



Member Etiquette

The Saltaires Chorus has had a long reputation of being an organization with style and class. Much of this reputation is due to the way we interact with each other, with other organizations within the Barbershop Society, and with the public in general. This section will address the manners and etiquette subscribed to and demonstrated by the members of the Saltaires Chorus, specifically during rehearsals, performances and contests.

Rehearsal Etiquette

Rehearsal etiquette begins before you even arrive at the rehearsal hall. It begins with your commitment to being the best you can be and being prepared to work hard to help the chorus achieve its musical and performance goals.

Preparation

Rehearsals are an opportunity to get new music, practice choreography, drill vocal techniques, improve chorus repertoire, and so forth. Specifically, rehearsals provide an opportunity for you to practice your performance.

Come prepared. This means warming up your voice prior to rehearsal and wearing comfortable yet appropriate attire. Be ready to put as much effort (vocally and visually) into rehearsing as you would a performance.

Now that you've come prepared to rehearse (perform), what should you do prior to the first downbeat? You need to help set up the risers and rehearsal room, greet visitors and fellow members, and be in your riser position before the appointed rehearsal start time.

Late Arrivals

What happens if you are late to the rehearsal due to work commitments or other reasons? The main thing to remember: Don't be a distraction to the director, coach, instructor or chorus. Stand at the end of the risers and wait to be invited onto the risers. Under no circumstances should we ever cross in front of the Director while getting on the risers. If you need to cross to the far side of the risers, walk behind him instead, or circle behind the risers.

We understand that life occurs outside of the chorus, and there may be times when you are late. Just show courtesy and respect when you arrive.

"No Talking On the Risers" Policy

When the rehearsal starts, there is nothing more important than what is happening in front of the chorus. This means that the director, coach or leader should have everyone's attention. When the director stops talking or the chorus stops singing, this is *not* your opportunity to talk. Furthermore, when the director, coach or leader is working with another part of the chorus, use that time to participate silently. This is because many times what is being said to one section may apply to you and your section. Remember that whatever is being said to the chorus is probably more important than what you have to say to your neighbor, so show proper respect to the director by listening attentively.

Ten Second Rule

If the Director has not addressed the chorus within ten seconds, then you can talk quietly with your riser neighbor until the director resumes. Keep your eye on the director so you know when he has resumed, and then immediately give him your attention.

Listen, Don't Fix

Often when there's a pause, chorus members try to correct their own mistakes or those of their neighbors. Although this may seem important, RESIST. You will miss important comments from the Director that affect everyone in the chorus. Bear in mind that the Director fixes all the problems eventually. What if you believe you have a great idea on how to improve a song or you heard some people singing wrong notes or words? Should you tell the director when the music stops? Generally not! While the director may recognize you if you raise your hand, it is always best to refrain from making comments or asking questions while you are on the risers. Bring the matter to your section leader's attention for resolution.

Listen, Don't Hum or Sing

When the pitch pipe is sounding, don't hum the pitch. It keeps you and everyone else from hearing the pitch accurately.

Chain of Authority

The best way to be heard if you have a concern about the musical program or chapter administration is to bring it to the right person's attention. Questions or comments about the music should be directed to the section leader. The presentation coordinator handles all performance or visual matters. If you have a question regarding chapter policy or administration, present it to a board member-at-large. By seeking these persons out during the break or some other time, you will not detract from the rehearsal.

Personal Grooming

Your appearance, even at rehearsals, is important because of the image the Saltaires Chorus seeks to uphold. That means you should wear presentable attire at all times. Refrain from wearing hats (except as part of a costume), clothing in poor condition, and shirts with offensive sayings or depictions. If you have facial hair, keep it neat and trim. If you are overweight, start a program now to shed some of those pounds. This will not only help you feel better about yourself, it will help your stamina on the risers. Also, because chorus members work hard and are frequently in close quarters (on the risers), each singer must be extra fastidious in the maintenance of his personal hygiene.

