



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CHALLENGES OF CHORAL MANAGEMENT AMONG THE CONTEMPORARY CHORAL MUSICAL GROUPS IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Music, as a profession is talent-driven; and most often, some performers, vis-à-vis some directors/or managers are much endowed with the innate ability, while some are less talented. This therefore calls for some collaborative efforts of both the talented and less talented to make a musical out-fit a coherent and formidable whole; and the onus, as a matter of fact falls on the ability of the Choral Director or Manager to discover and as well fashion out a way to integrate the two categories of performers into a meaningful whole for effective musical performance. This paper therefore has as its main focus, an attempt to explore the choral management antecedents amongst the contemporary choral musical groups within the Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. To achieve this objective, the researchers applied scientific/historical and musicological methods of research in gathering data for the study. Efforts were made in discussing matters on choral management tips, musical and extra-musical qualities of a choral conductor, as well as conducting techniques since conducting is seen as generalship in the battle field of music; can make or mar a musical performance. Briefs from some individual choral conductors/directors on their choral groups were also considered. The outcome shows that fusion of musicological training and natural talents are key to effective and successful choral music management.

Keywords: Music, performance, choral management, conduct

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Choral music and by extension choral conducting accounts for more than 90% of average Nigerians in contact with music. It is the one way through which the musically uninformed can make his/her first inroad into the world of formal music making/or study. More challenging and disturbing, though funny and wrong notion, is that performance in choral music/or conducting are indices through which the average Nigerian society sees and assesses any person that calls him/herself an academic musician. This erroneous impression therefore brings us to the topic of this paper: (Challenges of) choral management in the contemporary choral musical groups within the Owerri Municipal Council of Imo state. What is choral management, one may be tempted ask? The web, <http://www.groupanizeingingrs.com/blog/easy-and-effective-choir-management-tips> states:

It is the undertaking of responsibilities to better organize and plan the inner workings of a choir. Basically, it's managing choir members and thus allowing them to reach their audience better. This is important because an unorganized chorus could be bad news.

A chorus/choir, who is a chorus that sings in a religious services, or in a socio-religious, socio-political and socio-cultural activities etc, customarily means any group of singers with more than one singer on a part. Chorus or Choir has been variously defined by some authors, such as Kamien (2004) who sees it as “a group of singers performing together, generally with more than one singer to a part (p. 600).” Decker & Herford (1973, p. 56) whose definition seems more wholesome as it forms the bulwark of this study states:

...a community of singers led by a conductor in service to the choral art; together they are willing to learn and work in a curious interdependence to enlarge their understanding and appreciation of choral music and to develop their voices and choral technique (underline, the authors’).

The underlined phrases above by the authors speak volume of choral music. Community of singers led by a Conductor projects choral music as social activity. The existence of man as a must be seen by both the Conductor and the Chorus as a social family activity with one aim. Enlarge their understanding and appreciation of choral music makes choral music an aesthetic matter only to be appreciated by not only knowing the intrinsic nature of a choral work but also by building its beauty around good performance as led by the emphatic interpretation by a good conductor. Develop their vocal technique presents choral study as a biological issue only realizable by understanding the basic working principles of parts of human body involved in choral technique. Thus, the choral class – choir/chorus rehearsal, can be seen as a laboratory where the conductor serves as the technician with set objectives such as:

- Conversion of printed score to sound to represent exactly the composer's intension.



- Understanding and putting into use such organs as the ear, lips, tongue, diaphragm, the larynx, pharynx, head cone, chest cavities, etc into use in singing.
- Training the singer as an independent performer.
- Training oneself (the Conductor) in the art of piloting to safety a choral group.
- The discipline of studying under a conductor, amongst other choristers in order to benefit the group and self.
- Finally, preparing a group that is musically and aesthetically healthy for performances.

To Meek (1988, p. 110), the name, Chorus is derived from the ancient Greece. Thus, “in their plays, the “*choros*” was a group that danced and chanted comments during the course of the play.”

