The background features a dark blue gradient with a series of curved, glowing lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a tunnel or a stylized architectural structure.

Rehearsal Refresher I: *Musical Hierarchy & Rehearsal Techniques*

THE DELTA CHORALE
DR. ADAM POTTER
DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Rehearsal Guide

- “Plan” vs. “Guide”
- Needed elements:
 - Where? (always start with the largest landmarks and move to the smallest: page, system, bar, beat—be consistent!)
 - Who? (which voice part)
 - Many times it can be difficult to identify exactly with whom the problem lies
 - Isolate until you know

The Rehearsal Guide

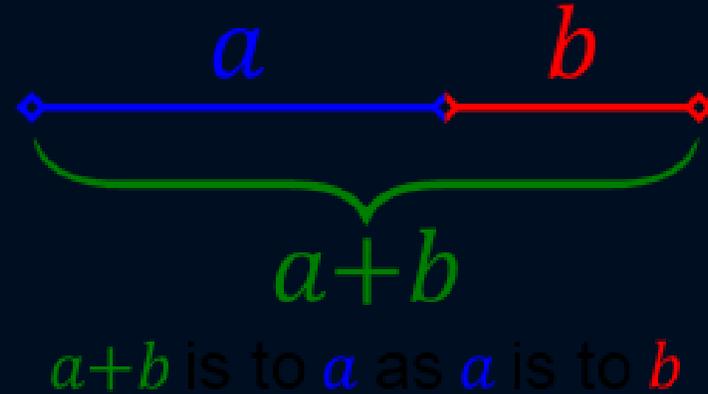
- Needed elements (cont'd):
 - What? (what specifically is the problem?)
 - How? (how can you fix the issue)
 - You need to provide several ways to solve every issue. You are trying to teach 9-20 people the same concept and you will need several teaching approaches because there are several different learning styles in the section.
 - Don't skip this step!
 - If you don't know how to solve it
 - Ask someone
 - Use your resources materials
 - Get creative

The Rehearsal Guide

- “When?”
 - When do you address the problem?
 - Is it *aural*?
 - Is it *vocal*?
 - Is it *mental*?
 - Is it an *emotional* or *vision* issue?

