
Choral Techniques for the Band & Orchestral Conductor

Conductor's Art Presentation

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

Rehearsing Singers...What are the priorities?

- Breath
- The Warm-Up
- Intonation
- Diction: Vowels/Consonants
- Preparing The Score - Cues & Releases, Articulation, Dynamics
- Seating/Placement of Singers
- Pacing in the Rehearsal
- The Rehearsal: Fixing Problems With
 - Rhythm
 - Pitch
 - Intonation
 - Balance

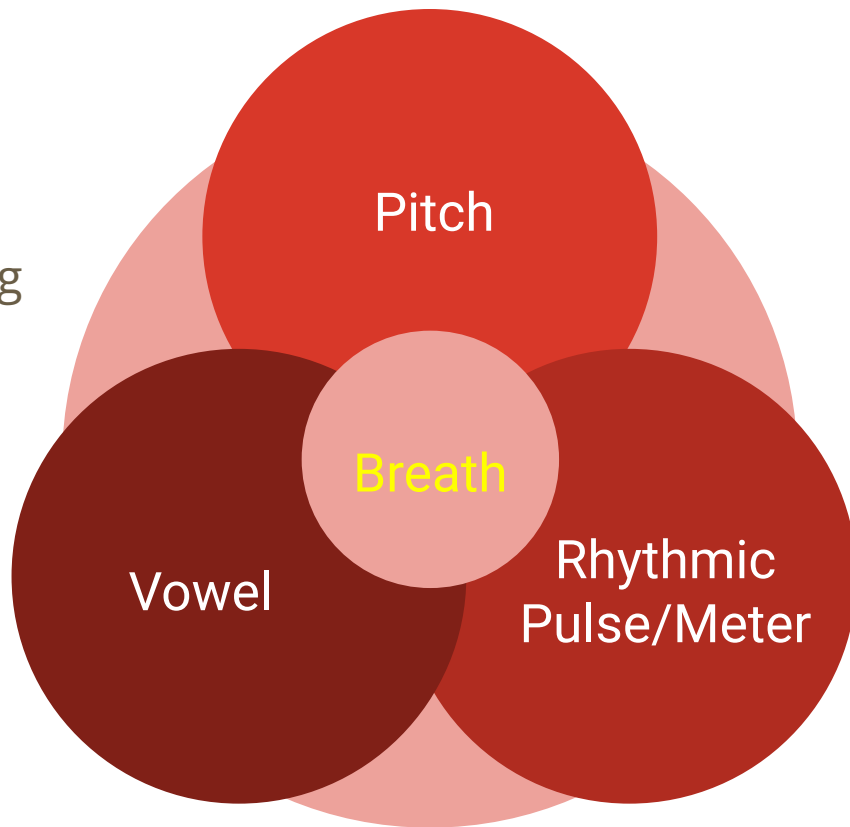


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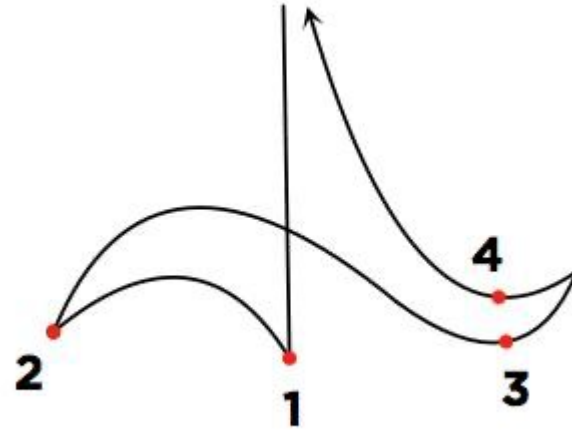


Breath

- Breath in conducting is ESSENTIAL
- Breath for singers is ESSENTIAL



Informed Breath = Informed Gesture



Gesture of Syncopation

UNCLOUDED DAY*

for SSAATTBB a cappella

Arranged by
Shawn Kirchner

Words and Music by
Rev. J.K. Alwood (1828-1909)

