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MUSE 356- Choral Methods

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Chapter 7: Working with Adolescent Singers
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Discussion Question

7. What is the dominant characteristic of adolescent female voice quality, and how can this quality be improved?

The dominant characteristic of the female vocal quality is breathiness. The thickening of the vocal folds and congestion within the muscles of the larynx prohibits the vocal folds from closing sufficiently. Air escapes easily during phonation because of this, and creates a light and airy tone. Teachers everywhere have expected that this is a part of girls' adolescent lives, and they will eventually outgrow it. The best way to improve this breathiness quality is by doing phonation exercises. Exercises that work on posture and breathing development, phonatory control, and resonant tone production will help these breathy tones. Specifically those phonatory exercises that focus on clear glottal closures can reduce breathiness over time. Breathing exercises, practicing humming, ringing qualities, and a light approach are all valuable to a female singers' development of their voice and getting them past this breathy tone. Practicing these female singers' upper range and a variety of registers will allow them to stretch their ranges and "work through" that breathiness the correct way and prepare them to sing multiple parts in the future. Teachers should make sure they do not sing too high or too low for a long period of time, because they may damage their voice. Also, avoid vocalizing on closed vowels and vary the dynamics to stretch their voices as well. All of these exercises and practices are those things that will be the most helpful to these young girls over time and through their changing voices stage.