

Summer 2016

Dear Singers,

Greetings from northeast Iowa and Luther College! I have heard so many wonderful things about the singers who participate in WSMA and I cannot wait to hear you and have the opportunity to work with you this fall. One of the defining moments of my life was participating in an honor choir when I was in seventh grade; in fact, I could still tell you the titles of the pieces in our program! The pieces that I have chosen for you were selected not only to showcase your skill, but to challenge you.

The program you will sing is one of the most favorite I have ever constructed. You will experience pieces from diverse backgrounds including songs from Kenya, a setting of three pieces from a tribe in the Amazon, a movement of a Haydn mass, a setting of a love poem by Robert Burns and one by Sara Teasdale, and a really amazing gospel piece to finish our program. These pieces will display your high level of musicality and your ability to adapt to different musical styles.

Please take a look at the conductor's notes that I have included so that you can be prepared for our rehearsals together. It is my goal to begin by making music and not by taking our rehearsal time to learn notes – I know I can count on your professionalism to help us all achieve our best. Also, we will use physical movement on two of the pieces in the program, so it's important that you come prepared to the point that you will hardly need your printed music.

I look forward to meeting you and hearing you. It will be here sooner than you think!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennaya Robison". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jennaya Robison, D.M.A.
Assistant Professor of Music, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa
Conductor of Aurora and Cathedral Choirs

Conductor's Notes – Dr. Jennaya Robison, WSMA Middle Level Honors Choir

Wana Baraka, arr. Shawn Kirchner

We will add movement to this piece, so it is important that you arrive with this piece very well learned so that we can begin adding movement right away.

- Tenors and Basses, be prepared to repeat m. 1-2 as needed
- Careful attention to who has the melody. If you don't have it, reduce your volume as indicated by the composer
- "Wana baraka wale waombao" is always sung without a breath and with a slight crescendo on the sixteenth notes, same is true of "wana amani wale waombao"
- Tenors, bring out accent in m. 26-34, Sopranos do the same in m. 42-48
- Basses, separate all eighth notes m. 26-34 on all "alleluya"s. Please do the same whenever you have this.
- TBB – big crescendo m.50-51
- m. 51-58, make sure you sing two measure phrases with a crescendo on the sixteenth notes.
- 58 to the end, carefully follow the articulation and dynamic markings by the composer. Note that the altos have the melody m. 59-66!

Gloria from "Mass in the Time of War," Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Some general ideas for phrasing when singing music from the Baroque period:

- repeated pitches are always separated
- repeated text is separated by a breath
- dotted notes receive a messa di voce (crescendo – decrescendo)
- series of quarter notes will receive "hand bell articulation" (we will go into more of this in rehearsal) or an articulation that isn't necessarily accented, but begins to immediately decay.
- Sopranos in m. 112-end, the run on the syllable "Pa..." Please put a small space after the first eighth note before the two sixteenth notes.
- All parts – watch that you sing the Latin with no diphthongs. Make sure your "e" vowels are pronounced "eh" and "o" vowels are "oah." If you feel your mouth start to close while you sing those vowels or feel like you are chewing them, then you have added a diphthong.
- We will concentrate on text stress in this piece. Each phrase will have a syllable of arrival and it is NEVER the final syllable.
- SA – breath in m. 16 after "bus", Soprano – no breath in m. 18-19, breath after "tis" in 20
- m. 32, stress the FIRST quarter note, release the second, same in m. 36
- breath at the end of m. 44
- Soprano – no breath, m. 51-62 (stagger!), ATB – breath at the end of 55
- Bass – no breath before m. 78
- SATB – no breath m. 116-117

A Red, Red Rose, James Mullholand

This is one of my absolute favorite pieces! Although the text looks a little different, please pronounce it as you would English (for instance, “luve” should be pronounced like “love.”)

- m.5-8, no breath. Stagger. We will ritard the end of m. 8 and take a quick breath before m.9. Same is true for m. 9-12. When in doubt, sing four measure phrases!
- m. 13-16, no breath, 17-20, no breath
- m. 20, alto and tenor are the most important
- bring out alto and tenor m. 21-24
- SATB, m. 21-24, no breath. All will take a quick breath before “and.” Soprano and bass, make sure to listen for altos and tenors so that you cut off with them.
- m. 25-28, no breath
- m. 29-32, no breath. Sing with a hushed, floating tone
- m. 33-36, no breath. Careful not to let the word, “and” pop out at the end of measure 34.
- m. 37-40, no breath. We will ADD a sizeable ritard in measure 40.
- Sopranos, use an “h” to get the air moving before the word “I” in m. 41
- m. 41-45, no breath. M. 44-45, decrescendo
- m. 48 – “I Will Come” – each will receive a small fermata

Tres Cantos de Nativos, Marcos Leite

These pieces look a lot more difficult than they actually are. We will do a lot with these when we are all together as they are much easier to understand when you have all of the voice parts. I encourage you to listen to some YouTube recordings to get an understanding of how the text is pronounced and use the notes from the composer to guide your pronunciation. Please make sure you circle or mark all of the directions the composer has written for your voice parts – there are quite a few and each of them are critical! Practice animal noises – we will use them!

- TB, breathe between each “RAM” – make sure you go immediately to the “m” on a hum.
- Notice the different dynamics of the sopranos and altos in m. 9-10.
- M. 26 – speak with a slightly higher pitch than normal.
- M. 39 – notice the clapping is different for SA and TB
- M. 50 – observe the fermata, notice all of the accents

I Loved All Lovely Things, Andrea Ramsey

The composer has done an excellent job of indicating exactly how she wants this piece sung. In general, there should be no breath in the middle of the phrase unless the

composer has marked it. Never interrupt a crescendo with a breath! Please note the dynamics and how they impact the way that you stress the syllables of the text.

- m. 12 – make “whips” an eighth note, eighth rest

Make a Joyful Noise, Rollo Dilworth

African-American gospel pieces in this style are sung without as many ending consonants. In general, please sing the word as you would say it. For instance, we won't need a big “d” at the end of the word “Lord.” You will use what we would call a “jazz consonant” where the ending consonant feels more imploded rather than exploded.

- Tenors – note that you go to the treble clef in m. 11
- We will scoop (yes!) when you see a tenuto marking (“break” in m. 14)
- Please pay careful attention to dynamics and articulation as that is what makes this piece exciting!
- Tenors – note that you go to bass clef in m. 38
- Careful not to rush all syncopated rhythms (especially m. 47-48, 62-63, 68-69)
- We will step-touch and clap at m. 77 – the end. Be ready!