

# Rehearsals and Director's Preparation

## 1

### BEFORE THE REHEARSAL

Here are some suggestions that may make rehearsals a bit more interesting and exciting for your choir or ensemble.

**A**  
Have all the proper music in the choir folder.

**B**  
Have the choir room a comfortable temperature, even a bit chilly. It will warm up!

**C**  
Make sure everyone has his or her own copy of each piece.

**D**  
See that the room is clean, the chairs are straight and in place, and the evening's order or agenda is on the board. If there isn't a board, get one!

**E**  
If you have a weekly choir newsletter or info sheet, put it in the folder slot or on each member's chair.

### DURING THE REHEARSAL

## 2

Don't make any announcements in the choir rehearsal; put your newsletter to work, and let it take care of all such details. Teach your people to read the material!

If you don't use a weekly newsletter or information sheet, allow the choir president (you do have choir officers, don't you?) to handle the last part of each rehearsal, using part of the time to emphasize all announcements.

**MORE**

Work fast, work hard, and keep the choir busy at all times. Don't allow any time for whispering, jokes, or conversations. The highest compliment you can be paid as a conductor is: "You didn't give us any time to talk tonight!" Always stay ahead of the choir!

When finished with the rehearsal, quit – even if it is not 9:00 p.m.! Turn the rehearsal over to your president and go sit down. Let the choir president finish the time with prayer requests, a devotional thought, any major announcements, and a prayer.

Begin on time, every time, and end on time, every time! This is a very important point. It's just not fair for the rehearsal to begin ten minutes late because you're waiting on five or seven key people to arrive. If there are choir members in the room, go to work.

Begin rehearsal with something familiar, in a nice low register, so as to warm up the voice gently while still teaching and working on choral tone.

### *Rehearsals that are consistently*

stimulating

refreshing

interesting

humorous

innovative

challenging

exciting

spiritually beneficial

and not boring

will entice the choir members to attend consistently, for fear that if they miss even a rehearsal, they may miss something really great. Build this spirit in the choir and it will work for you.

## A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK PRAYER FOR TODAY

# 3

Dear Lord,

*Help me to relax about insignificant details beginning tomorrow at 7:41:23 am, EST. Help me to consider people's feelings, even if most of them are over sensitive. Help me to take responsibility for my own actions, even though they are usually not my fault. Help me to not try to run everything, but if you need some help, please feel free to ask me!*

*Help me to be more laid back, and help me to do it exactly right. Help me to take things more seriously – especially laughter, parties, and dancing. I ask for patience, and I mean right now! And help me not be a perfectionist (did I spell that correctly?).*

*Help me to keep my mind on one th – Look! a bird – ing at a time.*

*Help me to do only what I can do, and trust you for the rest. And would you mind putting that in writing? Keep me open to others' ideas, incorrect though they may be. Allow me to be less independent, but let me do it my way. Allow me to follow established procedures today. On second thought, I'll settle for a few minutes. And finally, I ask You to help me slow down and not rush through what I do. Amen.*

# 4

## ATTITUDE DETERMINES SUCCESS

Your attitude will determine the success or failure of your rehearsal – believe it or not! If you are happy, jovial, smiling, anxious and determined, rehearsal will go better. If you come into rehearsal carrying extra baggage, such as personal or family problems or staff strife, and are up-tight and stressed, it will have a major impact on those who attend the rehearsal, as well as on the one who conducts the rehearsal. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that you rid yourself of as much stress as possible so that you can inspire, challenge and encourage your choir members to be better musicians and better Christians.

Side remarks, personal jokes and inappropriate humor are all out of place in a good and positive choir rehearsal. Keep your personal feelings to yourself and strive to challenge your people to be better musicians than they are. And under your direction, they will be if you prepare your rehearsal plan free of personal stress. Don't carry personal baggage into the rehearsal! Enjoy your people, love them, challenge them, encourage them, and stretch them to be better than they think they can be.

*You can do it...with the right attitude!*

## **5** CHECK-UP TIME *by David Smith, head of Knowledge Development at Unilever*

Here are some symptoms of an organization or program that is sick, or certainly not feeling well:

*There is a tendency for repeated mistakes*

*There is duplicated work*

*Relationships are beginning to be strained*

*Good ideas seem to die on the vine*

*You can't keep up with your peers*

*You find yourself becoming too dependent on key individuals*

*You are too slow to launch new projects, programs or plans*

If your program has any of these symptoms, perhaps a 'check-up' is due. Remember, a leader is not supposed to do everything by him or herself.

*by Warren Fields, a dear friend who has retired from active* **CONDUCTING**  
*music ministry but who knew the value of good conducting*

I have learned a great deal about conducting from excellent teachers and have learned a few things through practical experience. Conductors tend to develop some mannerisms they should try to overcome. In my judgment, the mannerism that produces the most negative results is moving the mouth (audibly or inaudibly) either in rehearsal or in performance. There is probably no mannerism that is more detrimental to the overall choral performance. Believe me, you will be both surprised and pleased beyond words (no pun intended) if you will conquer the habit of singing with your choir or forming the words of the text with your mouth. The tenors don't really need you!!

Let me give some reasons:

**1** You will be able to hear the choral parts and accompaniment more effectively if you conduct with your hands and arms and not your mouth. Listening carefully to your choir can become an art and you will be more sensitive to difficult spots than ever before because you will hear the errors and will be able to correct them!

**2** You will have a greater variety of gestures at your disposal in the use of hands, facial expression and overall body language. When you move your mouth, the eyes of the singers will be fixed there and movements, therefore, have almost no meaning at all.

3 Your singers will begin to have more confidence in their own musical abilities, which will result in a better choral sound.

4 You will convey to the singers that you have confidence in your skills as a conductor — without the use of your mouth.

I have always wondered why conductors tend to ‘mouth’ the words, particularly when the singers have the music in front of them! We must sure look funny to them!

# 7

## DREAM AT LEAST ONCE A DAY

### When I was young in music ministry,

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...serving First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, Dr. Phil Simpson, Organ Professor, Hardin-Simmons University and organist at the church, came to my office one day, sat down and watched as I was busily engaged in a multitude of activities. Finally,

in a quiet voice, **he said these words to me,** which I will never forget:

*“Bob...when do you ever sit and dream?”*

**“What do you mean?” I asked.**

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He said, “Bob...every creative person should put their feet up on their desk at least once a day and dream a dream, come up with a new idea, or think of how to do something differently to improve the ministry.”

### I had never thought about that concept.

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I began to do just that. I was amazed at the creativity God poured into my life! That became a pattern for me each day, and I have continued that practice almost every day of my ministry. If you will take the time to be quiet, rest in Him, say scriptures over

and over in your mind, and pray and think, God will pour into your mind new thoughts, concepts, dreams and visions for the future of your ministry. It will take time, but I encourage you to do this. You *will* discover a freshness in your ministry.