

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CHORAL-WIND ENSEMBLE COLLABORATION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

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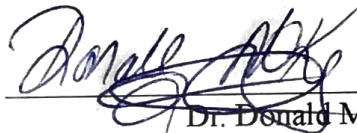
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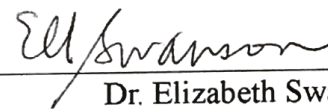
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Abstract

Comprehensive collaboration between collegiate wind and choral departments would be of substantial benefit to faculty, students, universities, and their communities at large. This includes modeling healthy project-based collaboration, exploring the wide range of wind-choral repertoire available, and forming a deeper understanding of both similarities and differences between areas.

The following work aims to explore the intricacies of collaboration—both the intent behind it, and essential elements for success. The author then offers tools to develop a common language between choral and wind conductors in the areas of vocal production, text, rhythm, timbre, balance, articulation, and intonation. Finally, based on interviews with five leading university wind and choral conductors, a guide for effective collaboration is presented. Key musical and logistical tools are provided for faculty to start a conversation, bridge perceived schisms, and be able to unite behind common goals.

Introduction

Ideally, higher education is a setting in which faculty are surrounded by diverse ideas, where they feel able to take creative risks, and where they have the opportunity to work together with talented colleagues. Unfortunately, this is not often the reality. The perceived separation that divides wind and choral departments, along with pressures of academia do not readily foster project-based collaboration.

Rather than accept this common situation, however, conductors should develop strategies for effective, inspiring collaborations. This project aims to provide such a practical guide. After considering the nature and value of collaboration, I explore the elements essential for successful collaboration and, finally, I provide a clear, practical framework for collaboration. Salient musical and logistical considerations are presented, based on my own experience, as well as the experience of five leading university wind and choral conductors. A key area of concern emerges: the necessity of developing a common vocabulary for choral and wind conductors in the areas of vocal production, text, rhythm, timbre, balance, articulation, and intonation.

It is integral that the profession consider collaboration as an element that is vital to our work, better preparing students for the exciting realities they face after graduation, and ensuring relevance in a rapidly changing world.

Part I: What is collaboration and why collaborate?

What is collaboration?

The act of working together to produce or create something is a familiar idea to many people, and surely to most creative individuals. Moreover, embedded within the definition of a performing artist, is the idea that not only do we constantly work together in group settings, but we become expert collaborators, working as a team on and off the stage. Daily collaboration does take place, yet the reality of what happens in rehearsals is sometimes less than collaborative. Truly collaborative models are simply hard to find. The traditional top-down approach such as the maestro whose interpretive decisions are best or the director whose individual creative vision will reap the most fruit is still the norm.

Moreover, creativity itself is not widely understood as a group effort. As Keith Sawyer explains, “we’re drawn to the image of the lone genius whose mystical moment of insight changes the world. But the lone genius is a myth; instead, it’s group genius that generates breakthrough innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”¹ After years of research on creativity, Sawyer came to realize that examples of radical discoveries, such as the airplane, email, and even the board game *Monopoly* emerged from “collaborative webs” instead of individual insights.

In a global world, we can look to many innovative companies who seem to be leading the push to further collaboration. In the past two decades, there has been a fast upswing of employee collaboration in corporate America—the 2016 *Harvard Business Review* reported that employees are spending as much as 80% of their time in collaborative activities. The *New York Times* corroborated this, stating, “teams are

¹ Keith Sawyer, *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017), 8.

now the fundamental unit of organization.”² It seems that everyone in the corporate world agrees that greater collaboration drives innovation.³

Why collaborate in academia?

What does true collaboration consist of in the world of higher education? A conductor might respond that if they are ideally teaching collaboration amongst the players and singers in their ensembles on a daily basis, why would they consider further avenues of collaboration?

Indeed, university professors have many reasons not to collaborate. The first is simply that often there is not an existing culture of collaboration in place. Dr. Rodney Dorsey, a wind conductor at Indiana University mentioned that he didn’t collaborate outside of the band department before holding his first Director of Bands position at the University of Oregon because the “mindset wasn’t there.”⁴ There is also the constant ticking of the tenure clock for junior faculty that insists upon a more single-minded approach to creative output. New faculty are under great pressure to get things done for themselves and their tenure files instead of thinking more globally, making room for collaborative projects in their busy schedules. Dr. Donald McKinney, the Director of Bands at the University of Colorado Boulder, says that junior faculty may worry about stepping on the toes of senior faculty members and, in general, have concerns about the politics of university music departments. He shares that, in his opinion, politics in academia is something that is not spoken about enough and, something about which junior faculty should be mindful.⁵

² Sawyer, *Group Genius*, xiv.

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Rodney Dorsey (Professor of Music, Bands, Indiana University), phone interview by author, Boulder, Colorado, February 8, 2019.

⁵ Donald McKinney (Director of Bands, University of Colorado Boulder), interview by author, Boulder, Colorado, February 13, 2019.

Despite the various challenges embedded within collaboration, it is clear that those who have reached out beyond their area believe it to be well worth the effort. McKinney says of collaboration early on in one's career, "I think it is vital for junior faculty to collaborate. What comes about in a healthy collaboration for the students, and for the visibility of that junior faculty member, is really important... It's important that they see [collaboration] as part of their profile, of reaching out into a larger institution, and...of the networking they have to do. I think it is something that all of us need to be doing more of."⁶ Director of Choral Activities at the University of Oregon, Dr. Sharon Paul, said, "when a collaboration goes well, it can be an extremely enriching experience for all of the participating musicians. I have almost always found it well worth the extra effort it takes to make things go smoothly."⁷

A final argument for collaboration in academia is the importance of a healthy model for young music educators. Whether or not the college has a large music education presence, a number of the young musicians playing and singing in ensembles will likely be teaching in a classroom sometime during their career. These students have the potential to be leaders in the future of cross-departmental collaboration if they are set up for success. Their undergraduate or graduate experience can be a laboratory for them to observe how to effectively collaborate between various ensembles, which they'll then be able to bring with them to their future communities.

They may be few and far between, but there *do* exist examples of healthy collaboration. At the University of Minnesota, Director of Choral Activities Kathy Romey, and her conducting colleagues have developed one example. Graduate conducting students earn a degree in Conducting, with coursework in their primary, secondary, and tertiary areas (wind, orchestral, or choral.) The conducting professors have co-taught seminars, they share their students, who also share an office, thus leading to shared concerts,

⁶ McKinney, interview.

⁷ Sharon Paul (Director of Choral Activities, University of Oregon), e-mail message to author, February 16, 2019.

and cross pollination of ideas and techniques. Romey says of the graduate model, “I think that this paradigm sets up an entire culture of collaboration.” She always has wind and orchestral conducting students in her choral seminars, which often leads to the graduate students themselves doing projects between their developing lower-level campus ensembles. Additionally, the faculty collaborate together with their ensembles on a regular basis. “Academic institutions are organized into silos,” says Romey. People are often afraid that “they don't have a good working relationship with a colleague or the opportunity to forge a relationship that would facilitate collaboration.”⁸

Companies, university students, and faculty alike create a more innovative and creative product, as well as a healthy model for future educators by collaborating.⁹ There is one problem: it seems that in fact, it is incredibly challenging to collaborate successfully.¹⁰

⁸ Kathy Romey (Director of Choral Activities, University of Minnesota), phone interview by author, Boulder, Colorado, February 20, 2019.

