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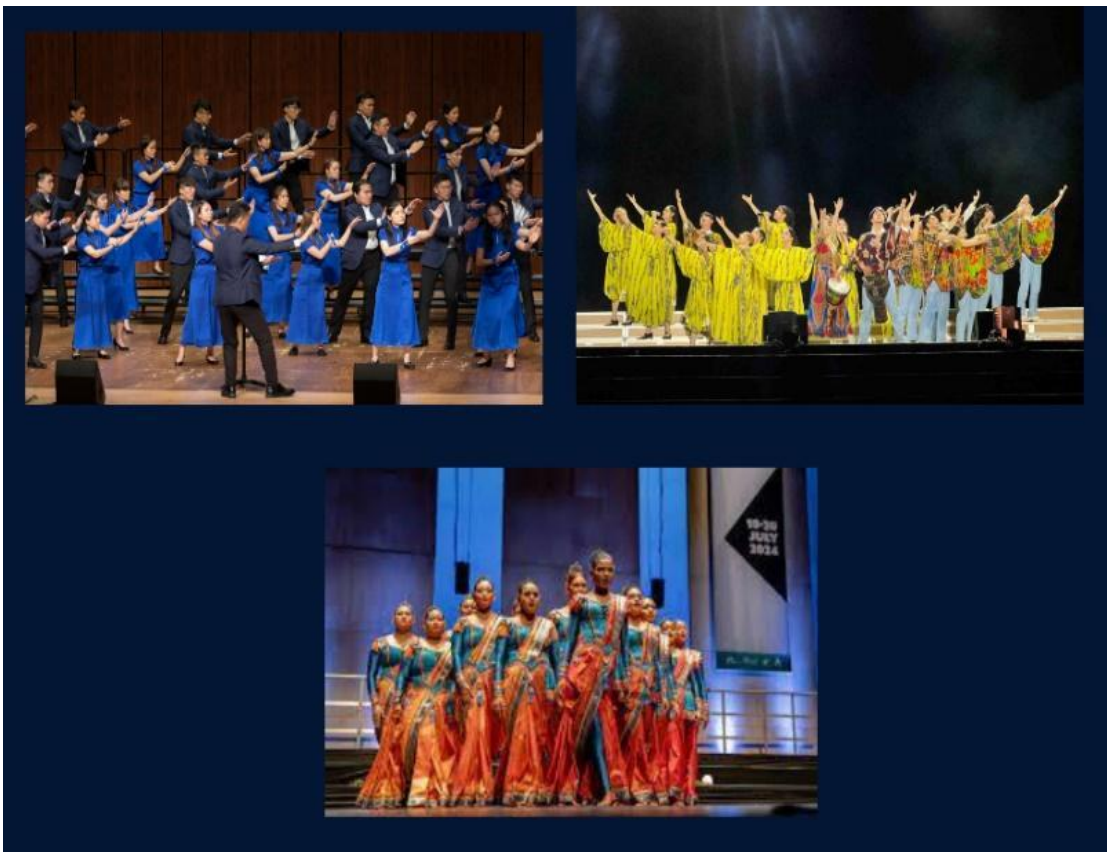
Voices Across Continents: New Global Repertoire for the 21st-Century Choir

American Choral Directors Association

Post-Conference Literature Session

March 2025

World Musics and Cultures



Overview

Welcome to "Voices Across Continents: New Global Repertoire for the 21st-Century Choir." We will delve into a rich tapestry of choral pieces that span sacred and secular traditions from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Each selection in this reading session is meticulously curated, blending publisher notes with my own research, analysis, and performance practice insights.

The curated and annotated repertoire list below features a diverse selection of works for both mixed and unvoiced choirs, catering to a range of skill levels and including options for instrumental accompaniment as well as a cappella performances. These newly published pieces have been thoughtfully chosen to enrich your choir's artistic expression and elevate their performance experiences. For each composition, I have provided a list of resources to support further study and cultural immersion, helping you deepen your understanding of the folklore and traditions of the featured regions while ensuring an authentic and informed interpretation.

"Music is the universal language of mankind, and choral music, in particular, creates a space where individuals from different cultures can unite and share their stories through song."
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Including world music in choral concert programs promotes cultural diversity and fosters a deeper understanding of global traditions, broadening both the choir's and the audience's perspectives on music and culture. This exposure to different musical styles and languages enhances singers' versatility and adaptability, essential skills for any accomplished musician. Moreover, performing world music encourages the exploration of varied musical techniques and rhythms, enriching the choir's overall sound and repertoire. Additionally, it highlights the universal language of music, demonstrating how diverse cultures can connect and communicate through shared artistic expression. This inclusivity not only enriches the choir's educational experience but also resonates with audiences, fostering a sense of global unity and appreciation. By integrating world music into concert programs, choirs celebrate the rich tapestry of human expression and contribute to a more inclusive and interconnected musical community.