The Rehearsal Guide

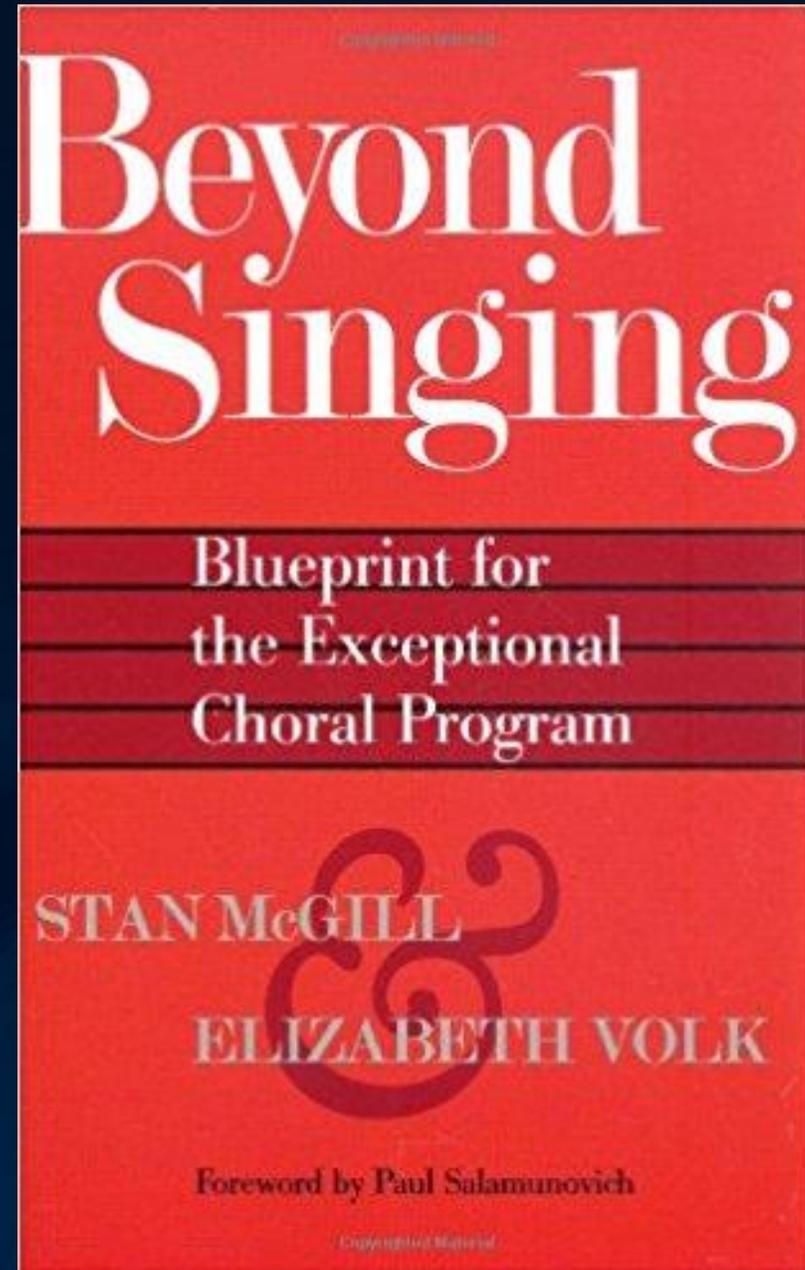
- How to structure an effective & efficient rehearsal:
 - Golden mean
 - Pacing
 - Instructions of 7 words or fewer
 - Always singing
 - Setting the tone
 - Use of humor
 - Avoidance of sarcasm & insults
 - Teacher feedback
 - Working together
 - Foster a culture of safety, respect, and camaraderie every day
 - Inspiration and imagination