Brightly, with great rhythmic clarity ♩ = ca. 112

Soprano
I, II

mp

O they tell me of ___ a home far be-yond the__ skies, they tell me of ___ a home far a -

Alto

mp

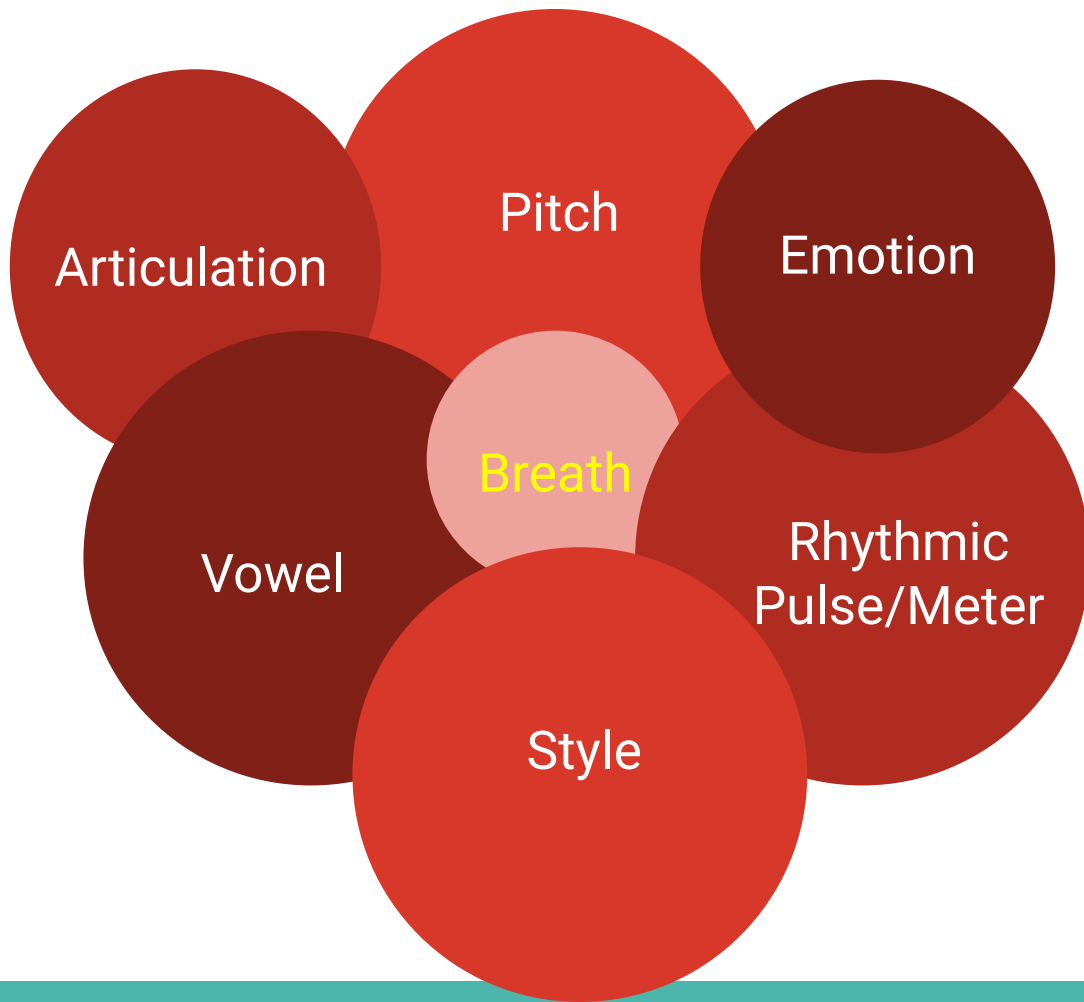
Home (mm) _____

Tenor

mp

Home (mm) _____