I hope you discover pieces that inspire and enhance your choir's repertoire. I am here to support you with inquiries, in-person or virtual rehearsals, clinics, guest performances, and Q&A sessions with you and your choirs. Let's embark on this musical journey together, celebrating the universal language of choral music.

Madlen Batchvarova, DMA

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***Post 2025 ACDA National Conference
World Musics and Cultures - Curated Repertoire List***

Madlen Batchvarova, DMA

ACDA National World Musics and Cultures Chair

| | <u>TITLE</u> | <u>COMPOSER/ ARRANGER</u> | <u>VOICING</u> | <u>PUBLISHER</u> | <u>PUBLISHER #</u> | <u>PEPPER #</u> | <u>COUNTRY</u> |
|----|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Plaudite, Psallite | Kestutis Daugirdas | SATB | Walton | WW1988 | 11514312 | Lithuania |
| 2 | Paris Barantai | arr. Ken Steven | SATB | Walton | WJMS1195 | 11514311 | Indonesia |
| 3 | Khutšo | M. Koapeng & R. Williams | SATB | Walton | WW2005 | 11536905 | Zambia |
| 4 | Tree Song | Anders Edenroth | SSAA | Walton | WW1990 | 11514317 | Sweden |
| 5 | El Humo | Eduardo Cota | 3 part mix | Walton | WW1966 | 11514298 | Mexico |
| 6 | Ari Im Sokhak | arr. Brent Wells | SATB | Earthsongs | S-475 | 11366962 | Armenia |
| 7 | Canto de Pilon | arr. Cristian Graces | 3 part mix | Pavane | 1189540 | 10279602 | Venezuela |
| 8 | Three Taiwanese Indigenous Songs | arr. Tsai Yu-shan | SATB | Pavane | 1412181 | 11564506 | Taiwan |
| 9 | Temporal | arr. Diana V. Saez & Suzzette Ortiz | SATB | La Voz Music Publishing | LVMP23103 | 11535672 | Afro-Puerto Rican |
| 10 | Ong Hye Ya | arr. Hye-Young Cho | SATB | Walton | WJMS1217 | 11567961 | Korea |
| 11 | Li, la, ley | Tracy Wong | SSAA | Hinshaw | HMC 2732 | 10513301 | Malai |
| 12 | Jumalo | Arr. Laura Jekabsone | SATB | Walton | WW2005 | 11567956 | Latvia |
| 13 | Ingen vinner frem | Ola Gjeilo | SATB div. | Walton | WW2031 | 11540239 | Norway |
| 14 | Y'did Nefesh | Jonathan Sheffer | SATB div | E.C. Schirmer Music Co. | 9268 | 11566214 | Hebrew |

Selections

Plaudite, Psalite

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

Kestutis Daugirdas

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjj9qbrpnB4>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Plaudite%2C-Psallite/11514312.item>

Kestutis Daugirdas is a contemporary **Lithuanian** composer known for his contributions to choral music. Born in 1971, Daugirdas has established himself as a significant figure in the modern choral landscape of the Baltic region. His works often reflect a blend of traditional choral elements with modern harmonies and textures, creating pieces that are both accessible and innovative.

"**Plaudite, Psallite**" is one of Daugirdas's notable choral compositions. The title translates from Latin as "Clap, Sing Praises," which reflects the exuberant and celebratory nature of the piece. The text, derived from Psalm 47:1, is a call to praise and worship, fitting into the tradition of jubilant choral music used in both liturgical and concert settings. The piece can be seen as part of the broader tradition of sacred choral works that aim to uplift and inspire. The title and text also evoke the spirit of Renaissance and Baroque compositions that frequently utilized Latin texts celebrating the glory of God. The rhythmic energy and interplay between voices in "Plaudite, Psallite" are reminiscent of the antiphonal and polychoral styles popular in the works of composers like Giovanni Gabrieli.

"Plaudite, Psallite" by Kestutis Daugirdas is a vibrant and engaging choral piece that exemplifies the fusion of traditional choral elements with modern harmonic and rhythmic innovations. Its use of Latin text, rhythmic vitality, and dynamic contrasts create a piece that is both deeply rooted in the choral tradition and refreshingly contemporary. The piece is an ideal choice for an advanced high school choir, a college-level choir, or a community choir with solid musical skills.

This work stands as a testament to Daugirdas's ability to breathe new life into the rich heritage of choral music, making it accessible and exciting for both performers and audiences alike.