⁹ Rob Cross, Scott Taylor, and Deb Zehner, “Collaboration Without Burnout,” *Harvard Business Review* (July-August: 2018), accessed February 13, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2018/07/collaboration-without-burnout>.

¹⁰ Sawyer, *Group Genius*, 20-24.

Part II: Essential elements for successful collaboration

Throughout the following discussion, elements for successful collaboration will be broken down to serve as a guide for those wishing to reach outside their departments but unsure of exactly how to do so. I will use the word “project” to denote cross-departmental collaboration that has a clear start and end date, and that usually is based on a specific composition or set of compositions. My research, and collaborative performance experience, along with the insights of leading choral and wind conductors working within five American universities will provide a clear and accessible route to developing healthy collaborations between areas.

Before discussing the salient musical and logistical considerations, we will begin with the most important elements that must be present for healthy collaboration to take place.

Collaborators are intentional about exploring beyond the familiar

In a 2017 interview with *Classic fm* on his top conducting tips for emerging conductors, London Symphony Orchestra Music Director Simon Rattle says, “Listen to everything. Listen to all kinds of music. Read everything. Go and see any art gallery. Go and walk in nature. What I’m [actually saying] is the whole of life goes into music.”¹¹

It is very easy in the fullness of each semester, to get consumed with one’s own teaching and performance schedule. Additionally, in a profession where the expectations are to create a national and international presence through clinics, festivals, and guest appearances, there is little time left to attend our music colleagues’ performances, let alone branch outside the musical world into disciplines such as

¹¹Lizzie Davis, “Conducting Is Hard- It Doesn’t Get Easier: Simon Rattle’s Top Conducting Tips” *Classic fm* (September: 2018), accessed February 1, 2019, https://www.classicfm.com/artists/sir-simon-rattle/conducting-is-hard-advice-tips/?fbclid=IwAR0hip27Du3RCfZQbXNV7rRdmHNCcF3hkq3t-aOUz9qURprgl_sxrWdZ_w0.

theatre, dance, film, and visual art. However, if we are to continue to grow, be inspired, and inspire those with whom we work, it seems necessary to follow Rattle's advice and explore widely beyond the familiar.

Additionally, I have found it to be rejuvenating and reenergizing in a profound way. I remember as a third-year teacher in Englewood on the south side of Chicago, I once saw an ad for the Marc Chagall stained glass window exhibit while driving north along the lakeshore on my commute. Spirit heavy, mind and body depleted from working within a system I felt failed in every way, I turned into the Art Institute of Chicago, and walked up the white marble staircase to sit in front of Chagall's *America Windows*. Bathed in the cobalt light, I was reminded of why we do what we do. The *Windows* provided me a moment of peace to process my own suffering, as well as that of my students. We aspire to provide this respite to our students, but less often ourselves. If we hope to have a sustainable career, we must be intentional about searching out art beyond our classrooms, our departments, and our academic walls. The maturation of our creativity, the growth of our students, and the future of our institutions will only be better for it.

Building relationships of trust with the right people is imperative

The first step is to take some time to get to know our colleagues. Director of Choral Studies at the University of Colorado, Gregory Gentry, says about collaboration that it "requires a special relationship between the instrumental conductor and the chorus master to be successful."¹² All other interviewees echoed Gentry's observation when asked what made a successful collaboration work.

Rodney Dorsey shared the importance of developing a solid collegial relationship over time. While at the University of Oregon, he commissioned a piece from Andrea Reinkemeyer called *The Thaw* for choir, soprano and tenor soloists, and wind ensemble that was a very successful collaboration. He spoke to me about why:

¹² Gregory Gentry, "Preparing A Masterwork With Choir" (wind conducting seminar presentation, Boulder, 2013).

That came about because I got to know Sharon Paul [DCS at UO] and heard her group, and I was really impressed...I [thought], this is the way I think music should sound. So, then I [thought], we have a really good chamber choir, and there is not a lot of repertoire for that, and when I pitched the idea to her, she was, like, sure!¹³

Dorsey was quick to add, however, that he didn't pitch a commission the first time he stepped in her office. Through many conversations, and getting to know and respect her musically and as a person, he eventually found himself in a position where collaboration was a natural progression. McKinney says of finding the right collaborator, "You get to know people who are like-minded that you think could work on projects with you....There are people who I think would be great collaborators, and then there are people who I really respect as musicians, but I know that musically we wouldn't collaborate well together."¹⁴

Along with informal interactions between colleagues, sitting in on conductors' rehearsals is vital to getting to know them as teachers and artists. Director of Bands at the University of Michigan, Professor Michael Haithcock says that before and during the collaborative process, he suggests observing the culture in rehearsals. He suggests noticing "how the students are treated, taught, and engage with the music. Not knowing the atmosphere of the other ensemble can lead to disaster. It's not that you have to become the 'other,' but understanding the vibe and trying not to create hostility by ignorance is a must."¹⁵

Finally, not giving in to fear and creating trust are themes that arose repeatedly from these experienced conductors when asked about successful collaboration. Not being afraid of asking questions about things you don't know and leaning on your colleagues in areas outside your expertise are integral to working together. McKinney says, "It's that trust element that I think comes from knowing your

¹³ Dorsey, interview.

¹⁴ McKinney, interview.

¹⁵ Michael Haithcock (Director of Bands, University of Michigan), e-mail message to author, February 10, 2019.

colleagues as people and as collaborators.”¹⁶ Paul adds that it is important for her collaborator to know she will prepare the choir to the best of her ability no matter what.¹⁷

Deep Listening

Although with whom we collaborate is vital, Laszlo Bock, head of the People Operations department at Google, concludes that how teams work matters more than who is on them.¹⁸ He affirms, “You can take a team of average performers and, if you teach them to interact in the right way, they’ll do things no superstar could ever accomplish.”¹⁹ When Sawyer researched improv actors and creativity, he noticed that they would consistently listen for the new ideas other actors offered at the same time as they were coming up with their own ideas.²⁰ How might we apply these ideas of deep listening to our collaborations?

To some conductors, deep listening comes naturally. To others, truly listening to a colleague can be less comfortable. Related to this topic, Israeli conductor and speaker Itay Talgam helps clarify his concept of a *keynote listener*:

The keynote listener is no less focused than a keynote speaker, but his focal point is different. Instead of focusing on transmitting knowledge, he focuses on creating dialogue. The underlying belief is that the final learning of any interaction is different for each participant, and that the only way to enable each one to best process what she heard, to form her own ideas based on what she heard, and [to] share them with others, is through dialogue. The keynote listener holds the space in which the exchange is made, and the different learning is “harvested” to the benefit of all.²¹

¹⁶ Haithcock, e-mail message.

¹⁷ Paul, e-mail message.

¹⁸ Sawyer, *Group Genius*, 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹ Itay Talgam and Larry Bloom, *The Ignorant Maestro: How Great Leaders Inspire Unpredictable Brilliance* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015), 60.

