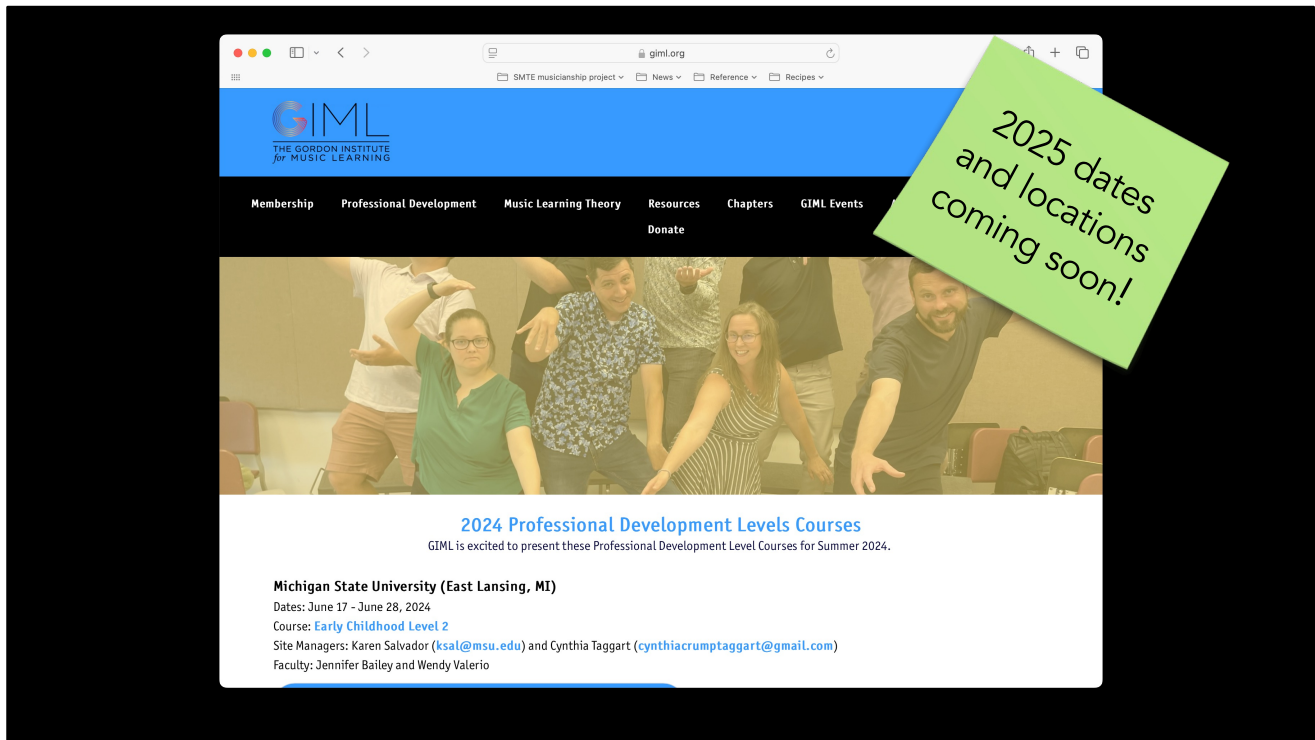
- Review key ideas about **audiation**
- Talk about **audiation-informed repertoire selection**
- Examine **audiation-focused rehearsal strategies**