Resources:

Kestutis Daugirdas Composer Website: www.daugirdasmusic.com

Musica Lithuania: <https://musiclithuania.com/collections/repertoire-of-lithuanian-choral-classics>

A publishing company that offers repertoire of Lithuanian choral classics

Paris Barantai

SATB div, unaccompanied

arr. Ken Steven

Indonesia MA

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbWJEkTOK5E>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Paris-Barantai/11514311.item>

Ken Steven is a contemporary Indonesian composer known for his evocative choral works that often draw on traditional Indonesian musical elements. Born in 1993 in Tarutung, North Sumatra, Steven's compositions are celebrated for their rich textures, intricate rhythms, and the fusion of Western choral traditions with Indonesian cultural influences.

The title "Paris Barantai" refers to a traditional folk song from the Banjar people of South Kalimantan, Indonesia. This song is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical context of the Banjar community. The Banjar people have a rich tradition of music and storytelling, often reflecting their daily lives, history, and natural surroundings. "Paris Barantai" is a love song that narrates a tale of longing and separation. The lyrics of "Paris Barantai" are in the Banjar language, a Malayic language spoken in South Kalimantan. The use of the local language not only preserves the cultural heritage but also provides a unique soundscape for the choral piece.

Ken Steven's arrangement of "Paris Barantai" transforms the traditional folk melody into a sophisticated choral work. It retains the song's cultural essence while infusing it with contemporary choral techniques and harmonies. It also allows singers to develop their skills in navigating complex vocal lines and dynamic contrasts, enhancing their overall musicianship. The piece adheres to a verse-chorus structure common in folk music, allowing the narrative to unfold.

Resources:

More about Ken Steven – Walton publishing - <https://giamusic.com/artists/ken-steven#:~:text=Hailing%20from%20Medan%2C%20composer%20Ken,with%20modern%20techniques%20and%20harmonies>

"Lombok, Kalimantan, Banyumas: Little known forms of Gamelan and Wayang,"

Smithsonian Folkways, Vol. 14, Music of Indonesia

<https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/SFW40441.pdf>

Music of Indonesia by M. Hood.

https://brill.com/display/book/9789004482906/B9789004482906_s002.xml

'Whither Indonesian culture?' Rethinking 'culture' in Indonesia in a time of decolonization by E. Bogaerts.

<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/34574/1/403204.pdf#page=242>

Manifestation Culture of Banjar Ethnic In The Lyrics Of The Song Uma Abah (Antropolinguistik Approach) by Kamariah Kisyani, Agusniar Dian Savitri, Suhartono, Darni, Udjang Pairin

<https://eudl.eu/pdf/10.4108/eai.4-11-2020.2314184>

Khutso (Chant for Peace)

SATB div, unaccompanied

arr. Mokale Koapeng & Roderick Williams

Performance Link: https://youtu.be/SWAM91Tu_FM**JW Pepper Link:** <https://www.jwpepper.com/Khutso/11536905.item>

"**Khutšo**," meaning "peace" in Northern Sotho, is a choral composition for SATB divisi voices, unaccompanied, arranged by South African composer Mokale Koapeng and British composer Roderick Williams. This collaborative work expresses themes of peace and grief, characterized by a simple harmonic structure and text, with opportunities for improvisation within the piece's structure, accompaniment, and individual voices. Originally composed a month after the death of Koapeng's father, the song is an emotional expression of losing someone special. The straightforward text expresses the same sentiments in Northern Sotho (also known as Sesotho sa Leboa or Sepedi) and in Latin. This moderately difficult piece would be a valuable addition to high school, college or community choirs exploring the music of the African diaspora.

Mokale Koapeng is a renowned South African composer, conductor, and lecturer, born in Soweto. He began his musical journey at the age of 10 and has since gained international acclaim for his contributions to classical and choral music. Koapeng has collaborated with various national and international musicians and groups, including Sibongile Khumalo, Hugh Masekela, and the British vocal group I Fagiolini. He has also been active in community development projects promoting music education and cultural activities and has served as the president of New Music South Africa, a chapter of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM).

Roderick Williams is a distinguished British baritone and composer, known for his versatility in opera, concert performances, and recital work. He has performed in major opera houses and festivals worldwide and has a diverse repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary music. As a composer, Williams has written various works, including choral pieces, and has been commissioned by notable ensembles and festivals.

"Khutšo" reflects a blend of African and Western musical traditions, embodying the cultural backgrounds of its composers. The piece's simple harmonic structure allows for expressive depth, while the opportunities for improvisation invite performers to engage creatively with the music. The text's focus on peace and grief resonates universally, making "Khutšo" a poignant addition to choral repertoires.

