

blackboard and endeavor to trace in them the speed, direction, and degree of their energy accumulation and dissemination. We try to find the musical logic for a proper use of rubato, inflection, and accentuation. We learn the fundamental qualities in short and long notes, in high and low pitches, in contrast or repetition, whether such be in length of phrase, in tempo, in dynamic, or in rhythm. I "measure" volume of sound by using an imaginary distance between my hands, and the chorus memorizes concepts of dynamics both by hearing sound and by feeling the energy that they produce to make it. We find that there are twoscore ways to pronounce or to color every vowel sound, depending upon its musical context.

The process of building a choral instrument is an exciting and challenging experience for all conductors. The sound of their choirs will reflect both their success and their failure to utilize properly the technical and interpretive aspects of music. But only when conductors know the basic processes of singing, are familiar with the demands of the score, and can evaluate their own personal and musical resources can they develop their tonal concepts with a judicious employment of procedures that have been tested over a long period. To these they add their own techniques. And at that point, they are well on their way to becoming that very rare person—an artist.

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The Choral Conductor and the Rehearsal

LLOYD PFAUTSCH

PURPOSE OF THE REHEARSAL

The primary and most commonly recognized goal of choral rehearsals is the concert appearance. The public performance not only provides motivation for purposeful and disciplined rehearsals but also constitutes a pause in choral development at which time the chorus and its conductor may present a summation of their progress in choral refinement. The choral concert thus reveals much about the chorus and its conductor. In addition to demonstrating how carefully rehearsal time has been spent, the concert reflects the conductor's musicianship, musical tastes, knowledge of repertoire and style, understanding of the human voice, understanding of people (in the choir and in the audience), and especially his abilities as a rehearsal technician.

Generally, however, we tend to forget that there are other, perhaps even more beneficial, results from intelligent choral rehearsing than a praiseworthy public performance. A chorus is a community of singers led by a conductor in service to the choral art. Together they are willing to learn and work in a curious interdependence (as we shall see later) to enlarge their understanding and appreciation of choral music and to develop their voices and choral techniques. In particular, they can, and should, aspire to the following:

1. An expanding encounter with the vast repertoire of choral literature, along with a growing sensitivity to stylistic integrity.

2. A gradual mastery of the scores being studied and prepared for performance as the "blueprint" of the composer's notation is realized in sound. The printed score should arouse the imagination so that the inner life of the music can then be reborn in sound (a stimulated imagination will add new and varied dimensions to performance).
3. The development of technical disciplines so that the voice, the ear, the lips, the tongue, the breathing mechanism, and so on all become more proficient and responsive in carrying out the demands of the music, thus eliminating technical barriers that inhibit choral development. The gradual absorption of choral disciplines creates good rehearsal habits.
4. The cultivation of flexibility and versatility comparable to that expected of soloists. An atmosphere of artistic endeavor encourages individual responsibility and personal musicianship, particularly in sight singing.
5. A more expressive and effective communication between conductor and chorus, encouraging responsiveness.
6. The development of an awareness of how important and essential it is for each singer to listen to himself and to others, and to hear and comprehend the inter-reliance of all parts.
7. A constant and unsparring effort to approximate choral ideals, thus creating a corporate sense of satisfaction, stimulation, exhilaration, entertainment, and educational advancement.

In recent years considerable versatility has been expected of choruses. Contemporary composers are writing choral music with a variety of unfamiliar sounds that challenge both the chorus and its conductor to develop new vocal and rehearsal techniques. Choruses are expected to perform a greater variety of choral literature and to do so in the appropriate style. It is in the rehearsal that the choral community fortifies itself for meeting these responsibilities.

The choral conductor is responsible for making effective use of rehearsal time. Many conductors are skillful and adept in rehearsing, while others are clumsy and inept. A few have a charisma that helps them as they rehearse, even though the techniques they employ are the same as those of other conductors. And some conductors rely on personality, dictatorial demeanor, or blind loyalty. But regardless of how conductors rehearse, all are required to prepare for this responsible leadership. How they prepare foretells the measure of success they will achieve.

PREPARATION FOR REHEARSAL

Preparation begins with experience: singing in a choral group, listening to choral groups, observing other choral conductors, and learning from what one does in his own rehearsals. It is most important that the background of every choral conductor include the regimen of singing in a choral ensemble. In no other way can he appreciate the significance of individual contribution to the ensemble sound, individual responsibility in following

the conductor's directions, and individual reaction to different rehearsal procedures. Without this experience, a choral conductor will lack empathetic understanding of the individual and the group. Experience in choral singing will also lead to the choice of a model singer and a model conductor—be they actual individuals or the idealistic composite of those qualities considered worthy of emulation.

No choral conductor outgrows the need for listening to other choral ensembles and learning from such experience. Opportunities for listening include formal concerts, recordings, and rehearsals. A concert performance by any choral group will reveal how they have rehearsed under their conductor's guidance. Although recordings always present an incomplete choral sound, they disclose many good and bad rehearsal procedures while also demonstrating how much a conductor knows about the choral problems that are peculiar to recording—for example, arranging the voices for a balanced pickup by the microphones. Both concerts and recordings provide opportunities for enlarging one's exposure to repertoire and to performance practices. No choral conductor can ever acquaint himself with the entire repertoire performed in his professional environment or available on hundreds of recordings. Yet his preparation involves the need for continual attentiveness to choral sounds *other than those produced under his direction*, with emphasis on variety, style, technical proficiency, and musicality. Again, the role of models is significant, especially in the early stages of a choral-conducting career. However, a choral conductor will always need to engage in an objective criticism of the preferred model or models lest he become and remain a slave to that source of stimulation and never develop any independence as a choral conductor. (It goes without saying, of course, that, while this independence is to be a goal for all choral conductors, it is ultimately more procedural or philosophical than environmental, since no choral conductor can avoid the influence of the choral community on his own choral work.)

FRAMES OF REFERENCE

No choral conductor ever outgrows the stimulation one can experience when reading books and periodicals available in the choral field. The choral art is not an exact science: There is no *one authority* or *one school* that has discovered all the knowledge pertinent to the choral art. Any writing is thus, at best, a partial presentation, disseminating what the author has discovered within his own experience and study. Furthermore, the more one reads, the more obvious it becomes that most of the ideas presented have been encountered before. Some choral conductors may consider this fact reason enough not to bother reading more than a few basic books. However, if these ideas are repeated in writings on the choral art, then

they must have significance; even though the ideas may be basic, the writer's discussion and application will have an individual touch that can enlarge the reader's understanding. This book, for example, does not pretend to be an all-inclusive presentation of what is to be known about the choral art, and most certainly this particular chapter will not cover all that could be included in a discussion of the choral rehearsal. Naturally, the writer hopes that his presentation will be both informative and provocative, but he will follow his own admonition to continue reading and to welcome the exposure to different approaches and ideas as a professional responsibility.

More generally, the interest in enlarging one's knowledge and understanding should not be limited to the choral art, for every choral conductor should be eager to know more about other areas of human knowledge. While there will always be limitations of time, energy, and personal propensity, it is important to broaden oneself in the other arts, in the social and natural sciences, in history, in philosophy, in theology, and the like. There are choral conductors who need to be reminded that there is other music besides choral music. Exposure to the creative efforts of a dramatist, novelist, poet, painter, sculptor, or choreographer can enhance artistic sensitivity. Opening one's mind to the thinking of philosophers, theologians, politicians, scientists, economists, and so on can contribute a breadth of knowledge that not only suggests a more complete human being but also helps the choral conductor relate more effectively to the other human beings with whom and for whom he works. This open-mindedness also encourages learning from the other disciplines as well as willingness to change, to experiment, to adopt, and to appropriate.

LEARNING FROM MODELS

It was mentioned earlier that certain conductors are endowed with charisma. Many conductors are able to produce good choral music in spite of technical and musical inadequacies, while other, less charismatic ones produce results that contradict their recognized musical training and ability. Not every good musician is a good rehearsal technician, just as a good rehearsal technician might not necessarily be a good musician. A fine singer does not necessarily become a good choral conductor. Why is it that a chorus will work for one conductor and not for another? Why will singers produce good vocal tone for one conductor and not for another? How does a chorus sense that one conductor has empathy with vocal technique while another does not? Why does a chorus overlook the musical integrity of one conductor while overlooking the lack of it in another? How do some conductors manage to establish an esprit without even talking about it, while other conductors alienate the singers as they employ the generally accepted

methods of rehearsing? The answers to these questions will reflect the kind of preparation each conductor has considered important as well as the extent of his preparation. When thoroughness of preparation combines with charisma, the rehearsals are distinctive.

A most important warning should be given to young choral conductors. Stated simply, the warning is BE YOURSELF. In watching other conductors work, in listening to other choral groups, and in reading what others have to say about the choral art, appropriate what will work for you. What you borrow must be meaningful for you. Do not employ another conductor's rehearsal techniques just because they work for him. Seek to understand the purpose behind the procedure and adapt the procedure to your own way of working. There is great danger in the matching of attire, humor, jargon, stance, and conducting gestures and mannerisms. The results usually are not the same, and when they are not, either great consternation overwhelms the imitator or he deceives himself into thinking that he hears the same results achieved by his model just because he has imitated it. Thus, the choral conductor's *self-image* will determine the type and the quality of preparation for rehearsing, the specific procedures employed in rehearsing, and the boundaries of effectiveness while rehearsing. It often seems easier to mimic the successful conductors than to pursue the reason behind their success. However, such pursuit can lead to a more profound understanding of why they do what they do; then this knowledge should be applied with *your own personal touch* in a manner that is *your way* of sharing this knowledge. Never forget to BE YOURSELF!

SCORE STUDY

The study and analysis of scores is an aspect of rehearsal preparation that choral conductors must accept as routine. This responsibility requires personal discipline, patience, and an inquisitive mind. As the details of a score are mastered through study, mnemonic development can be a by-product that every choral conductor will find beneficial if not essential. The particulars of score study and analysis are presented elsewhere in this book. They merely need to be reaffirmed at this point so as to emphasize continuous dedication to this phase of rehearsal preparation.

SCHEDULING OF REHEARSALS

Scheduling rehearsals is another prerehearsal consideration. Many rehearsal times are determined by tradition, by space limitations, by schedule exigencies, or by an authority higher than the choral conductor. In such situations the conductor will need to adjust. It is often easier for one person to make the necessary adjustments than to ask many to adjust. When the

conductor has a voice in scheduling rehearsals, he should entertain the following considerations:

School (High School, College, and University) Choirs

Is the purpose of the group an educational opportunity for many to gain experience singing in a chorus, or, in addition to being educational, is it also a select group with a public relations factor in concertizing, or is it strictly promotional and committed to entertainment?

