

Score Preparation for Efficient Rehearsals and Successful Performances

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“Every aspect of a great choral program must be based on the pursuit of excellence...all conductors and choruses have the ability to perform artistically. It is simply a matter of knowledge, desire, setting priorities, discipline, and hard work. **The only limitation on a chorus is its conductor, and there is absolutely no limit to the growth and progress of a conductor...The chorus is always a reflection of its conductor and will always be capable of attaining new heights of greatness and quality if the conductor is capable of leading them there.**” Donald Neuen, *Choral Concepts*

STYLE

Renaissance?	Folk?	Patriotic?
Baroque?	Gospel?	Broadway?
Classic?	From another culture?	Bluegrass?
Romantic?	Contrapuntal?	Dixieland?
Contemporary?	Recitative?	Oratorio?
Sacred?	Spiritual?	A cappella?

TEXT

- What is the song trying to say through its text?
- How does the text and music form a marriage to accomplish this?
- How can we best interpret the music to portray the composer’s desires for the text?
- First, solidify the text and interpretation in your mind then teach it convincingly to the chorus.

TEMPO

- Specific tempo (MM marking?) given by the composer?
- Determine your interpretation of “allegro,” “moderato,” “largo,” etc. Be able to justify your reasoning.
- Factors that influence tempo:
 - Style
 - Text
 - Most difficult rhythm
 - Acoustics of performing space
- Be careful of the effects of mood changes and nerves on the tempo

FORM ANALYSIS

- Major sections
- Long phrases
- Short phrases

MARKING THE SCORE

- **BLUE PENCIL**
 - Entrances

S A T B

- Expressive indications
 - Dynamics
 - Phrasing – breath carry-overs
 - Articulations
- Tempo
- Return to homophonic

- **RED PENCIL**

- Releases
- Ritardando
- Fermata
- Caesura //

- **HIGHLIGHT**

- Meter changes
- Repeat signs

- **PENCIL**

- Text translation
- Special instructions
- Notation changes (e.g., ♩ changed to ♪ ♪ for breath purposes)
- Vocal technique
- Conducting patterns

- As you conduct, your eyes will scan the music from marking to marking. You are not reading every note and word; you are only looking ahead for the next cue to gesture. **KEEP YOUR EYES IN THEIR EYES.**

FINAL TIPS

- Use good recordings for insight. Respect and learn from the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of others. Don't reinvent the wheel when it isn't necessary.
- Practice tricky conducting patterns.
- Use RH for a clear beat pattern; LH for expressive gestures. Try to get away from always "mirroring" the pattern. Make good use of the LH.
- **"What they see is what you'll get."** Have you videoed your conducting? What do you look like? Are your fingers spread? Are you rigid? Is your conducting plane too high or too low? Does your style match the music? Do you "over conduct?" What does your face look like? Do you train your singers to watch you or ignore you?
- Write the order of music for the rehearsal on the board. Train your singers to get their music in order before the rehearsal starts.
- Let a responsible student or adult assistant take roll and deal with routine matters.
- Always plan your rehearsal and come well prepared with score marked and mind ready. Divide the time with 2 or 3 pieces of music. Don't beat one piece to death.
- Always make the warm up related to the music to be rehearsed.
- Talk very little. The singers are there to sing. Correct one thing at a time. Be brief with instructions and let the chorus get right back to singing and correct the mistake for which you stopped. Insist on accuracy.
- Insist that singers ALWAYS have a pencil ready to take notes in the music. "If I say it, you write it." "Amateurs say they'll remember; pros write it down."
- Do not sing with your chorus. Your job as the conductor is to LISTEN, EVALUATE, and TEACH. Even conducting is secondary to these three things.
- Rehearse only those passages that need it.
- Do not allow your singers to become addicted to your mouthing the words.
- Keep the pace of the rehearsal lightning-fast and productive.
- Be as POSITIVE as possible. Inspire, motivate, encourage, and support the chorus. Do not become only a negative corrector. (Video yourself to see for sure!) Be intense, demanding, and relentless in your pursuit of excellence, but do it all in a positive and encouraging manner. Be FAIR, FIRM, and professionally FRIENDLY.

Subdivided

11

(80)

glo - ry, great things he hath done! Praise the

(85)

Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

To God Be the Glory

“To God Be the Glory” by John Carter, Hope Publishing, SATB, 4-hand piano

2+2+3 3+2+2 ↓ ↓

Handwritten annotations: **S**, **A**, **T**, **B** in blue ink.

Handwritten annotations: **ff** (fortissimo) above notes in S I, S II, A I, A II, T I, T II, B I, B II, and piano staves.

Handwritten annotation: ***** above a slur in S I.

Lyrics for vocal parts:

S I: Con-dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te!

S II: Con-dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te!

A I: dem! Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!


A II: dem! Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!

T I: Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!

T II: Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!

B I: Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!

B II: dem! Con - dem - na - te, con - dem - na - te! Cae - di - te!

* Director's note - maintain "agitato" on the slurred eighth notes (). Think a "hammered" style