Resources:

Wit University page on Koapeng: https://www.wits.ac.za/alumni/archive/news/alumni-achievers/mokale-koapeng---musical-maestro/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

African Composers Edition - History of African Music Scores by Christine Lucia: https://african-composers-edition.co.za/history-of-african-music-scores/?srsltid=AfmBOoqM1UISOBreQ51nWUSp-L6fcj3V1HOKmGtU-R-n_K7UPvEDnzqt

Tree Song

SSAA, unaccompanied

Anders Edenroth

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYZ2QUA9JYw>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Tree-Song/11514317.item>

Anders Edenroth is a celebrated Swedish composer, arranger, and singer, widely known for his work with the acclaimed vocal group The Real Group. Established in 1984, The Real Group has been at the forefront of a cappella music, blending jazz, pop, and classical influences with precision and creativity. Edenroth's compositions and arrangements have played a pivotal role in shaping the group's distinctive sound.

Born in 1963 in Stockholm, Sweden, Anders Edenroth studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and became a founding member of The Real Group, contributing as a composer, arranger, and performer. Edenroth's style is characterized by its blend of traditional choral techniques with contemporary jazz harmonies and rhythms. His compositions often feature complex harmonic progressions, rhythmic innovation, and a deep connection to lyrical content.

Formed in 1984, The Real Group quickly rose to prominence in the international a cappella scene. The group's repertoire spans various genres, and they are known for their precise vocal techniques and inventive arrangements.

"Tree Song" stands out for its poetic lyrics, lush harmonies, and evocative musical narrative. The piece reflects Edenroth's ability to create a seamless blend of music and text, resulting in a profound and moving experience for both performers and listeners. The lyrics of "Tree Song" use the metaphor of a tree to explore themes of growth, stability, and connection with nature. This imagery resonates deeply, inviting listeners to reflect on their relationship with the natural world and their personal growth. The text is contemplative and evocative, creating an intimate atmosphere of serenity and introspection.

Resources:

Anders Edenroth's Official Website: <https://andersedenroth.com/>

The Real Group: <https://www.therealgroup.se/>

Contemporary A Cappella Society: <https://casa.org/>

(the organization provides resources and articles on contemporary a cappella music, including insights into the work of composers like Edenroth)

El Humo

3 part mixed, piano

Eduardo Cota

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Tw0-rVMoJg>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/El-Humo/11514298.item>

El Humo represents the cultural heritage of Mexico, incorporating elements of folk music and imagery that resonate with its indigenous and mestizo (of mixed origin) roots. The use of metaphor (smoke as a symbol of transformation or spiritual ascent) ties to indigenous beliefs, where smoke often represents a connection to the divine.

The piece is strophic, with repeating melodic and harmonic patterns that build a sense of familiarity while allowing for expressive variation. The folk-inspired, lyrical, melody makes it approachable for developing singers while retaining artistic depth. The piano accompaniment provides rich harmonic support with occasional chromaticism that evokes the shifting and ethereal nature of smoke. Syncopation and dance-like rhythms add vibrancy and flair to the piece.

The text of *El Humo* is poetic, filled with vivid imagery of nature and introspection. It reflects on the themes of transformation, and the cycle of life. The English translation included in the score will prove a valuable tool in the understanding and interpretation of the work.

The 3-part mixed voicing and supportive piano accompaniment make this piece suitable for middle school, high school, or community choirs with developing musicianship.

The compositional contributions of Eduardo Cota were discussed by Frank Eychaner in his interest session entitled “Choir and Composer Collaborations- Commissioning as Cultural Bridge” during the 2023 ACDA National Conference. <https://acda.org/archives/sessions/choir-and-composer-collaborations-commissioning-as-cultural-bridge>

Resources:

Eduardo Cota Composer’s Bio: <https://giamusic.com/artists/eduardo-cota>

Ethnic groups in Mexico – Encyclopedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mexico/Ethnic-groups>

Ari Im Sokhak (Come, My Nightingale)

SATB, piano

arr. Brent Wells

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41GQFKo49Ck>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Ari-Im-Sokhak/11366962.item>

"Ari Im Sokhak" is a traditional Jewish folk song that has been beautifully arranged for choir by Brent Wells. The song's haunting melody and poignant lyrics have made it a staple in Jewish musical heritage and a beloved piece in the choral repertoire.

"Ari Im Sokhak" ("Lion If You Laughed") originates from the rich tapestry of Jewish folk music. Folk songs in Jewish culture often carry deep emotional and historical significance, reflecting the experiences, struggles, and spiritual life of the Jewish people. The song is in Yiddish, a historical language of the Ashkenazi Jews, which combines elements of German with Hebrew and Slavic languages. Yiddish songs are a vital part of Jewish cultural expression, often carrying themes of love, hardship, and resilience. "Ari Im Sokhak" can be seen as a lullaby or a narrative song. It explores themes of nature, animals, and human emotions, common in many Yiddish folk songs. The metaphor of the lion can symbolize strength, courage, or the struggles of life, depending on the interpretation.

