



OMAHA SYMPHONY

Ankush Kumar Bahl, Music Director

CHORAL COLLABORATIVE BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Elijah, Felix Mendelssohn

Best Practices for Students

1. Have pencils at every rehearsal.
2. Use tabs on your scores to find movements quickly for a more efficient rehearsal.
3. For pieces in foreign languages, write in translations for every word.
4. Make use of all materials provided by the Omaha Symphony, including marked conductor and piano-vocal scores and diction guides. Familiarizing yourself with these documents will ensure you are ahead of the curve.
5. Listen to sample recordings, if not exclusively. Knowing the sound world that you are performing can make achieving those sounds much easier.
6. Revel in the experience by being properly prepared! Performing with professional musicians in a world-class venue can be thrilling, if your personal preparation is at a level that allows you to enjoy the journey.
7. For the dress rehearsals at the Holland Performing Arts Center:
 - a. Pencils are still required. Often changes or marks are needed even at these final rehearsals.
 - b. Be silent (especially during the tuning). It is respectful of the orchestra (and efficient).
 - c. Write down questions. There will be time with the chorus and Chorusmaster only to address any concerns.
 - d. Turn ahead to the next chorus entrance during solo movements. This will keep you ready for what is next, rather than following along with the soloist(s) which can lead to surprise entrances.

Best Practices for Directors

1. If possible, try to program selected movements from the larger masterwork on your fall concerts. This maximizes rehearsal time and ensures that some of the masterwork will be ready ahead of schedule.
2. Begin the rehearsal process with your favorite movement, or the most popular one. Rehearsing the most recognizable moment of a piece will immediately grab the students' interest. Or, if you decide to rehearse your favorite spot, your affection for the work as a whole will infect your singers as well.
3. Try to avoid rehearsing from the beginning of the masterwork to the end. While starting off on the best foot is a great idea, the end of the work should be equally compelling.
4. Rehearse movements at varieties of tempi. Though the marked tempi will be most likely to happen, often the hall dictates faster or slower tempi (not to mention the pedagogical benefits of rehearsing at slower and faster tempi).

5. Rehearse coming in and out of movements. Especially when choral entrances are in the first measure, knowing the preceding material is crucial for continuity, finding pitches, flow, etc.
6. Feel more than welcome to seek additional help from the Chorusmaster via email, text, or phone call, as they are there to offer any guidance you may require throughout the process.
7. If you are interested, what follows is a sample rehearsal process, taking into account which movements will need more work, earlier work, or detailed sectional work. This general path should keep you on track for Chorusmaster and Maestro visits.

Elijah, Felix Mendelssohn | Sample Rehearsal Plan

(flexible due to individual schools' other commitments and specific week for Chorusmaster/Maestro visits)

- Week 1 (Aug 19): **Movt. 1-** be sure to practice finding pitches and getting started at the beginning of the movement (coming out of the overture); also a great movement to emphasize shadow vowels (on d, v, b, g, z, etc. – NOT on ng, n, m, though)
Movt. 22- long and taxing movement that will need some strategic work, with multiple altered note values
- Week 2 (Aug 26): **Movt. 11-** TTBB chorus v. SSAA chorus sections (need well-balanced 8 part splits); Movt. 11 also has multiple altered note values in the marked score to be transferred and rehearsed; - focus on declamatory v. legato sections, making each distinguishable
Movt. 42- Final Chorus- fugue!
- Week 3 (Sept 2): **First week of Chorusmaster visits**
Movt. 24- Style work (space after dots, etc)
Movt. 29- most recognizable movement?; long legato lines
Movt. 38
- Week 4 (Sept 9): **Movt. 2-** with all recitative movements, getting in and out of choral sections will take practice
Movt. 34
- Week 5 (Sept 16): **Movt. 12**
Movt. 20
- Week 6 (Sept 23): **Movt. 10**
Movt. 13- multiple note value alterations
- Week 7 (Sept 30): **Movt. 19**
Movt. 23
Review/Catch-up for Maestro Visits

Week 7 (Oct 7): **First Week of Maestro Visits**

Week 8 (Oct 14): Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro

Week 9 (Oct 21): Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro

Week 10 (Oct 28): Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro

Week 11 > Concert: **Week of Soloist Visits**

Review as needed, and school-specific instructions from Chorusmaster/Maestro

Resources (available on our website):

- Reference recordings
- Rehearsal tracks