The goal of collegiate teaching is not only to perform quality literature well, but to form critical thinkers and listeners capable of healthy dialogue on and off the stage. Talgam's emphasis on dialogue between keynote speakers and listeners invites conductors to develop and model the necessary skill of deep listening.

Another benefit of deep listening is that one gains an understanding of the priorities of the other conductor. Romey brought this point up in her discussion about her evolution as a chorus master:

Every conductor brings hallmarks to their work. For example, Osmo Vänskä, the conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, one of [his] hallmarks is an extraordinary spectrum of dynamics, and he is likewise passionate about articulation. It has taken me a while to understand [but]...knowing that information, I've been able to anticipate what he might want, and how I might help facilitate that when in piano/choral rehearsals. It has been important to have a sense of who the person is I'm collaborating with and understand what is important to them.²²

*Successful collaboration demands that egos are put aside*²³

In the music business, a little bit of ego is a necessity for survival. Those who have developed a strong sense of self (self-confidence) are more able to withstand the ups and downs that accompany putting oneself out there constantly—sometimes under great pressure and extreme criticism. Talgam shares, “The need for recognition is universal, and again it seems that our common human needs are mirrored in everything we do. Inherently we all know that but, somehow, in the process of becoming experts and specialists, we narrow our interests and forget it, until we are reminded.”²⁴ Where does healthy ego stop and unhealthy ego begin? The answer is different for each individual conductor, however it is clear that, based on each interviewee's responses, as well as healthy models of collaboration from outside the music industry, the most successful projects are those where leaders put aside their

²² Romey, phone interview.

²³ Throughout this discussion of *ego*, I will use the following definition: a person's sense of self-esteem or self-confidence. Originates from the Latin word for “I.”

²⁴ Talgam and Bloom, *The Ignorant Maestro*, 26.

self-interests, and prioritize what is best for the entire group, demonstrating respect to those with whom they are collaborating.

Michael Ovitz, the co-founder of Creative Arts Agency *Ovitz*, and now advisor in Silicon Valley, shared in an interview:

In Silicon Valley, I deal with men and women who believe they're unstoppable. In the entertainment business, people were just as spirited. But you could tell if they'd be collaborative by how they accepted suggestions. Look at Mark Zuckerberg. He's not afraid to have brilliant people working for him who tell him what they think.²⁵

Ovitz hits on an essential aspect of healthy collaboration: part of putting aside ego relies on *how we take criticism*. In the highly collaborative environment, there are bound to be instances where either your idea doesn't win, or where your colleague is not as thoughtful as you would like her to be and criticizes an idea to which you were attached. If the goal is to grow a long-term collaborative relationship of trust, both members must be willing to give and take critique without taking it personally, and become more thoughtful in their communication, without being fearful of the other's suggestions. In a passion-led environment, this is easier said than done, but well worth the effort.

Dorsey says this of ego in group environments; "I think there is an openness that needs to be there...hearing what is out there, and being open to that is so important."²⁶

Prioritizing the group process means that an individual need must sometimes be set aside. Romey spoke of giving up parts of yourself in order for a successful partnership to occur. "There are moments in any shared program when you realize something is important to your colleague, and you want to respect and affirm that." She adds, "While collaboration is not always an easy process, I truly believe that

²⁵ Allison Beard, "Life's Work: An Interview With Michael Ovitz" *Harvard Business Review* (January-February: 2019), accessed February 13, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/01/lifes-work-an-interview-with-michael-ovitz>.

²⁶ Dorsey, interview.

everyone walks away a better musician, educator, and/or student by virtue of the fact that we have broadened the experience and our perspectives.”²⁷

If conductors can focus more on *how* the process will evolve, rather than *who* is going to get the credit and be in control, the goal ends up being about the music, instead of the personalities involved. During the ensemble rehearsal process, this ideal also applies. Talgam speaks of the famous 20th-century conductor Carlos Kleiber, observing:

[He] modeled a uniquely liberating form of control by shifting from controlling people to controlling processes. Musicians were invited to engage in a process, which served as a basis for cooperation. They were granted autonomous space to interpret and innovate; in that sense they became emancipated. They were able to initiate, not just react.²⁸

Although there exist some brilliant examples of this shift of control such as the New York-based conductor-less *Orpheus Chamber Orchestra*, our wider community seems to be slower in moving toward true egoless collaboration.

Collaborators thrive when they hold a shared vision

Each interviewee mentioned the importance that the team hold a shared vision. The concept of “vision” can be confusing, elusive, and therefore challenging to create. Organizations take months to construct vision statements and hire specialists to aid in clarifying them. In this context, we’ll consider vision as the end goal. The Latin root of the word is *videre*, meaning “to see.” Conductors must be able to see through the multitude of details present in collaboration in order to clarify what they wish to achieve overall.

There are various methods of obtaining a unified vision. Vision emerges primarily from discussion early on in the process about what is important to each person. Instead of having to persuade colleagues to follow one person’s vision, open communication allows the team to commit to something

²⁷ Romey, phone interview.

²⁸ Talgam and Bloom, *The Ignorant Maestro*, 159.

that was created by the group. Holding common values with regards to the purpose of the collaboration and clearly articulating an end goal are also salient. It is easy to lose sight of the reason behind the work, and this clarification early on counteracts this. Once the core team understands the destination, effective communication to all involved allows the other musicians to share in the achievement as well.

It is not necessary, however, that conductors share the same opinions. Many advocate for creating teams that hold diverse viewpoints, observing that they are more creative, innovative, take more risks, and can produce a product far beyond what could be done alone.²⁹ Eventually, the team's individual opinions must coalesce into one clear vision. A 2018 study further corroborated the crucial focus on vision, citing that shared motives of team members is what unlocks productive teamwork.³⁰

The University of Minnesota is an example of what can happen when shared vision is cultivated. Romey observes that a focus on civic engagement, along with being inherent in collaboration, is among the common goals that has allowed for such successful collaborative projects. Their most recent initiative, *One Score, One School*, embeds a chosen topic within selected academic courses, conducting seminars, and ensembles. They have mounted year-long projects, focusing on both the Britten *War Requiem*, and the Bach *Saint Matthew Passion*. This upcoming year includes a fall presentation of Stephen Paulus' *To Be Certain Of The Dawn* and a spring semester on Bach's *Saint John Passion*. Study of the two works has been organized as a year-long, interdisciplinary exploration entitled *Every Face: A Project of Common Humanity*. Romey co-authored a special events grant in partnership with a musicology colleague and her doctoral student which includes a collaboration with a local period instrument orchestra.

A primary reason it seems the *One Score, One School* model is successful is that of shared vision. Discussions about the goals of the project began far in advance. Based on these discussions, faculty

²⁹ Sawyer, *Group Genius*, 10.

³⁰ Carlos Valdez-Dapena, "Stop Wasting Money on Team Building," *Harvard Business Review* (September 11, 2018), accessed January 28, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2018/09/stop-wasting-money-on-team-building>.

created the overarching goal of deepening understanding of one masterwork throughout the semester which would culminate in a historically informed performance of the piece. Professors approach study of the work in various ways, asking students to interpret it from a musicological, gestural, and performance standpoint, but always remaining clear that the informed performance of the work is the shared vision. The result of shared vision is that it creates equal investment from all conductors which, in turn, translates to their ensembles' attitudes.