Brent Wells is a choral conductor, arranger, and educator. He has arranged numerous songs from different cultures. His work aims to preserve the essence of the original songs while making them engaging for modern choral groups.

Resources:

Brent Wells – composer website: <https://brentwellsmusic.com/>

The Milken Archive of Jewish Music: <https://www.milkenarchive.org/>

(a thorough resource on Jewish music, offering recordings, scholarly articles, and historical context)

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research: <http://www.yivo.org/>

International Choral Bulletin: <https://issuu.com/icbulletin>

(The International Choral Bulletin is the quarterly magazine of the International Federation for Choral Music Access articles and resources on choral music, including discussions on arranging traditional songs for modern choirs)

Canto de Pilon

3 part mixed, unaccompanied

arr. Cristian Graces

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjj9qbrpnB4>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Canto-de-Pilon/10279602.item>

"Canto de Pilón" reflects the rich cultural traditions of Venezuela and showcases Graces' ability to translate folk music into compelling choral arrangements. The song is rooted in the Afro-Venezuelan heritage. The term "pilón" refers to a traditional wooden mortar used to grind grains and seeds, and the song historically accompanies the rhythmic pounding of the pilón. It is also an example of work songs, which were often sung by women during communal activities. These songs are characterized by their repetitive structure and rhythmic drive, designed to coordinate and ease the laborious tasks. Like many folk songs, "Canto de Pilón" has been passed down through generations by oral tradition, preserving the cultural practices and communal spirit of the past.

"Canto de Pilón" is suitable for intermediate choral ensembles. It introduces singers to Venezuelan culture and traditions, specifically the work songs of the Afro-Venezuelan communities. This exposure fosters cultural appreciation and understanding, allowing singers to connect with a diverse musical heritage.

Resources:

Cristian Graces composer website: <http://www.cristiangraces.com/>

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage:

<https://folklife.si.edu/magazine/venezuelan-music-light-in-darkness>

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings:

<https://folkways.si.edu/venezuela-afro-venezuelan-music-volumes-i-and-ii/world/music/album/smithsonian>

Choral Music of Latin America - Oxford Music Online

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/search?q=Choral+Music+of+Latin+America&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true>

Three Taiwanese Indigenous Songs

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

arr. Tsai Yu-shan

Performance Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_dolVW4xr4

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Three-Taiwanese-Indigenous-Songs/11564506.item>

Tsai Yu-Shan is a contemporary Taiwanese composer known for her work that bridges traditional Taiwanese music and modern choral techniques. Her composition "Three Taiwanese Indigenous Songs" reflects her commitment to preserving and celebrating the musical heritage of Taiwan's indigenous peoples through innovative choral arrangements.

From the Taroko and Tayal tribes in Taiwan, these three contrasting and fun-to-sing folk songs are arranged for intermediate a cappella mixed choirs. The first is a harvest song capturing the sounds of people working in the field. The second, featuring a soloist, seeks consolation for the friends and family we miss. The third and final song returns to the harvest with energy and joy.

Tsai incorporates modern harmonic techniques to complement the modal and pentatonic scales typical of indigenous Taiwanese music. Dissonances and open intervals evoke the raw beauty of traditional singing. The divisi parts create a rich, layered texture, simulating the communal singing style of the tribes. Polyphonic passages often imitate natural sounds or celebratory chants. Syncopation, irregular meters, and free rhythmic sections reflect the spontaneity of indigenous music, demanding rhythmic precision and flexibility from performers.

Historical information, translations, and pronunciation guides are available as free downloads on the publisher's website.

Resources:

Tsai Yu-Shan - Composer Profile <https://exhibits.library.umkc.edu/s/shining-a-light/item/4004>

The Choral Music of Taiwan – International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) Bulletin
<http://icb.ifcm.net/choral-music-taiwan/>

Taiwan Composers Database <https://archive.ncafroc.org.tw/composer/index?lang=en>

Temporal

SATB, unaccompanied

arr. Diana V. Saez & Suzette Ortiz

Performance Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Temporal/11535672.item>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Temporal/11535672.item>

"Temporal" is a captivating choral song composed by Diana V. Sáez and arranged by Suzette Ortiz. This piece is infused with the rich rhythms and melodies characteristic of Latin American music, offering choirs an opportunity to explore vibrant and culturally diverse repertoire.

