

Rehearsal Notes for Tennessee Women's All State

Dear Singers and Conductors,

I look forward to making beautiful music with you in April and to visiting your wonderful state. Here are some rehearsal notes that can help us to communicate quickly and effectively during our short rehearsal hours together. Please e-mail me at jordanoc@duq.edu if you have any questions. I encourage you to listen to the accompaniments of each work, as well as your part(s) sung with the other parts. Our performance will be much more satisfying if everyone is aware of each other's role in the music.

1. Cantate Domino:

This piece will be conducted in 2 at the tempo marking given. Be sure to maintain a steady pulse as you practice so that all the imitative entrances are very precise and in time. Observe all breaths marked in the score. Note that on page 2 the previous quarter note now equals the half note, so the macro beat is now twice as fast, but it changes back in the middle of the second system. In the subsequent sections with eighth note melismas, sing them smoothly, without "h" in between. In order to maintain the rhythmic vitality of the piece, make a pulse with your diaphragm on the macro beats in each measure. It should feel like an "internal metronome." Be sure to be attentive to the dynamic changes throughout.

2. Duet from Cantata No. 9

This piece will be sung in German. You have a separate practice tape with the correct pronunciation to help you learn it. While the notes are not difficult, the interpretation, particularly the phrasing is critical in communicating the meaning of the duet. Breaths should be taken in the places indicated on the tape. Pulsing will help with the articulation of the sixteenth notes in this piece as well. Read the notes on the inside cover of the music to get some practice ideas. Isolate the individual rhythmic and melodic motives and see how they are used throughout the piece. This will help you understand the relationship between the two voice parts.

3. Psalm 121

This is a glorious piece of music with many different moods and colors. There will be a variety of tempo and dynamic changes. Your voices should be light in weight but intense in timbre. Emphasizing consonants will help to communicate the text expressively. Note that the tessituras of each section vary dramatically. The first section is in the middle range, and the second section is quite low. At M. 45 it begins to rise until it climaxes at m. 60. (Sopranos, be gentle with the high A on “he.” At m. 65, the tessituras begin to lower, until the final section as m. 80. Practice staggering the breathing in the last phrase.

4. Shady Grove:

This piece is masterfully constructed. As you study the piece, follow the melody as it moves between and among the voices. Each phrase is 4 measures long, so avoid the temptation to breath after 2 bars. At. m. 53, the tuning may be a challenge. Learn the part opposite you as if you were singing the entire verse by yourself. Be careful of the modulation that begins at m. 49, especially at m. 51. If you can, play some block chords on the piano at key points to check your tuning. In the new key established at m. 57, altos need to be aware of the variation of the first interval in the melody. At m. 67, we'll slow things down significantly, leading up to the *molto rit.* and the *tenutos* in the last 2 bars of that section. Staggered breathing will be necessary throughout this section. Beginning at m. 75, we will begin a gradual *accelerando* until reaching the original tempo. This should be an exciting moment in the piece. At. m. 88, there will be a complete caesura after “love,” then the two lower voices will sing the pick-up “I’m” leading into the final two measures. This song should be very happy and fun, with very crisp consonants to help give it energy.

5. All the Pretty Little Horses:

This is a beautiful melody that employs some interesting techniques that may not have been clear on the practice tape. We'll work on the opening and closing a great deal at rehearsal in order to achieve the desired, dream-like effect. Please check your copies to note that in m. 4, the last pitch should be an “A.” Some original editions of this piece have it written as a “D” and this is incorrect. My own chorus premiered this work for the composer, so I can be certain of this.

6. Exaudi Laudate:

The parallel chords in this piece must be totally in tune for it to be pleasing to the listener. Your tuning will be aided with careful vowel formation. Eliminate all diphthongs, especially in the word “ex-au-di.” The “au” should be sung on a bright “a” vowel before closing to the “di.” The same is true for “Lau-da-te.” On p. 3, since the entire phrase from m. 13-through 16, and 17-20 on one breath. At the double bar at m. 21, change to a light and detached tone. The “x” of “pax” should be released on the eighth rest. At the end of p.5, stagger the breathing through the whole notes as you diminish in volume. At the imitative section beginning at m. 33, sing in a lyrical way with a soft dynamic level. Each entrance should make a clear statement of the rhythm. Beginning at m. 53, note the subito mf, followed by a subito piano at m. 55. Begin a crescendo at m. 58 that builds the excitement to return to the beginning of the piece. At the coda, practice your accurate tonal attack on the “alleluia.” The parallel chords sound a little like the “Star Wars” theme, so we want them to be rhythmically and tonally precise. Use staggered breathing throughout p. 12.

All the best with your practicing. I hope you will enjoy this music as much as I do.

Sincerely,

Christine Jordanoff