

Score Preparation

- ◆ Careful study of the score prior to rehearsal will help you anticipate potential problems
- ◆ If you suspect a certain passage may prove difficult for your singers, you can incorporate remedial strategies for fixing the problem into your rehearsal plans ahead of time
- ◆ By targeting problem areas before rehearsal, you can rehearse these sections first; if there are no problems, great, move on to the next area; but if there are problems, you're prepared to fix them
- ◆ Much frustration and wasted rehearsal time can be prevented by careful score study

Use of Questioning Skills

- ◆ Sometimes conductors will use questioning skills to engage their singers in the problem solving routine
- ◆ By asking your singers to identify and diagnose a given problem you are helping them to develop their own musical problem-solving skills (critical thinking)
- ◆ Engaging singers in the problem-solving process not only helps develop musical skills, but encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning
- ◆ Sometimes singers are more aware of where they are having trouble and why than the conductor; two (or more) heads are better than one!

Pacing

- ◆ Understanding of and sensitivity to appropriate pacing of your rehearsal will certainly impact the amount of time spent on a given problem
- ◆ If you find your singers are losing attention because you've spent an inordinate amount of time on one particular passage, you may want to move on to another section or piece even though you have not corrected the targeted problem
- ◆ Likewise, you may choose not to address a certain problem because you know you don't have the time, energy, or knowledge to effectively work towards a solution

Feedback

- ◆ Feedback can be positive or negative; positive feedback, however, is more desirable; even criticism can be worded in a positive manner; it's important that you are honest with your singers – don't tell them they did a great, when they didn't, they'll appreciate your honesty if it's presented in a positive and encouraging manner
- ◆ Specific feedback is more helpful than nonspecific feedback; "Basses, you nailed the pitch on the high D, but forgot to sustain the tone for the full note value" is more helpful than "Basses, good job; not perfect, but better"
- ◆ Feedback should relate to the task you asked the students to accomplish; if you were working to solve a pitch problem, providing feedback on pronunciation may be inappropriate unless it impacts their ability to correct the original pitch problem.