

The Singer

1. *Never be satisfied with the starting pitch. If the conductor uses a pitch pipe, insist on your preference for the piano - and vice versa.*
2. *Complain about the temperature of the rehearsal room, the lighting, the lack of space, or a draught. It is best to do this when the conductor is under pressure.*
3. *Bury your head in the music just before an important cue.*
4. *Ask for a re-audition or seating change. Ask often. Give the impression you're about to quit. Let the conductor know you're there as a personal favor.*
5. *Loudly clear your throat during pauses (tenors are trained to do this from birth). Quiet instrumental interludes are a good opportunity for blowing your nose.*
6. *Long after a passage has gone by, ask the conductor if your low C was in tune. This is especially effective if you didn't have a low C or were not singing at the time.*
7. *Wait until well into rehearsal before letting the conductor know that you don't have any music.*
8. *After dramatic moments in the music (while the conductor is emoting wildly) be busy marking your music so that the climax will sound empty and disappointing.*
9. *Look at your watch frequently. Shake it in disbelief occasionally.*

10. *Whenever possible, sing your part either an octave above or below what is written. This is excellent ear training for the conductor. If she hears the pitch, deny it vehemently and claim that she must be hearing the harmonics.*
11. *Tell the conductor "I'm not sure of the beat." Conductors are always sensitive about their "stick technique", so challenge it frequently.*
12. *If you are singing in a language with which the conductor is the least bit unfamiliar, ask her as many questions as possible about the meaning of individual words. Occasionally, say the word twice and ask her preference for pronunciation, making certain to say it exactly the same both times. If she remarks on their similarity, give a look of utter disdain and mutter under your breath about "subtleties of inflection".*
13. *Ask the conductor if she has listened to the Bernstein recording of the piece you are rehearsing. Imply that she could learn a thing or two from it. Also good: ask "Is this the first time you've conducted this piece?"*
14. *If your phrasing differs from that of others singing the same phrase, stick to your guns. Do not ask the conductor which is correct until backstage just before the concert.*
15. *Remember - softer means slower.*
16. *During a long and meaningful rest, either hold the note before a second too long or come in one beat before the rest is over.*