

Dear Students:

Congratulations upon your acceptance and thank you for the invitation to serve as guest conductor for your festival chorus. I hope you will enjoy working on the music.

First of all, for every piece of music, **number every single measure**. You may number above or below your part - wherever it is easiest to see quickly! The total number of measures for each piece is always indicated so that you won't mis-number.

Secondly the markings given here are to be strictly observed. Observe these markings, [e.g.. NB = "No Breath"] as you learn the music. You have the advantage of Song Learning Tapes that have been professionally tailored made for you, therefore, you must be fully and completely prepared with your own homework on the music.

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Hassler: Cantate Domino (TTBB)

1. Total number of measures: 47

2. Translation:

Cantate Domino canticum novum

Sing to Lord canticle new

cantate Domino omnis terra

Sing to Lord all earth.

Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini ejus.

Sing to Lord and bless to name his.

3. Pronunciation: Your directors are most familiar with this famous text. Many master composers have set it. Since the text is so short, I will address any diction discrepancies as I hear them.

4. In the metric changes from three to four the basic tactus remains constant. If you do not know the meaning of that term, "tactus" be prepared to share your understanding. Translation: Do the homework!

Britten: The Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard

1. Total number of measures: 275

2. Be sure to read the complete text of this ballad before you learn the notes. It is an incredible story about love, deception, revenge and murder! Britten has set it magnificently and has become a hallmark of the male chorus repertoire. If you check out the Oxford Book of Ballads you'll find several variants and very interesting readings.

3. Diction problems:

a. The "American R". Just cross them all out and sustain the vowel'

b. Exceptions to above, sing as a flipped "r":

4. You will note that piece is score for TBB. Some of you lower baritones might learn the lower bass part if isn't too low—we'll have enough of the middle—we need more of the low.

5. Some critical "NB's": mm. 15/16 NB between door/The; m. 36 NB between you/my; m. 262: DO take a breath and a big one before "Lord"

6. Two critical rhythmic issues: Britten is extremely sensitive to word stresses and words like “women”, “Lady’s”, “little”, are frequently set as an eighth-note to either a quarter or dotted quarter. Look specifically at m. 22: “Lady’s” and compare it to the setting of “lovers” in m. 264. You will note that he deliberately does NOT want that pattern in m.264 and this is a dramatic exception, emphasized by the placement of *tenuto* marks on every single note in the measure. Anyone want to hazard a guess? In any event you will want to sing that as the regular pattern, so I would caution you to write the word, “DANGER” over that measure as a reminder.

7. The other critical rhythmic problem occurs in mm. 137/138. Again you will want to perform it as an eighth note to either a quarter or dotted quarter, but in actuality it’s just the reverse. It is very treacherous and I have heard some male choruses of substantial reputation perform it inaccurately. Consider yourselves sufficiently warned.

8. Diction: We will use the King’s English (British) so modify all “a’s” as in “and”, “have”, etc. to a broad “A” and not the American “A”. Also, no American “r’s” so just cross them all out therefore “Lord Barnard” = Laud Bah-nahd; “word” = wuhd, etc.. Also a slight roll or flip on initial “r’s, such as “MusgRave”; “pRiest”” “gReen”, etc.

9. The middle section (mm. 52-235) goes like the wind and I will constantly demand precise diction throughout.

10. Notation issues: Many contemporary composers add an additional tied note to a previously sung note to insure that you hold or sustain the note for its full value and also where the consonant (if there is one) will be placed. It is an insurance policy. For example, m. 72; cross out the tied note; cross out the “n” of “ran” where it is and place is under the note you just crossed out! Do the same in m. 78; 92; 102; 106; 108-109; 111; 113 etc. Do all of this homework before you come to our first rehearsal. This piece is too magnificent to become bogged down with these minute details if you haven’t taken care of them yourself prior to our first session.

Sullivan: The Long Day Closes (TTBB)

1. Total Number of Measures: 67

2. Because a English poet set to music by a English composer writes this text we will need to be very precise with the diction and use the best "King's English" in our approach. Avoid at all costs the American "R" and use a flipped "R" or the classic rolled "R" for initial "R" sound. Examples of light flipped "R" would be: m. 1: "starr"; "o'er" and mm. 6-9: "Through"; "gray"; "creeping". Examples of the initial rolled "R" would be: mm. 9 and 10—"red" and "roses". The other major adjustment would be the shape of the "AH" which should be sung as a broad "A" as in "father" and NOT as in "sat". Examples would be in mm. 5, 9 and 13 would be sung as "half, "lahst" and "hahth"., respectively. You will need to go through the entire piece writing in these adjustments. As you can see this composition was arranged by one of the members of the King's Singers and you can listen to their performance as a guide. Go to your favorite search engine and find a performance—there are several available and your Director may have one of those CD's in your library. If not—it would make an excellent addition to your choral library as an example of excellent choral singing in the male genre.