The purpose of the group will dictate the amount of time required for rehearsing. The location of the rehearsals in the schedule should be related to the purpose and the time required. To serve large numbers of students or to assure an abundance of good singers for a select group, a minimum of schedule conflicts is necessary. The locations of the rehearsal in the schedule should avoid hours when physical, mental, and vocal fatigue can present problems. The location of the rehearsal in the schedule will enable the conductor to have adequate time for checking the setup, for last-minute preparations, for unforeseen complications, and for a few moments by himself.

Church Choirs

Again, the purpose, which should be obvious, is often overlooked. While the commitment to serving the worship experience of a congregation should be predominant, the conductor must never neglect educational responsibilities or forget that the church choir is a community of singers that needs or expects social interaction in a manner and at a degree of importance quite different from school or civic groups. The scheduling of rehearsals will need to consider other church activities, the complexities of business, professional, and family obligations, and the proximity to Sunday. The amount of time involved must allow for adequate preparation, organizational matters, and socializing.

Civic Choruses

Again, the purpose of the group is important. Is it a musical adjunct to the local symphony orchestra, a service choral organization that represents the city at various gatherings, or a group that contributes to the cultural life of the city by affording the best singers in the city an opportunity to perform choral masterworks?

The scheduling of rehearsals will require consideration of business, professional, and family obligations, the rehearsals of other choral groups such as church choirs, and the availability of rehearsal facilities. The length

of rehearsals must allow for adequate preparation, organizational business, and breaks for rest, socializing, and so forth. The frequency and the length of rehearsals are not as important as how the rehearsal time is used. Some conductors can accomplish more in one hour of rehearsal than others can in three.

REHEARSAL ENVIRONMENT

The rehearsal environment is very important. Although some excellent choral performances have been prepared under adverse conditions, it helps to have a room with good acoustics, lighting, seating, and temperature control. A well-lighted room with activating colors will help attract, arouse, and maintain a spirit of involvement. It is important that the chairs provide a degree of comfortable support while also encouraging correct body posture for singing. Each conductor will have to decide if he prefers a permanent or flexible seating arrangement on a flat surface or on tiered risers. This decision will not necessarily be the norm, for many choral conductors have to work within an environment that is determined by someone else, unless they have a room specifically set aside for choral rehearsals that they may have helped design. Temperature control cannot be overemphasized, especially since the advent of year-long temperature-control systems, which are usually fallible. Lack of constant and dependable thermostatic control frequently ruins rehearsals. A hot, stuffy rehearsal room is enervating, and while a cold rehearsal room may seem initially activating, it quickly becomes depressive. Visual aids, such as bulletin and chalkboards, are necessary for announcements, reminders, publicity, listing the rehearsal sequence, and explanations. Systems for music storage should be adequate, accessible, and practical. In recent years, the importance of tape and phonographic equipment has become universally accepted although often regretfully limited. How a conductor uses this environment ultimately determines whether it controls him or he controls it. (For example, much valuable time can be lost through excessive taping during rehearsals.)

SEATING

Organization of and preparation for seating arrangements must be planned with care. Every choral conductor will have a predilection for certain arrangements. A few varieties are shown in Figure 2-1. The exact seating arrangement will be dependent on the type of seating. Rehearsal rooms that have permanent seating will limit the possible arrangements to varying degrees. Other rooms will allow for mobility and variation since the chairs

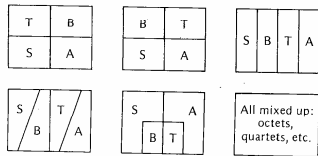


Figure 2-1

will be movable. The following suggestions might prove helpful when planning seating arrangements:

1. The seating should vary with each choral group, with change in personnel, with the repertoire, and with reference to the arrangement that will be used for concert appearances.
2. The conductor must decide if he wants the arrangements to be consistent or if he prefers to change them frequently. Regular arrangements encourage the individual singer to develop a sense of security within the choral ensemble, while shifting arrangements encourage his sense of personal responsibility to the total choral ensemble sound.
3. Place weaker voices near the stronger, the inexperienced singer near the experienced, the singer with modest musicianship near one whose musicianship is advanced, and the person who is blessed with a good voice but who has difficulty in sight singing near one who reads quickly although his voice has limitations.
4. Whatever the arrangement, it should assist the individual in relating to his own section as well as to the total ensemble sound.
5. The eventual arrangement should help the group develop a sense of ensemble and balance, interdependence and independence, and personal as well as corporate responsibility.
6. Singing position should be related to the style of the repertoire. For instance, when rehearsing polychoral works, the identity, development, and control of the several choirs can be assisted by various seating arrangements that also enhance the aural effect. The arrangement shown in Figure 2-2 might be used for Andrea Gabrieli's polychoral *Magnificat* for three choirs.

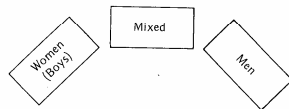


Figure 2-2

7. Do not choose a singing position for your choir based solely on another conductor's preference. What may be right for *him* and *his* chorus may not be right for you and your chorus. More important, the choice must be based on the structure of the music and the aural effect required by it.
8. Allow enough room for spacing so that the group can stand comfortably with enough room for necessary body movement.
9. As the performance date approaches, employ the concert arrangement consistently in rehearsal so that the group will feel secure and be able to adjust easily to the acoustical environment of the concert hall.

ORGANIZATION OF REHEARSAL

The organization of a rehearsal is the most important responsibility of a choral conductor. Many conductors rehearse in an improvisatory manner, and others are methodical to the point of tedium. A lack of organization is so hazardous that every conductor should develop early in his career a sense of obligation toward rehearsal organization. How one organizes a rehearsal depends on the particular chorus, the time of day, the amount of rehearsal time allowed, the variety of repertoire employed, the tempo, dynamics, and mood of the repertoire, the performance commitments, and the long-range plans for the group. The use of rehearsal time can be rigid or elastic. Rigidity does not allow for unexpected accomplishments or complications, although it does limit the danger of aimless procedure. Elasticity allows for change within a planned procedure and allows for what develops in a rehearsal, whether it be a problem or an achievement. Any choral group will recognize and appreciate an organized rehearsal prepared by a conductor who is capable of facile adaptations during a rehearsal.

The conductor must not waste rehearsal time, nor should he permit any of the personnel to waste it. Starting a rehearsal on time indicates meaningful purpose; ending a rehearsal on time indicates a respect for the individual's right to determine his own use of time outside the rehearsal. Both policies encourage punctuality. The organized use of rehearsal time indicates to the group that the conductor has made preparation and that he has an appreciation for the time and energy that the singers contribute during a rehearsal. A planned rehearsal that is paced well contributes much to a good rapport between the conductor and the chorus.

WARM-UPS

Young conductors are often eager to rehearse the music at hand but are frequently concerned about the preliminaries. They have read or been told that a rehearsal should begin by calling the roll and by singing warming-up exercises or a familiar work or both. They may have encountered the idea that warm-ups are not necessary because the singers have employed

their vocal mechanisms prior to the rehearsal. In opposition to this idea, there are devotees who favor warm-ups and spend almost one fourth of a rehearsal on them. Are warm-ups necessary? One could answer "yes" or "no," but they are generally agreed to be helpful for the following reasons:

1. Warm-ups have a pedagogical purpose, although the conductor does not have to make this obvious to the chorus.
2. They are an excellent way to focus the attention of the chorus on the singing process.
3. Since singing makes greater demands on the human vocal mechanism than does speaking, warm-ups are an effective means of preparing the body and that mechanism for meeting these demands.
4. Since there is more extensive use of the breath in singing than in speaking, the muscles involved in breath support need to be activated and exercised before strenuous singing begins.
5. Warm-ups can help the singers relate breath support to tone production. The use of consonants can assist this process; for example, one can use the exercises shown in Figure 2-3.

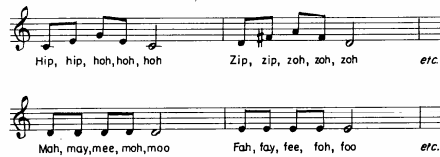


Figure 2-3

- Handwritten note:* do not voice lesson
6. Warm-ups can assist in the development of vowel sounds and good tone production, the results being a collective precision in enunciating and sustaining uniform vowel sounds, and a collective sensitivity toward pitch accuracy. When this process is supervised with care and persistence, much of the common sound experienced in the warm-ups can be carried over into rehearsal and performance of the music.
 7. The warm-up procedure should vary for rehearsals although the purpose should remain the same. When the same procedure is employed, it suggests mere routine and thereby encourages apathetic participation and a lack of attention. A variety of procedures will prove stimulating, engaging, and interesting to the singers and will call on the conductor's imagination and ingenuity.
 8. The warm-ups should be consistent with those employed in sound vocal pedagogy. Singing in a chorus may be the only vocal training many of the members will receive, so the conductor can use the warm-ups to share some vocal techniques and disciplines with the singers. Since there will also be a number of singers who

have studied voice privately, the warm-ups used should be consistent with what the singers have experienced in private vocal study.

9. The amount of time given to warm-ups should be varied. Determining factors are the time of day, the activities of the personnel prior to the rehearsal, and the necessity for conditioning.
10. Whatever is done in the warm-ups must be purposeful and directed to the music at hand, never routine.

TYPES OF PROCEDURES

The effectiveness of what follows the warm-ups in a rehearsal sequence will depend on how well defined a conductor's musical objectives are, how dedicated he is to pursuing these objectives, and how successful he is in sharing his objectives and dedication with the chorus. The conductor helps to shape the attitude of the chorus toward rehearsal as he creates an atmosphere of artistic endeavor that engenders individual involvement and responsibility. The singers must join with the conductor as they work together for an authentic and meaningful translation of the printed score into aural beauty. The conductor fosters a spirit of collaboration in contrast to one of servility. He should reflect the mood, style, and purpose of the music by word and gesture and direct the singers into an aesthetic experience. The conductor further assists this process by using his voice (and choosing his words) at a pace and dynamic level empathetic with the music being rehearsed. Nothing is more inconsistent than a conductor's shouting directions at a chorus during the rehearsal of a very quiet choral work. Likewise, group interest and attention may be quickly lost if a conductor speaks slowly and softly while rehearsing a loud and fast choral work.