Part III: Musical Considerations

The discussion will move from philosophical and idealistic considerations to more immediate practical concerns when wind and choral directors work together. It will begin with some general considerations important for both the wind and choral conductor to consider, before highlighting specific areas a wind conductor or choral director face when working with an ensemble outside their primary focus.

Consideration 1: Choosing repertoire

Successful musical performances and collaborations depend on the correct choice of repertoire.

Conductors must consider:

- the level and balance of the groups
- the acoustics of the performance space
- how the piece fits within the theme of the program
- whether all collaborators will enjoy preparing the work
- the audience appeal
- the academic worth of the piece
- the patrons or board approval (if present)
- the past performances of the piece in the area
- all other musical elements, including length, tessitura, instrumentation, form, text, etc.

Current wind-choral repertoire is not appropriate for the majority of collegiate ensembles. Works tend to be too easy, or overly challenging. Easier pieces, intended for more developing ensembles lack integrity and musical sophistication, making it hard for collegiate musicians to connect with the music. The subjects may be more suited for younger musicians, and the melodic and harmonic material is often

trite, and lacks depth. The more challenging works, often intended for professional ensembles, can be used as learning opportunities, but in performance will lack polish because they are beyond the technical level of many collegiate students. Thus, there is an opportunity for growth in intermediate wind-choral repertoire. Conductors are encouraged to commission works that help fill this void.

Dorsey described why he felt the Reinkemeyer commission at Oregon went so well. The text draws on the natural beauty found in the Pacific Northwest, as well as the themes of love, loss, and healing, which were relatable to all on stage. Additionally, it is smartly written in a way that helped the singers and players be successful- the wind parts worked with the singers instead of against them, and the level of technical difficulty was within student's reach.³¹

Consideration 2: Focus on what you want to hear

Thoughtful consideration must go into the preparation of ensembles with which you are not necessarily familiar, but whether a conductor is working with string players, jazz ensembles, singers, or an early music specialist, remember that music is music. Haithcock shares, "I reference the musical needs more than the ensemble needs at all times. Having everyone focused on the collective rather than themselves is always my goal."³² It is imperative that conductors interpret the music, but stay away from coaching students on technique. Dorsey explains:

One of the things I learned very early on is to tell them what you want to hear, and they should know how to make that happen. My first job working with music majors, I told a trumpet player something about tongue position and after rehearsal she said, "I just want you to know that our teacher tells us just the opposite." Who knows more about playing trumpet, me or the second player in the Chicago Symphony?³³

³¹ Dorsey, interview.

³² Haithcock, e-mail message.

³³ Dorsey, interview.

Haithcock backs up this point, saying, “No instrumental conductor has any business telling people how to sing. Discuss the type of sounds, phrases, blend/balance you want but stay out of ‘their’ business.”

³⁴ I believe that this approach to working with any ensemble also creates a healthier, more trusting relationship with the musicians, as well as their applied lesson instructors.

Consideration 3: It’s all about breath and line

Both wind players and singers use breath to create sound. It is vital to the two disciplines. McKinney says that, “If [wind players] don’t feel you breathing with them in transitions, they will not have a great experience with you, and it will affect their sound.” Haithcock adds, “Singers are about line; instrumentalists should be too. The beat should always show where the line is going, not just where to functionally place the next beat in the pattern.”³⁵

Thus, conductors can rely on their mutual understanding of breath and line to support the musicians in tutti rehearsals. In doing so, they remember that cues need to be given with ample breath well in advance (not just an eighth note before an entrance). They also consider phrase length and, if necessary, have thought out options for staggered breaths, in order to create the illusion of a longer phrase.

Before beginning rehearsals, it is helpful to clarify which interpretive decisions the artistic lead would like the other conductor to make. For example, conductors may decide that breaths, and cut-offs are decided by the artistic lead, but that additional phrase shaping will be decided by each individual ensemble director. Breath marks and cut-offs are straightforward decisions that are important to communicate early on and that must remain consistent. This eliminates unnecessary last-minute changes

³⁴ Haithcock, e-mail message.

³⁵ Ibid.

and allows the conductor and musician to focus on more salient interpretive details during joint rehearsals.

Idiosyncrasies of Choruses and Wind Ensembles

When preparing to work with the other's ensemble, there are four main areas of focus for both wind and choral conductors. While there remain many additional challenges, these four categories were mentioned most often in discussions, interviews, and literature. The more aware the conductor is of the subtleties of the other group, the smoother the collaboration and the better the level of music making.

For the wind conductor preparing to work with choirs

I. Vocal Production

Although the voice uses breath to phonate, and holds other similarities to wind production there are some key differences between a voice and wind instrument. With singers, stamina and volume are tied much more directly to the health and age of the musician. Often college-age singers have less stamina than their professional counterparts. 18-21-year-old voices don't fully mature until about 28-32 years old and often experience fatigue when partaking in collaboration. The frequent demand from the wind conductor to sing louder puts singers at risk of straining the voice. They push beyond what their vocal technique is capable of and create tension which leads to fatigue and possible injury.

There are various ways to help curb this unhealthy tendency and still end up with a balanced product. A warm-up is almost always necessary for the choir before all rehearsals and concerts. Ideally, this takes place in the performance space and is lead by the chorus master.³⁶ An exception to this would

³⁶ There are numerous physical warm-ups and vocalizations that aid in preparing a choir. (Know that body alignment greatly affects the sound of an ensemble. See further resources such as voicescienceworks.org and Choral Warm-Up Collection (ed. Albrecht) for helpful vocalises.) Additionally, it is ideal that warm-ups are tailored directly to the repertoire that is to be performed, with a clear connection to honing techniques needed in the work. Along with vocalizations, this is also an ideal time to give notes from a dress rehearsal and, at times, fine-tune select sections of a piece. Most importantly, however, is the overall goal of unifying the singers, with musical intent and focus.

be a professional choir, who often come warmed up, are less likely to over sing and, understand how to change technique based on varied acoustical spaces.

Consider alternate ways to balance the choir and wind symphony. Before beginning the collaboration, consider the size of the instrumental ensemble versus the choral ensemble. Invite other singers to join the collaboration if you foresee balance to be an issue. Also ponder where louder brass sections might sit to play into the wings, or across the group, instead of directly out at the audience. Amplifying the choir slightly is completely acceptable if that will conserve the health of their voices. Singers can also use the score as a megaphone, holding it open flat and up to the chin to aid in projecting the sound over the players. The choir also can change vocal placement through vowel modification to create more formants. Elongated consonants assist in cutting through an instrumental ensemble. Finally, physical standing order and staging of the choir can have a drastic effect on their ability to project. Note that none of the tools listed above include asking the choir to change volume.

During rehearsal planning, consider difficulty, tessitura and both pitch and dynamic range. Do not ask singers to rehearse their most challenging sections first, before the voice has had ample time to warm-up, nor last, when the voice is fatigued.

