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Repertoire for Beginning Treble Choirs:

Quality Music for Quality Singing

Ashley Chappell

University of North Texas

necessary to turn toward music of well-known composers that has been edited and arranged for beginning choirs by contemporary musicians. Performing music that has been edited by these contemporary arrangers may be the only method in which students can experience and become familiar with music by major Western composers. When possible, it is preferable for students to experience music that is unadulterated by arrangers' hands, but in some cases, it is a necessary evil in order to keep music available for purchase.

While having great educational value, authentic music by Western composers may also present one difficult factor for public school educators. Because many composers of previous eras were employed in the church, much of their musical output was written with a sacred text. In public schools, selecting an unbalanced program with a heavy emphasis on religious subjects could have a negative impact, but this should not negate the need for selecting music of high quality that is appropriate for the beginning chorus. With this idea in mind, Texas choral educators were surveyed for appropriate literature for beginning middle school and/or high school treble choirs, the repertoire list was pared down and studied for practical application in the choral classroom, and the following titles show the outcome of this survey. Selections presented with an asterisk are pieces that may be more challenging, but perhaps could be achievable for beginning treble choirs later in the school year. With the exception of three-part canons, there is little three-part literature that is appropriate for beginning choral students. Therefore, this study focused mainly on unison and two-part selections and canons for multiple voice parts.

German folk song's text about a ladybug, has a smaller tessitura (in G major), and is strophic in nature, making this selection very appealing to the younger choir. The "Andate" tempo marking in 4/4 time sets this piece at a nice pace. Should the German text become too cumbersome, an English version of the text is also given. *My Jesus is my Lasting Joy* by Buxtehude is arranged in the key of F with organ accompaniment and an English text with two strophes. The original solo cantata was written in the key of G with accompaniment for organ and 2 violins. The range of this selection spans just over an octave and the rhythms are comprised mostly of quarter notes and dotted quarter note rhythms in 4/4. John Rutter's *Star Carol* employs the verse/refrain form and spans the range of an octave and a fourth in the key of D major. The syncopation in this 4/4 selection adds a buoyant, rhythmic feeling to this song that is mostly sung during the holiday season.

Canons

Title	Composer	Arranger	Publisher	Period
Jubilate Deo	Praetorius	Rao	Boosey & Hawkes	Baroque/Ren.
Da Pacem Domine*	Franck	Goetze	Boosey & Hawkes	Renaissance
Illumina oculos meos	Palestrina	Leavitt	Hal Leonard	Renaissance
Non Nobis Domine*	Byrd	Bartle	Hinshaw	Renaissance
Tallis's Canon	Tallis	Appleby/Fowler	Oxford	Renaissance
We Will Praise You	Praetorius	Wagner	Lorenz	Baroque/Ren.

Once a choir has mastered the art of beautiful unison singing, working on a canon is the next logical step because the piece may be learned in unison and then divided into

Gloria	Vivaldi	Liebergen	Carl Fischer	Baroque
In Dulci Jubilo	Praetorius	Leck	Hal Leonard	Baroque/Ren.
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	Bach	Liebergen	Carl Fischer	Baroque
Regina Angelorum**	Mozart	Bennett	Hal Leonard	Classical
Schön Blümelein*	Schumann		National MP	Romantic
Sebben, crudele	Caldara	Leck	Hal Leonard	Baroque
Sleep, Gently Sleep	Brahms	Harris	Hal Leonard	Romantic
Sound the Trumpet! Praise Him!	Haydn	Hopson	Coronet	Classical

If students can successfully sing canons in two to three voice parts, then they may be ready to move on to two-part music where the vocal lines no longer share similar pitches and rhythms. Mozart's familiar *Alleluia* is set for two voice parts in D major with homophonic rhythmic movement and a simple repetitive text ("Alleluia"). Furthermore, a great deal of the mainly step-wise melody is outlined in the piano accompaniment and the rhythms consist of repetitive dotted quarter note and eighth note patterns mostly in 4/4 time. *Wash Me, O Lord God (Amplius lava me)* involves the use of more chromatics and polyphonic rhythms than many other pieces on this list, so it may be very challenging for the beginning choir, but the piece has a moderate range, is in G minor, and 3/8 time.

Come, Jesus, Holy Son of God from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* has a nice, lilting 6/8 feel and employs many call and response phrases in F major. *For the Beauty of the Earth* by John Rutter is challenging because of its extended range and varying treatments of each verse. The multiple key changes, meter changes, and syncopation make this piece exciting to sing, though. On the other hand, Handel's *Give Thanks and Praise* is in

singers. *Sound the Trumpet! Praise Him!* by Haydn is in A-flat major and 2/4 time. This selection employs dotted eighth note and sixteenth note patterns perhaps to emulate the sound of a trumpet and uses contrasting forte and piano dynamic levels.

Conclusion

In selecting repertoire for students, it is important to select not only Western music, but also music from around the world. This study focused only on music by Western composers throughout music history, but there is certainly room for research in multicultural music that is appropriate for the beginning choir. While this is not a comprehensive list, hopefully this will aid new and experienced teachers alike in their quests for selecting authentic music that is appropriate for beginning treble choirs, thereby giving the students a higher-quality choral experience.