



1990, 1993 & 1996 International Chorus Champions

General Performance Notes

by Doug Maddox and Bill Roth

Confidence comes as a result of preparedness. Your critical moments for success happen when you're under pressure. You need "PPUPP" — *Peak Performance Under Peak Pressure*.

You must also speak to the hearts of your listeners. You can do that only if you open your own heart. The trick is doing so when under pressure. Fear is the single obstacle—some people sweat, some get dry mouth and many get other symptoms as well. There is nothing wrong with any of these things so long as *you're in control!* These things will happen, so just know how your body operates and be ready.

Many people think they want to get rid of the butterflies, but you shouldn't; you want some adrenaline working *for* you. You need that excitement to show *your* heart to reach *their* hearts. In other words, you want to "make the butterflies fly in formation!" Use the nervous tension to work *for* you, and you'll be better than you ever thought.

The late baritone of the Roaring 20's Quartet, Ron Riegler, had this advice about stage fright: "Don't worry about making mistakes. What in life could possibly be worth that personal anxiety? You've rehearsed the act and are prepared, so just think about the correct things you're supposed to do and then go out there on stage and DO IT!"

1. Pre-Performance

- a. Close shave if possible; no strong fragrances.
- b. T-shirt mandatory; white briefs.
- c. No beeping watches.
- d. Registration badge and personal ID inside of jacket (for contests).
- e. No alcohol before a performance. It dries out the throat and will also take the "excitement" out of your music.

2. Standing on the Risers

- a. Feet should be in line with shoulders, toes slightly spread, and outside foot slightly forward; weight on balls of your feet.
- b. Arms should be relaxed at side, but elbows slightly back; hands motionless; fingers slightly cupped. Avoid licking lips.

- c. While curtains open, have continuous, pleasant, sincere and exciting smile; have face turned out to audience until director turns in to direct.
- d. When singing, always keep your focal attention on the director unless he turns out to the audience (in which case you look there as well), or a stage presence move temporarily requires you to look somewhere else. Concentrate on looking where you're supposed to, but NEVER up at the lights, into the wings, or at another chorus member. If something falls down, burns up, or the curtain gets stuck, just smile bigger and use the event as an opportunity to prove to everyone just how PROFESSIONAL you are !
- e. If your nose or anything else itches, smile bigger, but don't scratch! If you have to cough or sneeze, spray the guy in front of you, but don't raise your hand to cover your mouth.

3. Stage Presence

- a. If you miss a move, just smile bigger and pick up with the next one. DO NOT grimace and/or move LATE, or try and slowly "sneak" your hand (or whatever) into the proper position. That just draws attention to yourself. *Don't be the dark light bulb on the marquee!* Concentrate on your performance. If your neighbor messes up, don't watch him, (If you do, you'll probably miss *your* next move!)
- b. The entire time you are on stage there should be *strong* S/P involving the face. It should *never* be expressionless, but always convey the mood of the moment. In order to project mood to the audience (for them to see and feel it), there must be *much* more expression on your face than normal. *All* of your facial muscles need to be involved—the cheeks, eyes, brows, and forehead—with the mouth forming *pure* vowel sounds. (Incidentally, with the eyes, a slightly increased opening shows excitement; a slightly decreased opening shows tenderness.)
- c. The places the judges catch you are those when you're *not* singing—between phrases and between songs--and when you're not moving during an up-tune. These are the spots where your concentration must be heightened in order not to let down. *Use each breath to refresh and energize your face*, whether to an exciting smile or other mood appropriate to the song.
- d. After the curtain closes, no shrieks of joy. It's not professional.

(Re. 8/97, 12/97)