



# OMAHA SYMPHONY

## CHORAL COLLABORATIVE BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* / Hagenberg's *Illuminare*

### **Best Practices for Students**

1. Have pencils at every rehearsal.
2. Use tabs on your scores to find movements quickly for a more efficient rehearsal.
3. For pieces in foreign languages, write in translations for every word.
4. Make use of all materials provided by the Omaha Symphony, including marked conductor and piano-vocal scores and diction guides. Familiarizing yourself with these documents will ensure you are ahead of the curve.
  - a. The markings are critical! In some cases, note values have been changed, and these need to be transcribed into singers' parts.
  - b. Note on markings: for homophonic sections, expression markings found above the soprano line are to be applied to all voice parts.
5. Listen to sample recordings, if not exclusively. Knowing the sound world that you are performing can make achieving those sounds much easier.
6. Revel in the experience by being properly prepared! Performing with professional musicians in a world-class venue can be thrilling, if your personal preparation is at a level that allows you to enjoy the journey.
7. For the dress rehearsals at the Holland Performing Arts Center:
  - a. Pencils are still required. Often changes or marks are needed even at these final rehearsals.
  - b. Be silent (especially during the tuning). It is respectful of the orchestra (and efficient).
  - c. Write down questions. There will be time with the chorus and Chorusmaster only to address any concerns.
  - d. Turn ahead to the next chorus entrance during solo movements. This will keep you ready for what is next, rather than following along with the soloist which can lead to surprise entrances.

## **Best Practices for Directors**

1. If possible, try to program selected movements from the larger masterwork on your fall concerts. This maximizes rehearsal time and ensures that some of the masterwork will be ready ahead of schedule.
2. Begin the rehearsal process with your favorite movement, or the most popular one. Rehearsing the most recognizable moment of a piece will immediately grab the students' interest. Or, if you decide to rehearse your favorite spot, your affection for the work as a whole will infect your singers as well.
3. Try to avoid rehearsing from the beginning of the masterwork to the end. While starting off on the best foot is a great idea, the end of the work should be equally compelling.
4. Rehearse movements at varieties of tempi. Though the marked tempi will be most likely to happen, often the hall dictates faster or slower tempi (not to mention the pedagogical benefits of rehearsing at slower and faster tempi).
5. Rehearse coming in and out of movements. Especially when choral entrances are in the first measure, knowing the preceding material is crucial for continuity, finding pitches, flow, etc.
6. Feel more than welcome to seek additional help from the Chorusmaster, who is there to offer any guidance you may require throughout the process.
7. If you are interested, what follows is a sample rehearsal process, taking into account which movements will need more work, earlier work, or detailed sectional work. This general path should keep you on track for Chorusmaster and Maestro visits.

## **Resources (available on our website):**

- Reference recordings
- Rehearsal tracks
- Translation guide
- Marked PV scores

## Lord Nelson Mass, Franz Josef Haydn | *Illuminare*, Elaine Hagenberg

### Sample Rehearsal Plan

*(flexible due to individual schools' other commitments and specific week for Chorusmaster/Maestro visits)*

- Week 1 (Aug 18): **Hagenberg I (Splendor)**: primarily homophonic writing with achievable notes and rhythms. Good starting point for emphasis on Ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation
- Week 2 (Aug 25): **Hagenberg II & IV (Caritas & Munera Pacis)**: 2 adagio movements good for teaching sustained legato singing, emphasis of smaller note values, and 8-part splits
- Week 3 (Sept 1): **Kyrie**: exciting, recognizable part of the mass  
**Sanctus**: easy opening, contrasting Osanna
- Week 4 (Sept 8): **Dona nobis**: challenging fugal writing, will need multiple rehearsals  
**Credo**: accessible round, nice break from the fugal stuff  
**Hagenberg III (Nox)**: exciting
- Week 5 (Sept 15): **First Week of Chorusmaster Visits**  
**Gloria**  
**Qui tollis**
- Week 6 (Sept 22): **Et resurrexit**: challenging for tenors, may need sectionals, but ending is purely rhythmic work (pitches are easy and often unison)  
**Quoniam tu solus**: deceptive, fugal writing needs attention  
**Hagenberg V (Illuminare His)**: big finish – watch out for scooping/sliding in the larger intervallic motifs
- Week 7 (Sept 29): **Et incarnatus**: nice break from fugal writing  
**Benedictus**: same, plus some martial drama
- Week 8 (Oct 6): **First Week of Maestro Visits**
- Week 9 (Oct 13) **Agnus Dei** and review
- Week 10 (Oct 20): Review/Catch-up, especially on fugues!
- Week 11 (Oct 27): Review/Catch-up, especially on fugues!
- Week 12 – (Nov 3): **Week of last visit**  
Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro
- Week 13 – (Nov 9): CONCERT! 😊