

## Rehearsal Notes

St. Louis Festival: Nov. 7, 2009

I create my lesson plans as “Check-off Lists”. I’m creating this document in the same format. I place a date in the check-off blank to remind myself and my students when we accomplished the particular task; and in my world, there’s no going back!

### **Sanctus No. III by JS Bach, ed./arr. David Stocker**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Majestic tempo equal to majestic tone. Vowels should be tall, spacious and open.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Long, sustained notes (ex. m. 8-14 soprano) should always feel like they are moving. The choir should feel like the pitch is on a moving sidewalk at an airport terminal.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. P. 7 entrances: Each section “earns” the spotlight at this section. Make sure each entrance is performed with majesty, energy and pride. Remember the vowel sound for the “e” in “pleni” is an Eh sound/space.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Eighth notes: each pair should be articulated strong/weak strong/weak, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. P. 9 m. 42-45: First time the entire choir has performed the same rhythm at the same time. This is a relatively important place! Crisp diction—highlight the homorhythmic structure.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. 16<sup>th</sup> notes: All sixteenth notes need to be performed with separation and clarity.

### **Die Nachtigall (The Nightengale) by Felix Mendelssohn, arr. Russell Robinson**

<http://www.kstate.edu/musiceducation/teachingunits/DieNachtigall/StudentGuide.htm>

I found this really cool teaching module created by a K-State student. Parts of this would make a great activity for the kids!

I also found some recordings on YouTube by students from Concordia College. You might let students hear/see the performance.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Optional notes for Tenor and/or Bass – use them, please.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Read cover notes. Utilize in rehearsal.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. We will perform the piece in German.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Ask for a light, lyrical floating tone. We are singing about a Nightengale. Not a Whale!

### **In Flanders Fields by Dr. John McCrae; music by John Jacobson, arr. Roger Emerson**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Read the poem. Give students time to internalize the text and potentially relate the poem to personal experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Solo m. 6-13—NO. We'll sing the entire piece without solos. However, I will bring the voices in in a staggered manner so the entrance builds in volume and number at the same time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. 16<sup>th</sup> notes: articulation should be crisp and clean. Do not let the 16<sup>th</sup> note drift toward a triplet feel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Alto line – there are some interesting and unique rhythms UNIQUE to the alto part. Propel those notes forward.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Fermatas: TOO MANY in my opinion. Rehearse without using the fermatas. If the choir will permit, I will add stretches and space at our rehearsal. I do not want them to be trained to pause. The piece has a tendency to pull back naturally. We don't need to reinforce or insist on it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. This is a story-song. Words are critical. Again—insist on tall, spacious vowels, but the consonants need to be crystal-clear also.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Staging: I would like to have a dedicatory piece placed in the program to the effect of “This piece is performed in recognition of the sacrifices made by all those who have served to protect our country. It is also performed in hope that peace in all conflict can reign.” At this point, all veterans of any branch of the military will be asked to stand and receive our grateful thanks.

### **Sesere eyee as taught by Matthew Doyle; Traditional song and dane from the Torres Strait Islands**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. The piece will begin with seemingly random wild or native animal sounds like bird calls, monkeys, bigger animals swishing through tall grass, etc. **Teachers need to pre-select the students who will perform these sounds.** Students chosen need to be discreet upon entrance. We want the audience to be looking for the animals—not looking for students making animal sounds.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Performance Practice:

First time: Everyone sings the Melody line in their own octave.

Second time: Soprano moves to Harmony 1 while everyone else stays on the Melody line.

Third time: Alto and Bass move to Harmony 2 line; Soprano stays on Harmony 1 line; Tenor holds down the melody line. If the balance is awkward, I might move the altos back to melody with the Tenors on this entrance.

Fourth time: Repeat one more time with everything same as 3<sup>rd</sup> entrance. Dancing! Singing!

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Percussion: I would like 3 sounds – low timbre drum, medium timbre drum and a rattle-type sound. The parts are improvised and start when the animal sounds begin.

### **Zion's Walls adapted by Aaron Copland; arr. Glenn Koponen**

Southern Spiritual from the Baptist tradition.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Tonality – very open and clean; almost primitive. Be relentless with tuning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Diction – again—this one is a “come join me” song, so the words must be clear and the style should be invitational in nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Dynamics: Follow the editor’s markings closely. They are excellent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Phrasing: Follow closely. The sopranos will need to learn to stagger-breath, but cannot take a breath in the marked “no breath” areas. This song is a forward-motion type of feel. The rhythms and phrasing reflect people walking—at their own pace—toward a common goal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. P. 6 m. 27-37: Very smooth and connected. Kind of like smoothing peanut butter on substantial bread.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. P. 8 m. 40-45: Alto/Tenor maintain “peanut butter” feel; Basses have the MELODY! Make a big deal of that!: Sopranos – float! The marked dynamic is *mp*. That stands for moderately soft, not MUCH POUNDING!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When you have a chance to breath together, take it and enjoy it! (m. 12, 16, 33, 34, 45, 49, end)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Male divisi: T1, T2, B1, B2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Female divisi: S1, S2, A1, A2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Accompanist: This piece is your time to sparkle. Love it!