

# AUDIO PRODUCTION SCRIPT

No.	Topics	Narrative	File Name	File Size
1.	Routine	<p>The model for our problem-solving routine is taken from Barbara Brinson's choral rehearsal flowchart. Brinson's thirteen-step chart is intended as a guide for developing rehearsal techniques and listening skills. However, since our purpose focuses primarily on problem solving skills, we will incorporate only a portion of her chart.</p> <p><b>[BRINSON'S COMPLETE FLOW CHART]</b></p> <p>Six steps comprise the problem-solving routine used in this program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. ISOLATE the problem area,</li><li>2. IDENTIFY the specific problem,</li><li>3. DIAGNOSE the cause of problem,</li><li>4. SOLVE the problem,</li><li>5. place the problem back in CONTEXT,</li><li>6. and provide FEEDBACK to your singers.</li></ol> <p>Before we see how the routine works within the context of a choral rehearsal, let's review each of the steps separately.</p> <p><b>[SIX STEP ROUTINE]</b></p>	routine.mp3	2.49 MB
7.	Isolate	<p>You will initiate this step once you have listened to your choir sing and determined that there is a problem. You may not know exactly what is wrong or even where the problem lies, so your first step is to try and figure out just where the problem is occurring. By isolating specific areas you simplify the amount of musical information your ear must process, thus making it easier to pinpoint exactly where and what the problem is.</p> <p><b>[GOAL]</b></p> <p>At this point you're not trying to do anything more than figure out where the problem lies. While this sounds fairly simplistic, in reality it can be more complicated, especially for beginning conductors. Think about what has to occur in order for your choir to perform a given passage correctly. First, they must sing the correct pitches, rhythms and text underlay. Articulation and expression markings must be observed, and the text must be correctly pronounced and clearly articulated. All this must be done while producing a balanced, blended, and healthy choral sound. That's a lot to listen for. So, the first step towards solving the problem is to recognize where it happens and obtain a rough idea</p>	isolate.mp3	6.88 MB

		<p>about the nature of the problem.</p> <p><b>[STRATEGIES]</b></p> <p>The following strategies will help you to isolate the problem. Single out a specific voice part or target a single musical aspect. For example, asking the tenors to sing their part alone or having the choir chant or clap the rhythm allows you to focus your listening on one element. It may take several successive tries before you are able to zero in on the specific problem. As you ask your singers to repeat a particular segment you will find it helpful to refine your isolation technique by focusing on smaller and more specific components. For example, the first time through you might listen to the sopranos alone as they sing a short passage. The second time, you might listen to them chant rhythms using text (eliminating pitch), and the third time listen to them clap the rhythm (omitting text). This would be a logical sequence to follow if you suspect the problem to be rhythmic in nature. As your error-detection skills improve, and they will with practice, you will be able to pinpoint the problem with increasing speed and accuracy, thus decreasing the need to use these isolation strategies.</p>		
8.	Identify	<p>In many respects, this is really a further refinement of step one, isolating the problem. In fact, these two steps often occur simultaneously. As you listen to a section sing a particular musical passage, you will be listening <i>for</i> a musical problem. Sometimes the problem is readily apparent, it is clear that the basses are singing an F# instead of the F natural. At other times, you may have been quick to discover <i>where</i> the problem occurs, but need repeated listening to figure out specifically <i>what</i> the problem is. In this case you will want to continue to use isolation strategies to help you identify the <i>specific</i> problem.</p> <p><b>[GOAL]</b></p> <p>If isolation doesn't reveal the specific problem, it may be because the problem occurs only when certain parts or components are combined. For example, the altos and the tenors may be able to sing their parts fine alone, but when asked to sing them together, they fall apart. In order to identify the specific problem, you could ask them to sing their parts separately, listening to be sure they do so</p>	identify.mp3	4.66 MB

		<p>correctly (ISOLATE), then ask them to sing together, this time listening for places in the segment where they seem unsure or perform incorrectly.</p> <p><b>[STRATEGIES]</b></p> <p>Once you have identified the specific problem you are ready to move onto the next step. It is important to make sure that you have really identified the <i>specific</i> problem (i.e. “the sopranos are singing an A# instead of the A natural in the final cadence” versus “somebody’s singing the wrong notes somewhere in this section”). The more specific you are about the problem, the more accurately and efficiently you’ll be able to diagnose and fix it.</p>		
9.	Diagnose	<p>At this point, you have isolated the musical passage in which the problem is occurring and you have identified the specific problem. You know where and what the problem is, now you need to figure out what is causing the problem and then how to fix it.</p> <p><b>[GOAL]</b></p> <p>To determine the cause of the problem, you might ask yourself the following questions: <i>why</i> might your singers be having difficulty? What is causing them to perform hesitatingly or incorrectly? Are they confused about what part they should be singing? Are they not using proper technique? What do they need to know or do in order to correct the problem? For example, if the sopranos are late for a key entrance could it be because they are taking too long to breathe or because they are confused about how their part fits rhythmically with the other voice parts? If the tenors and altos are unsure about their pitches, could it be because of an unusual voice crossing or is it because of the previous key change?</p> <p><b>[STRATEGIES]</b></p> <p>Sometimes putting yourself in their shoes will help. In doing so, however, it’s important to remember that your singers may not have the musical skills or intuition that you do. Just because <i>you</i> can sing this passage doesn’t mean <i>they</i> won’t have trouble with it. Knowing your singers’ capabilities, their strengths and weaknesses will better enable you to quickly diagnose the cause of any given problem. If the tenors are going flat while sustaining that high</p>	diagnose.mp3	8.01 MB