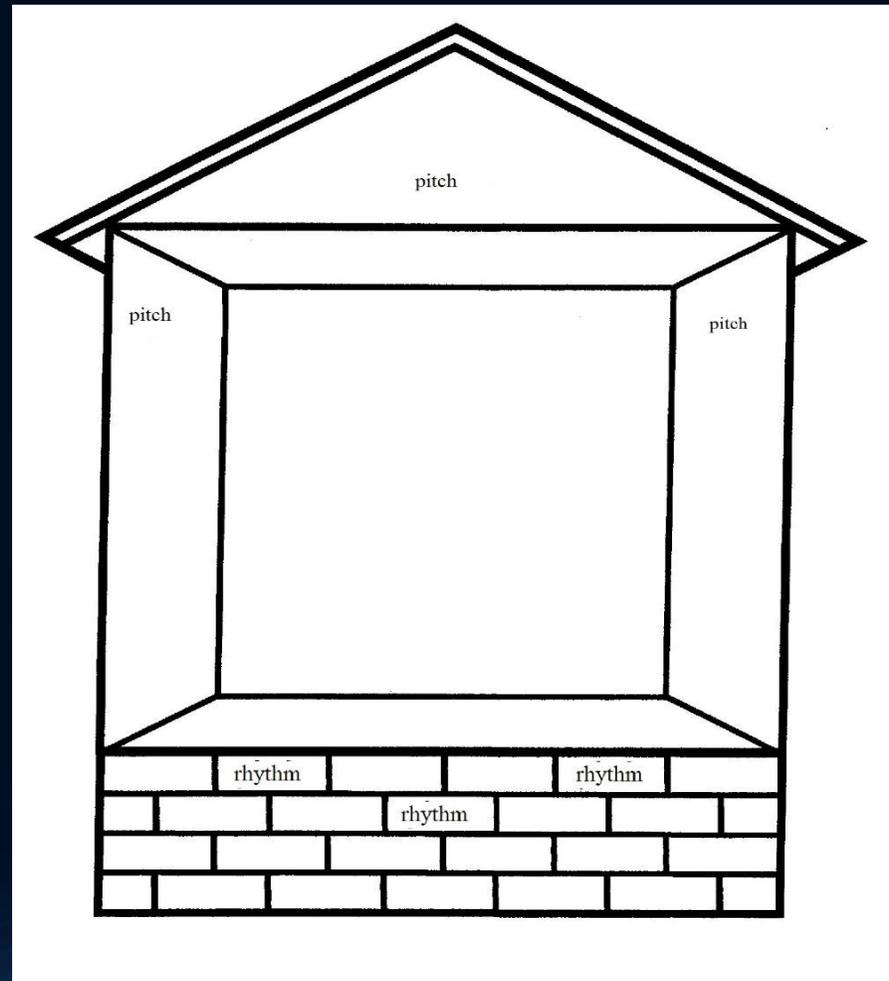
Rehearsal Techniques

TOOLS FOR EACH STEP

McGill, S. & Volk, E. (2007). *Beyond singing: Blueprint for the exceptional choral program*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Publishing. ISBN 978-1423420439.



1. The Core Level



The Core Level

1. Rhythm:

- Count-speaking: Takadimi
- Count-singing: 1-e-&-a 2-e-&-a *etc.*
- Use of conductor-singer repetition/call-and-response

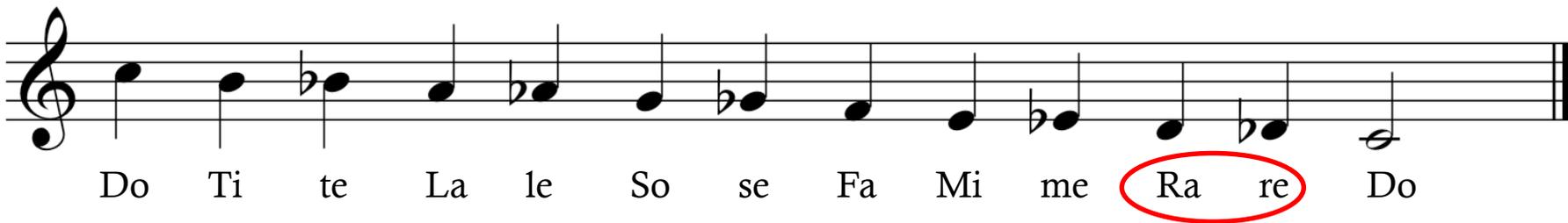
2. Pitch:

- Tonal music: movable-Do solfège (AKA “solfa”)
- Non-tonal music: fixed-Do solfège
- Use of the piano
 - Best for students to take ownership over the learning of pitches & rhythms. Conductors are there to guide and *empower* this learning. Therefore, give students the tools they need to correct tricky intervals themselves rather than “spoon-feeding” them!

