

Ensuring Choral Success & Confidence through Consistent Rehearsal Behaviors

Dr. Adam Potter

Director of Choral Activities & Assistant Professor of Music
Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, New York
Potter_Adam@roberts.edu | 585.594.6086

Three Rehearsal Expectations

1. Sing whenever you're supposed to be singing.
2. Don't talk when I'm talking.
3. Whenever you aren't singing, you are *audiating*.

Behaviors of Audiation

- Always knowing where the conductor is in the score.
- Signing along.
- Writing in score.

Whenever asked for a syllable, never *say* it, *sing* it!

Establish tonality before each new piece/major section.

Three Levels of Posture

1. Standing
2. Standing from the waist up (sitting tall)
3. Seated/relaxed

Mistakes and Successes (Individual Acknowledgement & Accountability)

- Acknowledge your individual mistakes by raising your hand whenever you make an error.
- Acknowledge others' individual successes with a *single* clap (what a time-saver!).

Use of Exaggeration

- Exaggeration is one of the most powerful tools at our disposal.
- Exaggerating errors can accentuate how to solve the error.
- Think and train behavioristically: A light slap on the wrist for intentional errors, a light stroke on the wrist for intentional solutions! ("Do it wrong, do it right.")

Who Can Ask Questions While Rehearsing a Piece?

1. The conductor
2. The pianist
3. Section leaders

All others, save your questions for after rehearsal. 😊

Organizational Principles

- Every student brings their own individual copy of their music to rehearsal every day.
- Every student brings in a music stand with them every day and then returns the stand after each rehearsal—it is crucial that hands and bodies are free to move!
- Warmups begin promptly at the beginning of class time. If you're late, take your place without disrupting rehearsal.
- Section leaders take responsibility for the note-learning of their section. Keep a shared Google Doc that all section members can reference and contribute to.
- Every singer has their own music binder, individually numbered, with music copies stamped with the corresponding number.
- Every singer also has their own *rehearsal* number—soprano 1s are 100s, soprano 2s are 200s, all the way down to bass 2s are 800s—that the conductor uses to assign voices to other parts as needed for balance

Phraseology

- "Make mistakes boldly."
- "Listen louder than you sing."
- "Move with a purpose."
- "Yay for you!"
- "Transfer!"
- "It's all or nothing—if it's worth doing at all, give it your all."
- "Vulnerability requires unconditional acceptance."
- "Relentless positivity"
- "Positive impatience"