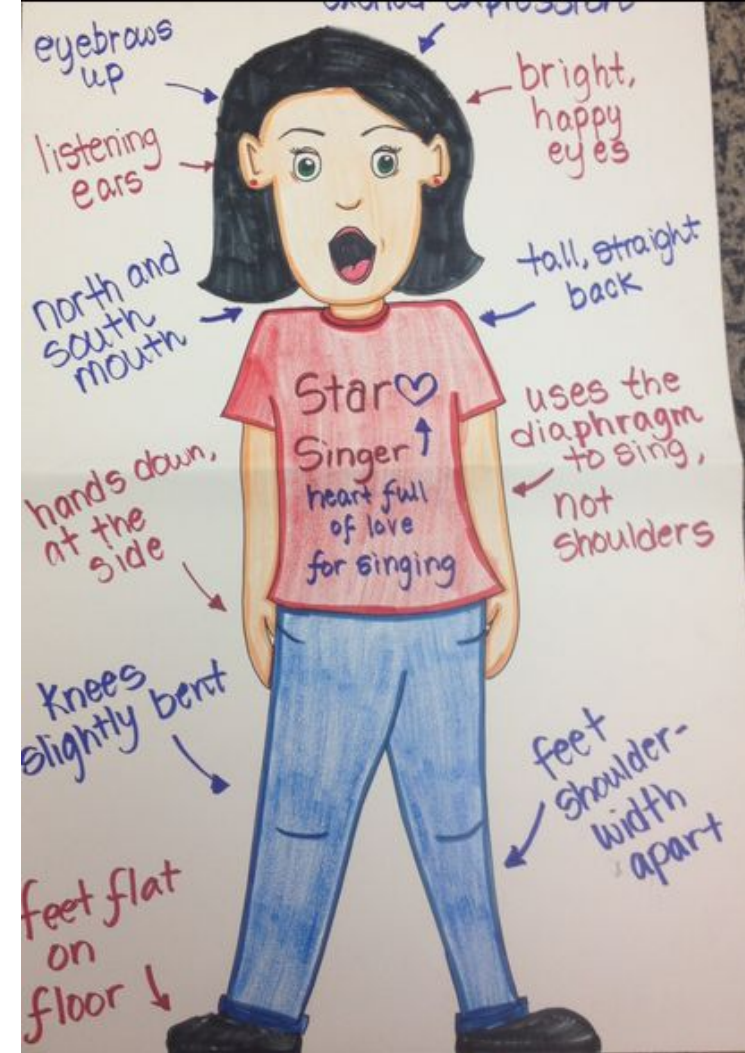
Breath



The Warm-Up

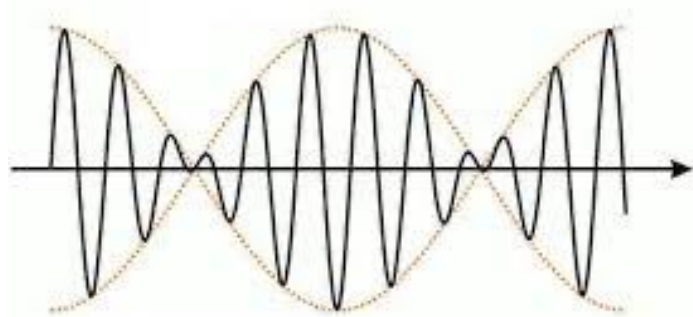
BARE NECESSITIES

- Awaken body and mobilize
- Inhalation and Exhalation Connected
- Find Head Voice and High Range (Vocal dexterity)
- Phonation
- Establish a Sense of Community



