**Objectives**

1. Students will recognize facts about the life America’s first composer of merit, William Billings.
2. Students will identify the tunebooks of William Billings, and compare the contents of each volume.
3. Through listening, students will analyze musical devices used by Billings including voicing, melody, texture, tempo, dynamics, word painting, and instrumentation
4. Students will critique a performance of William Billings’ anthems.

**Format**

The lesson on the music of William Billings will be taught in the form of a lecture/concert. During the beginning of the program, the audience will hear a lecture that begins with the historical background of Billings’ life. The next portion of the lecture includes small music excerpts which are demonstrated preferably by a choir or ensemble; however, musical recordings serve as a suitable substitute in the absence of live music. At the end of the lecture, students will hear a concert of Billings’ music. If a live performance is not possible, full recorded anthems may be played during the course of the lecture rather than as a large set at the end.

**Adaptability**

This particular lecture/concert on the music of William Billings is designed for students who are high school age or older; however, this type of lesson could be adapted to be more appropriate for younger students. The details and vocabulary would have to be edited; however, the content would still be informative for younger students, and the students would have the experience of listening to historically significant music to which they are not typically exposed. The Georgia music standards listed below are inclusive of the various age groups that might benefit from this type of lesson.

**Georgia Standards Addressed**

1. KINDERGARTEN GENERAL MUSIC
	1. MKGM.7a – Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. MKGM.7b – Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. MKGM.9a - Sing, listen, and/or move to music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., holidays).
	4. MKGM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
2. 1ST GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M1GM.7a - Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. M1GM.7b - Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. M1GM.9a - Sing, listen, and/or move to music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., patriotic).
	4. M1GM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
3. 2nd GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M2GM.7a - Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. M2GM.7b - Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. M2GM.9a - Sing, listen, and/or move to music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., patriotic).
	4. M2GM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
4. 3rd GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M3GM.7a - Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. M3GM.7b - Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. M3GM.9a - Perform, listen, move and/or distinguish between music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., various world regions).
	4. M3GM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
5. 4th GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M4GM.7a - Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. M4GM.7b - Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. M4GM.9a - Perform, listen, move and/or distinguish between music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods and recognize prominent composers from each period).
	4. M4GM.9b - Describe the role of music and musicians in various historical time periods.
	5. M4GM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
6. 5th GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M5GM.7a - Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others.
	2. M5GM.7b - Explain personal preferences for specific musical works using appropriate vocabulary.
	3. M5GM.9b - Describe the role of music and musicians in various historical time periods.
	4. M5GM.9c - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
7. 6th GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M6GM.6b - Recognize characteristics of musical elements in music, which represent diverse genres and cultures.
	2. M6GM.7a - Assess musical performances and compositions, when given specific criteria.
	3. M6GM.7b - Assess the quality and effectiveness of their own and other’s performances, compositions, and arrangements, implementing constructive suggestions for improvement.
	4. M6GM.9a - Identify distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.
	5. M6GM.9b - Classify exemplary musical works by genre and style and recognize their identifying characteristics.
	6. M6GM.9d - Demonstrate appropriate performance etiquette as a performer and a listener in a variety of performance settings.
8. 7th GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M7GM.6b - Recognize characteristics of musical elements in music, which represent diverse genres and cultures.
	2. M7GM.7a - Critique musical performances and compositions using specific criteria.
	3. M7GM.7b - Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and other’s performances, compositions, and arrangements, implementing constructive suggestions for improvement.
	4. M7GM.9a - Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.
	5. M7GM.9b - Classify exemplary musical works by genre and style and recognize their identifying characteristics.
	6. M7GM.9d - Demonstrate appropriate performance etiquette as a performer and a listener in a variety of performance settings.
9. 8th GRADE GENERAL MUSIC
	1. M8GM.6a - Accurately describe specific music events in a given aural example, using appropriate terminology.
	2. M8GM.6b - Demonstrate knowledge of elements of music through analysis of music which represent diverse genres and cultures.
	3. M8GM.7a - Critique musical performances and compositions using specific criteria.
	4. M8GM.7b - Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and other’s performances, compositions, and arrangements, implementing constructive suggestions for improvement.
	5. M8GM.9a - Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.
	6. M8GM.9b - Classify exemplary musical works by genre and style and recognize their identifying characteristics.
	7. M8GM.9d - Demonstrate appropriate performance etiquette as a performer and a listener in a variety of performance settings.
10. BEGINNING CHORUS
	1. MHSBC.6a – Listen to various genres and styles of music.
	2. MHSBC.7b – Exhibit commendable performer and audience etiquette.
	3. MHSBC.9b – Identify distinguishing characteristics of repertoire representing various periods, composers, cultures, styles, and genres.
11. INTERMEDIATE CHORUS
	1. MHSIC.6a – Critically listen to various genres and styles of music.
	2. MHSIC.6c – Identify and describe emotions and thoughts communicated through music.
	3. MHSIC.7b – Exhibit commendable performer and audience etiquette.
	4. MHSIC.9b. – Identify and apply distinguishing characteristics of repertoire representing various periods, composers, lectures, styles, and genres.
12. ADVANCED CHORUS
	1. MHSAC.6a – Compare and contrast various genres and styles of music.
	2. MHSAC.6c – Interpret emotions and thoughts communicated through music.
	3. MHSAC.7c – Exhibit commendable performer and audience etiquette.
	4. MHSAC.9b – Discuss how distinguishing characteristics of repertoire connect us to history, cultures, heritage, and community.
13. MASTERY CHORUS
	1. MHSMC.6a – Compare and contrast various genres and styles of music.
	2. MHSMC.7b – Exhibit commendable performer and audience etiquette.
	3. MHSMC.9b – Analyze and evaluate how distinguishing characteristics of repertoire connect us to history, cultures, heritage, and community.

**Sample Lecture**

Welcome

Good evening, and welcome to this lecture-recital on the music of William Billings presented by the Ridgeland High School Chorale. I would like to thank the members of the Chorale for their hard work over the past several weeks. We have enjoyed learning Billings’ music, and we are delighted to be able to share our work with you tonight.

Biography

William Billings is considered by most to be “America’s first composer of merit.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Billings was born in Boston, Massachusetts on October 7, 1746.[[2]](#footnote-2) His parents were most likely William and Elisabeth Clark Billings, though this information is assumed, and it is cannot be proven with written records. Billings’ mother, Elisabeth, was the daughter of William and Rebecca Clark, and his father was a shopkeeper in the Cornhill neighborhood of Boston.[[3]](#footnote-3)

 Although there is little known about Billings’ early life, it is likely that he received a common school training until he was about fourteen years old.[[4]](#footnote-4) Carl Lindstrom said of Billings:

While he never became a scholarly man, he was always acquisitive and knew how to put the terms and savor of learning to glib use for his own ends. His style of writing was fairly precise and economical, and the spelling, while not always uniform, was certainly as good as that of the average literate man of his day.[[5]](#footnote-5)

 There are no known portraits of Billings, but he has been described as “blind in one eye and with one leg shorter than the other. . . with one arm somewhat withered.” He has also been called “an eccentric and uncouth character…untidy in dress.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

While Billings is known as America’s first significant composer, his primary occupation was as a tanner.[[7]](#footnote-7) He entered this trade followings his father’s death. It was a difficult occupation requiring “a strong back, a strong stomach, and a weak sense of smell.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Aside from his work as a tanner, Billings made extra income by selling tunebooks and conducting singing schools. Other individuals who conducted singing schools were also part-time musicians. Like Billings, they made most of their income from a trade, but they also made money by teaching music in communities and selling their own tunebooks. Timothy Swan was a hatter. Daniel Reed was a comb maker. Justin Morgan was a horse breeder. In colonial America, it was difficult to earn a living through music alone.

Billings’ occupation earned him the nickname, “The Musical Tanner.”[[9]](#footnote-9) According to oral tradition, Billings used chalk to write down tunes and musical ideas on the leather hides in the tannery where he worked.[[10]](#footnote-10)

 As a musician, Billings was mostly self-taught. He likely had some study with John Barry, a local singer and choir leader in Boston.[[11]](#footnote-11) Billings was influenced by the tunebooks and writings of William Tans’ur, and [[12]](#footnote-12) he was also familiar with many of the English tunebooks that were published before his own.