Diana Saez and Suzette Ortiz are native of Puerto Rico and are recognized for their contributions to Latin American choral music and their efforts to promote cultural diversity through music. In their work they often emphasize the importance of cultural representation and education in the arts. "Temporal" translates to "storm" in English. The song captures the essence of a storm, both literally and metaphorically, through its dynamic music and evocative text. In Latin American cultures, storms are often seen as powerful and transformative natural events, symbolizing both destruction and renewal. The text employs vivid descriptions and rhythmic language that mirror the natural patterns and movements of a storm. This alignment of text and music enhances the overall impact of the piece. The arrangement adds layers of harmony that enrich the melodic line. The use of close harmonies and dissonances captures the tension and release inherent in the concept of a storm.

Resources:

Diana V. Sáez website: <https://dianavsaez.com/>

Suzette Ortiz website: <https://suzetteortiz.com/>

Latin American Choral Music: <https://www.latinamericanchoralmusic.org/>

Encyclopedia Britannica - Latin American Music: <https://www.britannica.com/art/Latin-American-music>

Ong Hye Ya

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

arr. Hye-Young Cho

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-zsuM1JoUM>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Ong-Hye-Ya/11567961.item>

Ong Hye Ya is based on a traditional work folk song from Kyeong-Sang-Do, a province in southern Korea, specifically tied to farming and communal labor. Such songs (known as *nongak* or *arirang*-like melodies) were often sung to synchronize group efforts, celebrate harvests, or relieve the monotony of work. Hye-Young Cho's arrangement preserves the folk character while adapting it for SATB divisi, unaccompanied choir. The song reflects Korean traditions where music serves as a communal activity (processing barley), blending rhythm, melody, and improvisation to unify laborers in shared tasks.

The repetitive and call-and-response nature reflects its origins in community-based activities. The tenor solo often introduces a melodic line, which is echoed by the choir. *Ong Hye Ya* emphasizes collaboration, joy, and the spirit of perseverance. The rhythm is lively and syncopated, imitating the natural flow of work songs. It is based on a Korean traditional rhythmic mode Ja-Jin-Mo-Ri (Eng. – frequent rhythm). Polyrhythmic elements and irregular meters capture the spontaneity of the original style. Divisi parts create a rich choral texture, with moments of unison that highlight the communal aspect of the song. The lyrics are in Korean, featuring nonsensical syllables characteristic of work songs. These syllables provide rhythmic energy and focus more on function than literal meaning. The rest of the text likely describes aspects of farming life or the joy of working together. A recorded pronunciation guide is available at waltonmusic.com, search for WJMS 1217. While the nonsensical syllables lack a direct translation, they should be used as rhythmic and emotional tools. Korean diction and unfamiliar phonemes may require focused rehearsal to achieve precise vowel articulation and attention to consonant clarity. The piece would be suitable for collegiate, professional, or advanced high school choirs with strong musicianship and cultural sensitivity.

Hye-Young Cho's *Ong Hye Ya* is a vibrant and engaging piece that celebrates the communal spirit of folk music and provides a meaningful and joyful exploration of Korean musical heritage. It challenges singers and conductors with its rhythmic complexity, language, and interpretive demands, but it offers immense rewards in terms of cultural enrichment and artistic expression.

Resources:

Eastern light Northeast Asian Choral Resources: <https://neachoralresources.wordpress.com/>

Eastern light Hye-Young Cho - composer: <https://neachoralresources.wordpress.com/hye-young-cho/>

Sensation Ep05 Korea's Sound "Gootgeori & Jajinmori Jangdan" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tXPcAOUr3Q>

A popular style video that provides cultural and musical insights and offers an immersive style learning experience. This episode focuses on Jajinmori traditional Korean rhythmic mode

Li, la, ley

SSAA, unaccompanied

Tracy Wong

Performance Link: <https://tracywongmusic.com/compositions-all/laliley>**JW Pepper Link:** <https://www.jwpepper.com/La-Li-Ley/11564952.item>

Tracy Wong is a Malaysian-born, Canada-based composer, conductor, and educator whose works often reflect her multicultural background. *Li, La, Ley* is part of her efforts to incorporate Southeast Asian influences into choral music while maintaining universal appeal. This piece, with its playful rhythmic energy and dynamic texture, is inspired by Malaysian folk traditions and storytelling. It celebrates the communal joy and vibrancy of traditional music-making in a contemporary choral setting. This piece was commissioned by the Virginia Choral Directors Association for their 2024 Virginia All-State SSAA Choir, Pearl Shangkuan, Conductor.

