

Director Notes

General thoughts –

Thank you for being willing to contribute to this effort. May God bless you for giving your time and efforts.

Please be prayerful and ask for God to prepare each of our hearts to worship him. We wish to do our best and give our best by singing with our all heart, soul, mind, body and strength.

Blending your voice with others is a top priority for the day. The goal is to hear one 1st tenor section, one 2nd tenor section, one baritone section and one bass section. This is not a competitive event where you try to eliminate your neighbor by out singing him. There is a Latin phrase “e pluribus unum” which means “out of many, one”. We come from different places, have different ages, different occupations, and different life experiences, however we are united in Jesus Christ as one. Our Messiah has taken many tribes, nations and peoples and made them one in Him. I am praying that the many voices that come together on Saturday will sound as one. We must start together, sing together, and stop together in an effort to make a high-quality recording that will honor God and bless others.

Being a 1st tenor myself, I do want to caution 1st tenors to be gentle and to sing with the lighter and gentler head voice. Higher frequencies cut through a recording and as a result there is less room for error when singing the higher frequencies. This is a long-distance run and not a 100-yard sprint. Remember to pace yourself so you have the stamina to last the entire day.

We must also remember that diction is critical. We are endeavoring to tell the good news of Jesus Christ through song but if the listener does not understand the words the message will be lost. For example, an individual attended an evangelization meeting where the hymn “There is a balm in Gilead” was being sung by a church music group, but the person in the audience, unfamiliar with the hymn, heard the words “There is a bomb in Gilead”.

O Worship the King –

This is a barbershop arrangement; therefore, we will be holding some notes longer than written to emphasize these barbershop chords. I have been told that emphasizing chords in barbershop is more important than strictly following the written rhythm (🕒)

First note we will hold to start each verse

The third beat of measure two we will also hold

Breath after the half note on measure 4

We will hold the note on the third beat of measure 4 each verse – just watch the director

Breath after beat two on measure 8

Sing soft on beat 3 of measure 8 and we will slowly crescendo building to the chord on beat 1 of measure 12 which we will hold

Lead Me to Calvary –

Fun fact: This was sung by a quartet in Latty, Ohio called the Joyful Messengers back in the early 1980s

Breath at the end of measure 2, no breath between measures 4 and 5, breath after measure 6.

Bass have melody between measures 9 and 14. All other parts should be soft. 1st and 2nd tenors should review measures 13 and 14.

Measure 4 baritones should see the timing of their moves are different than the bass. Baritones move on beats 2 and 4 while bass moves on beat 3.

Third verse on measure 17 will be slower with a breath at the end of measure 18, a fermata at the end of measure 20, breath at the end of measure 22.

Fourth verse will be back to a faster tempo which will help emphasize the message of being willing to bear our crosses.

At the very end in measure 25, 1st tenors should use head voice to lightly sing the high A. Just float the sound up like light fluffy whip cream as opposed to thick heavy molasses 😊

Behold the Lamb of God

This is a favorite hymn from the Zion's Harp. It is full of energy and I will direct at a nice energetic tempo. The breaths will be at the fermatas or rests.

Measure 19 beat 4, the tenor 2 should sing an A and the baritone should sing a G. The chord does not change but transition for each part is easier.

Do not go on auto pilot on this song. Your part will not track exactly with the Zion's Harp version. There are some variations.

Melody switches from 2nd tenor to 1st tenor on the last stanza.

Verse two measures 1 through 17, the 1st tenor, baritone and bass should all "ooo" while the seconds sing the words. Measure 18 all parts sing words. This verse should be sung softer than the other verses.

Verses 1 and 3 are as written.

The Walls Came Tumbling Down

This is an enjoyable spiritual song with energy

In measure two the notes are syncopated. We will sing the preceding eighth notes in measure one the same way. This is how the recording we posted on the website sings the songs. The same follows in stanza two.

Please note that somethings you sing “tum-bling” and sometimes “tum-bl-ing” either spread over two beats or three beats.

We will repeat the chorus at the end

When singing the chorus and if your part has a note that you hold for many beats, we want to crescendo while holding that note so the energy keeps building as each part comes in. Also, it helps us keep pitch if we put energy into the notes as we hold them.

The 2nd tenor sing the top soprano line an octave lower. Baritone sings tenor and 1st tenor sings the alto line.