		<p>G, perhaps it's because they are not using the right amount of breath support. On the other hand, it could be that you didn't have enough tenors to balance the ensemble and asked some of your baritones to help out, in which case the higher pitches may simply be out of their range.</p> <p>Another complication can arise from the fact that some problems may be caused by multiple factors. In this case you'll have to decide which is the most likely cause, attempt to solve it, and then systematically address the remaining problems. Some problems are complex and will require a variety of strategies and repeated practice before they are fixed.</p> <p>Diagnosing the cause of a given problem can be one of the most challenging and frustrating aspects of rehearsal. Of course, your effectiveness at accomplishing this step will depend on your how well you know the score, understand appropriate vocal technique and are aware of your singers' abilities. As you become more experienced this step will become easier. In fact, many expert conductors are able to instantly isolate, identify, and diagnose the cause of a given problem the first time they hear it. You can enhance your ability to be successful at this task by thoroughly preparing the score and developing your understanding of pedagogical principles.</p> <p>[TIPS]</p>		
10.	Solve	<p>You've isolated the problem, identified the specific problem, <i>and</i> diagnosed the probable cause, now you have to fix it.</p> <p>[GOAL]</p> <p>First, you need to communicate the problem to the singers: "Choir, you are not singing the dotted rhythm correctly, you're not holding onto the dotted note long enough." Second, you need to devise a strategy for fixing the problem. Depending on the complexity of the problem, it may require several steps, a combination of strategies, and repeated practice.</p> <p>[STRATEGIES]</p> <p>For example, if the group is performing the dotted</p>	solve.mp3	4.06 MB

		<p>rhythm incorrectly, you may want to approach the solution in the following manner: First, communicate to the choir the specific problem: “You’re not holding the dotted note long enough”. Second, demonstrate the correct way to perform the rhythm. Third, ask the choir to perform the rhythm correctly. This may take several tries. To keep the group focused and insure that they understand the desired response, you might ask a certain section or individual student to perform the rhythm for the rest of the choir to evaluate. Fourth, ask the choir to perform the rhythm correctly, then <i>incorrectly</i> followed immediately by the correct performance. Sometimes we have a better understanding of what to do when we know what <i>not</i> to do. By using this technique you enable the choir to hear and experience the targeted passage both ways while reinforcing the correct way. Once they can perform it correctly and <i>securely</i>, you are ready to put the problem back in context.</p> <p>[TIPS]</p>		
11.	Context	<p>This means performing the problem within the appropriate musical context; for example, if you isolated the rhythm to fix a rhythm problem, now you must sing the passage with the correct pitches and text to ensure that your singers can transfer the correction to the music.</p> <p>[GOAL]</p> <p>Listen as they perform the selected passage, if they do it correctly you’re ready to move on to the next step. If not, you’ll need to decide why it’s not fixed and return to one of the previous steps in the problem-solving routine (2, 3, or 4).</p> <p>[STRATEGIES]</p> <p>You may find that while your singers have effectively corrected the targeted problem there are other related problems within the selected passage that still need attention; in this case, go back to steps 2, 3, or 4 to correct them. Of course, if your singers’ attention, focus, or energy is flagging, you may decide that it would be more beneficial to move on to something else and return to this problem another day (see comments on Pacing).</p> <p>Once you are satisfied that your singers have</p>	context.mp3	3.63 MB

		<p>corrected the problem and have been able to successfully transfer the correction within the musical context, or if you decide to move on to something else saving this problem for another day, you are ready to continue with the final step in our problem-solving routine.</p> <p>[TIPS]</p>		
12.	Feedback	<p>Feedback is important; it is your way of letting the singers know whether they achieved the desired response or not.</p> <p>[GOAL]</p> <p>Of course, you'll be providing your singers with feedback as you work to solve the problem; however, once you've completed the problem-solving sequence it is helpful to give your singers <i>summative</i> feedback regarding their performance. Did they fix it or not? Are they on the right track? Are they making improvement? What still needs work?</p> <p>[STRATEGIES]</p> <p>If they didn't fix the problem you will want to let them know what still needs to be corrected but don't forget to commend them for their hard work. While it's important to be truthful with your singers, it's also important that they feel positive about the time spent working toward solving a problem. You can couch your criticism in positive terms, for example: "Our intonation is still not where it should be, but thanks to your hard work we've made some progress— we'll address this next time." If they sang it perfectly, a simple thumbs up gesture or single word of praise may be all that is necessary. With a mature or experienced group, no feedback may be needed, simply proceeding on to the next musical segment is indication enough that the problem was fixed.</p> <p>[TIPS]</p> <p>In summary, the following six steps work together to create a routine for solving musical problems: isolate, identify, diagnose, solve, context, and feedback. The routine will prove most valuable if you use it as a guide to help structure your thinking regarding the solving of musical problems. By incorporating and practicing this routine over time, your ability to make "in flight" decisions should</p>	feedback.mp3	3.98 MB

# AUDIO PRODUCTION SCRIPT

The Choral Trainer  
Module 2: Tutorials: Part I

		improve. To see how this routine works in practice, continue with the Tutorial, Part II.		
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