According to the composer, the piece is “a nod to two Malay folk songs, this a cappella treble piece uses vocable text inspired by a portion of *Canggung* (la-la-li-la-ley) and a main theme inspired by the opening motif of *Mak Inang*. This work features exciting vocal play merged with folkloric elements – quartal harmonies, dance-like rhythms, and shifting tonalities – that are spun through a contemporary lens.”

The intricate rhythms, close harmonies, and divisi sections make it suitable for skilled intermediate or advanced collegiate, advanced high school, or community women’s choirs.

Resources:Tracy Wong, Composer Website: <https://tracywongmusic.com/>Tracy Wong, Composer Website – Li, la, ley – resource page: <https://tracywongmusic.com/compositions-all/laliley>Malay in encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Malay-people>Mak Inang Dance In Malaysia: <https://www.danceus.org/style/mak-inang-dance-in-malaysia/>

The webpage provides an overview of the Mak Inang dance, a traditional Malay performance that originated during the Malacca Sultanate. It discusses the dance's evolution from strict court protocols to a more expressive form influenced by Chinese movements, highlighting its graceful footwork and the use of props like fans or scarves.

Jumalo

SSAATBB, unaccompanied

Laura Jekabsone

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DBGOCJKa8A>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Jumalo/11567956.item>

Pronunciation guide: <https://giamusic.com/resource/jumalo-printed-music-ww2031>

Jumalo is a noteworthy piece in the repertoire of the vocal ensemble "Latvian Voices," created by the group's leader, Laura Jēkabsone. Drawing inspiration from Latvian folk music, the song weaves together sacred and mythological themes deeply rooted in the country's cultural heritage. The term *jumalo*, although untranslatable, serves as a refrain imbued with profound meaning—symbolizing prosperity, wealth, and fertility.

According to Jēkabsone, the narrative of *Jumalo* centers on a wealthy father's son who transports the treasures of Riga to his hometown of Kurzeme, a historically prosperous region in western Latvia. Among the treasures, the most significant is a horse, a symbol with multiple layers of meaning in Latvian mythology, including good fortune and success. This mythological reference underscores the piece's connection to Latvia's spiritual and folkloric traditions.

The composition unfolds with an organic and evolving structure, where themes and motifs are introduced, developed, and intricately interwoven. This creates a meditative yet dynamic musical journey. The rhythm alternates between fluid, chant-like passages and rhythmically complex sections, capturing the balance between introspection and the lively energy characteristic of Baltic traditions. The SSAATBB arrangement allows for rich polyphonic interplay, with moments of unison that provide clarity and unity amidst the textural complexity.

Jumalo also demands exceptional musicianship. A strong soloist is essential to anchor the work, while the ensemble must navigate a wide dynamic range, seamlessly transitioning from hushed, introspective whispers to powerful, resonant climaxes. The piece celebrates Latvia's enduring connection to nature, spirituality, and folk heritage, blending traditional elements with a modern choral framework that resonates with contemporary audiences.

The syllabic text underlay poses a unique challenge for singers, requiring precise articulation and a deep understanding of the language's nuances. Fortunately, the publisher provides a recorded pronunciation guide, which serves as an invaluable resource for studying and mastering the text. This support ensures that medium advanced choirs can authentically engage with the piece's linguistic and cultural dimensions, enhancing its overall impact.

Resources:

Laura Jēkabsone on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JekabsoneLaura/?profile_tab_item_selected=about&_rdr

Vocal group "Latvian Voices": <https://www.latvianvoices.lv/>

Latvian Traditional Culture and Music – The Smithsonian: https://folklife-media.si.edu/docs/festival/program-book-articles/FESTBK1998_21.pdf

A disciplinary history of Latvian Mythology by Tom Kencis

<https://dspace.ut.ee/server/api/core/bitstreams/66262657-0ce6-45c4-bc09-d98ac9334a75/content>

(A dissertation that provides detailed account of the history and development of Latvian mythology)

Ingen vinner frem til den evige ro

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

Ola Gjeilo

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UVaqu3e70c>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Ingen-vinner-frem-til-den-evige-ro/11540239.item>

Publisher's

Pronunciation Guide: <https://giamusic.com/resource/ingen-vinner-frem-til-den-evige-ro-printed-music-ww2010>

"**Ingen vinner frem til den evige ro**" is a cherished Norwegian hymn, originally penned by Swedish pastor and hymn writer Lars Linderot in 1798. The hymn's title translates to "No One Reaches Eternal Peace," reflecting its contemplative meditation on the spiritual journey and the pursuit of inner tranquility. According to Gjeilo, the melody originates from Hallingdal, a sprawling valley that includes the town of Geilo, the ancestral home of his family.