Bound for Jubilee

This is an African American Spiritual to be sung at a quick upbeat tempo. A slave using the underground railroad to flee the oppression of the American South to reach freedom across the Ohio river or into Canada would know federal agents and slaveowners were on their trail seeking to bring them back to captivity. Speed was essential to survival. In a spiritual sense, the Devil is our old slave master seeking to bring us back to the plantation of sin. When singing this song, we want to tell a story and encourage others to follow us to freedom. To do this we must use dynamics and sing with emotion to be an effective story-teller.

The Great Redeemer

Another familiar hymn in our Apostolic musical heritage but this arrangement has differences compared to the song in the red Gospel Hymn book so please be alert when singing this arrangement.

The melody jumps around to various lines and doesn't always follow the red book exactly. The melody jumps will be notes in the final music booklet.

In the chorus the line “He is everything to me, to me” will be sung staccato but then after that the staccato will end. While the bass sing during the chorus it is imperative the rest of the parts are background support and do not overshadow the low, beautiful bass runs.

I would like to crescendo at “song of gladness in His praise” and then hold that with a short fermata.

Bass please watch the G natural on the “Life and light”. The G natural is on the word “and”

Just a Little While

I appreciate this song reminding us that Heaven is real and our present stay on Earth is temporary.

Watch the fermata in the fourth stanza on the first page.

In the chorus where the bass part has a fun little run “that’s always straight and narrow” the other three parts should hold for three beats and cut off on beat 4

On verse two I would like to add a little variety so only 2nd tenors will start, then at stanza 2 the 1st tenors will join, at stanza three the baritones will join, followed by the bass on stanza 4.

Verses 1 and 3 will be as written.

He the Pearly Gates Will Open

On measure two of stanza 2 there is movement with the different parts. Baritones move on beats two and four, bass move on beats 2 and 3, 1st tenor on beats 2 and 3 and 2nd tenors have it made by not moving at all 😊

On verse two all parts should “ooo” except 2nd tenors until the chorus when all should sing the words again.

On verse three we should sing soft and slower to help create a musical picture of life’s eventide at twilight. Please watch the director. At the phrase “At his door I’ll knock and wait” I want a fermata. We want to create a little “waiting” tension to bring out the words. Then we will crescendo in the phrase “By the precious love of Jesus” holding on the final note of that phrase. Then a quick tempo on “I shall enter heaven’s gate”. I don’t think the redeemed will be slow to enter heaven’s gate, so we don’t want to sing that part slow 😊

On this third final verse in the chorus we will have a fermata at the end on the word “redemption”.

Rise Up, O Men of God

I first heard this arrangement of this song about 18 years ago by a men’s choir from St Olaf choir in Minnesota. This arrangement is by Kenneth Jennings who was the director of St Olaf choir for many years. This song has always captured my imagination and to me represents a call to action for all men of God to do their duty to serve the King of Kings.

This song should be sung with a strong manly man sound to affirm the words of the Apostle Paul to fight the good fight of faith.

The melody jumps around from part to part. The final music will note where the melody switches. Each part at times will sing melody and at times be singing harmony.

Take a breath at measure two after God on beat 3, placing the consonant ‘d’ on that breath. Breath on measure 4 for things placing the “s” on beat 3.

Measure 5 beat two the bass go down one note and clash with baritone. Measure 6 bass should watch the move from e flat to e natural.

Breath on measure 8 for kings placing the “s” on beat 3. In measure 13 tenors 1 & 2 have different breath marks than bass and baritone.

In measure 14 the base should watch the A flat.

Measures 17 & 18 the base and baritone should continue holding that note for 6 full beats. Do not stop when the tenors start their line.

Measure 25 we need to emphasize each note going into measure 26. Put the “t” of great on beat 3.

Measure 27 no breath.

Measure 30 bass have another A flat

Measure 31 we will hold on the third beat on the word “Man”. Then I will give each note so we can emphasize the ending.

We end on a single note. Out of many, one. One voice and one sound, worshipping the One true God.

Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul

This is a Russian hymn, set to the words of Psalm 103. There should be a lyrical flow. The director will give the notes as the tempo and dynamics will fluctuate throughout, as the music seeks capture the emotion of this Psalm.

The contrast in dynamics should be intense. Many phrases start soft, grow in volume, diminish in volume and end soft, all in a few short measures.

The low bass is a tradition and hallmark of many Russian hymns.

