Score Study:
Discovering and Detecting the Composer’s Intent

“The real voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” -Marcel Proust

LOOKING AT OUR SCORE WITH NEW EYES (AND EARS)
How does the score inform our GESTURE?
How does the score inform our REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE?

GESTURAL CONSIDERATIONS
Cues & Cut-off
Dynamics: piano, forte
Dynamics: crescendo, diminuendo
Articulation: marcato, staccato, legato, tenuto
Tempo (MM markings)
Meter changes
Breathing (phrasing?)
Fermatas
Syncopation

REHEARSAL CONSIDERATIONS
Rehearsal numbers/letters
Keys and modulations
Harmony
Articulation
Historical/National Context (Style period)
Tempo (MM markings)
Meter changes
Phrasing
Clef/Transposition
Balance/Voicing
Structure/Form
Emotional Context
Text and translation

THOUGHTS FROM OTHER CONDUCTORS:
Ann Howard Jones: Choose music carefully and thoroughly know your score BEFORE the first rehearsal.
Helmuth Rilling: “If you want to be a good conductor, score preparation will require much work ahead of time—much solitary work.”
Ken Jennings: Schedule a regular time for practice (alone and uninterruptible)!
Jerry Blackstone: LISTEN! Learn the score, Imagine your dream choir, Show the dream through gesture, Transform your choir, (En)spire your choir.
SCORE STUDY:  
DISCOVERING AND DETECTING THE COMPOSER'S INTENT

MACRO DETECTION
- Read text silently and aloud
- Analyze poetry and structure of the text, and discover the poet (translate, if necessary)
  - How does composer set the poem?
  - Does s/he make changes?
- Discover historical significance, understand composer’s time period, and any circumstances surrounding the work specifically
- Get familiar with piece completely
  - Play through the piece on the piano (as many parts as possible)
  - Sing through parts individually; play one part, sing another, etc.
  - Listen to MULTIPLE recordings
- 3-tiered approach to structure, form and phrasing
  - large sections, periods or smaller sections, phrases
  - upper-case letter, lower case letter, phrase delineation (vertical line)
- Analyze harmonies and key areas
- If polyphonic, mark all entrances of themes, subjects, etc. (color code, if needed)
- Graph the piece to get an overall view of the piece (dynamic landscape, structural landscape, textural landscape)
- Conduct through the piece and discover difficult passages

MICRO DETECTION
- Number all measures
- If in a foreign language, write the translation (literal, word for word) above the text in the score. Attach a poetic translation to the score, as well.
- Mark all articulations that you want to add stylistically. Draw attention to any articulations that composer has marked
- Emphasize the following:
  - Red pencil  
    - forte dynamics
  - Blue pencil  
    - piano dynamics
  - Orange pencil  
    - meter changes
  - Green pencil  
    - cues
  - Purple pencil  
    - tempo changes
  - Highlighters
    - themes and material you wish brought out
  - Dark pencil
    - articulations, etc.
- Analyze the melodic contour
  - Is there text painting?
  - Word stress