 Billings married Lucy Swan, the daughter of Major Robert Swan who served in General Washington’s army. Billings and Swan had six children together.[[13]](#footnote-13) Billings died at his daughter’s home on September 28, 1800.[[14]](#footnote-14)Although Billings was able to earn a decent living in his early years as a tanner and musician, he died relatively poor. He was buried in an unmarked grave because his family was unable to afford a tombstone.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Tunebooks

 William Billings published six tunebooks:

1. *The New England Psalm Singer* (1770)
2. *The Singing Master’s Assistant* (1778)
3. *Music in Miniature* (1779)
4. *The Psalm Singer’s Amusement* (1781)
5. *The Suffolk Harmony* (1786) and
6. *The Continental Harmony* (1794)[[16]](#footnote-16)

His first tunebook, *The New England Psalm Singer*, was published in 1770. Paul Revere engraved the artwork on the front cover of the tunebook. This illustration has been reprinted on the front of your program, and it pictures several men sitting around a table. Each one of them is holding a copy of a tunebook as they sing together. One of Billings’ compositions encircles the group.

*The New England Psalm Singer* begins with “An Introduction to the Rules of Musick.” The introductory material provides information on musical notation, scales, keys, and singing practices. Billings’ second and sixth tunebooks, *The Singing Master’s Assistant* and *The Continental Harmony*, included similar introductions with theoretical information and discussions on music.[[17]](#footnote-17) The other three tunebooks, *Music in Miniature, The Psalm-Singers Amusement*, and *The Suffolk Harmony*, do not include any introductory information because these three publications were intended for more advanced singers.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Singing Schools

 Billings was known to have arranged concerts, and he also served as a church choir director. However, most of his music making was done in the singing school sessions that he conducted. Billings insisted that his students follow strict rules during the singing sessions. In His tunebook, *the Singing Master’s Assistant*, Billings wrote, “The well being of every society depends, in a great measure upon GOOD ORDER.” Billings expected his singers to be punctual or else they would be charged a fine by the clerk. Singers were asked not to whisper or laugh during the sessions. Students were asked to “refrain from levity both in conduct and conversation while singing sacred words.”

 In the *New England Psalm Singer*, Billings encouraged individuals to develop their singing skills. He wrote, “He who finds himself gifted with a tunable voice, and yet neglects to cultivate it… hides in the earth a talent of the highest value.” In the *Singing Master’s Assistant*, he gave some advice on how to choose the proper voice part. He wrote, “Sing that part which gives you least pain, otherwise you make it a toll of a pleasure. For if you attempt to sing a part which is almost (or quite) out of your reach, it is not only very laborious to the performer, but often very disagreeable to the hearer, by reason of many wry faces and uncouth postures, which rather resemble a person in extreme pain, than one who is supposed to be pleasantly employed.”

If a singer could not determine which voice part was best, Billings advised that they “submit to the judgment of the master, respecting the part they are to sing, and if he should think fit to remove them from one part to another, they are not to contradict, or cross him in his judgment. It is morally impossible for him to proportion the parts properly, until he has made himself acquainted with the strength and fitness of the pupil’s voices.”

Singing Instruction

 In his tunebooks, Billings provided instructions for cultivating good singing and tone quality. He was interested in quality over quantity. In the *Singing Masters Assistant*, Billings wrote: “It is a Maxim with me, that two parts well sung are better than four parts indifferently sung, and I had rather hear four people sing well, than four hundred sing almost well. The grand contention with us is not who shall sing loudest, but who shall sing best.”

 He also wrote: “It has been observed that those persons who sing with most ease are in general the most musical; for easy singing is a distinguishing mark of a natural singer, and it is vastly more agreeable (at least to me) to hear a few wild uncultivated sounds from a natural singer than a concert of music performed by the most refined artificial singer upon the earth, provided the latter have little or no assistance from nature.”

 When approaching high notes, Billings recommended that “there are but few voices, but what want restraining, or softening upon high notes, to take off the harshness which is as disagreeable to a delicate ear, as a wire edged razor to a tender face or a smoky house to tender eyes.”

 Billings also denounced nasal singing when he wrote, “Be sure not to force the sound through your nose but warble the notes in your throat.”

Voicing

 Most of Billings’ music is scored for four parts: bass, tenor, counter, and treble. Today, we use the terms “alto” and “soprano” rather than “counter” and “treble.”