Consider now a few rehearsal pitfalls that choral conductors often fall into:

1. The music is repeated over and over with benevolent allowances for mistakes in the hope that increased familiarity will eventually eliminate the mistakes.
2. Every detail of choral finesse must be mastered as a chorus moves through a choral work phrase by phrase.
3. One specific detail is stressed to the neglect of all others. For example, good diction is emphasized, but balance of parts, dynamic variety, or rhythmic accuracy are not considered.
4. A haphazard approach that features a casual, almost careless, attitude by the conductor, which is reflected in the chorus and in performances that are perfunctory.
5. Every choral work is rehearsed in exactly the same manner so that the singers anticipate what the conductor will do as he follows a set routine.

No two choral works should be rehearsed in exactly the same manner. There must be a variety both of procedures and in the manner of communication. The entire approach should be consistent with the mood and

style of the repertoire being rehearsed. Thus, the following works should be rehearsed with different techniques: a Bach motet; an anthem by Purcell; a mass by Palestrina; an oratorio by Handel or Mendelssohn; a Brahms motet; a folk song arrangement; a contemporary choral work; and so on.

The tempo of rehearsing, like the tempo of the music, should relate to the style, the mood, the text, the composer's directives, the capability, size, and age of the group, and the acoustical environment of the rehearsal hall. Musical form can be pointed out to advantage in the learning process. It is often helpful to ask all parts to sing the melodic lines together in order to point out their similarities as well as their variations. Fugue subjects can be mastered quickly when everyone learns together what is basically the same. Rhythmic problems are also overcome more quickly by corporate involvement in the learning process. In addition to these advantages, the conductor is also keeping the whole chorus involved during the rehearsal. Those sections that lack security, courage, leadership, and sight-singing ability will learn more quickly and develop faster without the embarrassment of struggling by themselves while the rest of the chorus listens.

The choral conductor must cultivate the ability to detect problems quickly, and, with a resilience in coping with the unexpected, he must develop an interesting and a creative approach. He should discover early in his experience that refinement comes gradually, and he must not expect to accomplish too much too soon. For example, the pace of rehearsing must not be constantly interrupted at the expense of details or subtle refinements. Mistakes, after all, need not be completely eradicated in one rehearsal, and an inordinate amount of time should not be spent in correcting them. Several rehearsals are often required to consolidate corrections so that the *right way* becomes habitual.

Pauses in a rehearsal should have purpose. When the choral conductor stops a chorus, he should know what was wrong and how to correct the mistake. If an added measure of refinement is necessary, he must make it clear how to effect the refinement. Once again, it cannot be overly stressed that the exact manner of handling a pause will vary with each choral conductor. The danger of imitating and appropriating conducting techniques effectively used by others, but without one's own understanding, is ever present. Thus, the observation of experienced conductors must serve only as a basis for personal adaptation of what was done in relation to why it was done. In order to be ultimately effective, the adaptations must become *your own way of working* and thus the valid methods or techniques will eventually receive *your personal touch*.

The chorus must be trained immediately to watch the conductor and gradually enlarge the amount of eye contact as they become freed from looking at the printed page. This helps develop the important relationships between conductor and chorus: dependence, interdependence, and independence. The manner of communication between conductor and chorus

is different in the rehearsal from what it is in performance. The more efficiently a conductor rehearses, the less he will have to do in a performance. The longer a group rehearses, the less a conductor should have to do by way of communication either through words or through expressive gesture. As the performance nears, there should be a gradual diminution of helpful gestures, of vocal directives and demonstrations, and of interruptions. Emphasis should be on reminders conveyed through conducting. Thus, the longer a conductor rehearses a chorus, the less a chorus needs him, except for such reasons as providing a focal point, inspiration, and reminders of what has been done in previous rehearsals.

Great patience will be required in rehearsing. The conductor must learn to recognize that the difference of age, capability, and purpose will affect the momentum of rehearsing. These differences will determine whether the process and progress of preparation will be slow or fast. The speed of learning will be related to the age and the experience of the singers and to the degree of difficulties inherent in the music. The choral conductor must respond with patient understanding to the varying rates of vocal, technical, and musical development. He must be equally patient with the progress of repertoire appreciation and the singers' sensitivity to musical style. He should never forget that he has spent much more time with the music and with rehearsal analysis than the singers have, so that he is capable of moving at a faster pace than they are. Thus, these conductors should allow their singers the privilege of similar growth experience *during* rehearsals and not expect them to begin rehearsing at the conductor's level of understanding or proficiency.

The day-by-day routine of rehearsing will also demand much patience. The choral conductor must know not only what should be accomplished in a rehearsal but also how long it will take, with allowances for the unexpected. He will also need to be patient with organizational details, which are often more significant to the chorus than they are to the conductor.

PACE OF REHEARSAL

Reference was made earlier to the pace of the rehearsal. How a rehearsal is paced is extremely important, for the result can be fatigue or exhilaration. The whole rehearsal must have changes of pace (which depend on a variety of style in the choral literature), an alternation of the familiar with the new, a variation of tempos and dynamics, and a balanced relationship between the vocal demands involving volume, range, and tessitura. These changes will help keep the chorus alert and refreshed and will counteract mounting tension and fatigue. Limited disciplinary problems are another by-product. Each choral work rehearsed should have its own pace largely determined

by style, tempo indications, rhythm, and the like. Verbal directives and verbal demonstrations should be given within the rhythmic framework and in relation to the dynamic indications. Keep the momentum of a rehearsal going in relation to the tempo of the music, and the singers will be forced to remain alert, ready, and responsive. Sustaining the mood as it relates to the style also assists concentration.

The pace of a rehearsal depends on the frequency of pauses and interruptions, which have the potential danger of lengthy discourses by the conductor or conversations among the singers. Group conversations can be thwarted by a pace and a momentum that never allow time for such exchanges. If the conductor begins speaking immediately after stopping the choral sound, he will inhibit conversation within the chorus. He should speak right to the point with a minimum of words and not lose any valuable time. It is equally important that he talk to the chorus while it is singing. Directions and corrections can be given in this manner and be more meaningful because there is an immediate relationship between what was done and what was said. Singing with the group can also save time when the singing is a good model. However, singing with the group should be employed sparingly lest it become a habit and lose its purpose and significance. Some choral conductors spend more time talking than the chorus does singing; other choral conductors sing with the chorus so frequently that they rarely hear the sound of the chorus. This imbalance between singing and talking suppresses the possibility of a well-paced rehearsal.

Periodicity should also be avoided since this implies predetermined pacing that cannot be varied. Vital pacing is the result of the conductor's reaction to mistakes, accomplishments, peaks, climaxes, and so on, each of which appears in rehearsals irregularly and often unexpectedly. Such pacing will also disclose a conductor's attitude toward the learning process and the developing of refinement. Does he know how much to expect from the chorus in rehearsal and how far to go in the process of refinement in one rehearsal? Does he know how to let a chorus and a choral work mature? The answers to these questions affect the pacing of a rehearsal.

HUMOR IN REHEARSAL

Humor is of great consequence in maintaining a well-paced rehearsal. The choral conductors who look on humor with disdain are at the opposite extreme of those who rely on humor to the surfeiting point. Excessive and uncontrolled use of humor or the lack of humor with insistence on sober propriety are equally abhorrent. Conductors frequently say the wrong thing at the wrong time, employ a double entendre or a spoonerism, and experience other slips of the tongue; the conductor who is not pompous will quickly learn how to use such episodes to his advantage by permitting himself and the choir to enjoy what has happened. Failure to take advan-

tage of this potential humor can be devitalizing to a rehearsal. There are also those conductors who recognize the importance of humor and collect anecdotes, jokes, and "clever phrases" so that they can use them at the right time or on the right occasion. Some even plan their use at a specific point in the rehearsal. Of more genuine significance is the use of humor that is personal, local, "in-group," unplanned, improvisatory—based on what has happened in the rehearsal. It may have only momentary pertinence that in retrospect is forgotten, but such humor contributes to the pacing of a rehearsal since it is generated by it. This use of humor can reinforce corrective measures and vocal demonstrations or can assist in the understanding of style or mood just as much as it can disturb them. Every choral conductor is responsible for controlling the use of humor: He should know when and how to encourage as well as stifle it. If he is not humorous by endowment, he should solicit help from those in the chorus who have such talent. Every choral group will have at least one singer who can provide this assistance. Never try to mimic a professional comedian or the way another conductor uses humor. Again, **BE YOURSELF** and work with humor in *your own way*, which is actually what the chorus would prefer anyway. It is amazing how frequently moments of humorous relaxation are followed by a resurgence of interest, energy, and involvement. When properly identified with the pace of a rehearsal, the use of humor is never a waste of time! Humor is one of the forces at work in *group dynamics*.

GROUP DYNAMICS

The importance of group dynamics must not be underestimated. The success of any rehearsal depends much on the role the conductor assumes, his self-image as a person, as a musician, and as a conductor, his attitude toward the group and its purpose, his personal relationship with the individual singers, and his approach to the rehearsal. It also depends on the group's sense of identity as a choral organization, their attitude toward each other and toward the conductor, and the acceptance of their responsibilities during a rehearsal. Although many conductors and choruses do not realize it, the success of their rehearsing together will be related to their attitudes toward other conductors, other choruses, the people who make up their audiences, the composers whose music they rehearse and perform, and the standards of choral excellence they seek to maintain.

INTERACTION

Although the conductor is the prime mover, the interaction of conductor and chorus determines group morale, collective musical and technical discipline, and artistic refinement and growth. It also determines expanding

interest in choral repertoire, its study in rehearsal, and its performance. He can be dictatorial or resort to friendly persuasion. He can be patient and persevering or restless and easily discouraged. He can be hypercritical or appreciative of achievement. He can indulge in frequent displays of temper, or his demeanor can be well adjusted and modulated. He can be a stoical disciplinarian, or he can control the chorus with benevolent authority. He can remain aloof from the group, or he can be open to their reactions, ideas, feelings, and preferences. In addition to the interaction between the conductor and the chorus, there are also important interactions between the conductor and the sections of the choir, as well as between the conductor and the individual singers, the conductor and the accompanist, the chorus and the accompanist, one section and another, and each section and its individuals. This interaction between individuals of the choir affects the quality of the rehearsal and the deportment of the group. Many choral conductors have difficulty understanding what leadership involves and are insensitive to a balance between reproach and commendation.

