



Ten Tips to Help Choir Members to Practice Their Music--On Their Own!

One frustration for many singers is how to practice their music on their own. If you didn't have any piano skills, the old school train of thought was that you were kind of stuck.

Well my friends, NOT ANYMORE! ;) I have put together a list for choir members--"Ten Tips for Choir Members to Practice Their Music--On Their Own!" For all of these ideas, all you need is your music and your phone (recording and pitch pipe apps!) No piano skills needed.

No more excuses for not practicing, people! ;)

1. Sing your part using solfege syllables.

Using solfege is a great way to isolate musical pitch and intervals. If you do this at the beginning of the process, you will learn notes more accurately.

2. Analyze the form, structure and phrasing of the piece

Are there distinct sections to the piece? What is the vertical structure like, and does it ever change? What is the phrasing like, and does it ever change?

3. Count Sing your part

Count Singing reinforces pitch while emphasizing rhythm. This is a good step to do after you've worked with solfege, just to clean up any rhythms you might have missed.

4. Sing your part on a neutral syllable

Singing on a neutral syllable allows you to self-evaluate how you are doing in regards to pitch and rhythm. If you find any problem spots, you will want to fix them before moving on to text.

5. Speak your part in rhythm

Speaking your part in rhythm allows you to get used to the rhythm, flow and phrasing of the text, separate from the pitches. Also a good way to memorize text! As is....

6. Practice writing out the text from memory

I had a teacher that once said, "If you cannot write out the text, separate from the music, then you really don't know it." Enough said.

7. Record yourself singing your part in rehearsal (make sure you clear it with your director), and then go back and listen to it

Everyone has a phone nowadays. And guess what? Lots of free recording apps available. Use one, record yourself in rehearsal, and then go back and review. Just tell your director first, so they don't think you're on your phone during rehearsal! ;)

8. Practice finding all of your entrances

Not only is when you enter important, it's also important to know from where you will find your starting note. Is it from your previous note? A note in the piano accompaniment? A note in another voice part? Recordings can be very helpful with this.

9. Audiate your part (with or without a recording)

Being able to *think* your part demonstrates a high level of learning. This is something that you can easily do while doing other things. Bonus!

10. Listen to, and sing along with, a recording

Sometimes good to save this towards the end of the rehearsal process, this is a great way to evaluate where you are at memorization-wise, especially if one can do it without using their music!

Bonus idea: Sing with others in your section, or in a quartet

Make practice a social event! Get together with members of your section, or form a quartet. Meet to sing through your music, and then go grab coffee afterwards.

Happy Practicing!