Modified Movable-Do Solfège



Do di Ra ri Mi Fa fi So si La li Ti Do



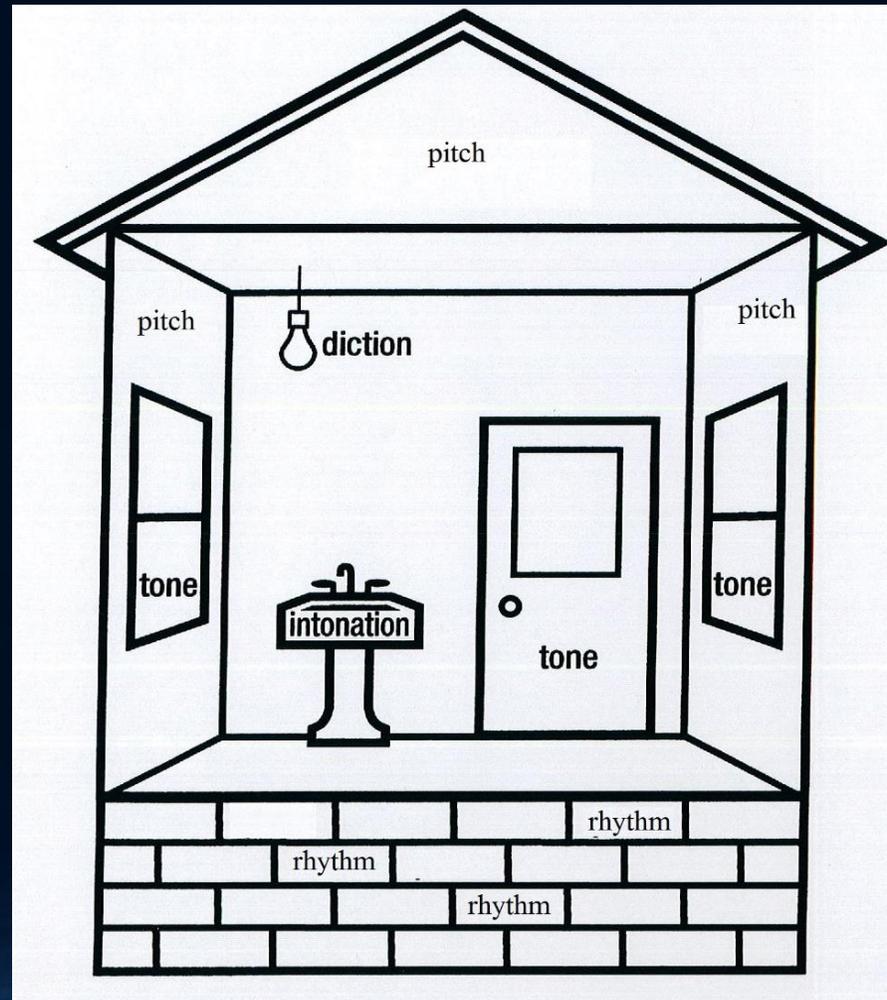
Do Ti te La le So se Fa Mi me Ra re Do

The Core Level

Some recommendations:

- Give students an opportunity to be successful at “the core level” before isolating rhythms/pitches.
 - This makes it *fair* to isolate because choristers have demonstrated their need for it.
 - This speeds up the process in case students do possess the skills of independent, literate musicians.
- When isolating parts:
 - aim for at least two parts at once.
 - provide an activity for the parts you don’t need to hear
 - singing along
 - humming their own part
 - audiating & signing their own part
- When it is absolutely necessary to isolate a single part, use the opportunity not only to correct rhythms/pitches but also to address another musical/technical element (e.g., tone).

2. Expectations No Builder Would Miss



Expectations No Builder Would Miss

3. Tone:

- Neutral syllables
- Attention to vowel formation
- Vocalices & exercises that improve vocal technique
- *Chiaro, oscuro, and chiaroscuro* exercises

4. Intonation:

- Under-dynamic singing
- Staccato [dut]
- [bIm]
- One chord at a time
- Technical solution
- Remember: Pitch problems have only 2 possible causes. Either the singer cannot hear the pitch or the singer cannot produce the pitch. When students cannot hear, fix with the tools addressed in step 2. When students cannot produce, find a way to correct their technique!

