

Manager's Notebook – Chorus

1. Select an assistant manager. This is the person who will be assisting you during the audition day, assisting you with preparations for the Festival rehearsals, and assisting you throughout the Festival itself. When approaching an educator to be an assistant manager, make sure s/he can be available for all of the audition and Festival dates. It is **vital** that both of you are on hand at all times.

2. Present at least two conductors to the Executive Board for approval. Copies of the potential conductor's biography **MUST** be presented (make at least twenty copies for distribution).

- If you are unsure of viable Festival conductors, the Executive Board, the Choral Coordinator, past managers, or other colleagues may have suggestions. Contact these suggested conductors in order of your preference.
- When contacting potential conductors, make sure to note the Festival dates (both regularly scheduled and snow dates), site(s) of the Festival, and the compensation for conducting and reimbursement for travel expenses (contact the Chairperson or Treasurer for the latest fee schedule). The past programs of your group (available on the District website) should also be sent as a link to give your conductor an idea of the level of literature performed.
- **The conductor should be approved no later than the May meeting for Senior District and the June meeting for Junior District.**
- The Past Festival programs page on the District website contains all of the programs and conductors from the past several years. Conductors cannot be considered to conduct the same ensemble within five years for Senior District and four years for Junior District.
- Make it known to every potential conductor that several are presented and only one is approved based on the Executive Board's thoughts on who would be the best choice for the respective District ensemble.

3. Once a conductor has been approved, two program choices must be created and one of the two approved by the Executive Board. **This can be done at the same meeting as the conductor's approval (to save time with ordering music) or at the following meeting.** These programs should be labeled "preferred" and "alternative" and be representative of a variety of styles. Substitutions can also be suggested. Scores **MUST** be provided for the presentation.

- At least one selection **MUST** be from the District Library (online at the District website).
- Any selections from either program choice should not have been played within the last four years for Senior District and three years for Junior District.
- The length of the program should be approximately 20 minutes.
- Make sure that any non-District Library selections are still in print and can be ordered. If a selection is out of print, you will need to find, or ask the conductor

for, an original set(s) and may need to ask for photocopying permission from the publisher.

- Determine if instrumentalists are needed for any selection. You will be responsible for securing volunteers.
- The Senior District Chorus and the Junior District Treble Chorus are responsible for opening the concert with the National Anthem. This is not counted as part of the program but is necessary for your conductor to be aware of. Ask the conductor if they have a specific arrangement or if they are familiar with the ones that we have on file.
- It is a good idea for your conductor to review the Past Festival programs page on the District website for him/her to get a sense of the achievement level of the ensemble, thus proposing appropriate programs. You may also want to have the Choral Coordinator review the proposed programs for appropriateness for a District ensemble.
- The program should be approved no later than the June meeting for Senior District and the September meeting for Junior District. This will enable you to order the music before the auditions and ensure that we have the music to mail out as soon as the auditions are completed.
- Special considerations may need to be given for the Junior District male chorus depending on the makeup and needs of the group once determined at the auditions. An approved program may need to be revised.

4. Once the conductor has been approved, please contact the conductor and let him/her know that they have been selected. Please alert them to the fact that the District Treasurer will be contacting them with contracts. You will also want to ask them for all program information at this time, as well as a congratulatory/informational letter that they might want to have you include in the student packets.

- Send all contact information to the District Treasurer. Please include full name, mailing address, phone number, cell phone number, and email address. Keep a copy of this information for yourself in case of emergencies near the day of the festival.

5. After your program has been approved, order the music that is **not** in the District Library immediately from Blodgett's Music (737-1147). You may also reach Evelyn at Blodgett's Music via e-mail: blodgmusic@aol.com. The District will be billed for all purchases. For District Library selections, contact the District Librarian (listed on the Contacts page of the District website) to make arrangements to have the selections sent to you. Please order ten additional copies from the projected number of students in the ensemble. Past programs can give you a general number to project from.

- Please contact the District Librarian to determine that the number of scores in the district library is enough for the ensemble. If not, additional copies of the piece may be ordered.

6. Contact the Senior Festival or Junior Festival concert/rehearsal host(s) with any Chorus rehearsal needs. Indicate if percussion equipment is needed for any part of the program.