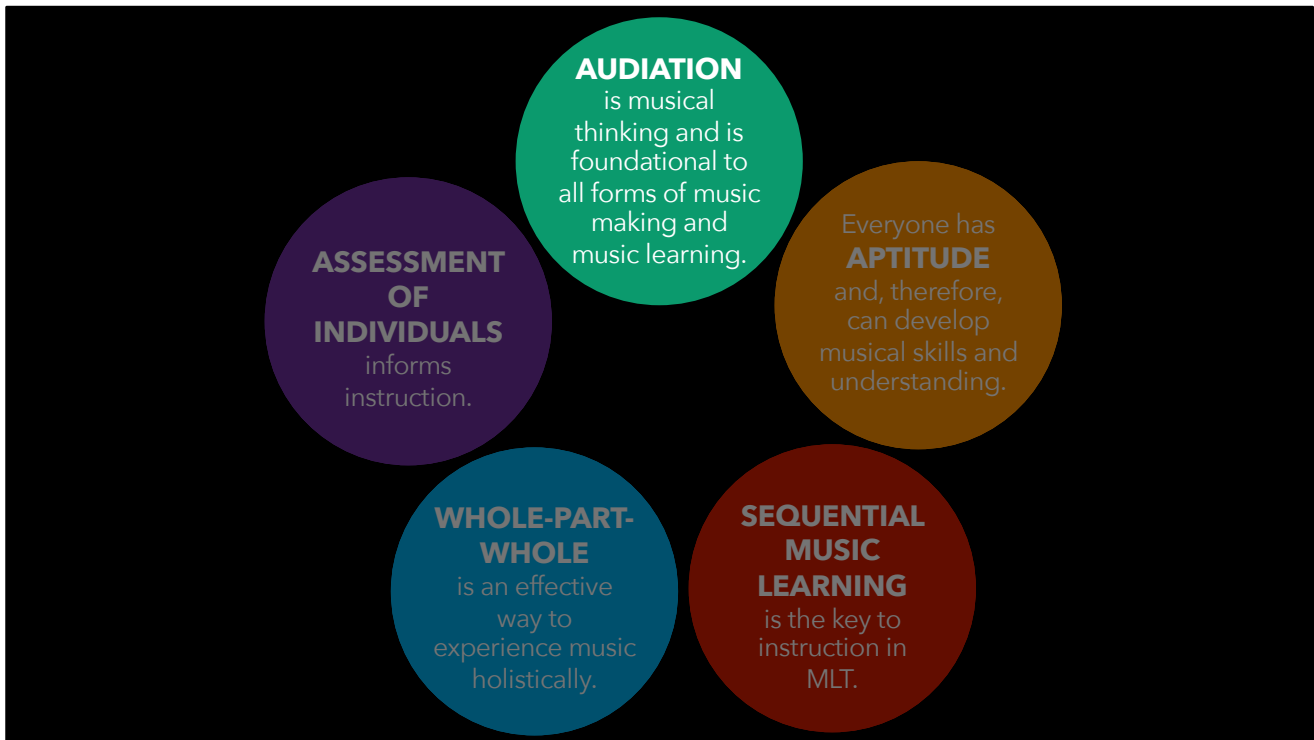
These books are great places to begin. Gordon (2012) is academic and “head-y,” whereas the Bluestine (2000) is more approachable, especially if you’re just considering these concepts the first time.



This book is newly published by GIA (2023) and applies some basic knowledge of MLT to choral practices. In addition to the three lead authors, there are contributors who have written specific chapters that target specific focus areas (creativity, informal music learning, pattern instruction, etc.).



Keep your eye on www.giml.org for the locations of Professional Development Levels Courses (PDLCs) for Summer 2025. These are the best way to immerse yourself in learning about Music Learning Theory and considering practical applications. There is now a choral-focused track, so look for sites offering the Choral course.



There are multiple key ideas of MLT (not just “Gordon,” “pattern instruction,” “du-ta-de-ta,” etc.) Today’s presentation is focused on audiation.

**AUDIATION : MUSIC ::
THOUGHT : LANGUAGE**

This analogy helps explain that audiation is a form of musical thinking; it's more than just "inner hearing" or the ability to recall pitches and rhythms.

au·di·a·tion (n.)

assimilating, comprehending, and giving musical meaning to sound which may or may not have been physically present; includes recalling, connecting, anticipating, predicting, summarizing, synthesizing, and generalizing

(Jill Reese in Reese, McCoy, & Hill, 2023, p. 19)

Here's a full definition of audiation.

“giving musical meaning to sound”
means understanding sounds in
tonal and rhythmic context

The core of audiation is being able to hear, perform, and comprehend music with understanding of its tonal and metric context.

*In short, we don't audiate pitches, or even intervals. We audiate **structured** pitches, pitches that we organize into functional patterns that relate to a tonal center. Or to use fancy linguistic terms, we don't audiate musical phonology (sound), but musical **syntax** (structured sound).*

(Bluestine, 2000, p. 43)

What's wrong with simply teaching half notes, whole notes, and quarter notes? The fact is that your *students don't audiate isolated durations* such as half notes and whole notes; they audiate rhythm patterns with *specific functions*.

(Bluestine, 2000, p. 52)

Consider **language learning**:

learning begins with **listening and imitating**—including exposure to the expert vocabularies and speaking patterns of adults

speaking precedes reading; includes a lot of “improvisation” and trial and error

speaking and reading with fluency precede naming/analyzing/theorizing

In language learning, speaking with fluency precedes reading, and reading precedes theorizing about language. Too often, in music instruction, reading notation precedes “speaking” fluency with the language of music, and theoretical concepts are introduced before students have had a chance to develop rich speaking and reading musical vocabularies.