Based on the above definitions and elucidations, the writers saw it as a challenge and decided to pen down some orders that makes choral management and rehearsals achievement worthy. This is because; it takes nothing but hard work for one to be fairly improved from a certain standard to another. To be fairly improved in choral music performance, therefore, the conductor who is seen as the generalship in the battle field of music performance should be in position to know and do certain basic things following a stipulated order, which includes rehearsal procedures, musical and extra-musical qualities of a choral conductor. Supporting the above, Randel (2001, p. 192) states:

Conducting... is leading and coordinating a group of singers and instruments in a music performance or rehearsal. Conducting includes indicating the meter, and tempo, signaling changes in tempo and dynamics, cueing entrances, adjusting timbral balances; identifying the sources of performance errors and helping to resolve these; demanding clear articulation and enunciation and generally bearing responsibility for the coherent interpretation of musical work.

Conducting is, therefore a sociological issue, arising from the need to control instrument and vocal forces in a musical situation.

2.0. General Review on Backgrounds of the Choral Musical Groups

The Owerri Municipal Council houses the seat of government of Imo State. In the same vein, it houses the two most populous church denomination's cathedrals – The Cathedral Church of the Transfiguration of our Lord (CATOL) for the Anglican faithful and The Assumpta Cathedral for the Roman Catholics, with their respective cathedral choirs, where most of the singers/performers dynamically tap their musical experiences. There are also the archdeaconry and parish choirs whose members complement the membership of the choral musical groups. Presently, some of the existing choral musical groups within the Metropolis, includes (without any organogram) The Imo City Chorale and Orchestra; The Royal City



Chorale; The Hosanna Singers; De Konzonant Singers; The Shepherd Singers; The Gospel Singers, Donaldian Ensemble, St Louis Golden Voices, etc. Interestingly, all the above mentioned choral groups engage themselves with various musical activities ranging from church services, seasonal concerts to contractual performances as required of them, performing optimally till date. What is the secret behind the stay afloat of the groups, where some at times fade away before Christmas? The answer will be revealed in the cause of this paper, as you will find below, the significance, concepts and choral management history, guidelines, tips and tactics that help the choral directors develop and nurture longer lasting, better sounding choirs through effective choral management.

In no particular hierarchical order, the antecedents of some of the choral musical groups are x-rayed in what follow.

St. Louis Golden Voices: This group, according to the Founder and Director, Dr. Ngozi Louis Ekezie who holds Doctorate Degree in Music Theory and Composition, was formed in 1993. The formation of the group was to assist any interested choir conductor and leaders so that they could go back to their choirs and build them on the right track. The founder used the group to train musically talented personnel immediately he graduated from the Department of music, Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri. The joy of the founder is that majority of the present music graduates benefited from formation of the group and appreciated, while as nature's characteristics, some others did not. His solace is, in every aspect, God is glorified.

De Konzonant Singers: This group is a crop of talented singers. It came into existence in the year 2006 through consortium of singers that performed during the Imo State's celebration of World Environmental Day in June, 2006. It has its motto, thus: 'Praise God, Hail Mankind and Appreciate the Goodness of Life'. Right from the inception, it has participated in various organizations' choral competitions such as the Harcourt Whyte Choral Competition held in November, 2011 at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, as well as in contractual performances. The Director of the group is Obiesie, Ezekiel N.C, a Historical Musicologist who delights in using the group as a training ground for most choristers, choirmasters and some choral directors within the Municipality and beyond.

Imo City Chorale & Orchestra, Owerri: This group was founded in the year 2020, by its Director, (a non-music scholar but talented music maestro), Eke, Chijindu Favour Hedges. At the inception of the group, it was made up of eight (8) like-minded consortiums of choristers and good singers from various choirs within the Municipality. Presently the population has grown to over seventy (70) choristers, comprising those serving within and those in Diaspora. The group has organized and hosted two major concerts: thus:

- (1) The Award winning Annual concert; the biggest Opera music concert in Nigeria, tagged "Opera Imo", and have successfully hosted the 4th edition last year, 2023.
- (2) Trinity Concert – a biannual concert, where the group performs the full books from the Masters such as George Fredrick Handel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, etc.