DIFFERENCES OF CHORAL GROUPS

The differences of various kinds of choral groups also affect the group dynamics of a rehearsal. Since there are women's choruses, men's choruses, mixed choruses, concert choirs, pop choirs, church choirs, civic choruses, children's choirs, youth choirs, adult choirs, large choruses, and chamber choirs, there will be differences in age, experience, personnel, purpose, and repertoire. Conductors of these various choral groups must approach them with a difference in pacing, humor, and general attitude. A select college choir can rehearse at a much faster and more demanding pace than the average volunteer church choir. The humor employed, or even expected, in a rehearsal of a men's chorus will be quite a contrast to what is heard in that of a rehearsal of a women's chorus. The manner of correcting mistakes and the discipline differ as the conductor works with choruses of different ages and experience. The terminology and jargon used by the conductor must be related to each group, and in some instances, such as a choir of music majors, he will be understood only by that specific group.

Every rehearsal demands a high degree of concentration on the part of conductor and singer, and the interaction between them is important to maintain this ingredient. All rehearsal procedures should assist the continuity of concentration. Loss of concentration upsets rehearsal momentum. It is always difficult to regain momentum and concentration, and the rehearsal time that is lost can be extensive. In some rehearsals, a singer's span of concentration will be very short, while in others an hour will pass in what seems like ten minutes because of the extended span of concen-

tration elicited. In either instance, the span of concentration will be dependent upon the interaction between conductor and chorus.

It is imperative that the rehearsing of a single choral work be organized as carefully as the total rehearsal. When a chorus turns to a choral work for the first time, the conductor should introduce the work with great care. Some pertinent information on the history, style, composer, poet, or source of the text should be presented in a manner that is appealing, informative, and succinct. Any additional information may be shared subsequently, for the conductor should never deliver a lengthy musicological lecture to his choir. Interesting information, properly spaced, will increase the choir's depth of understanding of and appreciation for the work, but often the conductor can let the choral work "speak for itself." Every conductor hopes that the chorus will share his same interest in and enthusiasm for the repertoire he selects, but he should be aware of the fact that the response will be both positive and negative. A negative reaction might suggest to the conductor that he reconsider his selection or, quite the contrary, that he must not lose confidence while the chorus becomes familiar with a work that may not have immediate appeal but will grow on them.

REHEARSING ONE CHORAL WORK

It is wise to sing through a new choral work from beginning to end with reasonable allowances for mistakes. The chorus should hear the musical sound from beginning to end, even if it is far from the sound expected in public performance. A gradual approach to musical details may have the advantage of arousing interest, but it also has pitfalls. For example, too much time can be spent on an early section of the choral work at the expense of a later section that may also be difficult and demanding. Previous study of the score should help the conductor anticipate how the chorus will progress. Before the first reading, he should analyze the form of the work phrase by phrase and then after the first rehearsal note carefully where the trouble spots occurred. In the rehearsals that follow he should begin with the section that is most difficult and work from there to that which presents little difficulty.

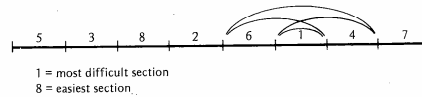


Figure 2.4

To make this clearer, the diagram in Figure 2-4 shows how a choral work can be sectioned from beginning to end. After acquiring some security in the section designated as most difficult (1), move on to 6 and 4 and bridge them with 1. Then move on to 2 and, using the same process, bridge with 8 and 6. Connect 2-6-1 and then 8-2-6-1-7. Move on to 3 and connect with 5 and 8. Then connect 3-8-2-6, 5-3-8-2-6-1, and finally 5-3-8-2-6-1-4-7, as the whole work is put together. The advantages of this procedure are as follows:

1. Most of the rehearsal time will have been spent on the difficult sections.
2. The conductor has avoided the pitfall of "getting stuck" in the difficult sections.
3. The easier sections receive the proper amount of attention and time.
4. The total work and its formal organization are mastered more easily and understood more quickly.
5. The amount of rehearsal time involved in preparing the choral work for performance is shortened.

USE OF PIANO AND INSTRUMENTS

At this point, it seems appropriate to discuss the use of a piano and accompanist. The *a cappella* tradition, which enjoyed many years of prestige, has been supplanted by an interest in a more varied choral performance. Accompanied works may require piano, organ, brass, woodwinds, strings, percussion, or even band or orchestra. The piano may substitute in rehearsal for most instruments except percussion and is especially adaptable in substituting for the organ, brass, woodwind, and string sounds. Such keyboard assistance calls for an imaginative and skilled pianist. However, not every gifted pianist proves to be a good choral accompanist, since keyboard responsibilities in a choral rehearsal require ensemble techniques that differ greatly from those demanded for solo and recital performances.

ACCOMPANIST

Some choral conductors argue that the piano should never be used in a choral rehearsal. They emphasize the dangers of constant use, of complete dependency on the piano by singers, and of retarded sight reading. They also point to the differences between the tempered pitches of the sound produced by the piano and the nontempered pitches produced by the human voice. Most choral conductors recognize these dangers, but they would also add that, when used with discretion, the piano can be of great assistance. Excessive dependence on the piano in a choral rehearsal can be a detriment, yet this does not mean that, just because the piano is used, the singers cannot learn to hear each other and make efforts to produce a homogeneous ensemble sound through individual vocal adjustments as

they follow the conductor's directives and demonstrations. The vocal sound is primarily the result of vowel formations and as such is much more varied than the sound of the piano. Thus, the singers should not listen to the piano as musical sound to be imitated (when it is doubling the voice parts and not contributing an accompaniment) but should merely let this sound be a helpful reminder of pitch and rhythmic accuracy. When the piano does not function as an independent accompaniment, it should be used sparingly and then only as a valuable assist in speeding up the learning process.

The accompanist must be a facile reader. He should be able to play with ease from the open choral score, especially when a piano reduction is not provided. The ability to play from an orchestral score and to provide a continuo part from the open score is also helpful. Working from vocal scores with piano reductions of orchestral parts, the choral conductor and accompanist should study the orchestral score thoroughly and mark the piano-vocal score in accordance with important instrumental parts. The accompanist should carefully prepare his accompaniments ahead of time so that he makes a minimum of mistakes in rehearsal. He should be able to follow the conductor's directions and learn to anticipate the conductor's actions and reactions. He should mark the score at the spots where the conductor has asked for specific assistance or support, where problems occur, or where the accompanist has significant responsibilities. The use of paper clips to section a large work will assist quick and easy reference.

The accompanist must also be empathetic with the singers by breathing and phrasing with them, even thinking with them as they produce the vowels and the consonants, which are their musical instrument. He must likewise be as one with the conductor. Every choral conductor rejoices when he has an accompanist who almost thinks as he does during a rehearsal, who does not have to be told what voice parts need assistance, who is constantly alert to mistakes, who reacts intuitively to rehearsal procedures, and who can help momentum, interaction, humor, and so forth. The accompanist must also learn to play the parts a fraction of a second ahead of the beat in order to help the singers enter with rhythmic accuracy and avoid a late response. He should also be able to know when playing the voice parts in octaves will help the singers hear their parts more easily. It is an added bonus if the accompanist is capable of improvisation. Such skill can provide variety during the tedium of part rehearsal. He should also be sensitive enough toward the rehearsal momentum to know when to play and when not to play. It will be of additional help if the accompanist is gregarious, for the conductor can often use him as a foil in helping to relieve tensions that can build up during a rehearsal. For example, when used judiciously, repartee (of a respectful variety) between a conductor and his accompanist can be a most significant source of humorous relaxation. Of course, above all, the accompanist must be a good

musician who is capable of contributing his own dimension of artistry to both the rehearsal and the performance.

When other instruments are involved in a performance, it is essential to use them for several rehearsals prior to the final rehearsal in the concert hall. The singers need to hear and adjust to the sounds of the instruments, and the instrumentalists need to adjust to the dynamics and the balance of the chorus. Each group will need to note the slight changes in conducting techniques employed by the conductor as he coordinates the contributions of both voices and instruments to the total sound. It will be most helpful if the rehearsal hall provides adequate space for combining the two groups with a minimum of confinement or restriction. Working together in this manner is of special educational significance to school choral and instrumental groups. The costs involved when professional instrumentalists are used limit the possibility of attaining the balanced relationship so necessary between choral and instrumental forces.

REHEARSAL SHORTHAND

Like an accompanist, the singers should mark their own music and should be taught to do so even without being told. When a conductor does give special directions he should do so clearly, quickly, and in proper sequence so that the singers can easily follow him to the specific point or problem. He should take advantage of rehearsal numbers or letters when they are provided in the printed score, but whenever they are missing, he can determine his own system of dividing the choral work into sections under alphabetical designations and can also number the measures.

Mistakes in rhythm, consonant articulation, vowel production, phrasing, dynamics, balance of parts, and so on should be indicated immediately and marked with reminders. The choral conductor, however, must never overwhelm the chorus with a barrage of corrections. He must know which corrections are of primary concern and how others rank in order of importance to the rehearsal sequence. The chorus and the conductor should be responsive to what the composer or the arranger has added to a score by way of written directions, musical terminology, and musical signs or symbols. Obviously, they should be understood by all, and so the conductor is responsible for explaining less familiar musical terminology. These terms may be underlined, encircled, or highlighted.

A rehearsal shorthand has practical significance, it is not difficult to learn, and it need not be employed in exactly the same way by all singers. The most important consideration should be that the individual singer employ markings that he understands immediately and that remind him of what he is to do. A list of some marks that may be employed is given in Figure 2-5.

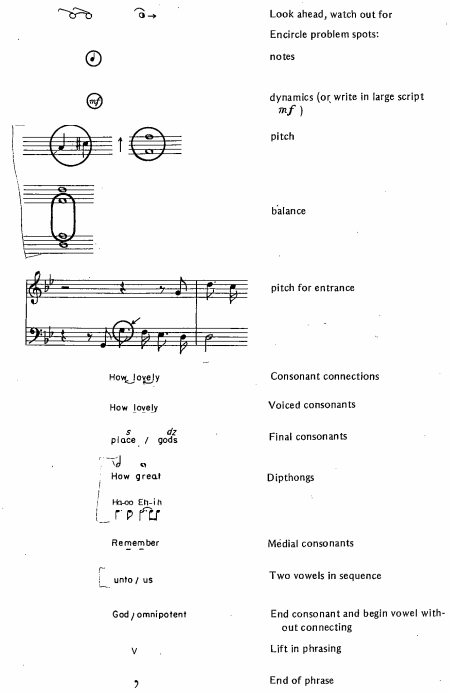


Figure 2-5

Figure 2-5 (cont.)

Some of the standard musical signs or symbols that singers should know and be able to add to the score as directed are given in Figure 2-6.