7. Obtain the following from your conductor as soon as possible and send to the program manager:

- Conductor's biography not to exceed 100 words
- Conductor's photo – Black and white or color is fine. A headshot is best. **DO NOT** take the photo from a website as the resolution will not be clear enough for the printers. JPG file is preferred.
- Accompanist biography – A short sentence about what and where they perform/teach.
- Manager's biography – A short sentence describing what and where you teach.

8. You may choose to have Blodgett's Music assemble the students' music packets themselves, especially if you are managing a larger chorus, or you may choose to assemble the music packets yourself. If you are having Blodgett's Music assemble the music packets, do not allow the store to photocopy any items, including scores or letters. You also need to provide them with student names, schools, and voice part as soon as the auditions appeal period is past. This can be obtained in an electronic format from the auditions coordinator.

- Please be sure to send a full packet of all music, including the District Library selection, to the conductor and the accompanist once music is assembled so that any discrepancies can be corrected ahead of time.

Packets will need to have the following:

- Music for all Festival selections
- Your manager's letter which includes a congratulatory statement to the student for being accepted into the Chorus, a brief biography of the conductor, a list of the music they should find in their folder, the regularly scheduled dates **and** the snow dates, times and locations of rehearsals and concerts, media outlets for postponement information, and concert dress. You will need to photocopy this letter yourself or let the Executive Board know that you need to have this photocopied. District letterhead may be obtained from the Chairperson.
- Full length mp3 files on CD or MIDI recordings to expedite music learning.
- Information on the sectional rehearsals at two high schools in the District to assist with music learning. This information can be found from the Choral Coordinator.
- The conductor is more than welcome to include a letter of her/his own to include expectations and specific practice directions.
- Senior District only: If already organized, include information on the sectional rehearsals at two high schools in the District to assist with music learning.

Following are details regarding concert dress, lunch at the Festival, and media outlets for postponement information. This information should be contained in your Manager's letter.

- Concert dress for boys: Black or very dark navy jacket (**for Senior District boys only**) and black or very dark navy slacks, long sleeved white shirt and tie, dark shoes (no sneakers), and dark socks. Students will need to come to the second rehearsal dressed in their concert attire.
- Concert dress for girls: Below the knee black skirt or dark pants, long sleeved white blouse, dark hose, and dark shoes (no sneakers). Students will need to come to the second rehearsal dressed in their concert attire.
- Lunch: Students need to bring lunch on both days. The site host(s) **MAY** sell snacks at rehearsal breaks. This varies from year to year.
- Bring a pencil!
- Bring water to hydrate throughout the day.
- Order forms for CD recordings of Festival concert (if available)
- Media outlets for Festival postponement: The District website (www.geocities.com/mmeawd/district) is the primary source for official news and information regarding cancellations and updates. Postponement announcements will also be carried on the websites for WWLP-TV and WGGB-TV. We will make every effort to put the announcement on the television scrolling list for these two stations.
- List your contact information in case of questions.
- In the event of a highly confident forecast for a snowstorm that would make traveling to the Festival site dangerous, every effort will be made to announce a postponement by midday of the Friday before the Festival to alert students and alter school transportation arrangements.

10. For the auditions, arrive for the first auditions in the morning and do the following:

- Assist the coordinators with any audition issues that may arise. Bring any discrepancies to the proper coordinator's attention **immediately** for resolution.
- Assist with tabulation in the tabulation room throughout the day.
- After all of the scores have been tabulated and entered into the auditions database, determine who will be accepted for the Chorus after discussion with the instrumental managers. All of you need to come to agreement on who should be accepted to what ensemble based on needs of each group, students' double and/or triple auditions, their preference of performing ensemble, and audition scores.
- Determine a cut off score for the District and for the All State recommendation (for Senior District only). This should be 25% from each audition room.
- Assist with the collation of audition result envelopes to be mailed to schools. If possible, collaborate with the Choral Coordinator to include information on the sectional rehearsals at two District high schools to facilitate music learning.

