

West Virginia Collegiate Honor Choir 2008
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Rehearsal/performance notes –

These notes are intended to help singers and conductors prepare for rehearsals in January. Before we begin rehearsals in Charleston, please do the following:

1. Number each measure of the music, beginning with the first full measure.
2. Mark all breaths and other details as indicated in the notes below.

At rehearsals, please have a pencil, a water bottle, and all your music, prepared as outlined below. The notes may seem detailed but they will make rehearsals more efficient and be sure that we can really concentrate on musical details and have a great time doing that! Thank you for all your preparation and musicianship; I am looking forward to meeting you all next January. Conductors, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Music is listed in performance order (although we may switch the Bach and Handel, depending on rehearsals in January).

1. Handel: Let their celestial concerts unite – *If you have the Theodore Presser edition of this (#392-03073), you will have wonderful historical notes that put this piece in context.*

Tempo: 96 – 104 to the quarter note

Style: this is crisp and articulate with slightly detached 8th notes; let the word stress shape the phrase (e.g. let their ce-LE-stial concerts ALL unite, with a slight cres. on the dotted quarter).

Cut-offs: always rhythmic and clean (e.g. m.2, S's release on the "and" of beat 4; SATB cut off same spot in m.4, in order to breathe together before the B entrance on m.5); on the "and" of beat 4 in m.14, m.26, m.28 (SAB), m.38, m.40, m.42, m.54, m.56, m.64, and m.66. Release the consonant on

the “and” of b. 1 in m. 53 and m. 63. In m.11 – S’s cut off on beat 1, B and A on b.2; m.16 , SAT on b.4; m.20, ATB on b.4; m.34, TB release “T” on the downbeat of the next m.; in m.56 and 66, AT should release the “T” on the downbeat of the next measures. In m.71, release the “Z” sound at the end of “praise” on the downbeat.

Breaths: usually relate to cut-offs as above, or to punctuation; sometimes stagger breathing is needed, however, to manage long phrases – e.g. Basses, m.6 – 11 is really all one breath but you may take a quick breath on b.3 of m.8 by making that note a 16th, releasing the “Z” of “praise” and going right on. Do NOT break the line after “morn” in m.9.

In m.16, B’s take a similar quick breath after “unite” and then stagger breathe to m.20; S’s, do the same thing in m.20 by taking a quick breath at the end of “light” (make it a 16th note) and then stagger breathe to m.24 after “morn.”

In m.22, S’s release the “Z” on the dot and catch a quick breath; A’s breathe on the “and” of b.2; TB, breathe on the dot at beat 4.

In m.24, SATB breathe on the “and” of b.3.

In m.28, T’s take a quick breath after “unite” and then a lift in m.31 on the “and” of b.3; release the Z of “praise” on the dot (beat 2).

In m.30, S’s breathe on the “and” of b.3; same thing in m.31.

In mm.35 – 38: S’s breathe at the comma in m.35; A’s release the Z of “praise” on the dot of m.36, beat 2; TB, lift in m.37 before the word “in.”

In mm.43 – 48, B’s breathe after the comma in m.44 and then on the “and” of b.1 in m.47; T’s breathe on the dot of m. 45, then stagger breathe to the end of m.48; A’s, stagger breathe throughout; S’s, breathe after the comma in m.45, then stagger breathe to m.48.

In mm.49 – 53: B, lift in m.50 before the word “in”; SAT, breathe at rests. NO breath for anyone in m.52!

In mm.59 – 63: same process.

The rest of the breaths are obvious!

We will shape dynamics according to texture and balance of thematic materials. Do NOT oversing this!

2. J.S. Bach – Sanctus in d minor

Tempo: quarter note = 92

Style: 8th notes are slightly detached, except for the 1st measure; put space on the dots in dotted 8th/16th patterns (e.g. m.5, m.12, m.20, m.35, 46); Long notes need to grow slightly (e.g. m.1 – 2, S's cres. slightly into m.2 and m.4, and m.6 to the tied note; cres. to m.46 downbeat; A's do the same in m.17, m.19.)

Crisp consonants will help articulation.

Cut-offs: m.3 – “s” on the “and” of beat 2; m.5 – “t” on the “and” of beat 2; m.8 – “t” on the downbeat; m.12, same on the rest; mm. 16 – 22: all “s” and “t” cut-offs are on the “and” of beats except in m.22 where the “t” is on beat 3; m.36 – release the “s” of “ejus” on the “and” of beat 2; m.38 – release it on the rest; m.44 – “s” cut-off is on beat 3.

Breaths: m.3 and 5 – on the “and” of beat 2; m. 17 – A's on the “and” of beat 3; m.18 – STB, on the “and” of beat 2; m.19 – A's on the “and” of beat 3; m.20 – STB, on the “and” of beat 2.

In mm. 23 – 27, B's, catch a quick breath at the comma in m.25; all others, sing the phrase in one breath.

In mm.28 – 32, S's breathe at the commas in m.28 and 32.

In mm. 34 – 38, SATB breath at the commas in mm.35 and 36.

In m.46, SATB breathe on the “and” of beat 2. Lift at the comma after beat 4.

Dynamics are affected by texture (e.g. m.23, start this at mf level; it will grow as parts add). Otherwise, follow the editorial markings.

Text pronunciation: Song-toose Daw-mee-noos Deh-oos Sah-bah-ought; Pleh-nee soont cheh-lee et ter-rah glaw-ree-ah eh-joose.

3. Faure – Cantique de Jean Racine

Tempo: 60 = quarter note.

Style: This lovely evening prayer is reverent, lyrical and very legato. Long phrases, expressive shaping and dynamic contrasts are most important. We will sing it in French. **

Cut-offs and breaths: m.17 – at the comma; m.21, B’s are the comma; AT on the “and” of beat 3; m.23, all on the “and” of beat 3; m.27, SATB on the “and” of beat 3; m.43, SATB on the “and” of beat 3; m.45, SATB on the “and” of beat 1; m.47, SATB on the “and” of beat 3 (TB breathe to be out of the way for the SA entrance); m.49, SA lift after beat 2; m.51, B’s breathe on the “and” of beat 3 (Baritones, stay on the upper octave if necessary); m.59 – Basses – do NOT breathe before “O” (stagger breathe from m.55 – 63); m.63 – TB, breathe after beat 3; m.67, Basses, breathe at the comma; m.71: SATB breathe after beat 3; m.75 – STB, breath at the comma; S, carry through into beat 3 while the others cut off; mm. 85 – 89 is all one phrase (NO breath at m.87, please).

Dynamic markings are exact; please be attentive.

****Text pronunciation** may be assisted by earthsongs’ publication “Translations and Annotations” vol. III, French. There is also a phonetic version published by Hinshaw in Jean Ashworth Bartle’s edition of this for treble voices.

4. **Busto – Ave Maria**

Tempo: quarter note = 72

Style: legato, lyrical, expressively shaped phrases according to text stress. Keep the tone pure and simple. **Dynamic and other expressive markings** are exact. Note that “amplio” at m.27 = bigger and more expansive.

Breaths are determined by punctuation and composer’s marks (e.g. m.30).

Cut-offs: m.11 – “s” is on the “and” of beat 3; m. 14 – “m” is on beat 3; m.18, “s” on the “and” of beat 3 before the TB entrance; TB, breathe at the end of m.20; m.23, SAT, release the “s” on beat 1; m.25 and 26, release the “s” on the “and” of beat 3; m. 34, release the “s” on the “and” of beat 3; m.39, all breathe on the “and” of beat 3; m.41, close the “N” of “Amen” on beat 3, release on the “and” of beat 3.

Text pronunciation: Ah-veh mah-ree-ah graht-see-ah pleh-nah daw-mee-noose the-coom. Beh-neh-deek-tah too een moo-lee-eh-ree-boose.

Frook-toose vehn-treese too-ee Yeh-soose. Song-tah mah-ree-ah mah-tear deh-ee. Aw-rah praw naw-beese peh-cah-tor-ee-boose. Noonk eht een aw-rah more-teese naw-streh. Aw-mehn. (Shape “men” like the word “hen,” bringing the vowel forward.)

5. McKennitt/Washburn – Tango to Evora

Style: You’ll see in the editor’s notes that this was originally an inst. piece arranged for chorus. It’s folk-like so keep the tone simple and almost folk-like.

Basses, you are imitating double basses played pizzicato, so close to th “m” at the end of each syllable, while keeping round space in your mouths.

Sopranos, keeps your jaws relaxed on the the “la’s.” Always lean into the upper note (C).

Altos, the “oo’s” are very important to the harmony – keep the vowels pure and round, and breathe every second measure, no longer than an 8th note breath each time.

Tenors, your part at m.21 is like a guitar, switching chords. If you learn both parts as if it were one melody, that will anchor the chord changes, but please sing parts as written for performance.

Clapping parts: Altos only, take the upper staff of the percussion part as written on p.5. Basses only, take the bottom staff on p. 5. (Sopranos and tenors will not have clapping parts.)

Solo: Sopranos – if you are a high soprano and are interested in the solo that starts on p.6, please prepare it for auditions in January. I will hear everyone during rehearsal. This takes a clear sound without excess vibrato so the style is consistent with the choral singing.

Finger cymbal solo: We’ll use at least one player.

Watch repeat signs!

We’ll probably get this one memorized for performance during rehearsals.

6. Washburn, arr. Tell my ma when I go home

Style: This is another folk-tune, an Irish song arranged by Jon Washburn, who also did the “Tango” setting. It’s robust and energetic so crisp rhythm is vital.

Voicing: S2’s should sing A1 from m.1 – 64 and from mm. 81 – end. ALL A’s should sing A2 throughout; it is not too low. This voicing is essential to balance of melody and harmony – no exceptions! S 2’s can sing with the S 1’s from mm.65 – 72.

Men – mm. 17 – 24, as written. At m.24, B1 should sing the T2 part, and T1’s carry the upper voice alone. At m.34, all t’s should sing T1, all B1’s should sing T2; all B2’s should sing the B part. Divide m.37, 41, and 45 so some take the low F. At m.57, ALL B’s on the B part; All T’s on the T part. At mm. 73, B1’s go back to the T2 part. T 1’s, take the top. At mm.89 – 96, use TBB voicing with all B’s on the bottom staff. At mm. 97 – end, use TTBB voicing.

Clapping/stamping: m.33 – SATB clap on the quarter notes. Note change of pattern in mm.45 – 46.

M. 49 -- no clapping!

mm. 65 – 72: All clap on the quarters.

mm. 73 – 80: WOMEN only, clap. (no TB)

mm. 81 – 88: MEN only, clap. (no SA)

mm. 87 – 111: stamp on the quarters; clap on the off-beats

m.112: stamp/clap/clap: 8th, 8th, 8th.

Breathing: four-measure phrases unless a rest occurs (e.g. mm. 13 – 16 has the 8th note rest, as does mm.45 – 48 and 77 – 80). In other words, you will breathe every four measures.

Text pronunciation: “Thrumm” – flip the r and go right to the “m”; “dum” sounds like “dumb” with a rounded shape of the mouth (think “doom” inside) and is like pizzicato strings. Keep the attack crisp, especially in m.65 – 79, where the basses have the shorter rhythms. Have fun with this!