

Spring 2023

Members of the South Dakota ACDA Junior High Honor Choir:

Congratulations on your acceptance to the SD-ACDA Honor Choir! I'm looking forward to joining you as we prepare and present a program highlighting the gift and joy of singing. Following the circumstances of the last few years, I am eager to collaborate with you to share pieces from a variety of cultures and influences, recognizing that the joy of singing holds widespread and universe value. I wish you the best as you learn your parts to our repertoire and encourage you to bring dedicated effort to your preparations so that our time can be spent creating a sense of ensemble, learning from each other, and creating the best performance possible. I have included a few items for each piece below that I hope you will incorporate in your preparation in order to help us all be on the "same page" when we assemble in Rapid City. It is my hope that we will perform the entire program from memory so, as you are learning your notes, rhythms, and texts, try your best to also memorize your parts so that we can begin instantly making music together!

Congratulations again on your spectacular achievement. I look forward to seeing – and hearing! – you soon.

All Best,



Vincent Oakes

!El Cielo Canta Alegria! by Pablo Sosa, arr. Roger Bergs

Sample Performance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1aISBMYzSc>

The **Argentinian worship song !El Cielo Canta Alegria!** will be an upbeat and spirited addition to our program. Expressing joy and celebration, dynamic differences, articulations, and contrasting compositional devices bring out your musicality at a fast tempo.

- We will perform the piece in Spanish – please familiarize yourself with the lyrics and the language by listening to the pronunciation sound file and the YouTube performance sample
- Note that there are several elisions (omission of a syllable) of the text in order to fit the rhythms inherent in the music, i.e. "canta alegria" becomes "canta_alegria," sounding like "canta lagria" in ms. 9
- The dynamics are incredibly important here – be sure to learn and incorporate these just as much as you learn the text, rhythms, and pitches.

Music of Life by B. E. Boykin

Sample Performance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq4lmirsWO> (SSA voicing)

Music of Life is an engaging piece by emerging Atlanta composer B.E. Boykin. This descriptive text by 19th century American poet George Parsons Lathrop speaks to the power and presence of music.

- We will use breath and no-breath indications to draw attention to the text. Please include the following marks and practice them in your preparation:
 - No breath between – ms. 4-5 ("sings" to "of", ms. 11-12
 - Breath after – ms. 3, ms. 6, ms. 10, ms. 11 "lives," ms. 11 "throbs," ms. 13, ms. 19 (Group 2 only), ms. 21 "blows/music/knows"
- Include a substantial crescendo in ms. 11 on the word "sings"
- For the ms. 19-20 section, each singer will perform their section twice (Group 1, 2, 3), then we will perform the sections combined at least twice together (possibly more!)

I Shall Not Live in Vain by J. Reese Norris

Sample Performance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZBXBB2tMn4>

This is a beautiful modern work by J. Reese Norris on a poem by Emily Dickinson. Containing verses that build upon each other and resulting in with dissonant harmonies and hope-filled resolutions, this song of finding purpose will both challenge and uplift all those fortunate enough to sing it.

- All are encouraged to prepare the solo part in ms. 6-10 and ms. 64-68. It is the same as the Soprano part in ms. 26-30 and ms. 48-52, but singers from any voice part are encouraged to prepare the solo
- Please include the following breath marks:
 - ms. 15 – after “breaking”
 - ms. 20, 42 – after “vain”
 - ms. 35 – after “aching”
- Please include the following no-breath marks:
 - ms. 14 – after “heart”
 - ms. 21, 43 – after “vain”
 - ms. 34 – after “life”

Sing to the Lord by Franz Joseph Jaydn, arr. Hal Hopson

This piece comes from Austrian Classical composer Franz Joseph Haydn’s much larger work Mass No. 3 in d minor (*Lord Nelson Mass*). Though relatively straightforward, the editor’s marks with dynamics, breath marks, and articulations are very important to unlocking and sharing the musicality found in the notes and rhythms. Learn these as you also learn your voice part.

O Magnum Mysterium by Evan Ramos

Sample Performance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI9N02ju6rg>

This gorgeous piece by Texas composer Evan Ramos is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate legato singing, independence of phrase, and sensitivity to line. The notes on the inside front cover of the octavo provide good, straightforward information about pronunciation, syllabic stress, and context – please review these as you prepare your part to the piece. A few quick notes about breaths:

- Pay close attention to Ramos’ directions about pure vowel sounds in the Latin text – these pure vowels will be the foundation upon which incredible opportunities for musicality can be created.
- In general, try to breathe only at rests or where breath marks are indicated, with these additions:
 - AT - quick breath after “sacramentum” at end of ms. 5 (SB extend their note to end of ms. 5)
 - ST - quick breath after “sacramentum” at the end of ms. 10
 - All parts – quick breath after beat three in ms. 14 (after “natum” in SB, “Dominum” in AT)

I Sing Because I’m Happy by Kenneth Padden, adapted/arranged by Rollo Dilworth

Sample Performance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJuAVXowRUo>

This joyous piece is so enriching to put together, with strong individual parts that come together in a powerful way with all forces combined. Dr. Dilworth does a great job of putting SO much into the score – dynamics, articulations, and more...be attentive to these, and the song will “come together” stylistically and ensemble-wise very quickly. A few small items:

- Whenever holding the word “me” at the end of the phrase “He watches me” (ms. 11, 19, 35, 58), be sure to know whether your part sustains on one pitch (holding it to the very end of the note value) or whether it resolves down (suspension), and perform your part with great confidence and joy!
- For measures 39-50, we might do this in a rather unconventional way that is slightly different than printed. This could include singing *a cappella*, having each voice part sing their part “solo,” layering in parts, or any other combination. Be prepared to be attentive and confident with any adaptations 😊