Figure 2-6

PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The listings in Figures 2-5 and 2-6 suggest that a conductor has pedagogical responsibilities in a rehearsal. There are many conductors who think of themselves primarily as teachers when they rehearse. Indeed, any performance by a chorus will reflect the conductor's effectiveness as a teacher during rehearsals. The sounds of his chorus will be a commentary on his ability to transfer his knowledge, to enlarge and refine his pedagogical techniques, to arouse and maintain dedication to vocal and musical disciplines on the part of the singers, to shape the syllabic and melodic nuances, to expand the knowledge and technical proficiency of the chorus, and to lead the group to artistic performance. When a foreign language is involved, the conductor, if he is not proficient in that language, may need to ask assistance from others. He can invite colleagues in the language departments to check phonetic accuracy, although more advanced choruses will frequently have members who are qualified to provide such assistance.

The conductor must not confuse teaching with lecturing. Although occasionally the information or the ideas he wishes to share with the chorus may be presented in the manner of a lecture, the choral conductor should then be brief, and, as indicated before, he must never indulge in lengthy discourses. Whatever a choral conductor presents to the chorus, he should present with enthusiasm, and he should develop an active imagination so that he can communicate with the chorus in different ways. An imaginative conductor will search for new ways of explaining, demonstrating, and sharing the old routine principles; in other words, a choral conductor must be willing to experiment as he teaches. The reactions and responses of the singers will help the conductor decide which of the new methods should be retained for refinement and which should be discarded as inconsequential. Thus, the teacher can learn from the student, although the singers are rarely aware of the fact that the conductor is experimenting.

THE CHORAL CONDUCTOR AS PEDAGOGUE

The word *pedagogue* is derived from two Greek words: *paidos*, translated as "child," and *agein*, meaning "to lead." A Greek *pedagogos* was actually a domestic slave whose responsibilities involved leading, caring for, and occasionally teaching the minor children. In English, however, we find that Webster's dictionary¹ defines *pedagogue* as "a teacher; especially a pedantic, dogmatic teacher." *Roget's Thesaurus*² is clearer when it relates *teacher* to "instructor, educator, preceptor, mentor, guide, docent, don, pundit, guru, mullah, master, and maestro," while *pedant* is related to "formalist and precisionist." Webster also defines *teacher* as "a person who teaches, especially as a profession," and *pedant* as "a person who lays unnecessary stress on minor or trivial points of learning, displaying scholarship lacking in judgment or sense of proportion; a narrow-minded teacher who insists on exact adherence to a set of arbitrary rules."

Some pedagogical responsibilities of the choral conductor have already been discussed briefly, and they are implied elsewhere in this chapter. However, some elaborations or additions might be helpful in considering the choral conductor as a pedagogue in rehearsal. While most conductors would admit that they have been pedantic with some frequency, all choral conductors would or should accept the fact that they are primarily pedagogues who instruct, educate, and guide choral ensembles. This is a tremendous responsibility that cannot be avoided.

In order to meet this responsibility, all choral conductors should be augmenting and refining their pedagogical skills constantly. They should enlarge their understanding of how to work with their singers as people and with the people in choral ensembles as singers. The rehearsal hall must not become another classroom where the conductor/teacher does more lecturing than rehearsing. Experience and experimentation will help every choral conductor achieve a balance between verbal and nonverbal communication in rehearsal. Singers expect their conductors to provide instruction in all aspects of performance preparation and musical development. Thus, choral conductors must be able to teach and, perhaps more important, must be willing to teach.

The choral conductor must never take too much for granted or assume that what is obvious to conductors will always be obvious to singers. Singers often need guidance in understanding the most elementary signs, notations, rhythms, terminology, and choral jargon. They are dependent on choral conductors for much more than meaningful gestures, although these are extremely important.

One of the most awesome pedagogical responsibilities all choral con-

¹Webster's *New World Dictionary of the American Language*, College Edition (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing House, 1962).

²Roget, *International Thesaurus*, 3rd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1966).

ductors face involves vocal pedagogy, which also receives some attention in this chapter. Although vocal training provided by choral conductors is somewhat different from that which singers receive in private studios, the technique employed in rehearsal should always be compatible with that used in the private studio. Many choral conductors merely provide a vocal model for their singers, who then try to imitate the sound of the conductor's voice. Conductors should be able to analyze and explain the vocal technique they are using so that the singers will approximate that technique in producing the sound of their own voices.

There are voice teachers to whom singing in a chorus is anathema. They think choral conductors ruin voices and that there is a difference between the vocal technique used in a studio and that used in a choral rehearsal. Choral conductors will have to admit that there is some justification for this conclusion, but many would also assert that the opposite contention is often just as valid. There should be cooperative interaction and respect between private voice teachers and choral conductors, who should be working together for the same cause: assisting the development and refinement of each human instrument.

In most choral ensembles, there is a mixture of singers who have had little or no vocal training and others who have had varying amounts of private instruction. While this is normal, the procedures of vocal pedagogy in a choral rehearsal are complex, since the two groups require different guidance, instruction, and paradigms. How each group is helped is most important and requires careful use of vocal terminology and wise allotment of the time involved. Obviously, more time will be needed to teach those with limited vocal background, although much of what is taught can be incorporated into rehearsal technique.

The choral conductor should help his singers utilize and enlarge the breath capacity that nature has provided each human being. Singers must be taught to develop and expand control over this capacity to provide vital support for tone production and good intonation. Singers must learn that proper use of resonance is related to proper use of the breath. They must be made aware of internal (personal) and external (auditorium) resonance, with the influence of the acoustical environment being of particular importance.

The role of diction is especially important. Choral conductors must require collective uniformity of vowel formations, which leads to a blend of the voices, better tone production and quality, more beautiful tone color, and more accurate intonation. Choral conductors must also assist correct consonant articulation so that there will be graphic clarity in singing a text, the tone will have better support and vitality, rhythms will be more accurate and precise, and intonation will be more secure. Finally, choral conductors must teach singers to understand that tone production will vary with the repertoire being sung. The tone production used for a Renaissance or a

Baroque choral work should be different from that used for a choral work from the Romantic period. Choirs should sing repertoire from all periods of music history. However, many choirs use the same tone production for all choral repertoire, with a tone quality or color that is monochromatic. This leads to the next pedagogical responsibility.

Every choral conductor should provide instruction in music history, but he should not lecture. The use of a wide variety of repertoire is essential and can increase the singer's interest in and appreciation of good choral literature from all periods of music history. Choral conductors should explain stylistic differences and varied performance practices in relation to the social, economic, political, and ecclesiastical influences on composers and performers. The interaction of music with the other arts in any given period will also require explanation. Choral conductors should be able to provide biographical data for composers and authors of texts. They should be able to elucidate the meaning of texts when necessary. They should share their understanding of the acoustical environments in which choral music has been performed in the past. Any choral conductor will need much practice and experience before he can balance the amount of time spent in sharing music history with the amount of time needed to fulfill other pedagogical responsibilities in rehearsal.

All choral conductors face the never-ending task of developing their singers' musicianship. Given the state of music education in recent years, this could be the most important pedagogical responsibility of all. High school and church choral conductors must compensate for what is no longer being taught at the elementary and some middle-school levels. College and university choral conductors might want to add that some high schools are also limiting music education. Choral conductors will need more patience and perseverance when teaching rudimentary disciplines of voice production, sight singing, intonation, balance of parts, balance of chords, rhythmic accuracy and precision, and so on. At times, each of these will involve variable employment of all the musical disciplines, which allows for divergent pacing or momentum in the sequence of rehearsing. Once again, experience and experimentation will temper any tendency to verbalize extensively while developing directives that are concise and comprehensible.

Choral conductors must teach singers how to work together by cultivating an understanding of individual and corporate responsibility. Singers and conductors work together and for each other. Each singer is dependent on all other singers to provide correct contributions, just as each singer is independently responsible for providing these correct contributions. All singers must be taught to accept the musical and artistic guidance of the conductor in rehearsal and performance. Conductors, however, must realize that singers also have contributions to make in any rehearsal, resulting from their personal response to the music and texts as well as from the

stimuli provided by the conductor. These stimuli are both verbal and non-verbal. Verbal (and vocal) communication involves corrections, directions, explanations, and demonstrations. Some conductors are reluctant to demonstrate because of real or imagined vocal limitations. They forget that it is the correctness of the demonstration that is important and not the quality of the voice. Other conductors talk too much, though all conductors have more to share with each added year of experience. Every conductor must guard against attaching undue importance to that reservoir of accumulated knowledge and must not be tempted to take more rehearsal time than necessary when sharing what he has learned. Nonverbal communication involves body language, facial expressions, and conducting gestures, each of which must be purposeful, related to the music, restrained, and never expansive to the point of calling attention to itself instead of to the music.

The ultimate pedagogical contribution every choral conductor should make is to inculcate in all singers the love of singing and of working together on behalf of the choral art. The sharing of that love and the results of that work during a public performance or a worship service brings an added dimension of fulfillment to both the conductor and the singers. During the performance, the choral conductor is joined by the singers in accepting an additional pedagogical responsibility: educating as well as entertaining an audience in a concert and elevating the sense of participation in the drama of worship in a church service. Audiences and congregations enjoy hearing familiar repertoire more than they do unfamiliar. Yet, as was posited before, every choral conductor should provide a balanced exposure to choral repertoire. The subtle differences in the performance of that varied repertoire may not be as obvious to the average listener as conductors might wish, but it is important that those differences be heard even if they are not comprehended. All the work on vocal technique in rehearsal should present the human voice to an audience or a congregation in a way that displays its beauty, its variety of tone color, and its expressiveness. If English is sung, English-speaking listeners will expect to understand the text, and most of them will certainly find that some choral ensembles are easier to understand than others. They may not know how that was accomplished, but they will understand that some effort was expended to make the text discernible. The subtleties of good intonation, balance of parts and chords, balance of dynamics, and so forth will also be appreciated more than understood, because the listener senses a greater ease in receiving the music that the singers and conductors are sharing. The ultimate pedagogical encounter of conductor and singers with the listener will involve inculcating in the listener the love of the choral art. A listener's appreciation of what is involved in performing choral music may be a by-product.

Any consideration of a choral conductor's pedagogical responsibilities can never be complete, nor can these responsibilities ever be completed. They are part of the never-ending process of choral education, musical

development, and artistic refinement to which all choral conductors should be committed as long as they serve the choral art.