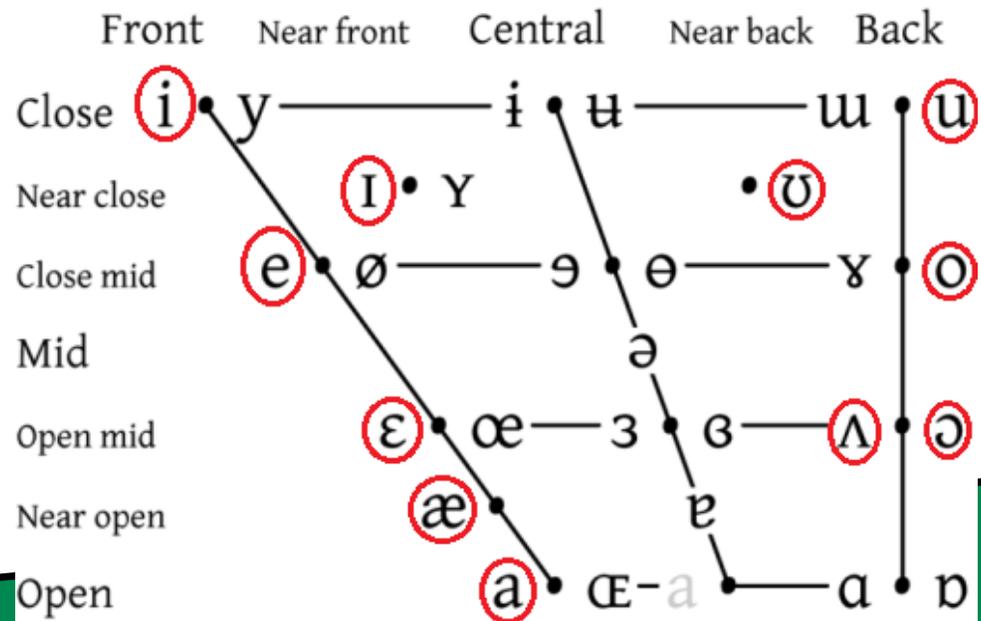
Expectations No Builder Would Miss

5. Diction:

- Echo-chanting
 - Oratorically/in free time
 - In rhythm
- Shaw chord (E-G#-D-F#)
- Attention to consonant formation
- Principle: Singing is *exaggerated* speech, an *extension* of speech, but to sing like we speak is the domain of amateurs.
- **Rule of the Consonant Onset:** Consonants are articulated before the beat, vowels are articulated on the beat (heel-to-floor exercise)
- **Rule of the Diphthong:** Sustain the primary vowel; the second vowel sounds just before the next consonant or syllable
- **Rule of the Consonant Release:** Sound the consonant release on the next beat
- **Rule of the Shadow Vowel:** If the final consonant before a breath/rest is voiced, add a shadow vowel after it
- **Rule of "The":** If followed by a vowel, pronounce [ði] ("thee" earth); if followed by a consonant, pronounce [ðʌ] ("thuh" world)

Two-Step Audiation

- Pitch (Kodály-Curwen-Glover solfège hand signs)
- Vowel (vowel hand signals)



Vowels at right & left of bullets are rounded & unrounded.

3. Common Comforts We Expect



6. Breathing

7. Phrasing

8. Dynamics

9. Balance & blend

10. Style (syllabic stress, articulations, tempo)

11. Memorization

Common Comforts We Expect

6. Breathing

- **Rule of the Breath:** Breathe in the shape of the first/next vowel you sing
- *Show* with conducting (stop gesture)
- Students write in \surd s during 2nd/3rd reads (eyes up!)
- **Rule of Punctuation:** *Usually* add a half-beat rest wherever there is a mark of punctuation in the text to define phrasing; *always* look at the conductor for sustain or release gestures to make sure!
- Be consistent: Wherever there is a breath but not a notated rest, subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ the value of the tactus from the note preceding the breath.

Common Comforts We Expect

7. Phrasing

- *Show* with conducting
- **Rule of Melodic Contour:** When the melody ascends, crescendo; when it descends, decrescendo
- **Rule of the Steady Beat:** Note values longer than the steady beat crescendo or decrescendo (*watch!*)
- **Rule of the Dot:** A rhythmic dot almost always indicates a momentary “swell”
- **Rule of Word Stress:** Underline the most important words/syllables—emphasize the same syllables in singing as you would in speech
- **Rule of the Slur:** Implied tenuto on the first note of any two-note phrase (“sing, shut up!”)
- **Rule of Dissonances:** Lean into the dissonant notes (tension) and lift off of resolutions (release)
- Importance of singing *note-through-note* instead of “note-to-note” (singing on vowels only exercise with a steady column of air)
 - “Steady column of air”
 - Practice singing on vowels only w/o consonants, then add consonants back in, allowing them to disrupt airflow as little as possible

