Choral Score Analysis and Preparation

GOAL: understanding how to analyze a piece of music for rehearsal

MUSICAL ANALYSIS

SOUND

Texture: 
- Homophonic vs Contrapuntal; identify sections and locate in score.
- Acapella vs accompanied; # of voices (instruments); is 
  accompaniment independent doubling or imitative?
- Certain voice pairings; eg. s/a-t/b or s/t-a/b

Dynamics: 
- Determined by text or texture (terraced dynamics)
  - Given by composer or editor
  - Overall dynamic range
  - Different for different voice parts (eg. melody vs accompaniment)
  - Special markings

HARMONY

Key: 
- Diagram the general harmonic outline of the piece including modulations
  if necessary.

Cadences: 
- Identify and locate all cadence points and analyze the harmonies (Mark in score)

Harmonic Devices: 
- Such as suspensions, anticipations, unusual chords (Mark in score)

MELODY

Motives-Themes: 
- Identify and locate. (Mark in score) These are the dominant voices at
  that point.

Range: 
- For each voice part and overall. Identify high points (Mark in score).

Melodic Devices: 
- Text painting. General movement (step vs leap). Difficult spots like
  accidentals. (Mark in score)
RHYTHM

Meter: - Identify and note any changes in meter including hemiolas. (Mark in score)

Tempo: - Identify all terms and their meaning. Determine general metronome markings for all tempos.

Rhythm motives: - Identify and locate. (Mark in score)

Rhythmic Devices: - Augmentation, diminution; polyrhythms (3 vs 4); general rhythmic movement; contrasting lines.

Articulation: -(Mark in score), this includes places to breathe.

GROWTH (FORM)

Sections: - Identify and locate major divisions of the piece. Then determine if it fits an existing form. Even through-composed pieces have sections that should be identified.

Phrases: - Mark in the score. Look at cadence points and breaths to determine locations.

Unifying Element: - What holds the piece together? Eg. melodic theme or rhythmic motive?

- Identify how the element provides structural unity.

TEXT

Translation, Pronunciation (IPA), and articulation.