

Conducting Guidelines

Learn the basic conducting patterns, esp. 3/4 and 4/4. They frequently come in handy...esp. when you hear the chorus getting out of synch.

Aspects of solid conducting technique:

- Good posture/stance/center of gravity
- Stability of body parts/joints...don't give them anything to look at that doesn't have meaning in the delivery of the phrase
- Legato delivery with isometric strength in the arms, hands and fingers
- Energized at all times
- Keep your distance...their sound won't grow if you're too close
- Keep your face animated...they'll tend to imitate
- Maintain a solid arm (esp. on louds) from elbow to fingertips.
- Fingers generally together
- For maximum effectiveness use the "Power Box" as a guideline...
- Your most effective conducting is done within these boundaries:
 - no higher than your eyes
 - no wider than where your arms normally hang at your sides
 - no lower than the line created when your arms are bent at the elbows and the forearms are parallel to the floor

Avoid...

- successive conducting moves that repeat in the same spot...these generally cause the singers to "chew" or bounce their sound.
- mouthing the words
- cueing choreo moves
- "whiplash" body movements...moving body parts are distracting to the singers
- constant knee bending...again, a distraction
- lifting heels off the floor at the beginning of song or phrase...distraction and loss of overall strength
- "soft"/floppy wrist...doesn't reflect the energy you want your singers to use in their sound; can also be the cause of synch errors
- any motion that does not have a specific purpose

Dynamics

- Softs are generally conducted in a smaller area and close to the chin
 - Use the hands and fingers
- Louds are generally conducted in a larger area near the waistline
 - Use the arms and hands
- There should be a difference in the “look” of your hand/fingers between
 - soft (gentle curve to the fingers) and
 - loud (solid line from elbow to fingertips)

Consider conducting the vocal production once the singers know the song:

- palate lift
- head tone
- resonance
- dimension
- crescendo/decrescendo
- texture: velvet/spikes
- feathering

Consider conducting the breaths and the breath timing rather than “cutoffs.”

Artistry and finesse are generally accomplished with the hands and fingers rather than with the entire arm.

“Choreograph” your conducting. As you move your singers through the learning stages of a song, be aware of any conducting moves you use that result in good vocal production... then include them in your conducting plan for that song.

Get help with your conducting from the risers:

- Find a chorus member on each end (esp. for a large chorus) of the risers who can give feedback on clarity of hand position from her (side) perspective.
- Find a chorus member in the center who can give feedback on overall technique.

NOTE: Unless invited by you, none of the above input should be done during rehearsal.

Have yourself videotaped from the center riser to analyze later.

Above all, HANG IN THERE!!!