The penultimate consideration is language used in rehearsal. Haithcock shares that pedagogical words such as “tight” or “tighten up” are foreign to choirs and tend to induce tension.³⁷ In stressful situations, the larynx will quickly raise and the jaw will become rigid. A simple sigh from the singers and a reminder to sing with a free and unforced sound is helpful half-way through a long tutti rehearsal.

Finally, remember that some singers may have relative pitch, but very few have perfect pitch. The conductor must provide a starting pitch or chord for the choir during rehearsals if the choir begins a section. That being said, singers often have decent pitch memory, therefore this is not always necessary if beginning repeatedly in the same place, or if the key stays consistent.

³⁷ Haithcock, e-mail message.

II. Text

One of the primary differences between the two ensembles is the presence of text. When dealing with text, a wind conductor should undertake preliminary study into the choice of language, pronunciation, and translation. Often for masterworks, there exist multiple language options for any given work. Before deciding on a language, the conductor must consider both historical performance practice and the choral ensembles' familiarity with pronunciation of that language. After a language has been selected, the dialect and pronunciation must be solidified. Depending on the region, era, and genre, this can vary widely. Leaning on the choral expert for this area is ideal, however the wind conductor has resources at his or her disposal.³⁸ Finally, the meaning of the text should be considered, by writing both a poetic *and* word-for-word translation into the score. Sometimes publisher's will add an English translation below the language, but this translations is often inaccurate and non-representative of the text's actual meaning. So the conductor is encouraged to undertake their own research.

During rehearsals, text can often sound unintelligible. While singers have to be mindful and work hard at diction, the wind conductor can improve the intelligibility of the ensemble through awareness of how syllables work. by A syllable consists of three elements important to the singer: the beginning consonant or vowel,³⁹ the inner consonants or vowels (on which sound is sustained), and the final consonant or vowel. The clear placement of consonants, getting to the vowel quickly (and unifying said vowel), as well as placing final consonants or vowels in a rhythmic nature (for example, placing the *s* on

³⁸ Ron Jeffers published a set of translations and annotations solely focused on commonly performed choral texts that are widely referenced in the choral world. They are divided by volume according to language, (Latin, German, French, and Hebrew) For example, they include a full word-for-word, IPA, and poetic translation of the full Catholic Mass, as well as annotations that are extremely helpful for the conductor preparing a Mass text. Jeffers is published by earthsongs, OR., 1988.

³⁹ The initiation of sound, whether through consonant or vowel is sometimes referred to as *onset* in choral classrooms.

the eighth-note or on the quarter-note) will communicate the text more clearly.⁴⁰ Finally, shadow vowels help with clarity of articulation as well, i.e., adding a schwa to the end of the word “God[ə]” to better accentuate the “d”. Singers don’t use the word *attack* to talk about articulation.⁴¹

Gesture affects both the choral ensembles’ unity and sound. In contrast to orchestras, singers are used to singing on the takt, and they are expected to place consonants before the takt so the vowel is on time. Singers will appreciate a clear cue for entrances, a strong ictus for releases for internal/ending consonants, and gestures of syncopation for rhythmic clarity, especially if the text prosody doesn’t match the melodic line. Rodney Dorsey adds, regarding the text’s influence on his gesture, “I try to think about more sustain while conducting the choir and less beats. Since singers tend to perform with more horizontal line...I try to conduct in a way that supports that.” In addition to gesture, variance in facial expression is appreciated and can also greatly affect singers’ tone, resonance, and vibrancy. Dorsey says, “Choir has the potential to be a lot more intimate. There is something beyond just us band folks manipulating our buttons in front of us. A lot of it is with text; you can get right to the heart of the meaning.”

Although the majority of this discussion on text has focused on the choral ensemble, words also affect the instrumental ensemble. Haithcock shares, “Be sure you have a clear idea of what the words should sound like before you start rehearsing the instrumental ensemble. Use the words to influence the rehearsing of the articulation with the instruments in advance of the joint rehearsal.”⁴² An accent can mean many things to an instrumentalist and a consonant can mean many things to a singer. If the language the choir is singing in is German, for example, the German diction could influence the articulation used

⁴⁰ Haithcock, e-mail message.

⁴¹ Ideally, the collaborative conductor of choirs will aid in these decisions, if that is something that is agreed upon. Usually, there is a more natural place to put cut-offs that take into consideration how much time the singer has for a breath and how nuanced the choir is.

⁴² Haithcock, e-mail message.

by the players. The influence of text on an instrumental rehearsal can also include using the prosody of a sentence in the choral text to inform the dynamic map applied to the same instrumental melody.

III. Rhythm

In general, students in collegiate choral ensembles have less prior musical training than in collegiate wind ensembles. Collegiate singers often hold far fewer years of private study, theory, and aural skills training than most instrumentalists. The college choir often accepts those who have studied music informally, or not at all, while that would rarely occur in a wind symphony. Whatever the reasons for this difference in prior experience,⁴³ it is necessary for the success of collegiate collaborations that conductors understand with whom they are working. Haithcock wisely states, “Be patient with difficult rhythms with singers. They do not live in the same world as instrumentalists. A metronome in the rehearsal will not help and sends the wrong message.”

To be sure, a clear cue to the choir after a long set of rests is helpful and appreciated. However, please do *not* lower musical expectations when working with singers because of the above-mentioned subtlety. Part of becoming a nuanced and sensitive collaborator is finding out how to expand language or gestural approach just slightly in order to ensure that all members on the stage are obtaining the highest level of musical excellence possible.⁴⁴ Remember, technique is not the only important skill in performance; choirs often bring a unique sense of meaning and intimacy through text that can be brought out in collaboration.

⁴³ A generalization, these observations are based on my experience both in wind and choral worlds and hold no judgement whatsoever. Additionally, the lack of applied study in voice prior to high school is most often justly because of vocal health reasons, the voice developing to maturity not until the late 20’s for most singers.

⁴⁴ A quick, helpful tool in rehearsal to clean up rhythm with a choir is to add kinesthetic movement (which instrumentalists have naturally).

IV. Timbre

The choral sound is versatile and malleable. More and more common is the belief that choirs can and should learn how to be flexible with their tone and color in order to match the era/style in which they are singing. Although certain conductors and schools historically have not shared this value (imagine the homogenous ‘choral sound’ that certain institutions are known for), far more choral conductors understand the importance of teaching young singers how to interpret a Bach cantata differently from a Georgian sea shanty or a Palestrina motet differently from the Stravinsky Mass.

Thus, the suggestion to wind conductors is to utilize this diversity of sound. Paul’s advice was to understand how the conductor’s gesture can “influence choral tone significantly.”⁴⁵ Often to obtain a difference in production, the gesture need only move up or down the vertical plane. Dorsey says of sound production, “I enjoy this weight of sound, it [is] very different. It [isn’t] this heavy big thing that the band can be. It, of course, depends on the composer, but bands tend to play [with] bigger, heavier, [and] a more dense sound.”⁴⁶

The flexibility of choral tone should inspire you to experiment with it. When time is of the essence, try simply asking the choir, *What would it sound like to sing this phrase with a brighter sound?* or *Let’s see if we can have a more airy sound here?* Sometimes even asking singers to have a *simpler sound* will affect vibrato (without talking about vibrato) and intonation on, for example, a cadence that is challenging to tune. Thinking about the possibilities of their sound world will engage the singers more and can influence balance and a range of other factors in a positive way. It is also beneficial to hear what

⁴⁵ Paul, e-mail message.