 Billings considered the bass to be the most important part of the choir. In the *Singing Master’s Assistant*, he defined the bass as “the lowest or foundational part; the most majestic, deep and solumn.” He also wrote:

In order to make good music, there is great judgment required in dividing the parts properly, so that one shall not over-power the other. In most Singing Companies I ever heard, the greatest failure was in the bass, for let the three upper parts be sung by the best voices upon Earth, and after the best manner, yet without a sufficient quantity of bass, they are no better than a scream, because the bass is the foundation, and if it be well laid, you may build upon it at pleasure. Therefore, in order to have good music, there must be three basses to one of the upper parts.[[19]](#footnote-19)

It is unlikely that Billings ever achieved such a ratio, but nevertheless, he advocated for a strong bass part. Billings added these comments about the bass part in *The Continental Harmony*:

You may select one of the best tunes that was ever composed, and let the upper parts perform without the bass, the noise would be almost intolerable, but, vice versa, let one of the upper parts be taken off and the bass substituted in its stand, the concert would be agreeable, although it would be diminished from a full chorus.

 The tenor part, according to Billings, was “the second part above the bass, the leading part in the church.” The melody, or the tune, was usually set in the tenor voice. Although this placement differs from the modern practice of setting the melody in the soprano voice, it was not an unusual practice for psalm tune writers during Billings’ lifetime. Billings described the tenor voice as “full, bold and manly.”

 The counter part had a range that was slightly lower than the modern day alto, and it was sometimes sung by men and boys.[[20]](#footnote-20) The range of the counter part was low enough for higher male voices to double the part. Billings considered this part the least important, and in his music, the counter is melodically static in relation to the other three parts.[[21]](#footnote-21) In the *Singing Masters Assistant*, Billings wrote that the counter should be “loud, clear, and lofty.”

 The treble, or soprano, was sung by “feminine voices of either sex” although the part was sung primarily by women. If the Singing School included all ages, it is likely that Billings had some boy sopranos sing the treble part.

 In the *New England Psalm Singer*, Billings quoted a text by the Reverand Dr. Byles which poetically described the function of each voice part:

Down steers the bass with grave majestic air, and up the treble mounts with shrill career. With softer sounds, in mild melodious maze, warbling between, the tenor gently plays. But if the aspiring Altus join its force: See! Like the lark, it wings it towering course; Through Harmony’s sublimest sphere it flies, and to angelic accents seems to rise; From the bold height it hails the echoing bass, which swells to meet, and mix in close embrace.

Occasionally, Billings would have a few female voices double the tenor melody an octave higher. Likewise, he would have some male voices double the treble an octave lower. These doublings created a six-voice texture that Billings called “sweet and ravishing.”[[22]](#footnote-22) In their article on the performance practice of Billings’ music, Leonard Van Camp and John Haberlen recommended the occasional doubling of the tenor line with a few soprano voices; however, doubling the soprano line with tenors often muddies the texture and robs valuable tenor voices from the tune. Therefore, the conductor has chosen to have a few sopranos double the tenor line on a few occasions. The Chorale will now demonstrate this technique by singing three sections from Billings’ anthem, “As the Hart Panteth.” For each section, the tenors and a few select sopranos will first sing the melody. The full chorus will then sing the section in a five-part texture with the majority of the sopranos singing the regular treble line and a small group of sopranos continuing to sing with the tenors on the melody. For the concert portion of tonight’s program, the conductor has chosen to add soprano voices to the tenor line during specific repeated sections of the music. (Demonstrate “As the Hart Panteth” mm. 28-36; 89-106; 119-129)

Melody

 Billings’ music is known for its “unerring feeling for melody.”[[23]](#footnote-23) As stated previously, Billings set the melody in the tenor rather than the soprano, or treble, as he called it.[[24]](#footnote-24) This practice was typical in early American psalmody. Many of the melodies he employed resembled the popular folk tunes of the day. In some cases, Billings used an exact quotation of a familiar folk tune as the melody for one of his compositions.[[25]](#footnote-25) In his anthem, “Is Any Afflicted,” Billings used an exact quotation of the familiar folk tune, “London Bridge Is Falling Down.” (Demonstrate melody of “Is Any Afflicted” mm. 28-31) In the tune, “O Thou to Whom,” Billings used part of the melody from the folk tune, “The Farmer in the Dell.” (Demonstrate melody of “O Thou to Whom”)

 According to J. Murray Barbour, “Billings was the only 18th century psalm composer, English or American, to make effective use of dance rhythms in his tunes.[[26]](#footnote-26) In addition to dance rhythms, another attractive feature in Billings’ music is asymmetrical phrases. The chorus of “Is Any Afflicted” was constructed with two phrases of four measures and five measures respectively. This chorus also includes some of Billings’ dance rhythms. (Demonstrate chorus of “Is Any Afflicted” mm. 10-18)

Texture

 Billings most often uses a four-voice homophonic texture for his music.[[27]](#footnote-27) However, every voice is conceived in a linear, melodic fashion.[[28]](#footnote-28) In general, singers should find that their lines have melodic interest, regardless of which voice part is being sung.