Here's my **argument**:

1. School music should enable and encourage **life-long music-making** (not just "music appreciation")
2. Life-long music-making depends on developing **musicianship skills** that can transfer not only to future choral music-making but also to other activities (e.g., forming bands, writing songs, learning tunes by ear)
3. We should all, therefore, be **musicianship teachers**, no matter our focus area (band, choir, orchestra, &c.)
4. One key **foundation of musicianship is audiation**, so **audiation development should be a classroom priority**

(the rest of)
Here's my argument:

5. Some legacy choral teaching practices (e.g., approach to teaching notational literacy) are divorced from audiation and therefore don't adequately contribute to students' audiation development (and therefore don't contribute to their musicianship, and therefore don't contribute to their ability to make music across their lifespan)
6. We don't have to burn it all down and start from scratch (much I'd like to some days)—we can **add audiation-focused activities to the things we already do**
7. Okay, fine. But how we do all that? Well...



Q & A FOR MLT
Choral Music Perspectives
on Music Learning Theory

Jill Reese
Krystal McCoy
Stuart Chapman Hill

Tools to support choral audiation:

- wide **variety of music** (tonalities, meters, styles)
- wide **variety of tonal and rhythm content** (patterns)
- skills beyond imitation and performance** (partial synthesis, generalization, creativity/improvisation)
- harmonic structure and tonal context** of choral repertoire (resting tone, chord roots)
- rhythmic structure and metric context** of choral repertoire (macro/micro beat, rhythmic ostinato)

(Jill Reese in Reese, McCoy, & Hill, 2023, pp.19–20)

This list of key tools to support choral audiation appears in the *Q&A for MLT: Choral* book. It's more expansive than what we can go over in a conference session—but these topics are well covered in the Choral PDLC offered by GIML. So keep an eye on giml.org for workshop times and locations for Summer 2025.

CORE PRACTICES FOR AUDIATION SUPPORT

- 1. vary tonalities and meters**
- 2. foreground context**
- 3. emphasize resting tone**
- 4. teach chord roots**
- 5. highlight macro/micro beat**

These are the core practices for audiation support that will show up over and over in today's sessions:

1. Vary tonalities and meters (of repertoire, warm-ups, and musicianship activities). Do more than just major/minor and duple (and possibly triple). Include songs and activities in various modes as well as different meters, including asymmetric meters (7/8, 5/8).
2. Foreground context: always return students' attention to tonal and rhythmic context. Orient students to the tonality and/or meter before teaching a song or rehearsing a passage.
3. Check that students are retaining the "resting tone" (in other words, "tonal center") of a piece or song.
4. Teach students chord roots—which are root-position bass lines that help students understand melodies in the context of the underlying harmonic motion.

Audiation-focused warm-ups

established
warm-up
framework
(Phillips, 2014)



audiation
"boosts"



audiation-
focused
warm-up
sequence

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**
2. Energize the **breath**
3. Energize the **ear**
4. Energize the **voice**
5. Energize the **song**

Sequence is adapted from Dr. Kenneth Phillips's "singing lesson" sequence in *Teaching Kids to Sing* (2014)

This sequence is based on the framework from Dr. Kenneth Phillips's *Teaching Kids to Sing*.

1. Energize the body/brain—physical and mental warm-ups that kick off the sequence and help orient students to the space
2. Energize the breath—exercises that teach breath energy and management
3. Energize the ear—exercises that prompt students to use their aural skills
4. Energize the voice—exercises focused on all manner of vocal technique skills, depending on repertoire demands and student needs (vowel shapes, resonance, breath management, vowel modification, range extension, flexibility, agility, etc.)
5. Energize the song—exercises that ground all of these skills in *songs*, rather than exercises (canons, partner songs, etc.), that bring the warm-up closer to the "rehearsal" portion of class.

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**

2. Energize the **breath**

3. Energize the **ear**

4. Energize the **voice**

5. Energize the **song**

- In addition to static stretches, use **rhythmic movement** in **different meters** and **different levels of beat (micro/macro)**
- **Vary the meter** of activities like “body canons” (not always duple!)

To give an “audiation boost” to body/brain exercises, use rhythmic movement in varied meters and teach levels of beat. Also vary the meter of activities like body canons (i.e., repeat after me with body percussion, neutral syllables, etc.)

