

***The Cambiata Composition Initiative***  
***2013-2014***  
***Choral Music for Early Adolescent Male Voices***

**Cambiata Institute of America for Early Adolescent Vocal Music**  
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**Purpose:** The purpose of the Cambiata Composition Initiative (CCI) is to promote the creation of quality choral literature for early adolescent male choristers, by influencing, guiding, and rewarding the output of composers in the immediate future and into the next generation.

**Feature #1** of the CCI is a set of guidelines that provides composers with general boundaries associated with the unique singing range of the early adolescent male changing voice, known as the cambiata voice. These guidelines detail the boys' vocal ranges and musical development during the onset of puberty when they move from their pre-pubescent, unchanged voice into their transitioning/changing/shifting/extending voice, culminating in their changed voice. Although some boys can begin vocal transitioning as early as age 9 and as late as age 17, the majority of boys experience their voice change during their middle school years, ages 12-14. For these boys to experience vocal success, the music that they are asked to sing must reflect their vocal ranges. General guidelines include suggestions related to pitch, rhythm, text, and accompaniment design.

**Feature #2** of the Cambiata Composition Initiative details the submission deadline and the judging procedures. The deadline for a scanned, PDF composition submission is August 1, 2013. The judging process includes two steps. In the first step, all submissions will be assessed by a jury comprised of four highly successful and experienced middle school choral music teachers. Each composition will be assessed for appropriate attention to the suggestions outlined in the following guideline categories: pitch, rhythm, text, and accompaniment design. All compositions that meet these guidelines will move to the second step, artistic merit judging. Lead artistic judge, Dr. David Childs, noted composer, conductor, and educator will be joined by three additional composers of national merit to examine each composition submission for artistic merit. Up to five compositions (2 and/or 3-part compositions) will be selected for performance on the MS/JH National Conference for Middle School, in April 2014, at the conference site, Voertman Hall at the University of North Texas, Denton. In addition to the bonus of a publication commitment from the Cambiata Institute of America, each winning composition will be rewarded from a purse totaling \$2,000.00.

*To serve as a model for the Cambiata Composition Initiative, Dr. David Childs composed **The Old Lost Road**, available through Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Cat. No. 1051. A recording of the work, performed at the 2012 MS/JH National Conference for Choral Music by the Rice Middle School Cambiata Boys Choir, Jennifer Alarcon, conductor, is available at [www.music.unt.edu/cambiata](http://www.music.unt.edu/cambiata).*

# Guidelines of the Cambiata Composition Initiative

I. General range overview: Clarifying terminology. Music staff visual is available at [music.unt.edu/cambiata/mcclung].

- Cambiata I, Phase A [A-a] Mostly 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys. Boys who extend higher comfortably = Trebles.
- Cambiata I, Phase B [F#-f#] Some 6<sup>th</sup> grade, mostly 7<sup>th</sup> grade, some 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Cambiata II [E-e] Some 7<sup>th</sup> grade, mostly 8<sup>th</sup> grade, occasional 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Baritone, Phase A [C-d] Some 7<sup>th</sup> grade, mostly 8<sup>th</sup> grade, occasional 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Baritone, Phase B [AA-c] Some 7<sup>th</sup> grade, mostly 8<sup>th</sup> grade, occasional 6<sup>th</sup> grade

II. Range boundaries: For the best results, work in the middle (the most comfortable pitches) of the following ranges.

- 2—Part Voicing
  - Cambiata Full range = [F#-f#] most comfortable range = [G-e] Notate in the treble clef at **actual pitch**, OR treble clef at **octave transposition**.
  - Baritone Full range = [AA-c] most comfortable range = [D-A] Notate in the bass clef.
- 3—Part Voicing
  - Cambiata I Full range = [F#-g] most comfortable range = [A-f]. Notate in the treble clef at **actual pitch** OR treble clef at **octave transposition**.
  - Cambiata II Full range = [E-e] most comfortable range = [G-d] Notate in the treble clef at **actual pitch**, OR treble clef at **octave transposition**, OR bass clef.
  - Baritone Full range = [AA-c] most comfortable range = [D-A] Notate in the bass clef.

III. Pitch suggestions for middle school boys who are learning to read music:

- Diatonically approached by step or simple leap.
- A limited number of altered tones may be used, if approached by half-step.

IV. Rhythmic suggestions for middle school boys who are learning to read music:

- Meters: 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, and 6/8. Although mixed meter is possible, the complexity of asymmetrical and mixed meter combinations are probably too challenging.
- Rhythm should be presented in patterns and in repetition of those patterns.
- Basic note durations are acceptable (eighth, half, whole, dotted half, dotted quarter followed by eighth and the eighth followed by a dotted quarter and their complementing rests. Eighth note triplets are accessible to middle school readers, but quarter note triplets are significantly less accessible.
- A complex rhythmic passage (probably taught by rote) is possible, if used as a returning/repeating motive.
- Sixteenth notes can be used, if presented in tight rhythmic patterns that return as a motive.

V. Text:

- Sacred or secular texts are acceptable. Consider the following languages: English, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, and French. Should you want to include Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, or Swahili, a pronunciation guide is advised. For most American boys, English is the language of greatest comfort. Languages other than English should be presented in short meaningful phrases that repeat. **Desirable texts reflect high quality literature that captures the moral and creative imagination of early adolescent boys, ages 12-14.**

VI. Accompaniment:

- A piano accompaniment may be used to provide **rich** harmonic colors. A piano part that is accessible to a classroom accompanist is desirable.
- An “interesting” solo instrument may be included to create timbre and musical interest.