3. Please mark, observe and rehearse the following "No Breaths" m. 2 lake/Its; m. 10 fall/round; m. 20 hearth/In; m. 28 believes/And; m. 35-36 (Bass II) dim/Are; m. 36 (All others) dim/Are; m. 44 bed/Where; m 52 bed/Where (except Bass I).

Shaw/Hunter: Li'l Liza Jane

1. Total number of measures: 112
2. There has got to be on every men's chorus concert at least one number in which the guys are just absolutely silly and that's why the ladies love us so much! I have a few ideas to make this a great deal of fun, and I'm sure you have better ones. Think about props and/or costumes as well!
3. Calls for a tenor soloist and he will play a lead role in the above. We will hold auditions early in the rehearsal schedule
4. I will really ham up the middle section from mm. 87-94.
5. Because of the nonsense things we'll do w/this lets go for memorizing!

Mozart/Bagley: Overture de Bon Appetite de U.S.A.

1. Total number of measures:
2. Program Note: Mozart's infamous overture from "The Magic Flute" is set to a text that describes and salutes the incredible diversity of the American culinary institution by way of listing foods that Americans consume, recognizing world-famous icons of the American food industry and summarizing multiple menus and venues from fast foods to the microwave oven. This arrangement was inspired by the wave of national pride following the events of September 11, 2001.
3. Program Script: We will use part or all of this script at the beginning of the development section: m. 97 (Adagio). Pick out a line from letter "a" to "f" that you think you would especially like to recite. You all will recite the last line.
 - a. *Beyond apple pie and cheeseburgers, America's food background is as eclectic as its residents are.*
 - b. *The United States is a land of delicious eating from coast to coast and neighborhood to neighborhood. But its cultural and culinary mix makes it impossible to characterize in a single byte or even a string of them.*
 - c. *American cuisine has come a long way since the early days of corn, beans and squash and along the way it has spawned some eminently forgettable and unforgettable food.*
 - d. *Nonetheless delicious regional styles remain and the new blood of immigrants sparks the imagination of the finest chefs in the world while making for great inexpensive food in the cities.*
 - e. *There is no American food. When we begin to list American foods, either we talk about regional things like lobster or Shrimp Creole, or we talk about spaghetti and pizza and hot dogs.*
 - f. *The fact that we don't have a cuisine is a measure of our democracy and of our ethnic heterogeneity. One could argue it's what makes us great!*

ALL: IT'S WHAT MAKES US GREAT!
4. The coda begins at m. 211-212. From this point to the end the remaining material must be MEMORIZED. One hand needs to be completely free for a surprise ending.

5. Diction! Diction! Diction! Diction! Diction!. It will be very challenging for the audience to understand every savory morsel so you must really over-do the diction.

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So much for musical preparation.

ATTENDANCE: No student may sing in the final concert if he/she is absent from any rehearsal during the festival unless cleared by the administrators of the festival.

PUNCTUALITY: All rehearsals will begin promptly at the appointed hour. You must be seated at least in your assigned chair at least 10 minutes early before each session.

MATERIALS: Each student is expected to come fully prepared to every rehearsal with his/her own music with all of the music previously marked and edited according to my instructions **BEFORE** the first rehearsal. Sharing of copies will not be permitted. Also, each student must have a **pencil** at every rehearsal.

MUSICAL PREPARATION: Much of the rehearsal time will be utilized in giving, and rehearsing new markings. For all of the pieces mentioned above I am expecting you to be fully prepared. Therefore, I have asked the chorus manager/chairperson to send me the complete roster of each school that will be represented from the festival. Since I do not know any of you personally this will be a wonderful opportunity to get to know you musically by hearing you in randomly selected **solo quartets or octets** from all the various school districts that you represent. Good luck!

BEHAVIOR: PROFESSIONALISM!!!

Thanks again for your invitation. If you have any questions, please have your Director send me an e-mail or visit our website at <http://chorus.uconn.edu/festivalnotes.htm> where you may access this newsletter for your personal interest. I am very excited about this festival and eagerly look forward to our first rehearsal.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peter Bagley
Director of Choral Activities

e-mail: peter.bagley@uconn.edu