Billings sometimes divided a voice part to thicken the texture. He referred to these divisions as “choosing notes.” These choosing notes were not required in performance; however, as the term implies, the singers or singing school master could choose to whether or not include these additional notes. Billings wrote, “When you meet with two or three notes standing one over the other, they are called choosing notes, and signify that you may sing which you please, or all, if your part has performers enough, and remember that they add not to the time, but to the variety.” The most frequent division used by Billings was in the bass part, giving the appearance of a bass/baritone division. Billings divided the bass part frequently in his anthem, “As the Hart Panteth.” (Demonstrate “As the Hart” 1-27)

When the texture is not homophonic, Billings’ music often includes a “fuguing tune.” Billings’ fuguing tunes were not literal fugues, but simple polyphonic passages of imitation.[[29]](#footnote-29) Each voice entered in succession, with the statement being imitated most often at the unison or the octave. Billings’ imitative fuguing tunes are a wonderful contrast to the homophonic passages in his music. The choir will demonstrate two fuguing tunes. In the first example from Billings’ anthem “Modern Musick”, the text explains to the audience that a fuguing tune is being sung. In order to make the text clear for our audience tonight, each section of the choir will sing their respective lines independently, and then the choir will sing the excerpt together. (Demonstrate “Modern Musick” mm. 27-38) For our second example of a fuguing tune, the choir will sing a more serious text from Billings’ setting of Psalm 42: “My soul thirsteth for the Lord, for the living God.” (Demonstrate “As the Hart” mm. 37-62)

 In addition to the fuguing tune, Billings used solo voice lines and voice pairing, or duetting, to contrast with the homophonic sections. It is unclear as to whether Billings intended for these sections to be for soloists, small ensembles, or the entire choir.[[30]](#footnote-30) The conductor has decided to perform these passages with the full chorus. The choir will now demonstrate a passage from Billings’ anthem “O Praise the Lord of Heaven” where Billings’ used duetting for the texture. In this example, the trebles are paired with the basses, and the counters are paired with the tenors. (Demonstrate “O Praise” mm. 74-85)

Tempo

 Billings required consistent tempos in his music. In the introductory material of his tunebooks, he wrote about tempo in detail. Billings kept time with a pendulum, and he explained to his readers how to properly construct the device.[[31]](#footnote-31) Billings used the time signature to indicate tempo.[[32]](#footnote-32) Several scholars have provided charts which include corresponding metronome recommendations for each of the time signatures used in Billings’ music. In their article on the performance practice of Billings music, Richard Crawford and David McKay suggested that conductors “should set their tempos from the time signature and should treat the rare verbal tempo indications (Billings) suggests as modifications of the pace implicit in the meter, rather than as absolutes.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Crawford and McKay also stated that “Virtually everything Billings wrote about tempo indicated that he believed firmly in metronomic strictness.[[34]](#footnote-34) As we perform Billings’ music tonight, the audience will hear tempo changes that correspond to the shifting time signatures.

Dynamics

 Billings used few dynamic markings in his music. In fact, his shorter pieces are never marked with dynamics.[[35]](#footnote-35) When performing Billings’ music, the dynamics must be inferred from the text. Softer dynamics should be used for minor keys and text that suggest sorrow or sadness. Louder dynamics should be used for major keys and text that express triumph or joy. In the anthem, “Is Any Afflicted,” Billings sets the text “Is any afflicted, let him pray” in g minor and follows it with the text “Is any of you merry, let him sing psalms” in G major. Because of the change in the character of the texts and the key change, the conductor has instructed the choir to include some dynamic contrast as well. (Demonstrate “Is Any Afflicted” mm. 1-9)

Word Painting

According to Karl Kroeger, “William Billings was fascinated by words. He was concerned with their meanings but also with their sound, texture, and rhythm.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Billings often used word painting, or the musical pictorialization of words, in his music to emphasize the text. Kroger listed five different word painting devices that Billings used: (1) melisma, (2) melodic direction, (3) onomatopoeia, (4) pace and tempo, and (5) musical texture.[[37]](#footnote-37)

