

# Building a Successful MS/HS Cello Choir

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2012 Midwest Clinic - 12/22/12 - 8:30am - W184

## In honor of our mentors

- Dr. Michael Alexander, Professor of Music Education – Baylor University
- Mrs. Donna Rodgers, Director of Orchestras - Memorial MS (Houston, TX), Retired
- Mrs. Ann Roberts, Director of Orchestras – Cy-Fair HS & Arnold MS (Houston, TX), Retired

## Why start a cello choir?

- Literature and technical demands
- Enrichment
- Increase technique including tenor and treble clef reading in more advanced literature
- Build a more solid fundamental pitch for your orchestra
- Create a showcase group if needed for community performances
- Aid in recruiting more cellists

## What if I'm not a cellist?

- Solution A – hire one if the budget exists.
  - Things to consider
  - Does he/she work well with big groups?
  - Is he/she personable enough to keep kids interested until this group takes off?
  - Do they know the literature and have experience working with a cello ensemble?
  - District regulations (background checks, do you have to be there, etc.)
- Solution B – teach it yourself and have a private teacher there to model if needed.
- Solution C – teach it yourself and use available online resources to model and demonstrate the end result.

## Where to start?

- Have a goal in mind before you start. Where and in what fashion do you want these students to demonstrate their end product?
- Concert
- Local festivals/contests
- Special events
- Communicate this goal as you start to recruit members to join.
- Contracts?/Requirement?

### Now I've got them here, what next?

- Introduce a tuning procedure and how you want to set up. Keep it simple based on your end goal.
- Part of a concert or an independent event
- Warm-Ups – best time to introduce new techniques and new clef reading.

### Selecting Literature

- Visit [www.kleinoakorchestra.org/cellochoir.htm](http://www.kleinoakorchestra.org/cellochoir.htm) for links to literature. As I find new literature and sources this will allow me to share these findings with you.
- Start easy so they can be successful and build the difficulty as the ensemble gets stronger.

### Assigning Parts

- How many parts are there? – keep number of parts less than or equal to 4 until the ensemble is either very large or very strong.
- Depending on the piece I try to set up each part of the ensemble with stronger and weaker players especially if there is tenor or treble clef reading involved.
- Spread the melody around if the literature doesn't do that already.

### Now I've got them here. How do I keep them here?

- Find/create performance opportunities
- Make rehearsals fun, set clear goals but this should be less structured than a class rehearsal.
- Once things get rolling, let cello choir members suggest possible future literature
- Invite former members back for end of semester concerts

Post session thoughts/questions:  
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