Regular Rehearsals*

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Abstract

This module represents a complete discussion of all aspects of preparing for and conducting the regular rehearsals of a choir. Important parts of the rehearsals are discussed in detail and are listed in the Related Content area for easy reference.

1 REGULAR REHEARSALS

Preparation for regular choral rehearsals is very important. There are a number of issues to be addressed. These are mentioned below as related content and are addressed in detail in each of the modules that are a part of the overall regular rehearsal dimension. In addition, discussion questions, possible projects and several readings are listed. One of the most important preparations for rehearsal is the prerehearsal analysis of the music. A presentation of this analysis is in a separate module. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. The rehearsal can be well planned, but if the director does not know the music thoroughly, all will have been in vain; the rehearsal will not be a success. It is imperative that the director know the music thoroughly before introducing it to the ensemble in rehearsal. Once the analysis is made, the director will not need to analyze the music in the same detail again, but will want to review the music relative to the rehearsal most recently completed and the upcoming rehearsal with the goal of improving the ensemble's performance and understanding of the music.

1.1 Related Content

Planning for Rehearsals and a Rehearsal Guide
- Establishing a Rapport and Pacing Daily (Regular) Rehearsals
- Repetition with Meaning
- Special Day Rehearsals and Use of Rehearsal Time
- Introducing a New Choral Piece New to the Choir
- Ensemble Intonation

1.2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recall your own high school rehearsals. How did the director manage to pull the students' minds together for rehearsals?
2. How many ways are there of wasting rehearsal time? List them and try to learn to avoid them.
3. Why is pacing so important in a choral rehearsal?

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4. What time of day is best for choral rehearsals?

5. What types of physical exercises are appropriate for use at the beginning of or during a choral rehearsal?

1.3 PROJECTS

1. Make several rehearsal guides based on four choral works.

2. Visit a local rehearsal. Take notes on rehearsal techniques and bring these back to class for discussion.

3. List several twentieth-century pieces that would be good introductions to twentieth-century music for a choir. Are there any twelve-tone works that are within the realm of high school singers?

4. Tape record a rehearsal of any ensemble and later examine the use of time. How much time did the conductor use talking? How much of that talking was on a topic unrelated to the music? How much actual time was spent rehearsing? How much time was spent rehearsing one part? How much time did a member of each section spend not rehearsing (while others rehearsed parts, etc.)?

5. Visit a choral rehearsal and listen carefully and critically. Try to identify the errors and the causes of the problems that occur.

1.4 SUGGESTED READINGS

Green, Elizabeth A. H., The Modern Conductor, 2d ed., Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Hillis, Margaret, At Rehearsals, American Choral Foundation, 1969.

Simons, Harriet, Choral Conducting: A Leadership Teaching Approach, Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1983.