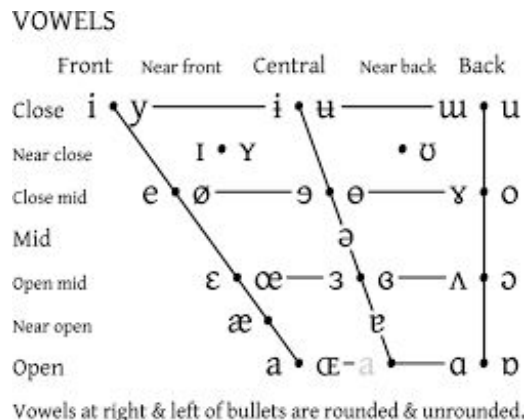
Intonation Rehearsal Techniques

- Warm-ups for intonation
 - Sing a Major scale on solfege together (vary this between major, three minor scales, chromatic scale)
 - Do - re - do - mi - do - fa - do - sol etc.
Ascending and descending
 - Sharpen and lower pitch over a series of 12 beats
- Isolate chords that are not in tune
- Build pitches in chord from lowest pitch to highest pitch. Listen for beats
- Use a brighter vowel



Diction: Vowels & Consonants

- Know the pronunciation of the text
- Speak through each word - know the vowel you want
- Warm-up for vowels: build a chord and over a series of beats move from bright to dark and visa versa
- Don't forget the diphthongs!



Research Gate - International
Phonetic Alphabet

Consonants

- Decide How Much & When for Each

- Voiced
- Voiceless
- Fricatives
- Stops

- Consider adding shadow vowels

- Add a vowel after the ENDING consonant
 - And
 - Harp
 - Vine
 - Eleison

CONSONANTS

Voiced Vibration	Voiceless No Vibration	Fricatives Air Escapes	Stops Air Stops
b → bat	p → pat	f → fine	p → pat
d → dot	t → tall	v → vine	b → bat
g → gap	k → cap	th → thin	t → tot
v → vine	f → fine	th → this	d → dot
th → this	th → thin	s → sue	k → cap
z → zoo	s → sue	z → zoo	g → gap
j → gym	sh → shore	sh → shore	
m → mail	h → hot	h → hot	
n → nail	ch → chip		
ng → sing			
l → let			
r → root			
w → wet			
y → yard			

Preparing the Score for the Singer

- An annotated score informs the singers of your musical ideas
- Consider a breath at every punctuation mark
- Add: Measure Numbers, Breaths, Articulation, Dynamics
- Singers very often only do what they see on the page!
- Practice your gesture WITH breath for the singers entrances



- Consider all punctuation
- What is duration of the breath?

To breathe or not to breathe?

W. A. Mozart *c minor* mass “Kyrie”

The image displays a musical score for the 'Kyrie' from Mozart's c minor mass. It features five staves: four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and one piano accompaniment staff. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e -'. The piano part begins with a series of chords and a melodic line, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and a 'Tutti' instruction. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines, along with fingerings (6, 4, 4, 6, 5) and a 'b5' marking at the bottom right.

W.A. Mozart - *c minor mass*

“Kyrie”

Added: breath marks, text stress, dynamics

Kyrie

dynamics

** Roll "r's"*

together

Lord have mercy,

Tutti

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e -

Tutti

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, e - lei - son.

Tutti

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

Tutti

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

Tutti

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

slight separation, bounce

f

6 4 4 6 5

V i

V⁺/IV

This work has a special challenge: “Eleison”

Beethoven Symphony No. 9 - 4th movement

The image displays a page from a musical score for the 4th movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The score is written for four vocal soloists (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in German, and the piano accompaniment is in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Freu-de, schö-ner Göt-ter-fun-ken, Toch-ter aus E-li-si-um, wir be-tre-ten". The piano accompaniment features a prominent, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a more active, arpeggiated bass line in the left hand. The vocal parts enter with a simple, homophonic melody. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fermatas.

SOPRANO.
Freu-de, schö-ner Göt-ter-fun-ken, Toch-ter aus E-li-si-um, wir be-tre-ten

ALTO.
Freu-de, schö-ner Göt-ter-fun-ken, Toch-ter aus E-li-si-um, wir be-tre-ten

TENORE.
Freu-de, schö-ner Göt-ter-fun-ken, Toch-ter aus E-li-si-um, wir be-tre-ten

BASSO.
Freu-de, schö-ner Göt-ter-fun-ken, Toch-ter aus E-li-si-um, wir be-tre-ten

B. 9.

Beethoven Symphony No. 9 - 4th movement

PRANO.
ALTO.
TENORE.
BASSO.
Violoncello.
Basso.