⁴⁶ Dorsey, interview.

a choir is capable of by leading a warm-up that moves the singers placement from the most forward-placed sound to the darkest sound possible.⁴⁷

For the choral conductor preparing to work with winds

“It is important to devote the time to understanding the ensemble that is not in your wheelhouse. If I’m going to be working with a wind ensemble or orchestra, I need to set aside more time to get myself confidently up to speed,” says Paul regarding the additional work and responsibility behind cross-departmental collaboration, whether lead conductor or not.

I. Balance

Balance is an ongoing process in which the ensemble must invest. Because of the diversity of sounds and dynamics possible in a wind ensemble, instrumentalists have to work harder at dynamic contour.⁴⁸ There are ways in which conductors can aid with balance, in addition to asking for greater dynamic contour and insisting on listening to certain parts (foreground, background, etc.).

For example, changing players placement on the stage and having an overbalanced section move to one side of the stage or the other might work if they are covering the choir. “Suppression” of marked dynamics to balance with the choir also may help (for example, mark an mp to a p).⁴⁹ Finally, in planning stages, the element of balance is important to consider when deciding how many singers versus players there will be, as well as the level of singers/players.

⁴⁷ Vocal exercise for tone and placement: I ask the choir to use the arm as an external measurement of where they are placing their sound, and sing a vowel together. Singers hold the arm horizontal to the floor, outstretched to the front while singing. This physical gesture represents the most forward sound of which the singer is capable. The singer then slowly raises the arm in an arc to the back, changing their placement to a darker sound.

⁴⁸ Haithcock, e-mail message.

⁴⁹ Gentry, “Preparing A Masterwork With Choir.”

McKinney shared a story about a collaboration he did early on in his career with the University of Colorado choirs on the Stravinsky Mass. He observed, “It was a great collaboration, a perfect piece to do at the time. I had the right players, except in one spot.” One of his doctoral students didn’t have a good high register, and the second trumpet, an undergrad, did. McKinney changed the orchestration in this particular place and re-wrote the part to make it possible for the players and said, “It sounded beautiful.” Sometimes, it requires somebody with the knowledge to make sure the groups are balanced within themselves and that the winds and choir are balanced

II. Articulation

An aspect that arose often in conversation and interviews was the idea of the importance of articulation to wind players. Many musicians interpret the idea of articulation as the way in which you tongue a note, its rhythmic precision, and the uniformity in attack and release. While correct, consider what respected wind conductor, Mr. Richard Floyd of Texas, says about articulation in his publication *The Artistry of Teaching and Making Music*:

Consider the possibility that the role of articulation in a musical context is to achieve note shape or interpretive nuance. The tongue and the air work in concert to provide each note with a contour that is expressive and consistent with the musical intent of the work being performed. The potential for an expansive array of expressive note shape options is limitless.

The ways in which wind players can create uniform and expressive articulations with singers are, then, also limitless. Finding a clear way of communicating to all musicians exactly what the style (and composer’s idea) merit and how the musical intent can be more clearly communicated are, then, the challenges. It seems that, collaboratively, in addition to “know[ing] that an accent can mean many things to an instrumentalist,” as Haithcock commented, the conductor must have a clear idea of how he would like each note to be shaped and then communicate that to the ensemble.⁵⁰ Whether it is through modeling

⁵⁰ Haithcock, e-mail message.

a note shape in rehearsal or demanding students use a more diverse variety of articulations, the musical result will be more stylistically appropriate and clear, with a further consideration of articulation.

III. Intonation

Wind players deal with intonation somewhat similarly to singers. First of all, as discussed above, breath is everything. When conductors cue a player, it must be with ample preparation and breath or else the entrance will be less than prepared. As with singers, long sustains are challenging for wind players, as opposed to the organ or stringed instruments. As well, the sound varies in different spaces, in terms of how it dissipates. Conductors can be incredibly helpful, therefore, in planning out places for players to stagger breath and being mindful of how their gestures support the sustain of sound or prohibits proper breath.

Further, it is important to notice what section (instrumental or vocal) hands off pitches to whom. For example, if the trombones have an A in measure 52 and, in measure 53, the altos enter after 40 bars of rests on an A, it will help both sections to be aware of this exchange. The singers must find their pitch after resting for so long, and the trombones must play in tune and loud enough so the singers hear the cue. Intonation can suffer greatly if this is not set up well in advance. Communicating this to both players and singers will allow them to key into these places just before they enter, to tune their note to those before them and vice versa.

Another way of showing this interconnectivity is through score projection. McKinney projects his full score at every rehearsal at the University of Colorado. “The players really wanted to see the full score,” he said, and this has become a constant in the department, enabling the musicians to understand how their parts work within the composition and how it all fits together in context.⁵¹

⁵¹ McKinney, interview.

IV. Addition of Text

Understanding the text is of importance to players. It allows them to make interpretive decisions based on the prosody and affect and can introduce a different dimension to the music making experience. A key difference from choral scores or octavos, is that instrumental parts tend to only contain their own line.⁵² The instrumentalists lack the benefit of both the full score and the text when playing their music. So the conductor must make greater efforts to connect interpretation to prosody.

Often, conductors either share only the overall affect with players or, they ignore or downplay a controversial text. Players can draw on their capacity for deeper interpretation if they know that at measure 63, it is marked *pianissimo* and low in tessitura because the text describes Jesus' death and, in 64, the ascending lines are Him rising to heaven. Students enjoy being given a new opportunity to interact with meaning and how it affects interpretation.

Exposure to diverse sacred and secular texts from an historical or cultural perspective may be new to some instrumentalists. Therefore, it is the conductor's responsibility to guide students understanding so they can broaden their perspectives in an educational setting. Help them to understand that they need not believe in the exact meaning of the text themselves to be able to interpret it. For example, in choir, Muslim or Jewish students are often asked to perform masses that talk of worshipping a Christian God, and vice versa. If, after discussion, a student would rather not perform a piece because the content makes them uncomfortable, allow them this choice and re-assign the piece. However, this usually is not an issue if text is well-presented.

Coda for Choral Conductors

When preparing a masterwork remember to a) insist on warm-ups for the choir, b) hire a competent collaborative pianist, especially for the piano/vocal rehearsal, c) ask the collaborator for, and

⁵² This can be counteracted by projecting a full score at each rehearsal.

communicate score markings to musicians ahead of time, d) find a diction specialist, e) use and provide IPA to choirs, and f) plan for collegiate choirs taking more rehearsal time than instrumentalists.

Part IV: Logistical Considerations

Removing logistical barriers helps make collaboration successful. It is my opinion that, while exciting music making is always of essence, conductors who have thought out all logistical concerns in advance portray a professionalism that is appreciated and noticed in our musical community.

Decide *who* is doing *what*, *when*

Collaboration takes extra communication about each moment of interaction. Allow ample time for this. The more clear we can be from the beginning about what each person's role is, the healthier the relationships, as each understands what he or she is contributing and what is expected at all times.

Who is the artistic lead at what time?