11. Immediately following the auditions:

- Directors have seven days (combined school and weekend days) from receipt of scores to appeal results. If an addition error has occurred which affects seating placement of a student or potential membership in the ensemble, a copy of the student's audition sheets **MUST** be photocopied and sent to the manager. The manager may then adjust the ensemble/section accordingly.
- An appeal for other matters may be sent first to the manager, then to the Chairperson for discussion within the original seven day time period. The Chairperson's decision is final.
- For Junior District male chorus: Consult with your conductor to decide if the original approved program will be appropriate for the auditioned ensemble. If necessary, present repertoire changes to the Executive Board for approval at the January meeting.

12. Once the appeals period has passed:

- All scores are final. Immediately send the student names, parts, and schools they attend to the program manager. This can be sent as a Word document or Excel file.
- If Blodgett's Music is compiling the student packets, send them a list of accepted students with names, schools, and parts.
- If you have compiling the student packets by yourself, attach labels of students to folders and give to your Gerry's Music Shop representative for distribution to area schools. The labels need to include the name, school, and part. The sooner this is done, the sooner students receive their music to practice.
- Determine if parts need to be split at times according to the repertoire (i.e. Soprano I and II, Alto I and II, etc.) and notify those students via music packets or school directors.
- **IMPORTANT: Music should be numbered and assigned to individual students.** A list that matches students to their corresponding packet and music **MUST** be created before music is sent out. This list is used to determine who does and does not return music after the Festival. Students who do not return music must be billed. Blodgett's Music will create this if you choose to have them create the packets. **Make sure to obtain/keep a copy from them when completed.**

13. Fill out the Fine Arts Center (FAC) tech sheet and check off your ensemble's needs on the form, including all necessary risers and piano. Follow the template for creating a set-up chart for the FAC Production Services staff and fax to the Festival concert host. If done on the computer, this may be e-mailed directly to the Festival concert services host. **This needs to be done shortly after the appeals process has passed.** If you have instrumentalists, consult with the concert services host as to what amplification may be needed.

14. Ask your conductor if s/he would like to have sectionals during the first Festival rehearsal day. Determine the number of necessary rooms and an ideal time to hold the sectionals. Inform the Chairperson of these details as soon as they are known. This needs

to be incorporated into the master Festival schedule. Start securing coaches for the sectionals before the Festival so these coaches can prepare accordingly.

15. Contact the District Librarian to arrange for black choral folders to be given to you for the concert.

15. Continue keeping in touch with your conductor regarding his/her needs, answer questions from directors, and continue to keep the Executive Board of your progress and to ask any questions.

- Before the first Festival rehearsal, create a seating chart that groups students by part and height. Students' heights should be listed on the audition results printout and on the Student Endorsement Forms. Arrange them in proper order for standing on risers. There are eleven sets of risers in the UMass Fine Arts Center. A chart can be made for students to find what area/seat they are sitting in.
- Devise a system for you to take attendance easily and quickly throughout the course of the day. We need to make sure that students are accounted for at all times. One idea is to have one central check-in location for attendance. Students can check in, receive a name tag sticker for identification, and proceed to their seat. You will need help from a few District members to make sure this runs smoothly.
- If you need instrumentalists, ask other District members if they would be interested in performing. The District will not pay for instrumentalists to perform. Using college students may be a possibility – this can be discussed with faculty from UMass Amherst.
- Invariably, students will ask to be excused from rehearsals for vacations, sports meets, concerts, etc. The signed Student Endorsement Form clearly states that a student who chooses to participate is promising to come on the stated dates for the entire duration. You should inform any student who asks that an unexcused absence will result in his not being allowed to participate the following year (whether in Junior or Senior). Students, through the sponsorship of their directors, may write to the Executive Board to secure an excused absence. The procedure is in the District Handbook on the District website and must be followed exactly as detailed for consideration to be given. If there are any questions regarding absences, please consult the Chairperson.
- Any student who withdraws prior to the Festival will be ineligible to audition for the following year's ensembles.
- If you will be having sectionals, be sure to have copies of each score for each sectional coach. It would also be nice to have a score for each piece for observing directors in the back of the rehearsal room.

16. After the Executive Board meeting on the Friday before the first Festival rehearsal, start to set up your ensemble with the help of other Executive Board members and your assistant manager:

- If you made a seating chart, put it in a conspicuous place for students to read.

- Make sure to have any extra Festival music with you in case students forget theirs.
- Work with collegiate helpers to move the piano and any other items for the conductor into place.