LEARNING BY LISTENING

The chorus must be taught to listen. The act of singing requires that the singer listen to his own voice, even though he will never hear it as others do, and to those around him. He must place his emphasis on good tone production, blend, balance, intonation, vowel formations, consonant articulation, dynamics, and phrasing. The choral conductor should encourage the singers to listen to the sound that the score solicits before attempting to reproduce it. Hearing the pitch ahead of time in the "mind's ear" results in better intonation and assists sight-singing proficiency. The singers should also be taught to listen to the music's harmonic, contrapuntal, and rhythmic activity, and to be aware of the contour of verbal and melodic phrases, in their own as well as the other parts. Since vocal scores contain all the parts and usually an accompaniment or a piano reduction of instrumental parts, singers have a great advantage in that they can see as well as hear the contributions of other performers while the instrumentalist only sees his own part.

The conductor must also guide the singers to an awareness of the variable acoustical environments. They should learn to adjust their voices and appreciate their choral environment, whether it be in a rehearsal room or a concert hall. Of course, none of this will be possible if the singers have not been taught to listen to the conductor when he speaks or demonstrates and to watch his gestures express the music he conducts. Once he has established this liaison, the responsiveness of the group will depend on his effectiveness as a teacher. There will always be a few conductors whose native endowment includes pedagogical aptitude, while other conductors will need to work diligently on acquiring and cultivating teaching skills.

CORRECTIVE PROCEDURE AND DEMONSTRATION

One of the teaching skills is a knowledge of how to introduce, develop, and complete a rehearsal procedure or routine. For example, when correcting a rhythmic mistake, a choral conductor may know what should be done, but in attempting to correct the mistake, he may alienate the chorus by his manner or by spending an inordinate amount of time or by not appreciating the necessity of gradual mastery. How a corrective procedure is introduced can determine its success or failure as well as the response of the singers. How a corrective measure is developed can make it a tedious

or an exhilarating process. How the corrective procedure is closed can establish a recognition of need for additional work on the problem, create the sense of failure and frustration, or produce a feeling of satisfaction and achievement.

Demonstration is another important part of a conductor's pedagogical responsibility. The generous assortment of tape and phonograph recordings of choral works can be used in demonstrating style, performance practices, tone production, and other attributes of choral performance. The emphasis might be either on exemplary models or on a careless choral performance. Taping during rehearsal can also provide the conductor and the chorus object lessons in which the chorus demonstrates to itself what the conductor prefers or dislikes.

The choral conductor must be willing to use whatever potential he has in demonstrating for the group what he wants to hear from them. The use of his own voice is especially valuable. He can demonstrate good or poor vocal technique, correct or incorrect vowel and consonant production, proper and improper use of breath, accurate and faulty rhythm, subtle or meaningless nuance and phrasing, and spirited or ineffective projection of style or mood. It will be necessary for the conductor to mimic what he does not desire to hear so that the chorus can easily observe the difference when he provides the contrasting demonstration of what he prefers. The conductor must not be reticent in personal demonstration. While a well-trained voice is an asset, the purpose and the quality of demonstration is more important. The point can be made with modest vocal abilities, but any self-consciousness will limit the effectiveness of a demonstration involving mime. He must "let himself go" in order to accomplish the desired results in a choral rehearsal. He can use movements associated with the dance to assist the shaping of phrases, the contours of melodic lines, and the mood of a text. In his evocations or verbal demonstrations, the imaginative use of metaphor and analogy can increase depth of understanding.

Use of individual singers for demonstration can be as dangerous as it can be helpful. Great care must be exercised in singling out any singer for this purpose. The choral conductor must know which individuals he can turn to and which ones to avoid. Their demonstration should always be pertinent and preferably have an impersonal quality; that is, there should be no excessive reference to a highly trained voice or to a singer with vocal limitations. The demonstration by an individual singer must never result in embarrassment, and it should always involve the possibilities for a successful and satisfying contribution to the purpose of the demonstration. Such demonstrations by chorus members can have an impact on the group if they proceed skillfully. Conductors themselves demonstrate so regularly, and in some cases so profusely, often in exactly the same manner, that such a diversion can be very meaningful.

WORKING WITH VOICES

Vocal demonstrations reflect the conductor's understanding of the human instrument. No choral conductor will ever know all that can be known about the human voice, but this fact should not deter him in seeking to enlarge his knowledge and understanding. His background must include private vocal study requiring of him the refinement of technical disciplines and the development of his own vocal potential regardless of its possibilities. It is additionally important that he understand the techniques of vocal production as they apply to different voices and not only as he has learned to apply them to his own instrument. The material covered in Chapter 1 should be recalled at this point.

In every rehearsal, a choral conductor must remember that he will provide the only vocal training most of the singers will receive—a tremendous responsibility that cannot be treated lightly. He must help these singers learn to use their voices correctly, to eliminate bad habits, to breathe, and so on. Although the fact that he is actually giving voice lessons when he rehearses should not be obvious to the chorus, the chorus members will appreciate what is taking place in their own personal vocal development. By the same token, when there is an absence of vocal instruction or an employment of a type of vocal guidance that asks for a production alien to sound vocal pedagogy, again the singers may not be aware of what is happening to their voices but will assume that such affectation and bad singing are normal. The absence of competent vocal pedagogy is usually the result of limited choral experience, no private lessons in voice, a solely instrumental background, or a generally weak vocal and choral background.

When there are chorus members who are studying voice privately, they should be able to recognize that the choral conductor thinks like a singer, that he is empathetic with what is involved in voice production, that he attempts to assist and to augment the vocal training received in the private studio, and that he desires to help and not inhibit the singer. The conductor's explanations, demonstrations, and vocal demands should always be consistent with what the voice student encounters in a competent private studio. To do otherwise is to add weight to the argument that there is a radical difference between solo and choral singing. Most certainly, a choral conductor can help or hurt the human instrument in a choral rehearsal, but so can the voice teacher in a private lesson. The choral rehearsal is not inherently bad for the singers and their vocal development. How much a choral conductor understands about the voice, however, and how he works with that understanding is of ultimate consequence and concern. He must, therefore, constantly seek to expand his knowledge through continued study.

Singers as a group have less musical training and technical proficiency

than instrumentalists because it is possible to begin the study of an instrument many years before it is advisable to study voice privately. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compensate for this difference. This does not mean that singers are less musical, less intelligent, less sensitive to musical stimuli, or less capable of artistic performance; rather, good choral performances simply take more rehearsal time than their instrumental counterparts. In addition, instrumental conductors can rely on preparatory instruction and private practice outside the rehearsals. This advantage, added to the opportunity of beginning technical instruction at an earlier age, saves much instrumental rehearsal time. By contrast, singers even without this early training receive little or no technical guidance outside the rehearsal. Therefore, because the human voice is the most complicated of all instruments, time must be allotted in each choral rehearsal for vocal training and development, which the conductor must provide.

The choral conductor must never forget that the human voice is more easily strained and fatigued than the lips, fingers, and arms used in instrumental performance. Excessive repetitions and drilling in rehearsals can be dangerous. The choral conductor must be most careful about demanding too much volume too soon, especially when the drill involves cleaning up rhythmic problems or inaccuracies in the parts. Drills can be developed that accomplish the desired results without taxing the voice. For example, when working on the parts, the chorus can sing on *loo, lah, lah*, or any other contrived syllable, and master intervals without using their full voice and without the complications of singing the text. This procedure not only provides a welcome contrast in tone production, but it also allows the singers to concentrate on the specific problems to be overcome; that is, they do not have to divide their attention by reading notes and words at the same time. As another example, a choral conductor can provide relief from singing when working on rhythm by having the singers speak the words in relation to the note values in the music. Good singing is always more of a mental than a physical effort. A chorus member should be taught to think before he sings and then to listen critically to his singing. This process must not, of course, be stressed to the point that he becomes self-conscious about vocal production; rather, the emphasis should be on concern for self-improvement, for as the individual singer improves, so does the whole group.

USE OF THE CONDUCTOR'S VOICE

A few final words about the conductor's use of his own voice should be added at this point. It has been previously stated that vocal demonstration by the conductor is important and that he can use his own voice effectively regardless of his native endowment. He should never forget, however,

that the singers in a chorus will have a tendency to imitate the sound of his voice whether that sound be good or bad. Many conductors sing with the chorus so much of the time that they cannot concentrate on a critical appraisal of the chorus; that is, they cannot possibly hear their singers as they should. However, a choral conductor can often help his singers mold a phrase more quickly by providing the model as he sings along with them—as long as he does not overdo it.

Many of the rehearsal procedures that a choral conductor uses to work on the development of good vocal technique involve diction. A choral conductor can use various ways of establishing correct vowel formations and precise consonant articulation. In most choral literature the variety of sounds produced by the human voice emanates from the phonation of the text on pitches prescribed by the composer. The duration and the range of these pitches are more varied and extensive than those used in normal speech. Thus, the words must be sung with great emphasis on clarity and precision so that the listener can understand them easily and so that the relationship between text and musical setting can be enhanced. Through explanations, demonstrations, and conducting techniques, the choral conductor can guide the singers to a common delivery of syllabic stress and duration. He will need to explain to the group that it is necessary for every singer to contribute uniform vowel sounds, carefully articulated consonants, and well-modulated verbal and melodic nuances. Only then will the chorus be able to sing a musical phrase with correct vocal technique and to mold and shape the contour of the melodic lines with verbal nuances and dynamic gradations, in keeping with the style of music being presented. The success of this process depends on how the singers respond to the stimulus and guidance of the score and the stimulus, guidance, sensitivity, and imagination of the conductor. Quite frequently, the singers add their own dimension to that of the score and the conductor, and this in turn arouses in the conductor an expanded imagination. This reciprocal stimulation must not be overlooked. Finally, his conducting gestures must clearly indicate the interpretation of the text and music so that there will be uniformity and precision in the singing.

There is a host of choral conductors who will argue that there is much choral music in which the text is inconsequential and the musical ingredients are paramount. This may sometimes be true, but vocal and choral music is a consequence of the text (unless a text has been added to music that was originally written without words), so that, in addition to the appeal of the music itself, there is an added essential dimension when the text is heard. Dynamics of music should be understood as complementary, not supplementary, concerns, and, thus, the rhythmic features must be understood not as ends in themselves but as essential parts of the whole mosaic of syllabic sounds related to note values. In many instances, the rhythmic problems are primarily related to faulty articulation of conso-

nants. Exploitation of Dalcroze eurhythmic principles can be of great assistance in establishing rhythmic accuracy. Talking and singing while walking relates the kinesthetic experience to sound duration within a specific rhythmic framework. Snapping fingers, clapping hands, patting of the hands, and bodily movement can also be incorporated in rehearsal procedures that seek to secure accurate rhythm by correlating the syllabic sounds with the note values.