Ola Gjeilo, a Norwegian composer born in 1978, is renowned for his evocative choral and instrumental compositions that blend lush harmonies with cinematic atmospheres. His style often incorporates rich, contemporary harmonies, seamless voice leading, and a profound sensitivity to textual nuances, creating immersive and emotive musical landscapes.

In his unaccompanied SATB divisi arrangement of "Ingen vinner frem til den evige ro," Gjeilo masterfully intertwines tradition with innovation. The piece opens with a serene, homophonic texture, allowing the hymn's poignant melody to resonate with clarity. As the arrangement unfolds, Gjeilo introduces intricate divisi sections, enriching the harmonic palette and enhancing the emotional depth of the composition. His use of dynamic contrasts and subtle harmonic shifts further amplifies the text's contemplative nature, inviting both singers and listeners into a reflective sonic journey.

This arrangement is particularly well-suited for advanced high school choirs, collegiate ensembles, and community choirs with proficient singers. The harmonic complexity and divisi passages require a level of vocal maturity and technical skill, making it an excellent choice for ensembles seeking to explore profound expressions of Norwegian hymnody through contemporary choral artistry.

Resources:

Composer's website: <https://olagjeilo.com/>

"Norway, §III: Choral Music" Sadie, Stanley, and John Tyrrell, eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed., Macmillan, 2001.

This comprehensive reference work provides an authoritative overview of Norwegian choral music, its historical development, key composers, stylistic trends, and notable ensembles.

The Psalm Blog: <https://salmebloggen.no/2016/11/01/ingen-vinner-frem/>

JSTOR - Cai, C. (1993). [Review of *A History of Norwegian Music; Defining a Nation in Song: Danish Patriotic Songs in Songbooks of the Period 1832-1870*, by N. Grinde, W. H. Halverson, L. B. Sateren, & H. Kuhn]. *Notes*, 49(3), 1018–1022. <https://doi.org/10.2307/898956>

(History of Norwegian Music (review) with ample historical/cultural information)

Norwegian Singers Association of America: <https://www.nsaaonline.org/>

The NSAA comprises various male choruses across the U.S., each committed to Norwegian choral music. The association maintains archives of "Sanger-Hilsen," its publication, documenting activities, news, and historical records dating back to 2009. Resources are available for translations of frequently sung Norwegian songs, aiding choruses in understanding and performing traditional pieces.

Y'did Nefesh

SATB divisi, unaccompanied

Jonathan Sheffer

Performance Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtzQABclPE>

JW Pepper Link: <https://www.jwpepper.com/Y%27did-Nefesh/11566214.item>

"Y'did Nefesh" English Translation: https://zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=24

"Y'did Nefesh" is composed by Jonathan Sheffer, an American conductor, composer, and producer known for his work across various musical genres, including classical, film, and choral music.

Born in 1953 in New York City, Jonathan Sheffer is a versatile composer with a background in conducting and composing for both concert and film music. He studied at Harvard University and the Juilliard School, and his career spans a wide range of musical endeavors, including founding the Eos Orchestra and conducting for various ensembles. Sheffer's music often incorporates elements from classical, jazz, and world music traditions. He is known for his ability to write music that is both accessible and sophisticated, appealing to a broad audience while maintaining artistic integrity. His choral compositions frequently explore themes of spirituality, human experience, and cultural identity.

"Y'did Nefesh" is based on a traditional Hebrew liturgical poem, often sung during Jewish prayer services. The title translates to "O Soul," and the text is a plea for spiritual redemption and divine grace. This piyyut (liturgical poem) was written by the 16th-century Kabbalist, Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri, and is traditionally sung on the Sabbath before the afternoon prayer service. It reflects themes of humility, devotion, and a yearning for closeness to the Divine.

The work uses traditional Jewish modal scales (e.g., Ahavah Rabbah), giving it an authentic Middle Eastern flavor while remaining approachable for Western-trained choirs. Rhythmic flexibility mirrors the textual phrasing, requiring careful attention to tempo and rubato.

Resources:

Jonathan Sheffer – Navona Records: <https://www.navonarecords.com/artists/jonathan-sheffer/>

Jewish Music Research Centre: <https://jewish-music.huji.ac.il/en>

"What makes music sound Jewish?" - Stroum Center for Jewish Studies, University of Washington
<https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/arts-culture/what-makes-music-sound-jewish/>

Jewish Liturgy in Music:

https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=2912&context=utk_chanhonoproj

Thank You

Thank you for your interest in the 2025 World Musics and Cultures Literature session. If you have any questions about the selections or about world music in general please feel free to reach out to batchvarova@hanover.edu for any assistance. I don't promise to have all the answers but will do my best to help. Thanks again for visiting today and best wishes for a wonderful concert season with your choral ensembles.

