

A cappella rehearsals are not as you would aca-imagine

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One might imagine Ithaca College's coed a cappella group IC Voicestream to have smooth-running rehearsals where harmonic voices never stop and songs are always in tune.

One might also imagine that tensions are low, as everyone is taking the opportunity to use rehearsal as a time to creatively express themselves, get lost in the music and really enjoy singing.

To this assumption, I respond, 'Take me to this imaginary land.'

Although everyone in the group unanimously loves singing, gives a significant amount of time and effort to the group, and loves IC Voicestream, rehearsals are very stressful and hectic, as the group puts everything into making the concerts what they are.

Rehearsals usually follow the same pattern every time. Although rehearsal is supposed to begin precisely at 8 p.m, everyone usually arrives a little late. By 8:05 p.m, everyone is there and warm ups usually begin.

Junior Namarah McCall said, "We do warm ups, scales and then Matt BA teaches a little bit of ensemble training. Then we start to learn songs to learn the different parts, then we come back and run the piece."

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Not only does the group have to learn the actual music, but we have to perfect the notes, and dynamics and memorize it.

This is what takes forever. The group runs through these songs around 30 times before the big block concerts.

The conductor of IC Voicestream, Matt Bailey-Adams, created one of the methods to memorization. He refers to it as the train method. The song is sung three times: once, while staring at the music intently, then again trying to use the music the least amount possible, and then lastly without the music at all.

The group does this with every song. Then, only after memorization are dynamics added, the aspects of the song that make it interesting. Getting louder at intense times, softer at mellow times, make the song interesting and different.

After perfecting dynamics, the group continues to run and perfect it, as the conductor believes that perfection is unattainable. Matt Bailey-Adams said, "Once we reach perfection, I will not be needed anymore...I'm glad that day will never come." He is incredibly ecstatic about how the block one went though.

This routine is applied to all 16 of the songs that are sung at each block concert.

This also does not include the intricate choreography that applies to two or three of the songs, which is a separate rehearsal on its own.

All of these aspects of the music are not something that is accomplished while the group is joking around and not focusing. Although it is difficult to get the group focused, eventually it happens and magic is made. After hours and hours of rehearsal, the group is ready to perform, and continue to improve.