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**

2. Energize the **breath**

3. Energize the **ear**

4. Energize the **voice**

5. Energize the **song**

- **Vary the meter** of breath exercises (not always duple!)
- **Incorporate creativity** by having students **chant back a different pattern (but in the same meter)**

To give an “audiation boost” to breath activities, vary meters and incorporate creativity as suggested above. Still focus on helping students produce a sound that is “hooked up” to the breath.

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**

2. Energize the **breath**

3. Energize the **ear**

4. Energize the **voice**

5. Energize the **song**

- Teach **wordless songs** in a variety of **tonalities and meters**
- Teach students the **chord-root melodies** (i.e., root-position bass lines) that go with these tunes

To energize the ear with audiation in mind, teach wordless songs in varied tonalities and meters—and teach chord root melodies, as mentioned before.

**THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD
MUSIC
CURRICULUM**

EXPERIMENTAL

SONGS AND CHANTS
WITHOUT WORDS

BOOK ONE



By

Edwin E. Gordon, Beth M. Bolton,
Wendy K. Hicks, Cynthia C. Taggart

This book (and others in the GIA catalog) is a great resource for songs in a variety of modes and meters to use in your teaching.

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**

2. Energize the **breath**

3. Energize the **ear**

4. Energize the **voice**

5. Energize the **song**

- Choose **varied tonalities and meters** for warm-ups
- Incorporate **chord roots** into regular warm-up exercises

“Energize the voice” exercises will be the most familiar exercises to us in some ways: these are the vocalises we’re accustomed to including during our warm-up routines. Boost their audial value by varying their tonalities and meters and incorporating chord roots to ground students’ understanding of harmonic motion.

Audiation-focused warm-ups

1. Energize the **body/brain**

2. Energize the **breath**

3. Energize the **ear**

4. Energize the **voice**

5. Energize the **song**

- Play **“resting tone game”** with familiar tunes
- Use **chord roots** to teach harmonic motion, which can inform expression/musicality
- **Change the tonality/meter** of familiar tunes

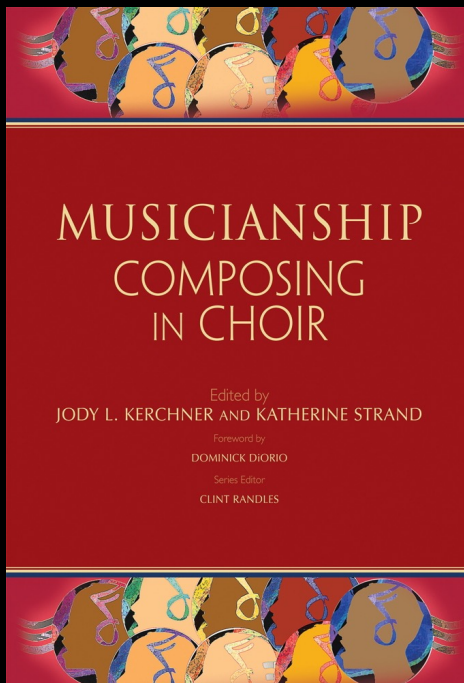
The “energize the song” stage also probably feels familiar: if you end your warm-ups with a canon or partner song because you want to close the warm-up with something that feels adjacent to repertoire rehearsal (and starting to think about group, rather than individual, sound), then you’re already “energizing the song. Among these activities, sprinkle “resting tone games”—i.e., finding the resting tone at random pauses during the song—chord roots, and “mixing up” the tonality/meter of songs.

Anything from the “energize the ear” or “energize the song” parts of the warm-up flow could become a “musicianship break” in between rehearsal segments.

Remember that the exercises we use in “warm-ups” don’t always have to be restricted to the first ten minutes of class. Some of the activities mentioned in the “energize the ear” or “energize the song” parts of the framework mentioned above make great “musicianship breaks” to sprinkle between pieces of repertoire. This is also a great place to intersperse tonalities/meters that aren’t represented in the repertoire you’re rehearsing.

Circle singing is a great, playful way to immerse singers in a **variety of tonalities and meters.**

Check out “circle singing” as an opportunity to play with tonalities and meters in an approachable, fun, improvisatory, playful way. See the next slide for a great resource on circle singing. Also check out



Paparo, S. A. (2016). "Circle singing: Composing improvisation and improvising composition." In J. L. Kerchner & K. Strand (Eds.), *Musicianship: Composing in choir* (131–149). GIA.

Thank you!

See you for
Part 2
at 5:00p!

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