

Performance Improvement Brainstorming Session

Directors and Visual Leaders

2017 Fall Music School Region #16

Group 1

- Tag quartetting
- Move rows down
- Singing in a Circle
- Divide in half and perform for one another
- PVI's (Personal "Visual" instruction)
- Be specific to the person (take your culture into account)
- Section practice—Its ok to tell people where they need to improve—don't avoid it
- Duet the Sections—all can learn from this
- Mirror room
- Do choreo a few sections at a time
- Reinforce the importance of authenticity and passion
- Tell a story

Group 2

As leaders we need to (ideas):

- Write each person notes saying why you appreciate the chorus members. This makes a person feel recognized and special that the Director knows you.
- Let members watch the others sing--1/2 chorus faces the other 1/2 chorus.
- Have guest come periodically to watch
- Learn what motivates each member—which of the pillars really matters to them?
- Build up section unity among members.
- Spirit of fun at the rehearsal—Don't be afraid to be silly together.
- Make your requests known—what will be happening on the next rehearsal? Get rid of the muddle ("Don't waste my time"—from the member's perspective)
- Make members feel appreciated even as you correct issues.
- Clarify changes and wishes related to music using medium such as e-mail, etc.
- Challenge members to use media tapes, etc. to hear themselves.
- Use visuals at practise—video-tape ourselves and provide others doing the moves etc. you want done (modelling).
- Incorporate music and action from the very beginning so be prepared before the members. (to be a leader, others must follow, but people will not follow a disorganized leader—leaders always have a direction they are going in.
- Go to members for their input re: costumes, sound, to investigate how they learn best so that you can provide the tools and learning tracks, visuals, etc
- Have a cheer for successes.

Group 3

- **Visual**—Break down the chorus into 1's and 2's (1's sing and 2's watch and give feedback and they take that input and perform again...then switch)
- **Visual**—Play a song like “How Beautiful You Are” Remove the garbage, junk and day to day hang-ups and then allow them to move freely without fear (something upbeat).
- **Vocal**—Play an audio of your song—discussing for example “When I Fall in Love”—Doris Day. Listen for the expression, the love and the emotion delivered in the line. Now try it.
- **Visual**—Play a recording of a song you are working on and get them to dance freely and in a way that expresses themselves. Director picks the people who are displaying the emotional or visual look that is desired. Bring them in front of the chorus and get the chorus to copy who they were being.... attitude, energy and freedom.
- **Vocal**—Small ensembles perform and get coached in front of the chorus—1 per week with time to prepare.
- **Vocal**—Spontaneous quartetting—Give them a # 1,2,3 or 4 with 10 minutes to prepare as a quartet on the song you were already working on—then they perform as a quartet in front of the chorus.
- **Vocal**—In a circle, one person at a time works on a vowel. Take a vowel and then one at a time get the members of the group to match that vowel one by one (adding in one voice at a time) and coaching them one by one if needed. Help them match vowels.

Group 4

- Circle exercises—everyone participate and everyone feels they can participate
- Warm-up activities—loosen the body, have a number of leaders who choose different styles of music and go through different stress releasing movements—10 minutes
- Starting warmups in the style of a song we are about to sing
- Do a relaxation exercise half way through the night
- Sing facing each other and give feedback to one another
- Sing in front of mirrors
- Performance chorus—small groups critiquing positively
- Perform in the community before chorus
- Listen to other artists singing our songs

Group 5

- Video-taping
- Mirrors
- Perform for each other being supportive and encouraging them to break out of their shell.
- Use small mirrors to focus on face and mouth
- Movement to enhance music and emotion and motion

Group 6

- Have one row at a time to sing while the other three rows listen and/or watch.
- Come off the risers—sing face to face in inner and outer circle to use more movement and expression—keep moving one circle to face more partners.
- Come off risers and find a partner (two people facing one another in lines—look at the floor and try to sound similar and blend)
- Rent mirrored room at a gym or bring mirrors to chorus and watch yourself

Group 7

- Encourage small ensemble participation
- Encourage risk-taking by members
- Give a song to small groups and perform in small groups on a show
- Provide opportunities for musical growth
- Take a portion of the chorus and have them perform the song—then gradually reduce the size of the groups
- Provide a coloured bracelet at the start of the night that corresponds to a skill area and then each week have the colour bracelet that associates to a skill area you want to work on (eg. Red Bracelet=Performance)
- Christmas chorus program
- Talent Lists—Collect a list of member talents to utilize

Group 8

- Make it fun and inclusive—all are able to do this, asking for help is ok
- Inspirational/Energetic/Upbeat
- Happy, Positive
- Think of the audience instead of ourselves
- Self-Evaluation/reflection ie. videotaping
- CPR—Commitment, Personal Responsibility
- PVI (Personal Vocal Instruction)
- Set tone (positive) and expectations right from the beginning and throughout
- Use coaches and choose the right coach for your chorus
- Be open to changes