It is dangerous, however, to use the text constantly in any rehearsal, especially when working on refinements that are not related to diction. Continuous use of the text leads to a sense of familiarity that can weaken the crispness and precision in articulation of consonants and accuracy in formation of vowels. Singers often think that they are delivering a text with clarity and sensitivity when they are actually obscuring it. The choral conductor must be a severe critic, but the longer he rehearses the same text, the more he runs the danger of imagining that he hears it distinctly, even when in actuality it may be diffused. He must respond to the diction of his chorus like an objective listener in an audience who is hearing the text for the first time.

INTONATION

The text can also be used to assist good intonation. Naturally, there are other factors, such as posture, fatigue, weather, humidity, atmospheric pressure, acoustical environment, and poor ventilation, that also affect pitch. Strict reliance on the piano accompaniment can also lead to faulty intonation. A slow tempo makes great demands on breath support to secure and sustain pitch, while a fast tempo requires quick and accurate shifts from one pitch to another. It is also exceedingly difficult for a choir to sing a succession of notes on the same pitch, especially when there is great variety in the sequence of vowel sounds. Pitch problems are often the result of poorly or incorrectly produced vowel sounds. Thus, the choral conductor will need to stress correct vowel formations not only for the sake of clarity but also to help intonation. Good intonation can also be assisted by careful attention to ascending and descending intervals. Singers should be taught to think wider intervals on ascending intervals and to sing shorter intervals when descending. They must be trained to listen carefully, to hear augmented and diminished intervals, and to hear their own part in relation to the others. They should be made aware of chordal progressions, where the parts are going, and how they move. Rehearsal techniques can help the chorus hear ahead of time the next sound they are to produce. Homophonic music is best used in developing this ability. The music should not be sung in strict time, but each chord progression should be sustained until the singers have time to think ahead to the next chord. Eventually

the chord progression can be taken at the regular tempo, and the intonation should be improved.

Other procedures can be used to combat and correct faulty intonation. For example, the conductor can change the key of the choral work by raising the pitch a half- or a whole-step. This, for some strange acoustical reason, frequently produces a more secure intonation. Some choruses find it easier to sing with more secure intonation in certain keys. Radical changes in tempo can also assist better intonation by keeping the mind and body alert and thus curtailing nonchalance. This also forces the body to react with immediacy in order to produce the vocal sounds within the changing tempos. Having a chorus stand often helps, especially if they have been seated for a long period of time. (The conductor should, in general, require frequent changes in body position, with special emphasis on good posture when seated.) Occasionally, poor intonation becomes a fixation and the longer a conductor struggles to correct the pitch problems, the more he compounds the difficulties or confuses the singers. In such instances, it is often helpful to turn to another choral work, one that is quite familiar and easy for the chorus to sing or one that requires drills that do not involve intonation as a major concern. This period of contrast, by concentration on another choral work providing other problems, can then be followed by a return to the previous work, with the frequent result that former problems of intonation have disappeared.

RHYTHM

Rhythmic problems are often diction problems and, as such, are related to poor consonant articulation, to incorrect duration of vowel sound, and to rushed diphthongs. Musical ideas are framed within organized time; there is a sequential movement of these ideas in sound that connects the sounds of previous moments to those of the future. This sequence has been ordered by the composer, and the conductor must see to it that the sequence is orderly. He provides the control, and the chorus must accept the rigorous discipline he demands during a rehearsal while he seeks to obtain the proper length of vowel sounds, the proper duration and precision of consonant sounds, the subtle nuances of a syllabic sequence, and the reproduction of melodic lines with the contours prescribed by the composer. Repeated drills stressing vowel duration, precise articulation of consonants, and the cadence of diphthongs should always relate the note values and the syllables with the note values to which they are assigned. The choral conductor must never forget that even experienced and well-trained singers will need surveillance. They often think that they are producing clear diction when they are not, and they also forget that the possibilities for inaccuracies are multiplied by the number of singers making up any chorus.

BLEND AND BALANCE

The choral attributes of blend and balance must also be developed in the rehearsal. In a select group, the choral conductor can almost predetermine the results through his choice of personnel who complement each other. All other groups will confront the conductor with myriad complications. Some voices are loud while others are soft, some are penetrating while others are subdued, some have a pleasing quality while others are harsh, some are flexible while others are restive, some are well modulated while others are raucous, some have a wide range while others have a limited range, and some are musical while others are not. The choral conductor must know how to take this "raw material" and mold it into a choral ensemble. He should use his knowledge of vocal and rehearsal techniques to achieve blend and balance. Blend will primarily be the result of refined vocal production. As the singers learn how to produce vowels correctly, they will present a more homogeneous section sound. Any deviation from correct vowel formation and production will distort the section sound and inhibit blend. The demands of range and tessitura are also factors that help or hinder blend. The choral conductor should know how to work the singers at the extremities of their range so that they are not overly taxed, and learn what adjustments are needed in order to maintain blend. He must also know that problems of range and tessitura affect balance. Thus he will need to dictate what must be done to produce a balanced relationship of parts by changing gradations of dynamic intensity. This can be done by altering the dynamics of each section, by deleting voices from the dominating sections, or by shifting voices from one section to another to increase the dynamic potential of the weaker section. If the bass part is primarily above the staff and marked *piano*, the basses can drop out and leave the baritones to carry the part. If the entire soprano section is too dominant, only the lighter first sopranos should sing. In contrast, second sopranos can help first altos, second altos can help first tenors, baritones can help second tenors, and first tenors can help second altos when sections require louder dynamic levels to balance with the rest of the chorus. It will be important to experiment in order to know how much to add and how much to withdraw from a section without hampering its sound. Without such experimentation, the conductor may be creating new problems in balance.

The choral conductor should also understand that chord structure affects balance of parts. The relationship of intervals making up a chord helps or hinders balance. For example, what is doubled? Where is the third or the fifth located and at what part of the range for that particular voice part? Are the altos below the tenors? Is the relationship of the outer voices close or distant? Or, what vowel sound is assigned to each section and how will these differences affect balance? These questions will have to be

answered by the choral conductor. His study of the score prior to the rehearsal should help determine what must be done to achieve balance; yet often the peculiar makeup of a particular chorus will require special adjustments to take care of unique complications. For example, the immaturity of basses will be more pronounced in some choral works, while it will be obscured in others. The choral conductor should share these concerns with his singers so that they will understand why he employs certain routines aimed at achieving a balance of parts and also so that the singers themselves will develop on their own a sensitivity toward the achievement of balance.

The singers should also be aware of the variable importance of vocal lines so that they will make the necessary adjustments in dynamics to allow important lines to dominate and thereby achieve proper balance with the other parts. This is especially important in nineteenth-century contrapuntal choral music. Again, it will be important to stress that each singer must listen to himself, to his section, to other sections, and to the accompaniment. The instrumental accompaniment must ultimately be balanced with the choral sound, and each of the following present different problems of balance: piano, woodwind ensemble, brass ensemble, string ensemble, percussion instruments, chamber orchestra, full orchestra, and full band. The choral conductor must prepare the chorus to sing with varying degrees of intensity that are related to the particular type of accompaniment; for example, there will be a difference between the choral tone required for a work with brass and that required for a work with a small consort of strings. When an instrumental conductor is to conduct the performance, the choral conductor should not make his singers fully dependent on him and his conducting but rather make it possible for the singers to respond to another conductor by training them in such a way that they are able to make necessary adjustments with ease and immediacy. When the choral conductor does conduct the performance, he can prepare his singers in accordance with his plans for orchestral-choral balance.

CONDUCTING TECHNIQUES

Reference has been made several times to the importance of conducting technique. It has been suggested that much of what is done in a rehearsal is ultimately dependent on how expressive the conductor is with his conducting gestures. Conductors are known for their personal idiosyncrasies, which often defy analysis and suggest hypnotic control. Some choruses seem to be able to sing in spite of what the conductor is doing on the podium, and yet there is always a relationship of choral sound to the physical movements by the conductor. Whatever he does, however, the

conducting gestures must be functional. They should be a sign language that conveys to the group what the conductor expects from them.

The conventional beat patterns that are generally used by conductors should be employed. There is no reason why a choral conductor should not use them; there are many reasons why he should—one of the most important being that they will help secure the rhythmic pulse. He should also know how to control cues and cutoffs, but he must understand that much more is involved than just the movement or gesture. Here is a list of what should be involved in a cue:

1. The cue must include an alerting motion that signals to the chorus that they should get ready to sing.
2. The cue must tell the chorus when to breathe and help them to do so rhythmically.
3. The cueing gesture must be related to the rhythmic pace of the choral work being sung.
4. The cue must provide a *point of reference* to which the singers react, and the conductor should time his arrival at that point so that when the singers react they will begin singing precisely on the beat. The conductor's movement to the point of reference will actually be ahead of the beat so that the singers will respond at the correct time.
5. The cue should indicate at what dynamic level the chorus is to start singing.
6. The point of reference should help the chorus begin singing on either a vowel or a consonant. Many so called *glottal attacks* are the result of the singers' response to a poor gesture used by the conductor at the entrance cue.
7. If the entrance begins on a consonant, the point of reference should help the singers differentiate between voiced and unvoiced consonants.
8. All of the above must be related to the style of the music.

During the rehearsal, the choral conductor establishes the effectiveness of his gestures for important cues.

When considering the responsibilities involved in a cutoff or release, most of the above can be applied, with the following modifications:

2. There is obviously no need to indicate when to breathe.
4. There must be a point of reference to which the singers respond by *stopping* the sound.
5. The cutoff or release gesture must be consistent with the dynamic level of the vowel sound in the final syllable so that when released the final consonant is not produced too loudly or too softly.

Points 1, 3, 6, and 7 are applicable except that the gesture finishes the sound in contrast to beginning the sound. The magnitude of the gestures involved in cues and cutoffs should be fairly large at first in rehearsals so that they will attract attention. As a chorus becomes more familiar with and responsive to the conductor's movements, the movements should become smaller and smaller so that the slightest movement will elicit the

response desired by the conductor. This rapport must be established during the beginning rehearsals.

