



**CHORUS  
VS  
DIRECTOR  
DRIVEN**

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# WHAT we as directors tend to do

## The Laundry List

- That vowel didn't match
- We dropped pitch
- That phrase ending didn't lift
- We didn't make the key change

This puts the chorus into “tell me, I’ll wait” mode.

- I don't have to find it; the director will tell me if I'm wrong.
- I wasn't told I was wrong so it must have been someone else.

# HOW we can help the singer

- That vowel didn't match
  - Let's stay on the target vowel until we have to turn the diphthong
- We dropped pitch
  - The pipe is going to blow the key, when you have the key note (that I notated for you) make sure it matches
- That phrase ending didn't lift
  - Be sure to go to the "air store" so you have enough to support the ends of phrases
- We didn't make the key change
  - Take a more elevated breath to lift into the key change

# WHY we are asking for a change

- That vowel didn't match
  - Let's stay on the target vowel until we have to turn the diphthong
    - A common approach to the vowel will allow for better tuning and ring
- We dropped pitch
  - The pipe is going to blow the key, when you have the key note make sure it matches
    - Songs are usually written a specific key to maximize ring and keep all parts in a comfortable range, when we drop, we lose those opportunities
- That phrase ending didn't lift
  - Be sure to go to the "air store" so you have enough to support the ends of phrases
    - Phrase ending that aren't lifted together are typically out of synch and lack energy
- We didn't make the key change
  - Take a more elevated breath to lift into the key change
    - Solid key changes make an exciting moment and puts the next part in the proper space for the overtone series

# WHO has the ultimate control?

## The Singers!



We can't crawl into their mind, or mouth, and "fix" them, but we can put the controls in their hands.

No one is standing on the risers refusing to do it right.

Everyone needs reminding from time to time. The more you can use peer or self assessments the more it will stick.

# WHEN can we do this?

At the very next rehearsal! Here are some things to try:

- Section circles
  - Peer to peer help
- ½ perform and ½ analyze
  - Shows WHY it's important
- Do it right, do it wrong, do it right
  - Allows the singer to feel the difference
- Pair and Share
  - Allows verbal processing and helps recall
- Planted “incorrect” singer
  - Demonstrates that each voice matters
- Ask questions
  - What would I say to you?
  - What would make that better?
  - What did you hear?
- Run “director-less” sets to find:
  - Where they DON'T need you
  - Where the DO need you
  - Where YOU are getting in the way

# WHERE can we celebrate the victories?

**IN THE MOMENT!**



- Give yourself a high five
  - Recognizes a group victory in a quick and easy way
- Individual accolades
  - Recognizes and affirms when a singer accomplishes or improves an element
- Cumulative collection (short term goal)
  - Small tokens that can be worn or posted to encourage growth

# Chorus vs. Director Driven Sound Category

*There's an indefinable levitation of the voices that's effortless. If there's control, caution, stilted-ness, effort, muscle, there's usually director involvement.*

*When the director can get out of the way, then you can tell when the chorus takes it and makes it their own. They trust their skills and technique and perform.*

*You can tell when a chorus is performing compulsories, rather than the free skate! When I hear a display of technique, sometimes it is chorus driven, but not as enjoyable as when they "let it fly."*

-Beth Smith, Certified Sound Judge Specialist



# Chorus vs. Director Driven Music Category

***Chorus-driven performance in the Music category sounds as if the singers are intuitively interpreting and performing the creative ideas of the arranger/composer in the moment.***

***It loses the trappings of repeated rehearsal and feels spontaneous rather than controlled or even well-trained.***

-Jana Gutenson, Certified Music Judge Specialist

# **Chorus vs. Director Driven Expression Category**

***Chorus-driven is when there is freedom in the vocal skills and singing, forward motion and storytelling that is connected and authentic.***

***There is usually a vibrancy with energy.***

**-Vickie Maybury, Certified Expression Judge Specialist**

# Chorus vs. Director Driven Visual Communication Category

*When a director is physically working harder than the chorus...the chorus is “director driven”.*

*When a chorus sings well enough to own the visual and vocal plan...and the director can serve as an inspiration vs. “perspiration” entity...the chorus is chorus driven.*

*The good thing about OUR category is that it is easy to see the difference because we are looking...*

*As I always say...”if the audience can sing the interp of the song...watching the director from behind” ...there’s a really good chance that the chorus is director-driven and the director is working extremely hard to remind them of every diphthong, lyric, dynamic, etc.*

-Diane Porsch, Certified Visual Communication Judge Specialist

# The Chorus Driven Management Team/Board

Everyone one needs to be ALL IN with the goal of being chorus driven, including the Director

Teamwork and accountability in all aspects i.e. chorus culture, music to suit all audiences, committee jobs

Set reasonable and time sensitive expectations for full participation

Discuss honestly what the director needs and/or wants assistance with

# The Chorus Driven Singer

CPR Choose Personal Responsibility on all fronts

- Learn your music BEFORE rehearsals
- Have your perfect performance every time
- **BE THERE** at rehearsals and sing-outs
- Know the plan and do the plan

Send the Director to **any and all** educational opportunities and encourage singers to do the same

# QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS



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