The most common word painting device employed by Billings was the melisma, which he often used to highlight words like “joyful” and “praise.”[[38]](#footnote-38) In his anthem, “Is Any Afflicted,” Billings used short melismas and dance rhythms to accent the words “Word” and “Christ.” (Demonstrate “Is Any Afflicted” mm. 19-21)

 In the anthem, “Creation,” Billings gave emphasis to the word “long” by writing a lengthy melisma. The text in this section reads: “Strange that a harp of thousand strings should keep in tune so long.” The writer, Issac Watts, was referring to the human body (as a harp of thousand strings), noting the great complexity of the body and how it stays well for so many years (or keeps in tune so long). (Demonstrate “Creation”, tenor and soprano parts only, mm. 44-56).

 In his anthem, “O praise the Lord of Heaven,” Billings uses the word painting device of voice texture to accent the phrases “praise him in the heights” and “praise him in the depth.” The “heights” are sung by the higher voice of the counter (or alto) while the “depth” are sung by low voices of the bass. (Demonstrate “O Praise” mm. 1-6)

 At the end of this same anthem, Billings used melismatic passages and dance rhythms to accent the words “Hallelujah” and a long melisma for the word “Praise.” (Demonstrate “O Praise 95-106).

Accompaniment/Instrumentation

 In his tunebooks, Billings did not clearly state whether or not instruments were used to accompany his compositions. Due to Puritan beliefs, instruments were banned from many churches in the late 18th century. For these reasons, Billings’ music is most often performed unaccompanied.[[39]](#footnote-39) It is documented, however, that Billings was fond of the organ. In *The Singing Master’s Assistant*, Billings described the organ as “the grandest of all musical instruments.”[[40]](#footnote-40) “During the 1780s, Billings’ interest in the organ shifted from admiration of it as a peripheral phenomenon to acceptance of it in his own music.”[[41]](#footnote-41)

 In the early 19h century, it was not uncommon for singing schools and churches to use an instrumental group to double the choral parts.[[42]](#footnote-42) Billings, with his fondness for the bass line, is credited with introducing the cello into the American church. Other instruments were occasionally used to reinforce the vocal parts.

For tonight’s performance, the conductor has chosen to double the voice parts with organ and string accompaniment. The trebles and counters will be doubled by the violins. The tenor and bass parts will be doubled by the viola and the cello respectively.

The Ridgeland High School Chorale will now present a concert of Billings’ music. The text of each piece is included in your program.

**Concert Program of Billings’ Anthems**

1. When Jesus Wept
2. David’s Lamentation
3. Is Any Afflicted?
4. Creation
5. O Praise the Lord of Heaven
6. As the Hart Panteth
7. The Lord Is Risen Indeed!
8. Modern Musick

**In Development: A Walk Through Music History**

Though I do not currently have lectures available to submit on other topics, I am interested in developing more programs of historical significance. One in particular that would be valuable is a lesson that would walk students through the various periods of music history. Excerpts would be presented from each work with a concert program similar to the following:

Sample Program:

Medieval (ca. 400-1450) – excerpts from Gregorian Chant

Renaissance (ca. 1450-1600) – a Palestrina motet and an English madrigal

Baroque (ca. 1600-1750) – a Bach chorale or a chorus from Handel

Classical (ca. 1750-1825) – a Mozart motet

Romantic (ca. 1820-1900) – a Brahms motet

Modern (ca. 1900-present) – perhaps some samples from various decades of several modern composers

**Other Ideas for Similar Programs**

1. World music from various cultures.
2. Specific Periods of Music History
3. Specific Composers of Significance (e.g. Mozart)
4. An Overview of the 20th century choral art
5. The History of Spirituals
1. Fonder, “William Billings: A Patriot’s Life?,” 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Carl Lindstrom, “William Billings and His Times,” *The Musical Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (October 1939): 479. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 480. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mark Fonder, “William Billings: A Patriot’s Life?,” *The Bulletin of Research in Music Education* 19, no. 1 (September 1997): 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Lindstrom, “William Billings and His Times,” 480. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mark Fonder, “William Billings: A Patriot’s Life?”, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Lindstrom, “William Billings and His Times,” 481. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Mark Fonder, “William Billings: A Patriot’s Life?”, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Lindstrom, “William Billings and His Times,” 481. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., 481. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. J. Murray Barbour, *The Church Music of William Billings*, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1960), xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Lindstrom, “William Billings and His Times,” 481. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., 485. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid., 485. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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