

ACDA 2009 ALL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL HONORS CHOIR PROGRAM

Christine C. Bass, Conductor

Greetings Choir,

Congratulations on being selected for the 2009 ACDA All National High School Honors Choir. I hope each one of you are excited about the wonderful opportunity we will have to make amazing music together in March. As you prepare, please follow these notes carefully and incorporate everything into your personal scores. The practice CD contains more than just your parts, it has some language tracks and a few demo recordings of my top high school choir, West Singers, singing some of the pieces. I would also encourage you to go on line in search of other quality performances of some of the repertoire. I am looking forward to meeting you and working with you towards an amazing concert!

**Best,
Mrs. Christine Bass
Conductor**

GENERAL NOTES:

In order to make your individual practice time musical, please pay careful attention to the areas listed below. As you learn your music, learn the phrasing, dynamics, and syllabic stress so as to bring the musical elements into your note learning process. This will help make you a much more musically sophisticated choir!

1. Number all measures of every piece. Start with the first complete measure.
2. Highlight all dynamic markings.
3. Underline the proper syllabic stress syllables.
4. Write in all phrasing and breath marks given - learn the music with the proper phrasing.
5. Unless noted as marcato, or staccato please learn all phrases with a sense of connection and line. Never just sing notes! My preference is that you do not add the text until the notes are fully learned to achieve the sense of line. Learn all your music with a neutral syllable (noo, nah, nee or loo, lah, lee)
6. On any long note (sometimes that can mean a quarter note) make sure the second half of the note is still alive and moving forward. Do not sit on or punch the beginning of a note and ignore the remainder of it.
7. Write in all diction directives.
8. Always have a pencil in your hand when rehearsing with your score for additional markings.

To Music -David Stanley York

SSAATTBB, Mercury Music Corporation 352-00320

Text: Aspirate H in how

ov for of

all non-initial 'r' s should be sung w/ a british accent - evah not ever

most final consonants of a word within a phrase should be blended into the following

word - stop to think of music =

stah-pto-thi-nkah-vmu-zic

strong voiced 'd' for God

some - times watch that you don't sing the voiced m too long. Stick with the open vowel
for as long as possible then pop the 'm' on quickly.

prayer = preh - yuh

When = hoo-when

failed us = feh -lduhs

weight = hooweh

music = voice the initial m

country - kuhn-tree

creed = kreeduh (voiced d)

but gives - buh -tgi- vesto

continue with the same ideas

There is no break of the first phrase until after God at m. 5

Therefore take your breaths in all the hidden places like in the middle of a longer note, never at the beginning of the next musical idea like between think and of in m. 2

Be very aware of the second half of every quarter and half note - the phrase must stay energized and can not have any holes in it.

Follow all dynamic markings and have them highlighted in your score.

General rule: sing to the strongest note of the phrase - make sure it has the emphasis needed.

Underline the phrase destination notes of each phrase. Example: When words have failed us neath the weight of care.

Syllabic stress rule; normally the first of two syllable words, or the second of three syllable words. Have the stressed syllables underlined.

Tenors & Basses (T & B) we will break after 'race' in m. 15.

Laudate Pueri (from *Missa Solemnes*) -Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

SATB LG51166 arr. Robert Shaw

General- THIS PIECE MUST BE MEMORIZED BEFORE YOU GET TO OK! There will be memorization testing at our first rehearsal. Be very careful when learning this piece to think about the pitches in a lifted sense. This is a difficult piece to keep in tune due to some of the intervals and the descending scale passages. It is important to learn it by lifting the pitch throughout. The treatment of the notes should be fairly bouncy and clean, not necessarily detached. Take some time to analyze the form and compositional techniques used by Mozart in this alle breve fugue which is the fourth movement from his *Vesperae solemnes de confessore*. What is the main theme, how is it treated? Where are the variations on the theme? Identify as much as you can before coming to OK and we will talk more about it in our rehearsals to better comprehend and sing with understanding.

Text: Please refer to the spoken track for pronunciation.

Count -Singing: We will be rehearsing this using count singing before we go to text. So you will need to write in all the count singing for your part. In 2/2 time the half note gets one count so the opening measures for the basses would be: 1 (pulse the 2 by singing 2 even though it is not a new note)/ 1 2 / 1 da 2 / 1(2) + / 1 + 2 +/ etc. The sub division for the eighth notes is 1 e + da 2 e + da.

Breathing: This piece is tricky because there are places where it feels natural to breath but you must only breath at the commas. As you are learning it with count singing be careful to learn the correct phrasing and do not chop the phrases by breathing in the wrong spot. Example; basses in the opening phrase may not breath until the comma after Dominum. You are going to want to breath after pueri or Domi-- num - but don't!