Group 9

- Small groups—choose a song, change the words to make it a comedy and then perform it on a show
- Take a poem—divide into groups and break it down and then perform it.
- Drama (10 minutes) Groups of 5—Create tableaux in themes
- Split chorus in half—greet members across the floor in slow motion
- Sing and perform one on one

Group 10

- Back to basics—Vocal Production
- Think of the story—singing in circles, listen to each other
- Spread out in the entire room—sing to hear you and others
- Stand farther apart on risers—People fill in the space with sound
- Sing contest sets by section
- Section Teams
- Listen to all learning tracks of all parts—know your part in comparison to the other parts
- Mirror Room-practice
- Video of people
- PVI's—Encouraging people
- Freedom Visually and Vocally
- Give permission to drop out when needed—personal breath plan
- Be allowed to stagger breathe--Say not breaths in the entire song. Keep the song full and everyone has to find their own breath points.
- Stages of a song—learn notes, coaching, can sing song by yourself, on hard drive
- Choreo— (different ways to learn) Video-taping, printed material handed out, personal practice, the expectation that members will come to chorus having practiced

Group 11

- Retention
- Make them feel the musical line
- Influence them to do better
- Members want to be valued and validated (sincere genuine appreciation)—not necessary music/visual
- Ask question if a member is not up to snuff
- Encouraging singer driven chorus
- Explain why you want members to do certain things
- Build the trust and respect
- “We trust ourselves and each other”
- No hand-holding
- Explain, validate and let them fly
- Get prior buy-in
- Recognize people who want to be leaders
- See potential in people
- Have trust and commitment of members
- Need everybody on the same page
- Validate your members when they do well
- Allow them to sing freely (expression and freedom)
- Peer Listener
- Call it personal review rather than qualifying
- Additional choreo rehearsals

Group 12

- Smaller groups working on songs to perform
- Step outside comfort zone and try new opportunities—builds confidence (eg a different type of performance)
- Integrate and mix with other musical art forms/organizations
- Ask for feedback from the chorus and let them decide how they want to improve
- Ask for commitment from the first note
- Sing in a circle—mirror and see each other
- Put choreo video on youtube
- Change things up every so often (change riser rows, divide into groups)
- Double circles facing each other
- Quartetting/Octetting in turns
- Drama Exercises—Taking on a character to show that they can

Group 13

- Encouragement
- Getting to know members interests and talents
- Freedom—willing to be free and bring message across
- Sharing our music with the community (nursing homes, etc.)
- Everything we sing/say will lead to that connection with our audience

Group 14

- Video—to aspire to or not
- Characterization—using emotions ahead of time to prep
- Videoing themselves and doing a self-critique or in small section and self critique
- Practice at home
- Row by Row work
- Mirroring another person
- Watching the chorus from the Director's perspective
- Split chorus in ½ and sing to the other side an critique others
- Each small group takes responsibility to practice and perform a different song than the rest of the chorus to increase personal responsibility and teamwork
- Do a variety of songs just for fun as well as make a parody out of songs for comedic interp.
- Have fun together
- Open up power structure to allow all to contribute—stifle the “doers” from jumping in and taking over so that others can volunteer
- Faster understanding of different levels of commitment and needs by talking/socializing with members

Group 15

- Pull ½ the chorus off the risers and give feedback
- Honest criticism and being open to taking it
- Small groups breaking down chords
- Individual Quartets
- Double Quartets in a circle for expression, eye contact
- 2 lines looking at each other
- Small ensembles with section directors coaching a song before chorus and the group performs for the whole chorus that night. “Coaches” point out good parts and problem areas on a sheet that is only seen in their mailbox
- Passing Deadlines—and re-passing every year
- Passing via recordings—more accountable
- Section leaders stand up front and can listen to singers for passing

Group 16

- Section practice for unity
- Circle performances
- Separate chorus in groups (SWOT Analysis)
- Chorus members face each other mirroring each other's performing
- Drama—Improvisation scenes, express different emotions, people out of their comfort zones
- Visual one on ones
- Video-taping visual performance
- Focus on the positives
- McDonald's visual to help with reaching high notes

Group 17

- Form two rows and sing to one another
- Chorus turn in and pick a person to sing to
- Pick a fun song or a ballad that is familiar and use it for a warm-up
- One on one, or small group mentoring and use an experienced person as the leader—give a compliment
- Make someone feel special
- Make a connection with every person at some time with a positive comment
- Use a mirror at home and at rehearsal
- New member challenge