



Center for the Performing
and Cinematic Arts

Boyer College of Music and Dance

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Boyer College of Music and Dance, Temple University

November 17, 2021

Dear All State Chorus Members and Directors,

I am thrilled for the opportunity to work with you this spring and I know there will be some tremendous music making! I sincerely hope that each one of you will *carefully read* through this letter and make all the proper notes in your scores so that you can study/learn your music completely before we gather in March. I hope that your directors will encourage this and will also help prepare you. The more prepared you come, the more awesome the experience will be. I have chosen an incredibly diverse program for you with many challenges. *Please* spend significant time in preparation as this is a very full program. I know you will enjoy it!

In order to make your individual practice time musical, please pay careful attention to the general areas listed below. As you learn your music, learn the phrasing, dynamics, and syllabic stress (which syllable receives the stress) so as to bring these 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.
2. Highlight all dynamic markings and meter changes.
3. Underline the proper syllabic stress syllables.
4. Write in all phrasing and breath marks given below - 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.

Please write the following specific notes in your scores:

1. Modimo, arr. Michael Barrett SATB Walton Music WW1733

We will be processing onto the stage while singing this wonderful South African piece. The arranger is the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Pretoria, a very well respected program, and this piece was arranged with great care and authenticity. **THIS NEEDS TO BE MEMORIZED**, we will use percussion as well. The score is very clear, just make sure to say 'reh' and not 'ray' for the rebokawena. Please note the arranger's notes on pronunciation in the inside cover. Please enjoy the arranger's choir performing on

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tnts98AGiwU>

2. **Bogoroditse Devo**, Rachmaninoff SATB earthsongs

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a famous, late romantic period, Russian composer. This piece is a rich, lovely, tender piece that is a part of the 'All Night Vigil' for the Catholic Church. We will seek to observe all dynamic markings. At measure 14 on the 2nd beat Soprano 2s please sing the Alto 1 part, and all Altos sing the Alto 2 part. Stay that way until M18, 2nd beat then all Altos take the Alto line split and Soprano 2s go back up to the Soprano line for the divisi at M 20.

Please take the time to listen and mark your text from the pronunciation guide below.

Pronunciation is found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fBo0rGYk_4

This link provides an excellent example of the piece, please listen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InMhSNBIIg8>

3. **My Spirit Sang All Day**, Gerald Finzi SATB Boosey & Hawkes OCTB5814

This piece is one of my all time favorites because of the way it flows with intensity and excitement. It is clearly 'text driven' as the music makes the text come alive. This 20th century composer brings Robert Bridges' poem to life phrase by phrase, full of imagery. We will need to be a very 'tight' unit to perform this piece well. Please observe all dynamic markings and put the following markings in your score:

M2-3 no breath

M3 'joy' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M5 breath after 'say'

M10 'spake' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M12 break for the 't' in 'thought'

M17-18 no breath

M19 'found' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M21 breath after 'joy'

M24-25 no breath

M26 - put the 't' of is't on the eight note

M30 'heard' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M31-32 no breath

M33 'word' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M37 'replied' is a quarter note followed by a quarter rest

M38-39 no breath

M39-40 no breath

M42 breath before 'thou'

M44 sfz on the final 'joy' (sforzando)

Please watch the 2017 Virginia All State Mixed Chorus performance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0HLeYcrOnY&feature=share>

4. **The Awakening**, Joseph H. Martin SATB Shawnee Press A 2023

A masterful creation of his original poem, Joseph M. Martin, a contemporary composer has given us an intense yet beautiful piece depicting the awakening of music in our souls. While not difficult note-wise, this piece requires great maturity in vocal production to bring it to fruition. Please write in the following markings:

Add a 'glottal stroke' (/) - a re-starting of the word instead of an elision, on every 'dreamed / a dream - so it is not 'dah-dream' - please mark that everywhere it occurs in the score.

M16 no breath after dream

M20 'way' is 'whey' no diphthong

M21 'hoo-where' - this applies to the entire piece with 'wh' words

M70 and on, the 't' of 'silent' is on the eighth rest that follows the whisper

Pg 9 and on, please make sure the highest pitch in the phrase is very lifted - to avoid reaching up to it and flattening it.

M76 and on, the 'k' of the first 'awake' is followed by a glottal stroke (/) before the next 'a'

M83-84 Soprano, no breath

M85 - All breathe after the first beat.