Be very careful when learning the chromatic passages that you are singing clean, correct pitches. Give a little accent when you have a moving note on the 'and' of a beat to help move the music forward.

m. 41 start piano but move towards the downbeat of 42 then back off. Also give more on the downbeat of m. 44. The same idea occurs at m. 115 - downbeat of m. 116 and m. 118 are stressed.

Pages 15 & 16 when amen is directly followed by another amen, start the second amen with a glottal stroke.

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen (from *Ein Dutsches Requiem*) -Johannes Brahms
C.F. Peters EP 3672

Please take some time to listen to the entire Brahms German Requiem, it is well worth it! The fourth movement is very well known and for good reason. It has some of the most beautiful phrases, voice leading and crescendos in all choral music. This piece must reflect the text (Psalm 84) and also the passion of the Romantic period. Please learn the notes on the neutral syllable 'noh' for sopranos and tenors and 'nee' for altos and basses. We will work on it often with those syllables for line, color, tone and phrasing. Learn the German from the practice CD clip but also find a great recording of it to observe the sung German.

Text: German must be sung with very strong consonants. There are several new sounds for in German, the neutral syllable the 'schwa' = 'uh' which occurs on the unaccented ending syllable of a word Woh-nun-gen = Voh-nun-gun. All initial Ws are Vs, all ending Ds are Ts, initial Vs are Fs, initial Ss are Zs. All Rs are rolled. When there are two vowels you hold the second one (opposite of our diphthong rule) so Wie = Vee and Lieblich = Leeblich. Please study the spoken track for pronunciation.

The tempo must be gracefully flowing, not rushed but not too slow. There are huge phrases in this piece which require wonderful breath control and line. Make sure you observe the dynamics while learning the piece. Brahms does a masterful job of melding the melodic line with the text

structure. The text is written below with the syllabic stressed notes underlined. Please underline them in your score and stress those notes in each phrase:

Wie lie-blich sind dei-ne Woh-nun-gen,

Herr Ze - ba- oth,

Mie-ne See -le

ver-lang-get und seh-net,

nach den Vor- ho-fen des Herrn;

mien Leib und See-le freu-ne sich

in dem le-ben-di-gen Gott,

Wie lieb-lich sind dei-ne Woh-nun-gen,

wohl de-nen, die in dei-nem Hau-se woh-nen,

die lo-ben dich im-mer dar (only when you have quarter and half notes)

Breathing:

Breath at the commas unless otherwise noted. Do not breathe in the following places:

m. 57 to 58 no breath for A & T

m. 69 to 70 no breath all voices

m. 77 to 78 no breath for A & T

m. 115 to 123 one phrase for all voices

m. 164 to end S & T one long phrase, A & B observe commas

We Beheld Once Again the Stars -Z. Randall Stroope

SATB Double Choir, Alliance Music AMP 0525

(ACDA 2004 Raymond W. Brock Commissioned Work)

My choir premiered this piece in 2004 at the ACDA All Eastern Convention in Boston. This was my first encounter with my now close friend, Z. Randall Stroope and this piece is now a favorite of my choirs. This is the centerpiece of our program because it is the longest work and it is for double choir. Choir One will be all the S1/A1/T1/B1 and Choir Two the S2/A2/T2/B2 - I may make some voice balance changes once we get to OK but for now those are the parts you should learn. On your practice CD it has both choirs, incase you need to switch choirs. Please highlight your part carefully as it is sometime easy to miss your line. Read the inside sleeve about the piece and the text. If you have the chance, also read Dante's Inferno which the piece is taken from.

Style: Learn the piece with a strong sense of legato line as the two choirs ebb and flow. My

preference again is that you learn it with a neutral syllable before adding the text. Learn all the dynamic markings. Obviously, the Molto Agitato section m.42 to 87 has a much more marcato feel than the previous and following sections. Measures 134 to 147 must stay double forte between both choirs for the entire time. To do this you need to stay under the sound with great breath control and support and keep the voice open and free. Observe all phrase markings for breathing, and all dynamic markings. Also, make sure you hold the final note of each phrase for its full duration (example m. 10).

Text: All 't's are dentalized which means that they do not aspirate like our English 't', they are formed with the tip of the tongue touching the back of your top teeth sounding more like a soft 'd'. Please make a note on every 't' so we do not have to correct this later. All 'r's are flipped except on. 87 the 'r' is rolled.

Tanquendo -Oscar Escalada
SATB Lawson-Gould 52729

Read the inside cover for text pronunciation and to understand the background of this fun piece. When we preform this piece we become a big instrumental tango band!

Caution: don't rush, keep an inner pulse throughout the piece. Listen to how your part interacts with the others and use that to keep you on track rhythmically.

We will omit m. section 20 on page 9 and stay in C# for section 21.