C O R O.

Seid um - schlun - gen, Mil -
Seid um - schlun - gen, Mil -
Seid umschlungen, Mil - li - onen! Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt! Seid um - schlun - gen,
Seid umschlungen, Mil - li - onen! Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt! Seid um - schlun - gen, Mil -

B.9.

Mozart *c minor* mass

“Kyrie” m. 27=31

Bare necessities for singers:

- Breath or no-breath at all punctuation marks
- Underline text stress
- Write in pronunciation
- Extra: Mark peak of each phrase, articulation, reinforce or add dynamics

NMA I/1/Abt. 1/5: KV 427/01 (417a/01)

(5)

27 28 29 30 31

Oboe I, II
Bassoon I, II
Horn I, II
Trumpet I, II
Timpans
Alto Trombone
Tenor Trombone
Bass Trombone
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Soprano Solist
Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass
Violoncellos,
Organ

P

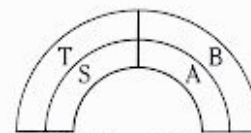
Ky - ri - e - lei - son, e - lei - son, e - lei - son, e - lei -

VII⁷

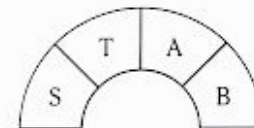
Seating

- Speak to your chorus master about seating
- Considering pairing voices with instrument groups
- SATB
- SBTA
- STBA

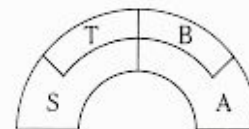
SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SEATING PLANS



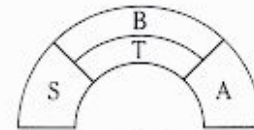
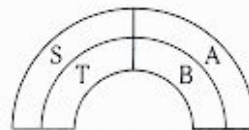
Well-balanced Choirs



Two arrangements where weak basses are brought forward



Weaker female voices



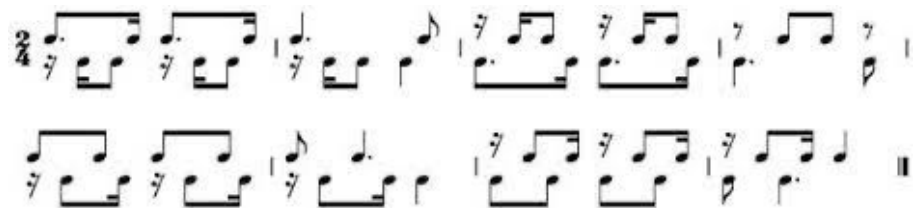
Two arrangements for choirs with weaker male voices

Pacing



- Singers always need to be given their starting pitches
 - Roll the pitches from the bottom up
 - If there is not pianist have your concertmaster give the root of the chord or the bass note
- Think of your singers like a brass section
 - Take a 10 minute break every 60-80 minutes
 - Consider having sopranos/tenors sing down the octave if you will rehearse a section more than 3x
- Keep all singers active even when isolating certain sections
- Movement is very helpful.
 - Keep meter on their body while waiting to sing
 - Whisper text while others sing and add movement to reinforce articulation

Rhythm Rehearsal Techniques



- Isolate parts
- Rehearse text *staccato*
- Rehearse under or over performance tempo
- Whisper text in rhythm
- Find placement of consonants AHEAD of the beat
- Sing on only vowels
- ½ of singers speaking meter vs. ½ of singers isolating rhythm

Pitch Rehearsal Techniques

- Isolate parts - Sopranos alone, then altos alone, etc.
- Tutti sing the difficult part (all sing the alto line)
- Hold - *fermata* - on difficult pitches
- Have the section struggling sing their phrase A CAPPELLA / WITHOUT the piano



QR code - Score Study Example



Ask for help!

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