The Imo City Chorale & Orchestra as a choral group has participated and won many international choral completions. These include World Chorallympic Competition in Korea; African Sings Competition in Togo; ECOWAS Music Festival in Uyo. The group has also performed in many National and International events like Aso Rock Villa Christmas, Festival of Praise Abuja, etc. the group is dedicated to growing good choral music performers both within and outside Nigeria.

The Gospel Singers Owerri: This group of talented Owerri based singers was first assembled in the year 2000 at the Emmanuel Anglican Church, Ezime Mbieri by Evang. Gospel Iwuoha and Mr. Emmanuel Asinobi, the celebrated trophy winning Choirmaster, Conductor and Music Director, (another non-music scholar but highly talented). The group has been living as a family right from the inception, undertaking a multitude of religious and social ceremonies that impacted on people and thus the society feels their importance most often. Mr. Asinobi has directed so many Church choirs and choral groups within the State and beyond, represented them in many chorale festivals and concerts to the glory of God Almighty.

Other choral groups that could not bring in their briefs earlier enough includes: The Shepherd Singers, led by Dr Sir Chukwuma Chukwuka, a Doctorate Degree in Music Theory and Composition holder; The Hosanna Singers, led by Mr. Chima Umunna (a non-music scholar but naturally talented); The Royal City Chorale, led by Mr. Harry (also non-music scholar but naturally talented); The Donaldian Ensembles, led by another non-music scholar, Dr Akamike.

Significance of Choral Management

Choral management is an important factor to be considered while planning a music programme; this is because the success or otherwise of a music programme for any choral group largely depends on proper planning, management and execution. It is therefore the responsibility of a choral director to plan and organize his singing group (choir) effectively. The study on choral management will among other things, enable every choral conductor, amateur or professional, to plan, manage and execute his group's musical programmes effectively. Nnamani (2009) states that "some administrators often judge the effectiveness of the director/conductor by his ability to plan, organize, manage and execute musical programmes rather than by his musicianship (p.130)."

Secondly, it is a truism that you cannot give what you do not have. In this regard, if the choral directors especially the amateurs became acquainted with all it takes to be a good choral manager, he will put the knowledge so garnered to practice in his singing group. The resultant effect shall be on the enthusiastic singers who will in turn become happy and excited to attend choir practices, rehearsals and performances due to the administrative improvement in their respective choirs. In the long run, the lovers of good music (audience) –



the schools, churches and the society at large shall continue to savour the echoes of good music from their respective musical idols, with occasional demands for 'encore'. Hence the Igbo say: *Ura toba uto, e kwobe ya ekwobe*. Meaning, when sleep becomes deep (sweet) snoring begins. Other significance of choral management that are key to fostering successful choir dynamics includes:

1. **Team Leadership:** Directing activities, assessing performance, motivating, and planning.
2. **Mutual Trust:** This is essential for success, building a positive atmosphere and strong relationship.
3. **Enhanced Musical Abilities:** This is key to improving musical appreciation, harmony, and learning.
4. **Social Bonding:** This is a *sine qua non* for effective choral management, as it forges connections, broadens horizons, and improves social cohesion.
5. **Physical and Mental Well-being:** Health, they say is wealth; hence by being physically and mentally balanced, enhances lung function, reduces stress, and boosts confidence.

2. 1. Concept of Choral Management and Choral History

Choral management is an aspect of music practicum. Its concept encapsulates the totality of a music director's managerial ability. It holds the key for the upward progression and sustenance of every musical out-fit. A choral director should be very knowledgeable in the practical aspect of planning and management procedures in order to succeed in his job. He is first an organizer, second a teacher and finally a conductor. A very crucial aspect of choral management is organized rehearsals, starting with Warm-Ups.

