

This new feature hopes to provide you with refreshing tips to sing to the best of your ability during rehearsals and performances. Nothing is that new under the sun. I am sure that you have heard from your conductor about posture, breathing, vowel, production etc... before today.

With this in mind, let's look at ways to come to the first fall rehearsal "chorally" present and mindful. Even before this anticipated first rehearsal happens, you could:

Sing your favorite excerpts from the last concert to hear your voice again and attend to how it feels in your body. Are you out of breath? Which parts of your register are comfortable? Any parts of your range feel tight? Is your tone resonant as you sing these excerpts? Do you notice any body tension?

Now, where to begin to continue to develop your choral singing potential?

I suggest we begin with awareness. We are so involved making singing or conducting happen that it makes it challenging sometimes to have some mental space left to focus on awareness, i.e. what is really happening in my body while I am singing or conducting? To increase awareness, we need to identify what it is we do to enable us to change some habits in our music making. For example, to improve my conducting posture, I first need to feel how my body "holds itself" before I can modify any aspect of my posture. So, how about coming to the first rehearsal with the aim of developing a certain degree of awareness towards posture and breathing.

How do I stand? Using a "kinetic" scan inside myself, am I able to feel that I am well aligned and tall? Solid on my feet with my weight evenly distributed, quiet lower back (resisting the temptation of arching) aligned with the back of my heels with my hip joints on top of my flexible knees? Shoulders resting in a dynamic position to give my chest and the shoulder blades space and freedom? Is the highest point of the back of my head (of the occipital bone) aligned with my upper back and resting on my tension-free neck? I like to feel rooted in the bottom half of my body and yet light, free and open in the top part of my body, as a tree, more or less, solid and yet with flexible and supple branches.

Furthermore, Where is my breathing taking place? In the upper chest or in the lower part of the belly? Is my body responding exactly to the guidance of my conductor? While I am focused letting the lower ribs e-x-p-a-n-d my rib basket (Yes! More flexible than the rib cage!), did I let go of the great feeling of "tallness" and openness I had moments ago?

CHORALICIOUS

SLICE NO. 1

Increasing our awareness is certainly within reach. I give my self one point at a time to focus on and I increase my kinetic palette gradually. Enjoy your first rehearsal and make sure you bring, along with your scores and pencil, your body and breathing apparel!