After each phrase there will be a short break, similar to how we sing many hymns:

Bless thou the Lord, Oh my soul – breath/short break

Blessed art Thou, Oh Lord – breath/short break

Bless thou the Lord, Oh my soul – breath/short break

Bless the Lord, and forget not all His benefits – breath/short break

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul – breath/short break

And all that is within me, bless His holy name - breath/short break

He is full of compassion and mercy – breath (the quarter will be an eighth note with the breath on the eighth rest)

Long suffering and great in goodness – breath (the quarter will be an eighth note with the breath on the eighth rest)

He will not always chide: nor keep His wrath – breath

His wrath, (no breath) His wrath forever, His wrath forever – breath/longer break

Bless thou the Lord, Oh my soul – breath/short break

And all that is within me, bless His holy name – breath

Oh blest art Thou, Oh Lord

Ode to God

Thank you to Greg Kufchak for supplying this music. A little history on this song with its origins in Switzerland. From the internet, “The Swiss town of Trogen and its main square situated in front of the church are traditionally associated with the Landsgemeinde assemblies of the canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden – and thus with the hymn “Ode an Gott” (Ode to God) sung at the beginning of each assembly.” It is inspiring to think of a local governmental legislature singing this hymn before beginning its work. Whether in private, civic or business duties, how much better would we be performing our duties if we remember that all of life flows from God?

The melody jumps around between 1st tenor, 2nd tenor and baritone and will be marked in the final music.

In measure 7 watch the staccato notes for beats 1 & 2.

Dynamics are marked throughout.

In measure 10 I will direct the little bass run on beats 3 & 4 with a slight ritardando. Then in measure 11 back to normal tempo.

The very last chord of the song where the baritone splits, the C is the most important note as it is the only C in the chord, whereas the E is both second tenor and bass and the A is 1st tenor, baritone and bass.

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Verses 1, 2 and 3. Verse 2 is softer.

Remember phrasing on this song.

Breaths at the end of stanza 1, stanza 2, the fermata in the middle of stanza 3, and a breath at the end of stanza 3.

At the end of the song on the word “which” the 1st tenor and 2nd tenor should switch notes, and on the word “as” the 2nd tenors should stay on the E.

In Christ Alone

I think the melody has an Anglo-Irish folk hymn feel to it, especially when sung a cappella.

At the beginning everyone is singing. When it splits into two parts, the tenors take the top and the bass and baritone take the bottom.

Do not over sing at the beginning. The first verse should be softer. We should work to have lyrical phrasing that connects the notes. Think of a violin with a bow moving across the strings, compared to the clanking of a harpsichord. We want the violin feel 😊

Verse 1 – breath after found, song, ground, storm, peace, cease, all and stand.

Verse 2 – T2 and baritone have melody until the words “the wrath of God” when T2 goes to harmony

Breaths after flesh, Babe, righteousness, save, died (but only after the bass moves and resolves the chord), satisfied (but only after the bass moves and resolves the chord), laid, live

Verse 3 the bass should have a nice smooth, rich sound, with the other three parts singing soft “ooo’s” as accompaniment. Bass take breaths after lay and slain.

At “Then bursting forth” there should be a rise in volume and energy.

No breath between “in glorious day, up from the grave” but then a rest and breath after again.

At “and as he stands” there should be another rise in volume and energy.

Breath after victory (but only after resolution of the chord) and then a fermata on “me”.

Then soft again on “For I am His”.

There is a key change on “No guilt”. 2nd tenors are on a B flat and just need to go up a half step to a B natural. I will hold this note until we all lock into the pitch so watch me.

Final verse, breaths after life, death, me, breath, destiny, and man

When we get to “from His hand” the director will give each note. This this is the climax of the song and should be the strongest chord with emotion and controlled volume.

Till He returns should be a little softer with breath after home and stand.

The final “Till He returns” should be even softer. There will be a fermata on home. Another fermata on Christ with a break. Then the director will give each note for “I’ll stand”.

Ambassador for Christ

Verses 1, 2 and 3. Between verse 2 and 3 we will do a key change.

1st tenors when you come in please use your head voice. It should be a light, pleasant sound. The higher frequency will carry so no need to out sing anyone.

Bass has many moving lines so you will help keep the tempo going.

In the chorus the bass should bring out the little run in measure 30.

When we sing the chorus for the final time when we get to “in service to the Lord I am” we will hold with a fermata and then sing slowly to emphasize “ambassador for Christ.” Just watch the director 😊

Show a Little Bit of Love and Kindness

I am not sure what to say other than we have to practice out notes for this one. The 1st tenor sings below 2nd tenor at times so please watch out for those moments.

Baritone has some tricky runs in the chorus.

Bass has the hardest job on this song. The chorus is tricky with some interesting note changes. Also, if we sing this fast it will be easy to get off and hard to get back on track. The best advice I can give is to sit down at the piano and go through your notes or go the website and listen to the piano recording.