Warm-Ups: Most choral directors think that opening prayers, roll-call and perhaps singing a scale up and down, with or without keyboard are enough for beginning a choral rehearsal. Albeit prayers undeniably serve useful religious purpose that cannot be ignored in most social gatherings, yet it cannot be the only required entry behaviour for a choral rehearsal. "Warm-up is a period of practice or a series of exercises designed to loosen the muscles and increase the blood circulation of a competitor prior to hard exercise, a practice session, or competition (Ude, 2012)".

Why the Warm-ups: Some non-music scholars/choirmasters think that a musical score carries with it appropriate and enough challenges to take care of the outcome of vocal trainings. For example, they may think that if notes are right in pitch and duration of the work is sung correctly, an automatic beauty of sound is achieved, but the argument on the other side is, if skills are necessary in playing instrumental ensemble, such skills are equally necessary for vocal ensemble. Also, if a footballer still requires physical training despite very



regular matches, then a singer needs same too. One thing (very easy) is to sing; another thing (very difficult) is to sing well. Singing well therefore requires a special quality of teaching and learning for development of a choral tone which is adequate for the demands of any musical composition. A good choral conductor, therefore, teaches his/her choir to respond and aim only to the aesthetic elements in musical sound. Decker & Harford (1973) states that “everything in the score is subordinated to sound – to a note which is continuously the same in spite of obvious musical variations found in a score or among several (p. 6).”

Perhaps, Ekwueme (1993) sees the need for warm-up when he sums it up thus;

It is necessary for the choir to warm-up before any rehearsal or performance. Athletes, boxers and other sports men generally get the body in physical readiness for the strenuous undertaking ahead of them... In the same way, a singer needs to get his/her vocal apparatus in a state of readiness before a performance (Ekwueme, 1993:.84).

For this reason, not only Ekwueme (1993) supports warm-up, Decker & Harford (1973) as earlier mentioned, Durrant (2003) and Ray & Allen (1976), also all agree that there should be warm-up exercise before any rehearsals. Durrant (2003) goes extra mile in suggesting the scope of any warm-up, thus:

A number of choral educators put forward a convincing rationale for warming up the choir at the beginning of each rehearsal, arguing that it is time well used. These include mental, physical, vocal, emotional and psychological warm-ups.... In an ideal rehearsal situation, all these must be attended to with all the singers (p. 113). Some of the warm-up exercises propounded by Ekwueme (1998) include:

- **Physical:** Exercise the organs of singing
- **Breathing & Breath Control:** Put breathing exercise as a topic of its own
- **Vocalizing:** Vocal readiness; each singer reaching both his/her lowest and highest pitches. Sequence of note; taking the voice up and down. Alto bass drop as exercise gets higher.
- **Pedagogical & Psychological Exercise:** Use of consonants in vocalizing; Using some simple songs as warm-up exercise. Choral masters to create their own.

To Durrant (2003), physical exercise involves stretching and massaging to release tension; stretching arms and legs; massaging faces, and imaginary biting. Breathing & Breath Control involves filling the stomach and chest with air, gradually releasing the air; Take in air, exhale with the sound of ‘ssh, or phh’; Concentration on diaphragmatic breathing. For Vocalizing



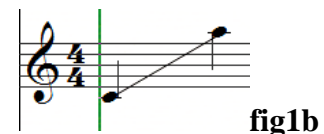
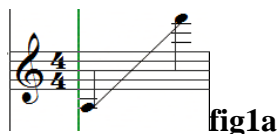
Exercise, start in the middle range, extend the range gradually; Use of difficult musical passages in the piece to be learnt.

Choral Musical Parts: Most choral music is written to be sung in four parts: A mixed chorus comprised of soprano, alto, tenor and bass; while a women's chorus has 1st and 2nd soprano and 1st and 2nd alto. A men's chorus has 1st and 2nd tenor and 1st and 2nd bass. There is also solo singing.