Common Comforts We Expect

8. Dynamics

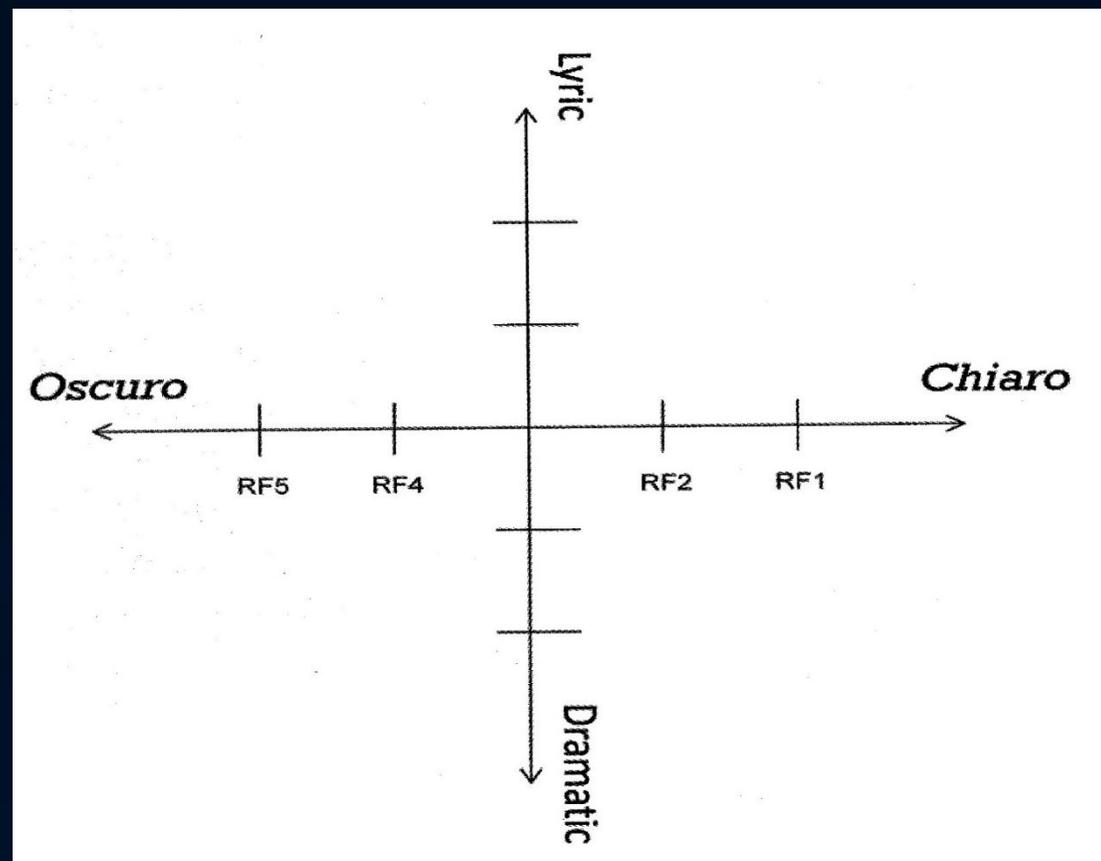
- *Show with conducting*
- Dynamic exercise (1 = *ppp*, 2 = *pp*, 3 = *p*, 4 = *mp*, 5 = *mf*, 6 = *f*, 7 = *ff*, 8 = *fff*)
- **Rule of Dynamic Contrast:** When going from a softer dynamic to a louder one, think even louder than the dynamic written; when going from a louder dynamic to a softer one, think even softer than the dynamic written
- **Rule of Voicing:** In polyphonic music, “mic” the important motives and “shush” everything else

Common Comforts We Expect

9. Balance & blend

- What is the “ideal” choral balance?
- What is “blend” and the best way to achieve it?
- Focus on vowel unification
 - Use of IPA
 - Use of vowel hand signals
 - Vowel modification through & above *passaggio*
- Building chords from root up
- Use of “model” voices
- Create sectional unity before attempting ensemble “blend”
- X/Y Resonance Graph
- Breath-Muscle/Flow-Phonation Voice Quality Continuum

X/Y Resonance Graph



Zabriskie, A. (2009). *Foundations of choral tone: A proactive and healthy approach to vocal technique and choral tone*. Tallahassee, FL: USingersPublishers. ISBN 978-0-9814817-1-5.

