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# RULES FOR CHOIR SINGING



- Rule of **WORD EXAGGERATION**: Always exaggerate the pronunciation. After all, we don't dance like we walk, so we don't sing like we talk.
- Rule of **STEADY BEAT**: Any note lasting longer than the steady beat should crescendo or decrescendo slightly, to add movement.
- Rule of the **SLUR**: There is an implied *tenuto* (slight emphasis) on the first note under a slur.
- Rule of **WORD STRESS**: Additional emphasis should be placed on important words or syllables, as done in speech, so the musical phrase will have shape and the audience can understand the text.
- Rule of **DIPHTHONGS**: All "double vowel sounds," (diphthongs) should be performed on the first vowel until the release. The second vowel should be flipped immediately prior to the release. Example: I = aaaaahhhhhh ee
- Rule of **PUNCTUATION**: Singers should break the sound at all punctuation marks provided in the text. However, no punctuation...no break.
- Rule of **CONSONANT RELEASE**: Release consonants on the beat following the note, unless you have to sing on that next beat. In that case, elide the ending consonant of the first word into the beginning of the next.
- Rule of **DISSONANCE**: Crescendo into dissonant chords and decrescendo on resolution.
- Rule of **A** and **THE**: If the words "a" or "the" precede a word starting with a vowel sound, then the long vowel version of "a" or "the" should be used; otherwise use the short vowel version of the article.
- Rule of **OPENING**: The *higher* girls sing, the more *open* their throat and mouth should be. However, the opposite is true for guys – the *lower* they sing, the more *open* their throats and mouths should be.
- Rule of **STAFF-HOPPING**: Only sing the divided parts on your own staff.

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# COMMON SCORE MARKS

' = Breath

√ = Lift (quick breath or slight break in sound)

NB or  = no breath

// = pause

/ = slight break between words

‡ = fermata (hold and watch conductor for cut-off)

 = no r

s/1 = s on beat 1

*ff* = very loud

*f* = loud

*mf* = medium loud

*mp* = medium soft

*p* = soft

*pp* = very soft