

Establishing our Chorale Culture through Consistent Rehearsal Behaviors



ROBERTS
WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Chorale

Creating a Culture of Commitment

- Chorale rehearsal is *The Holy Hour*
- Your presence at *every* rehearsal is crucial to our corporate success. If you are absent without notifying (a) Dr. Potter, (b) Rebecca Mugnolo, and (c) your section leader, your section leader will call you.
- When you walk through the door, you are confident, you are smart, you are committed, you are capable—no matter what has happened the rest of the day. The door of our rehearsal room is a *Transformation Threshold!*
- Pre-rehearsal time is *practice* time

Three Rehearsal Expectations

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

Consistent 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 Accountability & Acknowledgement)

- Acknowledge your individual mistakes by raising your hand—with an arm at full extension!—whenever you make an error.
- Acknowledge others' individual successes with a single snap
- Quartets/octets performances
- Random or assigned part checks
- Section leader reports

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. ☺

Section Leaders

- Empowered to lead from any chair
- Identify *yourself* as the next section leader
- 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.

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"
- "A little more beautiful every day"

Quotes

- "Embodying the emotion of a piece of music through theatrical movement is a performance-enhancing drug for *empathy*." –Lynda Hasseler
- "We have no art. We do everything as well as we can." –Balinese Proverb
- "What is done without joy is zero!" –Nadia Boulanger
- "As soon as we find each other, we invite the miracle to begin." –Robert Shaw
- "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." –Aristotle

Use of Exaggeration

- Chorale is a safe place to make mistakes and to make ugly sounds.
- 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.”)

What To Expect on a Daily Basis

- Backrubs (it’s 100% acceptable to opt out—just let your neighbors know)
- Spiritual activities
- Lots of *movement*
- Consistent engagement (*idea*) demonstrated by facial expression (*behavior*)
- Daily assignments
- Feedback half-sheets
- Prayer

Clear Organizational Principles

- Every student brings their own individual copy of their music to rehearsal every day.
- Every student brings their own individual *pencil* to rehearsal every day—and it is *in hand* and *being used* to note every verbal and nonverbal instruction.
- Every student brings in a music stand with them on Mondays and Thursdays and then returns the stand after each rehearsal—it is crucial that hands and bodies are free to move!
- Place your phone on the table on your way into the rehearsal. If Dr. Potter wants you to have it out to record, it will be noted on the board.
- Save all questions for Dr. Potter until *after* rehearsal. Before rehearsal, we are all getting in the “zone.”
- Warmups begin promptly at the beginning of class time. If you’re late, take your place without disrupting rehearsal.
- Every singer has their own music binder, individually numbered, with music copies stamped with the corresponding number.
- All new students (“littles”) are assigned a mentor returning student (“bigs”)
- Any student who is ill and cannot sing will still participate actively in rehearsal—“sickbay form”
- 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