Breath-Muscle/Flow-Phonation Continuum

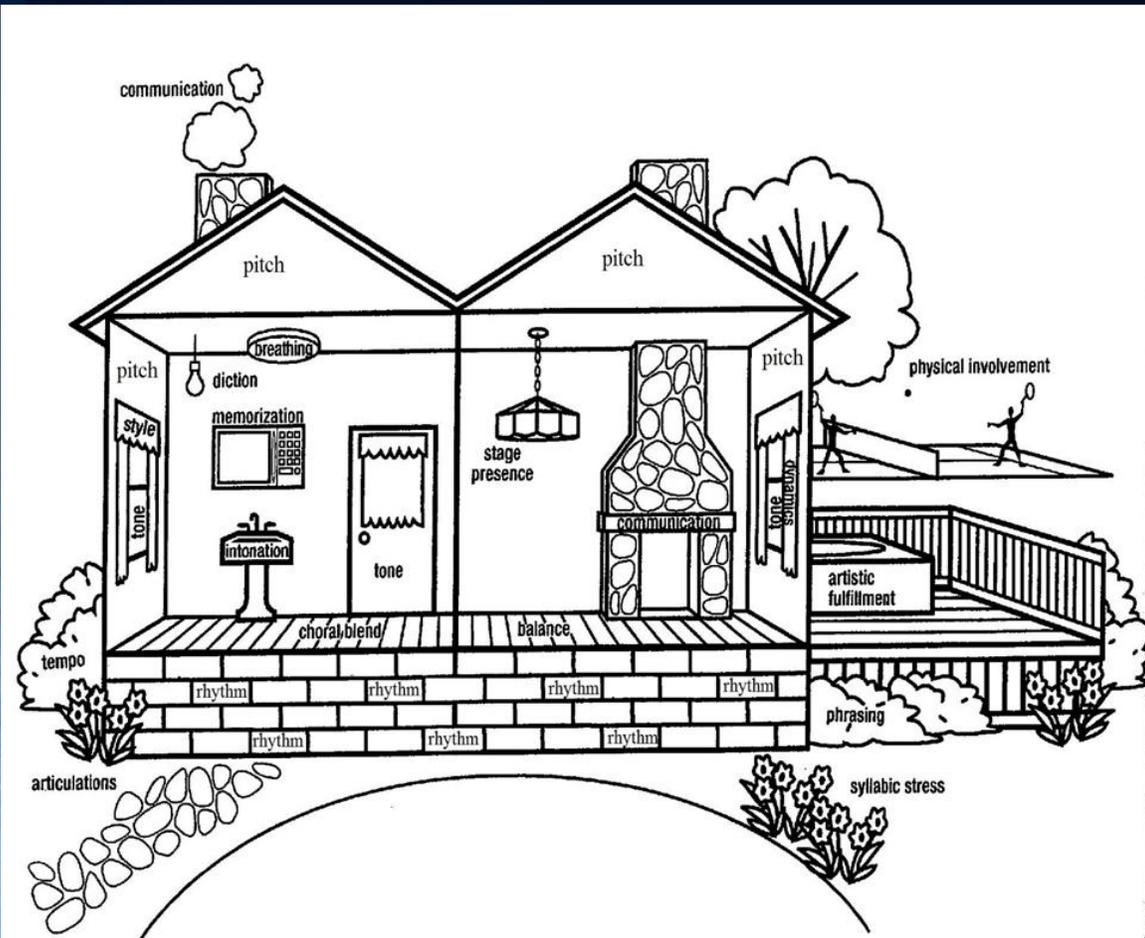


Common Comforts We Expect

10. Style (syllabic stress, articulations, tempo)

11. Memorization

4. The Dream Home



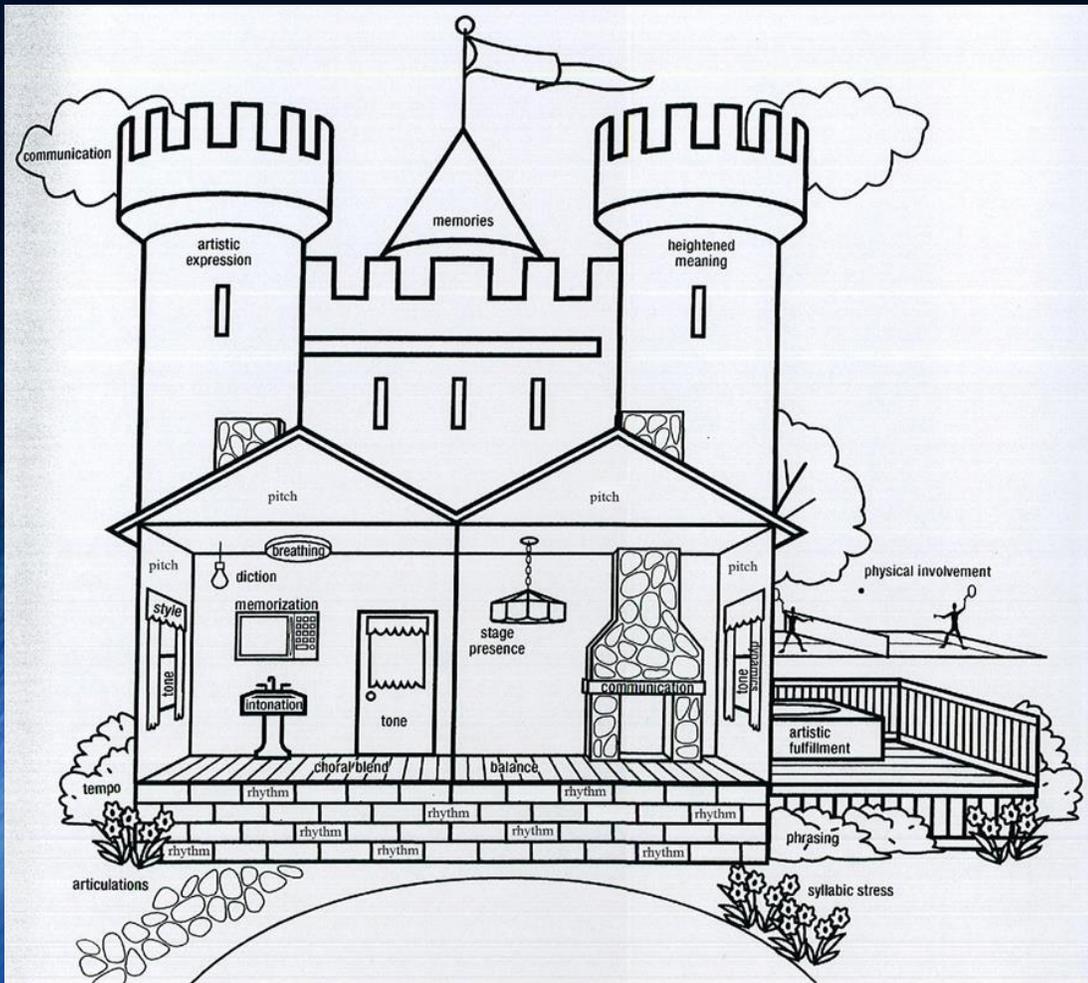
12. Communication

13. Stage presence

14. Physical involvement

15. Artistic fulfillment

5. The Castle in the Clouds



16. Artistic expression

17. Heightened meaning

18. Memories

Rehearsal Techniques

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION

Guidelines for the Choral Pianist

- When asked for pitches, roll slowly from the bottom up
 - Give pitches at the singers' opening dynamic
 - Hold the pitches in rhythm until the conductor's final preparatory beat
- *Always* use two hands
 - When playing a single voice part, double it in 8^{ves} (treble parts 8^{vb}, men's parts 8^{va})
 - When playing multiple parts, use a different hand for each part
- When playing voice parts, be "musically intelligent"—predict where the conductor may indicate breaths and separate, emphasize stressed syllables, etc.
 - You will need to *sing along with* the singers as you play!
- At all times, *follow the conductor!*