Riser Positions/Stance

While standing on the risers, be attentive to the speaker in front of you. If you are not singing, refrain from folding your arms around your chest or putting your hands in your pockets. These mannerisms show a disrespectful attitude. Keep your arms to your sides or, if you prefer, clasp your hands in front or behind your back.

When singing, stand with your arms at your side, press forward, and keep your feet shoulder-width apart. Refer to the Basic Presentation section for more information on this subject.

Pagers/Cell Phones

Many members need to stay connected with others and, as a result, are required to carry pagers and/or cellular phones. While it is nice to have a 3-4 hour break from the world, those devices must remain active. If you have this need, please show respect for the chorus by putting the device in the vibrate mode. If you are called, beeped or buzzed, step off the risers at a break in the song. Show good manner by not disrupting the rehearsal.

Performance Attitude

As previously discussed, rehearsals are mini performances. Therefore, you should be practicing your performance, not just doing a run-through of the song. Work on maintaining your focus on the director or coach. While singing, keep your face and body activated; but most of all, keep your brain activated. If you miss a note, word or move, don't call attention to it. Just let it go and continue to perform.

During performances and rehearsals, keep your arms to the side when you're singing unless you are doing choreography. If you have an itch, do not scratch. If you need to sneeze or cough, do not bring your hands up. While it is proper to cover your nose or mouth in these circumstances, you are on stage. Your decorum on stage is that of a professional. Do not detract from the performance by bringing your hands up. The person in front of you will understand.

Performance Etiquette

Now that we have discussed rehearsal etiquette, let's examine performance etiquette. All of the previously mentioned rules and guidelines still apply; but now we have additional issues to consider.

Chorus Call/Warm-up

Arrive on time, wear the correct clothing, be properly warmed up, and have a winning attitude. Remember, the chorus is being observed at the performance venue from the moment the trailer arrives until the last member of the chorus leaves. That means we must have charm and show humility and class at all times. Your riser discipline is even more important now. That's because of all the distractions that occur in preparing to do the show. Maintain the focus you have been practicing on rehearsal nights, and even bring that level of focus up a notch or two.

Show Time

The performance starts before the curtain goes up and does not end until the curtain closes. Remain focused and in character during the entire show. When performing, accepting applause, waiting for an introduction, etc., DO NOT scratch, look around, shift from side to side, or make moves that will draw the audience's attention. If for some reason you miss the start of the performance, wait back stage. DO NOT JOIN THE CHORUS WHILE THE CURTAIN IS OPEN. When the curtain closes, speak with your section leader during a break to see if you will be allowed to join the chorus for the remainder of the performance.

Contest Etiquette

Contest Rehearsals

All rules and guidelines of rehearsal and performance etiquette continue to apply here. During contest rehearsals, bring your level of focus and attention up even another level. The contest stage is what you have been preparing for, so give your absolute best to these rehearsals. This is not the time to ask questions about the musical plan. Your job is to execute the plan that has been rehearsed for the past several months.

When announcements are made, pay close attention. Generally, the announcements will be very clear and specific so that there is no need to ask questions. If you are talking, you will miss important details. As has been said before, there is nothing more important than what is happening in front of the chorus.

Attitude/Demeanor

When you are in public, you will likely be recognized as being associated with the Saltaires Chorus. Therefore, what you do and say will reflect on the entire chorus. You will be "on stage" from the minute you arrive at your departing airport until the time you return home. Make your impression on others as being a first-class performer and human being. Always be humble and gracious when talking to other contestants. They have probably put in many hours just like you, so make their contact with you a memorable moment in their contest experience.

In closing, being involved with the Saltaires Chorus is a privilege and comes with responsibility. As a chorus member, your responsibility is that of a foot soldier. You need to remain focused on your job, not your neighbor's job. You need to have self-discipline and be responsible for your actions. Have pride in being a chorus member. Have pride in your accomplishments. Most of all, have pride and confidence in yourself.