Is it important to have one artistic lead while collaborating? Research says that a top-down approach will lead to less creativity. However, for the sake of time and clarity, it is important to begin with a clear structure, then allow creative and spontaneous moments to happen. The players of the renowned Chamber Ensemble *Orpheus* say that their rehearsal process of playing with no conductor, albeit inspiring and intensely collaborative, takes much longer than rehearsing with conductor.

Musically, even with an artistic lead, both conductors must take responsibility for their rehearsals and for preparing their ensembles to a similar level. Paul mentioned the importance of "...clarifying if each conductor should make sure their ensemble is *performance ready* before they meet the conductor that will be on the podium or [if] the performing conductor [would] prefer a *clean slate* without much interpretive work completed when they first rehearse with the other ensemble."⁵³ Romey also spoke about

⁵³ Paul, e-mail message.

this point: “I think about how much of my voice to introduce into the repertoire, versus the voice I’m preparing for.”⁵⁴

Finally, during tutti rehearsals, it is helpful to have an understanding of how comfortable each conductor is with the other conductor making comments during joint rehearsals. Paul adds that, based on her experience, “...some people enjoy that kind of active collaboration, and others might find it threatening or denigrating to have the other conductor chime in.”⁵⁵ Romey said in her role of chorus master, it is important to understand the personality of the person/conductor you are preparing for and whether they want you to be a more active or passive partner. She added that she gains an understanding of that relationship either through exchanges before the first rehearsal with a guest conductor or during the piano-conductor rehearsal itself.

Who conducts the final rehearsals/performances?

Although, traditionally, it has been more common for the instrumental conductor to be the artistic director, this should not be an automatic decision. For example, at the University of Michigan, the orchestral and choral conductors alternated years conducting the major collaboration. Dr. Jerry Blackstone (former Director of Choral Activities) and Professor Haithcock mutually agreed to rotate every other year and also considered when the other was especially “interested in the work to be performed.”⁵⁶ It is also plausible that the piece is a joint effort, and that it is performed on both colleagues’ concerts, with each director getting a chance to conduct the piece. Romey said this is often the model at the University of Minnesota with smaller forces used on one concert, and larger forces on the other, creating a shared collaboration that feels more equal.

Other important roles to delineate:

⁵⁴ Romey, phone interview.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Haithcock, e-mail message.

- Who is coming up with and making decisions regarding all text translations, IPA, and diction concerns?
- Who is holding which auditions? Soloists/small ensembles?
- Who is hiring other instrumentalists? Collaborative pianists?
- Who is taking care of payment of hired musicians?

Schedule

Stick to the schedule

It is vitally important that all collaborators strictly adhere to the schedule within a rehearsal and across combined rehearsals. This may seem obvious; however, multiple conductors interviewed mentioned this specific point, alluding to this being a concern in past collaborations. Sticking to the schedule also builds rapport and respect between conductors and ensemble members.

Leave enough time to prepare your ensemble adequately

Choirs need more time to prepare a work than instrumentalists. It is common to have music majors alongside non-music majors in choral ensembles, thus diversifying those student's musical abilities and backgrounds. However, in a top wind symphony, the assumption can be made that nearly all players are music majors and possess a basic level of musicianship.

Thus, it is important that your colleague knows you will prepare the choir to the best of your ability, devoting ample time to the collaboration, regardless of who is ultimately on the podium. As a wind conductor, it is also important that you are aware of the choir's preparation, when they are beginning rehearsals, and how the process is proceeding. Haithcock said of this detail: "I have had the good fortune of great choral colleagues. All details were ironed out way in advance so there were no

last minute surprises or second guessing.” He added, “I have heard horror stories from others about a choir not allowing enough time [to prepare].”⁵⁷

Long-range rehearsal planning

When preparing a masterwork, long-range rehearsal planning is mandatory. Rehearsal plans are often dictated by difficulty and length of composition. It can be helpful to create score study charts to divide a larger piece into smaller sections. This helps internalize and memorize the work, as well as gives the conductor an overview of the piece that can be communicated to the ensemble. Sandra Willetts’ publication *Beyond the Downbeat* (among others) has helpful information on this subject, including the suggestions to divide a chart by movement, then use it as a check-off list for rehearsal planning. For example, Chart 1 could be used for clarifying movements, including forces, length, and time; Chart 2 could be used for only tempi; Chart 3 for soloists; and Chart 4 for instruments.

Piano/Vocal rehearsal (or Wind Ensemble/Artistic Director rehearsal)

Most commonly referred to as a “conductor-piano rehearsal,” this integral rehearsal is relevant when the choral conductor is preparing the work for the wind conductor. (If the choral conductor is ultimately conducting the collaboration, it is important to plan a similar rehearsal with winds only.) In an educational setting, however, it is ideal to have more than one conductor-piano rehearsal; one is more common in professional settings. This can be one of the only times the guest conductor works with the choir/winds alone, and is a necessary opportunity for the guest conductor to forge a relationship with the ensemble. Haithcock reminds us: “It is not fair to either ensemble for the first rehearsal with the ‘other’ to be with combined forces.”

⁵⁷ McKinney in his interview said, “You want to do collaborations, but you want to make sure that you have allocated enough time to make it a good collaboration. So you don’t want to jam pack your semester, where then the piece falls by the wayside, and doesn’t have the quality that you want it to.”

Additionally, it is helpful if the other conductor is present and involved in the process, whether it be taking notes or otherwise.⁵⁸ Romey, in her extensive experience as chorus master, says that the choral conductor must constantly read the ensemble. In the piano-conductor rehearsal, she sits next to the guest conductor. If she sees that her singers clearly do not understand an instruction, then she will intervene or translate this for the ensemble. However, if the choir is receiving the information, and the result can be heard in the sound and musical interpretation, she assumes a role of listening and taking notes.⁵⁹

If there is only one piano/vocal rehearsal, it should take place one to two weeks prior to the concert. Importantly, a strong collaborative pianist is required at piano/vocal rehearsals so no time is wasted.⁶⁰

Romey and her colleagues in Minnesota have designed their model to be supportive of frequent collaboration. They have an overlapping time period between choral and instrumental rehearsals of 45 minutes which, both, allows graduate students to step in and work with the other ensemble outside of their primary area and for vocal and instrumental ensembles to come together easily when putting together combined works.

Tutti rehearsals

Decide on times/spaces for tutti rehearsals far enough in advance so all details can be clearly communicated to the many integral members of the project: players, singers, venue managers, other faculty in the department/school of music, and administration (ideally dates are communicated in the syllabus in the beginning of the semester or before). This is especially important if one or both ensembles have to rehearse outside of their regular course times.⁶¹ Along with this communication, students will

⁵⁸ This rehearsal in a choral-orchestral collaboration can also include the concertmaster.

⁵⁹ Romey, phone interview.

⁶⁰ Gentry, "Preparing A Masterwork With Choir."

⁶¹ McKinney, interview.

often need a letter to provide other professors asking if it is possible to release them from classes, etc. If this is communicated far enough in advance, with the appropriate approval (of the Dean or Director) there is rarely friction created amongst faculty. However, because of department politics, it is easy to quickly build resentment from other faculty, administration, and students if those involved in the project are not taught to communicate very far in advance or the conductors don't send out a letter with ample time.