The Soprano

The soprano is the name given to the voice with the highest pitch; that is the highest female voice, ranging from below middle C to as high as F², two-and-half octaves higher. However, through practical experiences, the researcher has noted that most average amateur sopranos in the area of this study will do well and comfortably reach a high A¹ or approximately one-and-three-fourths octaves. See fig1a/1b.

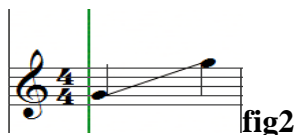
professional
Amateur



The Alto

The alto, also called contralto is in the lower of the natural ranges of women's voices. It is the lowest female voice. A professional alto singer may often have a two octave range, usually from G below the middle C to G¹, while most amateurs' range is usually limited to G below middle C to D¹. See fig2a & 2b.

Professional



Amateur

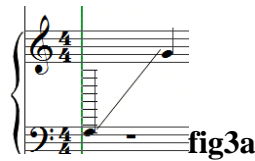
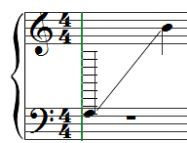


The Tenor

The tenor is the highest of the natural adult male voices. In Medieval music, Bennett (1982) stated that the tenor was the voice which carried or “held” the *cantus firmus* (or melody upon which other voices were written). The word “tenor” according to him comes from the Latin “*tenere*”, which means “to hold”. The tenor voice of an amateur usually ranges between G below the middle C and G above the middle C whereas a professional tenor singer can move through his falsetto unnoticed, maintaining the same quality up to B above the middle C.



Professional



The Bass

The bass is the lowest male voice in music. Its part is most often the foundation upon which the other harmonic voices are written. Bennett (1982) also noted that musical shorthand was developed in the 17th century that consisted of merely writing the bass part (called a continuo) and placing numbers and signs above the notes. This practice gave rise to the term “figured bass”, (p28) a term now used mainly by students in music theory and composition. A true bass voice in some choirs is quite rare, being able to reach very low tones and having a deep, rich quality, such that Meek (1988) and Pen (1992) typified as “**basso profundo**”. (Low powerful range). Typical bass ranges for professionals and amateurs are as below. See fig4a & b.

Professional



fig4a

Amateur



fig4b

Choral Management Tips for Choral Directors/Conductors

In this choral management tips, the words director and conductor are used interchangeably because both meant the same thing. Ekwueme (1993) states inter alia.....

They are each to be understood as referring to the man or woman who prepares the music for the choir or chorus, trains the singers in the art of choral music making, and conducts or directs the group at a rehearsal or performance of the works so prepared. It is the choral musician who is a choirmaster at his church and the choral conductor or choral director at his school choir or the community chorus (p. 32).”

3.0. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the use of scientific/historical method, tilted towards musicological and experiential methods in extracting useful data, such as the anthropology of the choral groups, the musical antecedents of the groups, as well as the musicological experience directors/leaders of the groups. The responses from the groups that responded to this exercises were penned down at the rhetoric about the choral musical groups within the area of study.



4.0. DISCOURSES

4.1. The Choral Conductor and the Nature of Conducting

Scholes, (1978) stated that conducting is generalship on the battle field of music. Forces, often large and very varied in their functions; have to be controlled that they will combine together not only accurately but with unity of spirit. (p. 240). In the same vein, Meek, (1988), stated that:

Conducting is a demanding discipline, equally as worthy of proper training and study as learning to play the piano, organ, or studying proper voice production”. So, if you wish to be a creative, efficient, and authoritative communicator, you must study well the proper technique of conducting. Also, if you want to be one of the best leaders (conductors), you must be properly prepared (Meek, 1988: 5).

Corroborating the above assertions, Randel (2001) maintained that conducting is leading and coordinating of singers and instruments in a musical performance or rehearsal. Conducting includes indicating the meter, and tempo, signaling changes in tempo and dynamics, cueing entrances, adjusting timbral balances; identifying the sources of performance errors and helping to resolve these; demanding clear articulation and enunciation and generally bearing responsibility for the coherent interpretation of musical work (Randel (2001:192).