The Choir Invisible - David Childs
(ACDA 2009 Commissioned Work in honor of Gene Brooks)

When I received the invitation to conduct this Honors Choir I immediately thought of my friend Gene Brooks who was the person who encouraged me to become involved with ACDA back in 1996. His leadership of ACDA has made the organization what it is today and his untimely death last year was a great loss. I asked if we could commission a work in his honor and was enthusiastically supported by the ACDA leadership. David Childs was commissioned and together we selected the text for "The Choir Invisible". We will undertake the job of presenting this piece in Gene Brooks' honor to the ACDA family that he loved so much. Learn your part with line, energy and intensity!

Precious Lord -Thomas Dorsey/arr. Arnold Sevier
SATB (divisi) Abingdon Press 061784

Lush harmonies with eight part divisi in spots, totally passionate text and that gospel 6/8 feel are all important elements of this wonderful piece. Learn it with a sense of both the macro beat of 2 and the underlying micro beats of the eighth note pulse. Each note must be sustained with life and tons of energy, no matter what the dynamic level. The line must constantly pull the listener through each phrase. The diction must sting on certain words, I look forward to bringing this piece to life with all of you.

Breathing: Each spot where there is no breath there IS strong line moving forward.

- No breath from m. 2 to 3
- No breath from m. 6 to 7
- No breath from m. 10 to 11
- No breath from m. 18 to 19
- No breath from m. 22 to 23
- There is a break in m. 29 before me
- No breath from m. 38 to 39
- No breath in m. 51 between Lord and I

Text:

On all words in the phrase, connect the final consonant of the word to the first sound of the following word.

- Spring to the first Pr sound in precious.
- In m. 33 hoo before the when.

Style:

- sfp* - sforzando the word 'weak' in m. 12
- m. 25 - 27 the phrase 'take my hand' move to the word hand.
- m. 45 break after 'most' then cushion the next entrance on 'gone'.
- m. 48 ladies finish the word 'gone' with the men, then re-sing it on the first two beats of m. 49
- build, build, build dynamically to the *fff* in m. 52 and give a big 'nd' to finish stand.
- m. 57 another big 'nd' finish to the word stand.
- tenors be careful to note the pitch difference between m. 59 and m. 27
- at m. 63 change the mmm to ooo and then add the words 'lead me' to beats 5 & 6 of m. 62 and 'home' to the 1st beat of m. 63 closing the m before releasing.

William Tell Overture -Giacchino Rossini
SATB divisi, Alfred arr. Julie Eshliman

We will take this as fast as possible with a large choir. We will also be adding some fun 'choralography' to depict the different musical ideas and instruments, so come with this piece totally memorized. Again, I recommend listening to the real WT Overture for a reference. Go through and highlight which voice part has the main theme. It is important to always understand if you are presenting the main theme or more of the background part. Observe the sudden dynamic shifts and learn them right into the piece.

Notes:

At m. 78 Soprano 1s only take the melody up the octave starting on the + of 1. Drop back down at m. 83. Then back up at m. 86 on the + of 1 again through m. 90.
After the repeat back to page 6 @ m. 35 the second time you come to the end of m. 58 we will break out into a unison version of "Bonanza" with a simple chord on the last note - and add those 10 measures :) ! Then we will pop right back into m. 59 to the coda.

My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord - Moses Hogan
SSAATTBB Hal Leonard

I had the wonderful privilege of working with Moses Hogan personally on the day of his last birthday (which of course no one knew it would be his last). My choir sang his pieces for him at Westminster, I will never forget our interchange afterwards. "My Soul's Been Anchored" is one of my favorite Hogan pieces and I know it will be an amazing experience for us to work on together. It is important to learn this piece with a rich, rather dark, vibrant tone color. As Anton Armstrong would say, we need big church mommas and preachers to sing this song! Please listen to the demo recording or watch West Singers on you tube to view my stylistic interpretations of this piece (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOMuCZr_PBw).

Text: The text must be viewed as conversational. Which means that you need to understand it from the point of telling someone about your experience. Several times in the piece there are call and response conversations. In general, stinging consonants and very warm, rich, tall vowel sounds are needed. The lower voices will close the 'n' as noted in the next to last measure.

Lord = Lawd

My = mah

Anchored = a---n-chu-rd do not close the n or chew the r

Style: Really too much to cover on paper so please listen to the you tube performance. Please learn the dynamics as you learn the notes. Measures 22, 45, 68 - lower voices 'good Lord my' must be very weighty. The back and forth section between the women and the men starting at measure 70 must have the proper understanding of the text and thus the proper syllabic stress. Women in m. 73 and 81 make sure to give the word "God" more weight and line. Same thing for the first note of the phrase in m. 72, 79, 87. To all, note the changes in text for m. 90, 91 don't get stuck there. I will slow things way down from m. 96 on. Be ready to keep a full sound at the slower more dramatic ending. I will choose about 10 first sopranos for the obligato part starting at m. 97. S1s please learn both parts from there to the end. The final chord will *sfp* - sforzando.