

SEICDA Junior High Honor Chorus

January 29, 2010

I am so excited to share the music for the festival with you. Hopefully my comments about each of the pieces will help you to prepare so that when we gather in January we will have a very rewarding and musical day! Of course you should know all the notes and rhythms, but true music is only found when we're ready to move beyond that—and that will be our goal when we sing together. Be sure to have a pencil with you when you come in January to make lots of comments in your scores. Happy Singing!

Dr. Michael Zemek

Augustana College

O occhi, manza mia

Orlando di Lasso

Available to download for free at www.cpdl.org/wiki/images/sheet/lass-occ.pdf

We will be singing this in Italian. The repetition of the words and music makes it easier to learn and memorize than you might first think. Here is the pronunciation:

O o-kee mahn-tsah MEE-ah, chee-gee do-rah-tsee.

§ m. 5 & 12 hold the “EE” and make the “ah” a grace note

O fah-cheeah doo-nah loo-na strah-loo-chehn-tee.

§ m. 15 & 18 make “cheeah” equal 8th notes

Tee/eh-nay-mee mehn-tay, jee/oh-eeah meeah bel-lah

- m. 22 & 31 grace note “tee” quickly to “eh”
- m. 23 & 32 grace note “jee” quickly to “oh”
- m. 23 & 32 “eeah” and “meeah” are both equal 16th notes
- m. 23 & 32 “bel-lah” has two distinct “l” sounds

Gwahr-dah-moon po-cah may, ah may fah mee con-tee/ehn-to.

· m. 28/29 & 37/38 grace note “tee” quickly to “to”

One note change in measure 16 for the altos: last note should be f# (students—ask your teachers about musica ficta and you’ll understand why I’ve made the change).

There are no expressive markings in the music. Instead of sharing them with you here, we will add them at the festival. So—be ready to watch! If you have the notes and words memorized, it will make this part of our preparation so much easier.

Song for the Mira

Arr. Stuart Calvert (Gordon Thompson Music VE.I. 1080, SATB)

This song has a great folk quality to it. With that in mind, keep the vocal tone free and easy sounding. When humming, there should be a lot of space in the mouth with your teeth not touching each other.

There will be soloists on verses 1, 2, and 6. Please come prepared to audition on Jan. 29 if you’re interested.

Page 5 middle system: “Can you imagine...” will be sung in unison by the entire choir.

Verse 3 is sopranos and altos.

Verse 4 is everyone.

Last page, middle system, last measure: “I’m going to be...” will be everyone in unison.

Gate Gate

Brian Tate (earthsongs, SATB)

The key to this piece is the rhythm. It can never be heavy or laborious. It must be free and dance-like. We will be alternating between 6/8 and 3/4 and then it moves into 7/8—so be sure you understand and feel the difference.

The Sanskrit text is easily learned and there is a guide in the front cover.

For soprano divisi throughout, we need more second soprano than first. Directors: assign 1/3 soprano 1 and 2/3 soprano 2.

Use the dynamics written in the music—this is not all loud! The louds will be more effective if our softs are focused and expressive.

Angel Breathing Out

Alisa Bair (Heritage 15/2227H, SATB)

Assignment—identify and make comments in your scores about examples of text painting. We'll be focusing a lot on this and how we use our voices to bring this music to life. The “breathing section” on page 11 must be free on the “ah” vowel. There must be motion in each of the lines—they are always moving somewhere. Think about how both dynamics and text stress make this song more interesting and come alive.

A Living Song

David Brunner (Boosey & Hawkes 48019285, SATB)

I hope you spend some time reading and thinking about the text which is a combination of a 19th-century Prussian poet and a Northwest Canadian native song. The song looks easy because there is so much unison—but that's harder than you may think. Be careful of the rhythm; don't be lazy with it. We will need accurate rhythms with clear diction in order to pull this off together. In the end, it's about singing with conviction and understanding.

What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor

Arr. David Eddleman (Carl Fischer CM8958, SATB)

This piece is fun—but you have to be smart! The key again is the rhythm. Be really careful when it changes slightly, note the accents, and learn the stomping. Don't sing so wildly that you forget to sing well. This will make a great closer to our concert.

Michael Zemek, Ed.D.
Choral Music Education
Augustana College, Rock Island, IL