The choral conductor must also learn to use his left arm in various ways to aid his communication with the chorus. It can mirror, supplant, supplement, or complement the right arm. It can be used for cues and cutoffs, for control of dynamics, and for molding or shaping of phrases. It must always be used purposefully and never call attention to itself through movements that are incongruous with either the music or the gestures generally associated with conducting. The choral conductor must use the rehearsal to practice this part of his craft, because without the response of the singers he will never understand how his movements must be adapted to a wide range of variations in order to guide and control the singers, and he will never acquire the highly refined sense of timing that is required for the movements to be effective.

SECTIONAL REHEARSALS

The rehearsal experience sometimes calls for a section to rehearse by itself. There are many choral conductors who consider sectional rehearsals a necessity and include them as a regular part of the rehearsal schedule. They believe that a sectional rehearsal will save time in full rehearsals because each section will have used such a rehearsal to help solve such problems as technical difficulties, note accuracy, intonation, and rhythm. Some choral conductors maintain that the sectional rehearsal helps group identity, esprit, and élan. There are other conductors, however, who do not consider the sectional rehearsal a necessity but maintain that it is a waste of time; they contend that it is best for the parts to be learned in relation to each other because intonation is primarily a chordal rather than a linear-intervallic problem. They also believe that rhythmic problems are frequently the result of an interaction between parts, so that the singers need to stabilize their own parts within the complex diversity of the whole; that since rhythmic problems are often related to consonant articulation, the conductor can more effectively correct the whole chorus in full rehearsal. The latter course of action saves time when the conductor supervises the sectionals (if any are held) and assures a uniformity of correcting procedures when he does not. If he does not supervise all sectional rehearsals, however, how can he be assured that everything he wants to do will be done and that it will have the same level of achievement he could obtain?

Every choral conductor will have to answer the following questions concerning sectional rehearsals: Will they be used regularly or only occasionally? Will they be routine or timely? Is there sufficient rehearsal time to justify using some of it for sectional rehearsals? Is enough space avail-

able? Will the conductor be able to indicate precisely what the sectional rehearsal is to accomplish? Will the sectional rehearsal save time for the full rehearsal? Is the conductor merely following a procedure he came to know when he was a singer in a chorus? Is the conductor scheduling sectional rehearsals because he thinks that the chorus in which he sang could have benefited from sectional rehearsals?

VISITORS

The choral conductor will also have to decide whether or not visitors are to be allowed to observe rehearsals. They may consist of parents and friends or other choral conductors who like to watch another conductor rehearse or who feel that a visit by their chorus to a rehearsal of another choral group has great educational value. If no visitors are allowed, the conductor must examine his reasons. Will visitors make him self-conscious? Will they embarrass the chorus? Will they upset his routine? Will they inhibit him and the singers? Will he and the singers have to worry about the impression they will make? Will the visitors understand why certain things are done and said? Will the visitors know how to conduct themselves during the rehearsal? Will they provide added motivation or distraction? Will the chorus be able to accomplish as much as it could without the visitors? Will the visitors hear the chorus and watch the conductor work at a time when both can be observed to their advantage or disadvantage? If he permits visitors, the choral conductor might find them more helpful than embarrassing. He must learn to go about his work as if the visitors were not there. His tactics should be the same, although he may feel somewhat restrained when disciplinary action is necessary. He may find, however, that group response is greater and the quality of performance much higher when visitors are present.

Visitors can also help a choral conductor view himself more objectively. Every choral conductor needs to do this periodically even without the stimulus visitors can provide. The tape recorder, as was mentioned earlier, can be used to help the conductor listen to his chorus more objectively. He can concentrate on what he hears—without the distractions of conducting. It will show him how he uses rehearsal time and how he sounds to the chorus when he speaks to them, demonstrates for them, criticizes them, corrects them, and compliments them. Videotapes can also be used by the choral conductor, which adds the opportunity to see himself—his movements, stance, conducting gestures and facial expressions, his reactions to the chorus and their reactions to him. Through this medium, a choral conductor can visit his own rehearsal; he can hear and see what the visitor hears and sees. He will be able to see himself objectively, and, by analyzing his procedures, he can help himself become a

better choral conductor and a more efficient rehearsal technician. Constant self-appraisal by a choral conductor is essential, but few conductors are able to do this without the assistance of tape recorders, for they provide an added dimension of critical appraisal by means of which the conductor can see and hear himself objectively.

POSTREHEARSAL REVIEW

After a rehearsal, every choral conductor should review what has transpired. He should examine what he had planned to accomplish and then objectively appraise what was actually accomplished. He must be honest in his evaluation of failures, which may seem to outnumber accomplishments on certain days. He must be ready to analyze those procedures that proved to be ineffective, why the chorus reacted as it did both positively and negatively, what procedures showed promise and why, and how effectively the rehearsal time was used. A conductor who does not do this never learns from his own rehearsal time. Most conductors would be surprised or embarrassed if they saw and heard themselves waste time, give incompetent demonstrations, use wrong procedures, overlook glaring mistakes, or fail to recognize significant refinements. When these have all been recorded on tape, the conductor will find it hard to believe what he sees and hears. Yet, he will profit from observing himself. Because of his total involvement in a rehearsal, a choral conductor is often oblivious to what in retrospect seems so obvious. Finally, a postrehearsal review, whether it be a videotape or purely reflective, should always include an inventory of what took place, but emphasis should be placed on matching accomplishment or failure with what any conductor would have the right to expect from a chorus at its particular level of choral experience and potential.

DRESS REHEARSAL

All rehearsals culminate in what is referred to as a *dress rehearsal*. On this occasion, the chorus has the opportunity to hear itself in the acoustical environment of the concert hall. The choral conductor will need to be sensitive to the subtle changes that occur naturally and to those that he will need to effect. Final adjustments of balance, refinements of phrasing, or changes in dynamics and tempo will be necessary in relation to the acoustical environment. These alterations must be minor, however, and must not represent a major deviation from what has been carefully developed and made routine during the weeks of previous rehearsal. Radical changes are dangerous, and the choral conductor must realize that he is taking a calculated risk if he asks for them.

The dress rehearsal is not like previous rehearsals. If it is, the conductor has been ineffectual and has not carried out his responsibilities in thoroughly preparing the chorus. At the start of a dress rehearsal, either the chorus is ready for a concert or it is not. Thus, this final rehearsal should be a time for reviewing what the conductor and the chorus are capable of sharing with an audience. It should be a time of both reaffirmation and confirmation. The rigorous disciplines of preparatory rehearsals should show their significance for the public concert, and the security of performance should attest to the validity of previous rehearsals. The chorus should not be overwhelmed mentally, vocally, or physically at the dress rehearsal, and there should be a minimum of starting and stopping, of preoccupation with details, of picaresque criticism, and of added directions. This final rehearsal should stimulate confidence and not destroy it.

It has been said that a poor final rehearsal means a good concert, the rationale being that the chorus, realizing that it has done poorly in the dress rehearsal, will be more alert and responsible during the concert. It has also been said that a good dress rehearsal can lead to a poor performance because the chorus will let down or will be too casual. Any chorus can be *underrehearsed* so that the concert performance sounds tentative and lacks security in technical details. The concert may not provide that final spark that brings off a polished performance; indeed, it may provide a spark that leads to disaster if the chorus has not been carefully rehearsed. A chorus can also be *overrehearsed* so that a concert performance lacks freshness, spontaneity, and enthusiasm. The chorus may have been drilled to the point where they react like zombies. If the conductor has planned his rehearsals carefully and has had a timetable for progress and refinement, the dress rehearsal should be the last step in the movement toward the climax achieved during the concert.

This final rehearsal is the time when the chorus realizes its capabilities and experiences an added or a heightened sense of involvement. If they are ready for this realization and experience, then they have been well prepared during all other rehearsals. If they are not ready, then it is too late for the conductor to recoup the time that has been lost.

In addition to musical concerns during the dress rehearsal, the choral conductor will need to attend to such matters as the use of risers and their placement, the use of chairs and their placement, the use of stands and their location if an instrumental ensemble is involved, the location of a piano, the type and variety of lighting, the access and egress of the chorus, and their attire and deportment during the concert. He should make a complete list of all that has to be done during the final rehearsal, and although much can be delegated to officers, committees, and work crews, he will need to supervise and double-check these details, since he will be held responsible for any obvious omissions. He should also prepare a list of final directions that have to do with concert arrangements, such as starting time, meeting time, attire, and so on. He should not leave anything

to chance and should welcome questions from the chorus if his directions have not been complete or clear.

The dress rehearsal must be carefully organized so that the time available is fully utilized, all the repertoire is covered, and sufficient time is allowed for the nonmusical details. To do otherwise not only wastes time and produces chaos but also shows disrespect for the time and energy that the performers are contributing. When instrumental forces are being used, the rehearsal sequence should be organized so that they may be called and used without much waste of their time. For example, if the brasses are used in only three choral works, these should be rehearsed first even though it may not be in the sequence of the concert. Instrumentalists should not be kept idle while the chorus rehearses unaccompanied choral works. This will be especially important when union instrumentalists are being used, for the conductor will need to schedule the sequence of a dress rehearsal most carefully in such instances so that money is not wasted in addition to time. A well-organized dress rehearsal that is conducted with efficiency and thoroughness will have tremendous psychological value for all performers as they move on toward the concert.

THE STIMULUS OF PERFORMANCE

As mentioned earlier, the concert appearance is generally considered to be the chief source of motivation for the chorus as for other performing groups. Every rehearsal is related to that peak of achievement which a chorus discloses during a concert performance; thus, every choral group needs the stimulus of public performance. It is important that the singers have the satisfaction of completing the process of technical preparation; in doing so, they can bear witness to the quality of preparation and to their growth as a choral group. In this way, as was also stated earlier, concert performances are like periodic reports on the status of choral artistry by both the chorus and its conductor. These appearances will also provide opportunities for the chorus and its conductor to demonstrate their ability to perform a variety of choral literature with stylistic sensitivity and accuracy. Every concert should verify that the chorus and its conductor are striving for continued development and refinement of technique, style, and musical knowledge.

A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS

A choral concert is a report of the progress made in rehearsals, and after its completion the chorus and the conductor should evaluate this *report* to the audience and ascertain if that *report* measured up to their expectations, if it proved to be an accurate summation of their preparatory efforts, and

if there was evidence of achievement or failure. The concert is not an *end in itself*, for the chorus and the conductor must profit from this analysis and continue to learn together more and more about the choral art. Thus, though the concert may be a goal that serves as an incentive, it is even more importantly one of a series of events in the total choral experience. The concert is a phase of a cyclical process: After the concert the chorus and its conductor return to the rehearsal room and continue this never-ending process of choral education, musical development, and artistic refinement.