The lesson appears to be that, in order for collaboration to be successful and set the stage for future healthy collaborations to take place, artistic leads must simply have all their organizational wits about them, planning and communicating well in advance.

Program

A program is a visual representation of your work, your department, and the institution (or institutions) who you represent.

Thus, the following reminders are essential regarding the elements of the program:

- Proofread many times and have others assist.
- Decide who is going to write program notes well ahead of time so they are not hurried and poorly scripted.
- The choir is listed by voice type; the ensemble(s) are listed by instrument.
- The text of the work is listed in poetic meter either within the movement listings or in a separate section, along with translations.⁶²
- Include a brief biography of the chorus master.

The second aspect is being mindful of what other works are on the concert program. Conductors must program a collaborative piece or pieces in a strategic way. The questions should be asked, How does

⁶² Ron Jeffers has very helpful resources for translations of commonly used texts, along with IPA, and other background information.

this work fit within the overarching theme to this concert? What are we programming on either side of the piece that will allow both student and audience to connect to this work in a manner which we intend? How can we set students and audience up for success (musically, emotionally, aurally, logistically) by where we place this work in the program?

Set-up

After thinking through the musical logistics, planning how to get bodies, instruments, and risers on and off a stage is integral to the successful performance. Considering how the stage management is going to work will lead to a smooth and professional concert. Failing to think this through results in dead time and, as Haithcock says, “No one wants to sit and watch stage hands for any more time than minimally necessary.”⁶³

Secondly, where will the aforementioned elements be located both in rehearsal and concert? Consider where ideal locations would be for: choir/choir risers (risers must be present at rehearsals as well), wind players’ chairs/stands, percussionists’ set-up, harp, piano, etc. When considering layout, both physical space and balance/musical success must be taken into account. “Often the choir is pushed back and the instruments are squeezed. This makes folks uncomfortable, particularly if they are not aware of what is happening before the first rehearsal,” says Haithcock. Conductors cannot always make a venue more comfortable for mass forces, but communicating the circumstances before musicians get into a space can help prepare them for any discomfort. Additionally, moving an instrumental section to either side of a stage can greatly determine the overall balance, normally focusing on how a choir can project over the players.

⁶³ Haithcock, e-mail message.

Stage Etiquette

The most professional collaborations in which I have participated prioritized professionalism in all they did, musical and non-musical. Not only was the music extremely well prepared, but the attention to detail was immaculate in their non-musical gestures as well.

Thus, conductors might consider the following with regards to non-musical details of presentation:

- When and how a choir and wind ensemble will take the stage.
- Sits/stands for the choir: Sometimes the chorus master will decide upon these but, more often, the artistic lead will denote these cues and communicate them to the choir or chorus master ahead of time so they can be practiced at the dress rehearsal. Ideally, they will be well thought out and in the affect of the section of music. For example, choirs who collaborate often are used to being asked, for example, to stand slowly at measure 104 or sit quickly on the downbeat of measure 56. It is helpful to ask singers to place both feet on the floor *before* standing, especially if standing during a quieter section in the music.
- Scores up/down: Because choirs don't often use music stands, it is important to consider providing cues for when scores come up and go down. It is helpful to communicate that, for example, a) when the conductor steps onto the podium, scores come up, b) when the choir is not singing for a movement, scores remain open on the lap, and c) at the end, when the conductor puts her hands down, scores come down into singers' right hands.
- Consider lighting and the ability to read scores. It may be necessary to supply stand or book lights to attach to singers' black folders so they can read their music. Whether or not to use black folders or uniform scores is up to the conductor.

- In larger symphonic choral works, Romey may ask singers to hold their music folders flat and close to the chin during dramatic sections where the choir needs to project over the instrumental ensemble. Rather than push their voices, the singers use the score almost as a megaphone in one hand.
- Bows: Depending on who is conducting, be sure to acknowledge the other group. It is nice to acknowledge the chorus/band master but not mandatory, depending on if he can get to the stage easily. This acknowledgement is typically given at the first bow after the soloists. At that point, the C.M./B.M. acknowledges his ensemble.

Attire

Each conductor determines attire for her ensemble as she wishes. However, at times, choirs are asked to dress in concert black or, in certain programs, to wear actual uniforms. This could be a decision that is influenced by the overall artistic vision and whether there is staging or movement of the choir/players.

Conclusion

There are intricacies to learning healthy collaboration. This guide focuses on the most salient features that arose consistently in research, but there are additional considerations specific to each university, faculty, and project. In academia, expectations for excellence can be intimidating and conductors can become deterred by the vastness of the collaborative process.

However, I propose another viewpoint—that the academy is in fact the *ideal* setting to propose new ideas, try them out, and make the mistakes that eventually lead to cutting-edge creativity. While being mindful of existing culture, junior (and senior) faculty will only add to their departments when they engage in collaboration. Doing so in a thoughtful and well-informed manner, with the guidance of those with more collaborative experience, will lead to a successful and healthy partnership. We must approach our privileged places as conductors, within the safety of the academy, as ones from which to explore, push boundaries, and model fearlessness. If we do so, our comprehensive collaborations will be not merely of substantial benefit to students, but imperative to their future success. Collaboration will also lead to commissions for more wind-choral repertoire and greater connectivity between colleagues, ensuring that higher education remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. Romey concludes:

The world is changing so rapidly...I think we need to offer our...students opportunities to cultivate the skills that are necessary for entering a world that will require much more of this cross pollination, collaboration, and engagement with the community. I believe that you will be required to do this over the course of your career and, frankly, I'd think you would want to—it is so exciting!⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Romey, phone interview.

Appendix I

Pieces that were cited from interviews as most successful collaborations between wind/choral departments

Botti, Susan. *Cosmosis*, Soprano, SSAA choir, wind symphony, 2005

(Haithcock has performed twice; Romey/Kirchhoff/Mehaffey have performed twice)

Brahms, Johannes. *Begräbnisgesang (Funeral Music)*, SATB choir, wind symphony, 1858

(Haithcock has performed)

Bruckner, Anton. *Mass in E Minor*, SSAATTBB choir, wind symphony Ensemble, 1866 (v. 1), 1882 (v. 2)

(Haithcock has performed three times)

Persichetti, Vincent. *Celebrations*, SATB choir, wind ensemble, 1967.

(Haithcock did at Baylor, but did not “feel strong enough about it to do again”)

Reinkemeyer, Andrea. *The Thaw*, Soprano, Tenor, SATB choir, wind symphony, 2016

(Commission from Rodney Dorsey for the University of Oregon Wind Ensemble and University Singers)

Stravinsky, *Mass*, SATB choir, wind ensemble, minor solos often performed by chorus members, 1948

(Haithcock has performed three times, McKinney says of piece, “perfect collaboration”)

Theofanidis, Christopher. *The Here and Now*, SAB soloists, SATB choir, orchestra *or* wind version, 2005

(Romey and Haithcock/Blackstone performed)

Walker, George. *Canvas*, 2 speaking voices, SATB choir, wind ensemble, 2000

(First African American to win Pulitzer Prize for Music, College Band Directors National Association commission)

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