The Dos and Don'ts of Conducting

In music profession and also in other fields of endeavor, there are certain etiquette that should be upheld/ or encouraged amongst the practitioners. So also is some untoward musical behaviour that should be discouraged in the entirety. These behaviors which Meek (1988) called Dos and Don'ts of conducting, paraphrased by the researcher are as follows:

- ❖ The conductor/Director must be a critic of all the elements of good performance.
- ❖ Must be capable of remedial surgery for any problem (musical) as it arises.
- ❖ Should make corrections in a good-humored way.
- ❖ Should never make any remark or insinuation that could embarrass a performer.
- ❖ Helpful criticism is beneficial. Derogatory criticism is detrimental.
- ❖ If you have a crabby face, such that reveals your cantankerousness, your group (choir) will be uncooperative and will lack enthusiasm to produce to their capacity. Even your best friend may not tell you that you suffer from extreme “facial-expression-halitusis”.
- ❖ Wriggling your bottom/waist may bring a certain amount of joy or satisfaction to some members of the audience, but be sure, take it or leave it that these listeners will remember little of the musical performance. What you succeeded in doing is distraction.



- ❖ Never show facial displeasure with amateur performers while on stage. This is because it may confuse them the more and throw them into panic, or worse still, it may cause them to dislike you altogether.
- ❖ Finally, the probability of producing a No – No; that is, uncomplimentary remark is greatly reduced if you keep your feet close together. Good directing should be accomplished from the waist up, with no overt movement from the waist down, and with feet comfortably closed. Always stand well balanced and relaxed. This is pleasing to an audience and, as well, will help you to define and project a better and more efficient beat and control any musical situation.

4.2. Musical and Extra Musical Qualities of A Choral Conductor

A choral conductor /director need to possess certain musical and extra-musical qualities to ensure effective choral management. Ekwueme, (1993) lamented the dearth of truly qualified personnel serving as choral director; hence according him “it is to be expected that amateurs and ill-prepared professionals have to do the job (p. 33).” He further proffers some useful musical qualities for choral directors as paraphrased by the researchers which include, but not limited to:

A Good Ear

A choral director must be able to hear different sounds going on simultaneously and discriminate between and among them individually, collectively, and in groups or sections (p.34).

Knowledge of Choral Literature

A choral director should be exposed to various kinds of musical arrangements ranging from Western to African and even the Negro Spirituals. Vast knowledge of musical literature of the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and even the 20th Century should be added advantage.

General Musicianship

This has to do with the general knowledge of the history, theory, aesthetics and some nitty-gritty of music, including the characteristics of historical periods of music.

Music Theory

A good choral director should be vast with music theory.

Thus...familiarity with **Tonal counterpoint** will help the conductor bring out such features as *imitation*, *canon*, *augmentation* and *diminution*, and other contrapuntal features as they occur in music of the 18th Century and later, as well as familiarity with or knowledge of local idioms needed in creating a good and imaginative composition in African music (p. 37).



Singing Technique

This includes knowledge of the ranges and limitation of various voice parts and the *tessitura* of certain vowels (English or Vernacular). It would be not only an asset but added advantage if a choral director has innate ability of singing as well as being a “trained” singer.

Keyboard Facility

Some choral directors work with the help of an accompanist at choir practices, rehearsals and performances. Nevertheless, a choral director should, as a necessity, have Keyboard Facility and as well “be able to play at least one voice part at a time on the piano to help any part that may need it, especially when his accompanist is not around (p. 38).”

Ekwueme (1993) went further to recommend some extra-musical qualities of a good choral director. These include: Self-discipline; Regularity in attendance; Punctuality; Personal Self-control; Hardworking and Mental alertness; Clarity of Instruction; Friendly Attitude; Sense of Humour. Of all the above mentioned needful extra-musical qualities of a choral conductor, the researchers hereby give few details on three of the expected qualities. They are: Self-discipline; Regularity in attendance; Personal Self-control.

