



Songs of the Season 2024 - Tech Tips for Choirs

*WETA Arts producer Judy Meschel is available to chat with you via Zoom
on June 25 at 1:30 p.m. and June 26 at 7 p.m.*

To sign up for one of these time slots, send an email to arts@weta.org

Basic Tips for Capturing Your Concert

- Use more than one camera. One should be wide on the choral group. Additional cameras should give you other views (ex. medium shots, or side views with a subset of choristers).
 - Use cameras that can shoot 1920x1080 or more (i.e. HD).
 - Shoot 59.94 (60), not 24 frames per second (24 doesn't look good for broadcast).
 - Use lenses that don't distort the image (no fisheye or wide-angle lenses).
 - Use a camera/camera setting that can handle your lighting conditions/expected changes in lighting.
 - Use the same settings for all the cameras.
- Sync your audio recording to your video recording(s).
- Secure all cameras on tripods.
- Shoot Landscape (i.e. wide) not Portrait (i.e. tall).
- Frame shots so the composition is balanced (ex. don't cut off the head of your conductor, no matter how much you'd like to in real life, nor have 2/3 of the shot be comprised of the wall behind the choir).
- Set focus for the whole piece and leave it (assuming your choristers aren't moving forward and back a lot!). Autofocus is not recommended.
- Start shooting before the beginning and after the end.
- If you have an *extra* camera –
 - Shoot some footage of the conductor. Shoot some footage of the audience. You might be picking up this camera and going from one place to another during a performance if you can do so without disrupting the audience. You can use this footage for cutaways if you run into a problem with a shot (a bat flies through the shot, it could happen).
- If you are doing moves, hold in place for 5 seconds (or more), then move, slowly and smoothly, then hold for 5 seconds (or more) when you've landed at your destination.
 - Be mindful that you need a pretty good camera to be able to do a move and not pixelate, so don't do moves if your camera doesn't have the firepower for it. You also need a pretty good – heavy – tripod to do it smoothly.
- Assert yourself with the folks who are responsible for appearance
 - No looking straight into the camera, not even a teeny bit.
 - No thin stripes or high-contrast patterns.
 - Look engaged with the audience even when you are not singing (and even if there is no audience).
 - Try to have a *lot* of space between the choir and whatever is behind them.

- Use good audio recording equipment, separate from the camera (the camera's distance from the choir will make in-camera audio not reflect well on your choir. And that's what it's all about, isn't it?). Set record levels so you don't get distortion when it gets loud.

Editing

- You may need a version that fades in and fades out for your website or other purposes. Please also make a version that doesn't have fade in and out, for our purposes.
- Please make a no-text no-graphics version.
- Getting the edit pace right is a skill and is hard to describe without the context of the music. It should be peppy but not distractingly fast and match the mood of the performance.
- Cuts and crossfades are sufficient. No need to draw attention to edit with things like split-shots, wipes and other edit tricks.
- Edit around things that distract from the performance, like the person scratching their brow with sheet music or that angry look from the conductor when they hear a wrong note. This is when you want to cut to your wide shot or one of those cutaways.