17. On the day of the first Festival rehearsal day:

- Meet your conductor and introduce him/her to your assistant manager.
- Direct students to locations for their personal belongings and instruments.
- Check students in for attendance purposes.
- At 9:00, introduce yourself, tell students to shut off their cell phones, take off hats, put trash in the proper receptacles, and state that any requests must be directed to you or your assistant manager. Introduce your conductor.
- **Absolutely no food or drink, other than clear liquids, are allowed in Bezanson Recital Hall.**
- Once rehearsal has started, check the registration desk for missing students. Consult their directors/chaperones, who should be on site, as to the reason for their absence. If sick, they **MUST** bring a note from a medical professional, such as their family physician or school nurse, to the second rehearsal. Make note of those who had unexcused absences. They will not be allowed to participate in the second rehearsal or concert. If necessary, call the students at their house with the number listed on their Student Endorsement Form.
- At the first break, inform students on where the bathrooms are and what time to be at their seat. Also, direct them to be respectful of other students and conductors rehearsing elsewhere. Supervise students with the assistance of other directors. Stress to students that CD recordings will be made of the concert. You should have order forms available.
- At lunchtime, tell students where to go, to put trash in proper receptacles, and when to return to their seats. Directors will supervise students. Help to expedite getting the conductor away from students to allow them the proper time to eat. You will eat with them.
- If you will be having sectionals, meet with your sectional coaches to tell them what to focus on and how much time they have. Each should have copies of the scores.
- Continue rehearsing with breaks as deemed necessary by you and the conductor.
- If there are any behavior problems, address them appropriately and be sure to inform the student's director/chaperone.
- After rehearsal is done, assist the site host with clean up of the rehearsal room and adjacent spaces. Collect any lost and found items.

18. For the second Festival rehearsal day:

- Direct students to locations for their personal belongings and instruments if the second site is different from the first. Remind students to turn off cell phones and take hats off.

- Secure assistance from District members who can help you with moving the chorus from the rehearsal area to the stage and help with lining up students in correct order as necessary.
- Strictly follow the rehearsal schedule. The time on stage for each group's dress rehearsal is one hour with fifteen minutes to get on and off. It's very tight and needs to be followed exactly. Help with set-up as necessary. During the rehearsal, go into the audience and assist the conductor with blend and balance issues. Once your time is up, you **MUST** leave the stage area so the next group may rehearse.
- At lunchtime, tell students where to go if this site is different from the first.
- Obtain the conductor's and assistant manager's addresses for her/his complementary CD recording.
- Before the concert, line students up in correct order with the assistance of District members in the hallway areas outside the Concert Hall. Check with the Festival concert host to make sure the rehearsal space can be locked for storage of personal belongings.
- Assist the set-up crew with setting the stage if necessary.
- After the performance, direct students to put their packets with music in the District Library bins. Clean up the rehearsal room with the assistance of the site host. Collect any remaining lost and found items and give to the Chairperson. Folders will also be collected.

19. After the Festival:

- Ask the District Librarian for the numbers for any missing scores. Correlate the missing parts to the proper students and inform their respective directors. If the parts are not returned by the end of the school year, send the proper information to the Chairperson and the Treasurer so the student may be billed.
- Keep the Student Endorsement Forms for one month after the Festival.
- Create a Final Manager's report for the Executive Board meeting following the Festival (February for the Senior Festival, April for the Junior Festival). The report must include the following:
 - Program and conductor
 - Thank you's to hosts, student helpers, and any others deserving them
 - Any general comments regarding the ensemble, students, and the conductor
 - Suggestions/Recommendations for future ensemble managers
 - Student attendance issues - this includes two categories of students:
 - Those that were absent due to illness and have sent you a medical professional's note stating such illness
 - Those that were disqualified from participating in the concert. Send the Chairperson a list of all disqualified students, including those who were disqualified from participation before the first rehearsal. In a separate e-mail/letter, send the Chairperson the addresses of the students as listed on your student endorsement forms and their directors.
- Keep the Student Endorsement Forms for one month after the Festival.

- The Treasurer will not pay the stipend for the manager and assistant manager until the Final Report is presented and filed at an Executive Board meeting following the Festival.

20. Give any necessary forms or information to the assistant manager, who then becomes the manager.

21. Relax and be proud of the hard work you have done!!!