Pg 12- to end, continue with great choral diction habits, eliding the consonants, losing the 'r' on 'never' and such

M113-114 no breath

M116 - break after the first 'awake' for the 'k'

M124 - We will take a large // pause before the final 'live'

Please watch/listen to the combined choirs (well really only part - about 200 - of the 325 from my school who went on the music trip) entry level to advanced, perform this for adjudication in 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfP0qnuo0GA>

5. **Precious Lord**, Thomas Dorsey, arr. Arnold Sevier SATB Abingdon Press 067784

Another one of my top favorites due to the depth of meaning behind this piece. Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993) was considered the 'father of gospel music' and as a jazz pianist and composer brought the richness of 'blues' into gospel music.

Lush harmonies with eight part divisions 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 M2 to 3

No breath from M6 to 7

No breath from M10 to 11

No breath from M18 to 19

No breath from M22 to 23

There is a break in M29 before 'me'

No breath from M38 to 39

No breath in M51 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 (elision).

Spring to the first Pr sound in 'precious'.

In M33 hoo before the 'when'.

Style:

M12 *sfp* - sforzando on 'weak' in

M25 - 27 the phrase 'take my hand' move to the word hand.

M45 break after 'almost' then cushion the next entrance on 'gone'.

M48 ladies finish the word 'gone' with the men, then re-sing it on the first two beats of M49 build, build, build dynamically to the *fff* in M52 and give a big 'nd' to finish 'stand'.

M57 another big 'nd' finish to the word 'stand'.

Tenors be careful to note the pitch difference between M59 and M27

at M63 change the mmm to ooo and then add the words 'lead me' to beats 5 & 6 of M62 and 'home' to the 1st beat of M63 closing the m before releasing.

Please watch another adjudication (thus the lack of audience) with my HS Choir (Cherry Hill West) performing Precious Lord for the stylistic nuances mentioned above.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fpgMni2Q7g>

6. **Shaker Dance**, arr. Brad Holmes SATB

I loved this piece the first time I heard it and saw it performed by the composer's college choir. A delightfully light 'nonsense' piece with a bit of humor from the soloist. PLEASE MEMORIZE this piece as we will be doing some 'choralography'. I will be auditioning for a theatrical male soloist who is able to memorize and deliver the 'improv' section of the solo on the bottom of page 8. If you are interested, please learn it well before hand and be ready to audition.

The composer has specified a 'nasal' sound at M20 for the Sopranos which we will honor. This piece is to be sung with a great deal of 'lift' to the sound. We will sing the divisi as marked, it would be a good idea to highlight your vocal line (as it changes throughout) as you are learning it. There are times when the T1 or A1 or S1 line is not marked with the '1' please write it in.

I may even pull out some 'dancers' for the very end - so be ready if that is in your wheelhouse!

Please watch this video several times to get the 'feel' of the piece. It is the composer, Brad Holmes, conducting his own choir.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqGhSSjrdWk>

7. **Hold On**, Moses Hogan SATB Div. Hal Leonard

I hope you are not tired yet! One more piece, an awesome closer, a spiritual arranged by the incredible Moses Hogan. First, I will need a trio of Sopranos and also of Tenor/Baritones for the small ensemble parts - please study that if you are interested and be ready to audition on our first day of rehearsal.

There is quite a bit of part doubling in the score for the Alto 1 and Tenor 2 parts. I prefer not to have things doubled, so here is the breakdown of those changes, please write them (or cross them out) in your score if they apply to you:

PLEASE HAVE THESE MARKED AND LEARN THE CORRECT PART!

M1-9 (exception M7 last beat) all Alto 1 parts are crossed off - Alto 1 sing Alto 2

M7-9 Tenor 2 part is crossed off - Tenor 2s sing Tenor 1

M15-18 same for Tenor 2

M17-18 same for Alto 1

M25-26/ 33-34 / 49-50 / 57-58 same for both Alto 1 and Tenor 2

M39-42 same for Tenor 2

M41-42 same for Alto 1

ALL in M47 please make all Cs natural

M63-66 same for Tenor 2

M65-66 same for Alto 1

M71-74 same for Tenor 2

M73-74 same for Alto 1

M76-79 / 82-85 same for Alto 1 and Tenor 2

M86 same for Tenor 2

Please listen to this recording of my HS choir singing "Hold On" at an ACDA All Eastern Conference in Boston, 2004 (sorry the camera is a bit jumpy!)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVlk_0mPyJo

Whew! I know that is a ton of markings but they must be put in and the music learned correctly. When we meet in March we will be making music and not learning notes and giving markings! If you want to learn more about me, visit my website: christinebass.com. See you in March!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine C. Bass". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christine" being more prominent than the last name "Bass".

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