Self-Discipline: On self-discipline, perhaps the most important of the extra musical qualities of a choral director because you must discipline yourself first before affecting same to others. “A choir trainer who hopes to be successful must have self-discipline”.

Regularity in Attendance: In most cases these days if the regularity of attendance of the choral director, *de jure and de facto*, is not assured, no matter any substitute arrangement made, many members tend to absent themselves from rehearsals. In regards to this experience, Ekwueme (1993) further states inter alia: “absent once will only be glad to hear (later) that the choirmaster did not come, and there was no practice, or that it was taken by a member of the group whose respect is not so high in their esteem. They then feel justified that they have not wasted their time by coming” (Ekwueme (1993:42).

It is embarrassing for a substitute conductor not to be expected or accepted by leaders of the choral group. The choirmaster’s irregularity in attendance actually leads to loss of faith or dims the zeal of the hitherto strong members of the group.

Self-Control: “Personal discipline includes self-control in all its ramifications. A male choral director should not compromise himself by having intimate relations with female members of his choir (p. 43).” The researchers therefore condemn in its entirety the practice of a choral director compromising his integrity before a female member of his choir. It is like the Igbo proverbial ‘dog that ate the bone hung on its neck’ (*nkita a taala okpukpu a nyabara ya n’olu*). It is inexcusable, especially to the under aged female members of the choir.



In addition to the above the researchers opine that a choral director may under normal circumstances be considered to be the boss, but should never consider himself to be the star performer. The stars are the producers, that is, the singers and the players while the director is only the catalyst to a good musical performance. During performance, no matter the environment, eccentric display should be avoided as it will only distract from the quality of the music and lessen the listener's (audience) concentration and enjoyment. Furthermore, if performers (singers) make errors on the stage, the audience may still consider that the musicians did a great job because they do not expect perfection from amateurs. In this regard, the singers have little to lose, but the director, academic musician (professional) have much to lose, especially if the errors were as a result of your directions that are erratic or are not clear enough to avoid a sudden crisis or impending catastrophe that can sneak up on you without any warning. This is the reason why a choral director should have vast knowledge of music theory as earlier mentioned, as well as orchestral conducting ability, "which would assist him in avoiding sloppy entries and scooped voicing by members of the choir".

5.0. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In a way of summarizing all that have been mentioned in this paper, an effective choral management can be said to be dependent upon the choral director's/conductor's managerial ability and musical competence. As earlier stated, a conductor should be very knowledgeable in the practical aspect of planning and management procedures of choral group in order to succeed in his job. Emphasis was placed on the conductor's musical and extra-musical qualities, with greater emphasis on the conductor's personal discipline, self-control and regularity in attendance.

Mention was also made on the importance of music conducting during performances. Scholes, as earlier mentioned referred conducting as generalship on the battle field of music; while Meek saw it as a demanding discipline, equally as worthy of proper training and study as learning to play the piano, organ or studying proper voice production. These assertions are in order because, as also stated in the dos and don'ts of conducting section of this paper, a conductor can make or mar a musical performance situation through his pattern of conducting. The music director or conductor may be properly considered the boss but should never consider himself/herself to be star performer through spectacular pyrotechnical display of nonsensical hand and body movements. The director is only a catalyst to good musical performance.

Finally, the study shows that the contributions of non-music scholars in choral management cannot be over-emphasized. As Okafor (2005, p. 2-3) points out (paraphrased): There are academics – Western trained musicians, people trained in all the rudiments and theories of the art – who may not necessarily be as proficient or as naturally gifted in performance...there are other people – gifted, excellent performers – who may not be trained



academically or formally in the art, but whose natural talents release music, which the society accepts. “Their music performs all the functions according to the books – they evoke, they move, they express and they inspire. These are the master musicians.” In the light of the above, it is the view of the researchers that the importance of musicologists and musically enlightened personnel in the choral management is a *sine qua non*; hence, ‘behind every successful choral group, there is synergy of musicologists and talented non-music scholars working within or without’

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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