



OMAHA SYMPHONY

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CHORAL COLLABORATIVE BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

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.
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, 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. Feel more than welcome to seek additional help from the Chorusmaster, who is there to offer any guidance you may require throughout the process.
6. 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.

Sample Rehearsal Plan

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

- Week 1 (Aug. 22): **Movt. 1-** will get students attention as the recognizable portion. Also great movement for emphasizing word stress and the unique Germanic Latin pronunciation.
Movt. 7- long movement with tricky bits for each section (rhythmic middle exposed section for tenors, high B at pianissimo for soprano 1s, etc.), plus the first appearance of the German text.
- Week 2 (Aug. 29): **Sectionals for Movts. 12-14, 19** for tenors and basses (Movt. 13 needs thoughtful counting, Movt. 14 needs serious attention to text, and Movt. 19 is **6-part a cappella!**)
- Week 3 (Sep. 6): **First week of Chorusmaster visits.**
Movt. 5- tons of text, and good movement to practice staccato diction (with final consonant of syllable moved to beginning of next syllable)
Continue with sectionals for Movts. 12-14, 19.
- Week 4 (Sep. 12): **Movt. 8-** tricky German, though easy notes
Movt. 9- more German, review 4-part TB sections
Movt. 24
- Week 5 (Sep. 19): **Movt. 18**
Movt. 20- split singers into double choruses
Review sectionals for T/Bs, Movts. 12-14, 19.
- Week 6 (Sep. 26): **Movt. 3**
Movt. 22
- Week 7 (Oct 3): **Movt. 2**
Movt. 10- easy, but with a high C for sops
- Week 8 (Oct. 10) First Week of Maestro Visits
- Week 9 (Oct. 17): Review around Maestro Visits, particularly: 1, 5, 7, 12-14, 19, & 23
- Week 10 -- Concert: Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro