

## REHEARSAL NOTES from Dr. Peggy Dettwiler

Congratulations for being selected to sing in the 2020 PMEA District 10 Chorus! I will be conducting the choir and am looking forward to working with you. The program was carefully chosen to include music from several historical periods and in a variety of styles. I hope you enjoy the selections.

Let me offer some suggestions that will help you in your preparation and make our rehearsals run more smoothly and efficiently. ***Number the measures from the beginning to the end of each selection*** and work with your teacher to learn your part according to the considerations suggested below. In January, bring all of your music to the festival, along with a pencil!

### ***Gitanjali Chants***.....Craig Hella Johnson (G. Schirmer 50490335)

This is a beautiful contemporary piece written in the style of Gregorian chant. It is in e dorian, which is similar to natural minor but with a raised sixth (C#). Practice your part on “doo” and keep the eighth-notes constant. You might even tap an eighth note beat to keep the measures accurate. We shall strive for a very pure blended tone with minimal vibrato and word stress to shape the phrases.

### ***Swell the Full Chorus***.....George Frideric Handel (CPDL marked score)

Learn the pitches using the syllable "tah" with a detached approach; expand to "tah-dah-dah-dah" on the runs. Sway to feel the beat. The markings in the score guide you for the style.

### ***Alma Redemptoris Mater***.....G. P. da Palestrina (G. Schirmer 12001)

Here is a lovely Renaissance motet. (We are singing works from all five major historical periods! I recommend learning by singing in solfege. It remains in Eb major throughout. Strive for a light tone production. A great piece to learn soft singing. I particularly like the Eau Claire choir on Youtube to learn style and pronunciation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdZHqpUA36w>

### ***Laetatus sum***.....J. M. Haydn (Theodore Presser 312-41607)

Rehearse on "tah" with a detached style. Try to separate each note and sing with lots of breath connection. Note dynamic contrasts but keep the style light & buoyant when forte; practice runs with "tah-dah-dah-dah." Careful the final “s” is short and released on the beat.

### ***Psalm 43: Richt mich, Gott*** – Mendelssohn (CPDL marked score)

A wonderful motet for 8-part chorus! It would be a good idea to learn this on a neutral syllable such a “pah.” It begins in d minor and moves to D major if you know solfege. Follow the direction of the note stem. For example: 1<sup>st</sup> tenors sing a G on beat 2 in measure 30. Here is a Youtube link to aid your German pronunciation!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69vKLM7RQzk>

### ***There Will Be Rest***.....Frank Ticheli (Hindon HPC-7095)

Learn your part by first singing it on "nah" with a smooth sustained tone quality; take the divisi as they come in each part; I will divide the basses on the 3-part chords at the festival (practice each part to be prepared)

***Simple Gifts*.....Traditional Shaker Tune, arr. Mark Hayes (Alfred 18722) SSAA**

Here the trebles will have the opportunity to sing in four parts! Think tall vowels and long phrases - hold out those half notes. Alto I – please sing the pitch A on the words, “spirit in your,” in m. 86. And I am planning to add some pitches for some selected sopranos to sing such as: an F on “music” in m. 135-137; also a Bb on “live life” in m. 152-153.

The pitches are in the piano and add color as do the dynamics!

***Johnny Schmoker*.....Pennsylvania Dutch folk song, arr. James Rodde (Santa Barbara SBMP 344) TTBB**

Rehearse on "tah" with a detached style. Sing with lots of breath support. Keep the music light & buoyant; practice 16th-notes with "tah-dah-dah." Through its seven verses, Johnny describes and accumulates all of the instruments he can play. Please have this music memorized when you come to the festival. We are going to add choreography!

***Good Timber Grows*.....Roger Emerson (Hal Leonard 40307444)**

Note the suggestions on the inside cover! This text is very meaningful and sends a powerful message. We will strive for beautiful choral blend and pure intonation. Learn first on the neutral syllable “doo.” Reduce “r” and address unvoiced and voiced consonants! Every “the” has a voiced TH for example. The piece is a great example of tone painting and excellent voice leading!

***Walk Together Children*.....Moses Hogan (Hal Leonard 08703332)**

Learn your part by singing on "daw" in a detached style; if you know solfege – you can learn the opening 12 measures in F major; observe the accents and dynamics carefully and pay close attention to the chromatic intervals. Altos and basses, please learn both pitches when your part divides. We will work for a dark tone production! Plan to sing from memory.

***Don't Bend Down*.....Stephen Hatfield (Boosey & Hawkes 48004951)**

Please read the notes at the beginning of the score to gather the concept of the style. Scooping is acceptable at times and the rests are important to the Gospel style. Articulation markings are well-placed. Basically, the piece is about standing up for yourself and the truth.

The better prepared we are, the more exciting and rewarding will be our time together. Let's make the 2020 PMEA District 10 Chorus an event we will remember for the wonderful music-making! See you in January,

Sincerely,

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