**Notes for All Cape & Islands Treble Honor Choir Participants**

Dear Singers!

Congratulations on being chosen as a member of the Treble Honor Choir for this year’s All Cape & Island Festival, which is celebrating its 60th Anniversary! So it’s an \*extra exciting\* year to be a part of this festival, and I am honored and excited to be your Guest Conductor. Because this was such a special year, and because you are a part of the Treble Choir, I have selected pieces that have all been composed by **living, female,** composers. And because this is a special year, all of the pieces have to do with empowerment, strength, being a part of a community, and experiencing life with joy and wonder!

I hope that as you are preparing for the Festival and working on and rehearsing this music that you are enjoying not only the awesome melodies and harmonies, but the energy of the rhythm and movement of each piece.

I have written some notes here for you to think about as you prepare each song, in the hopes that you will have an idea about the intent and impact that each piece of music brings with it, and what musical choices we’ll make as an ensemble, to really share each unique story with our audience and each other.

You’ll notice that a lot of the notes have to do with emphasis on certain words and stresses in phrasing, along with articulation - as that will be super important in conveying the message of each piece. I know that you will all come to the Festival rehearsals with a good handle on your parts both notewise and rhythmically, so these notes are more about the shape of the music.

See you all in a few weeks!

Trevor Fanning

\*\*\*I’ve given notes in what I think will be our concert order:

Be Like The Bird, If You Can Walk You Can Dance, Rise My Soul, and Let the River Run

**Be Like The Bird**

While on the surface this seems like a very simple piece, there are a lot of things to keep in mind when thinking about this piece. Unison singing is always very difficult, especially acapella unison singing, so make sure to really be secure in the melody, especially the moments where the phrase makes big leaps as opposed to step-wise motion (like mm: 2 “from “in” to “her”, mm. 3 from “a” down to “while” and mm. 6 “from “her” down to “and” and back up to “sings” in mm. 7).

We will sing the melody **once thru in Unison**, and then we will begin singing it as a round, which is where the real genius of this piece can be found. The composer has intentionally placed the entrance of each part of the round so that as we add more groups, amazing harmonies begin to be heard. The challenge is to make sure that we still hear each individual part when the cacophony of the round really takes off. Logistically, each”group” will sing the round twice through after we’ve sung it in Unison. As that happens, we really need to stress certain words in the phrases so that the harmony really comes through. Here are some words to really stress/emphasize and give a little more volume to: mm. 2-3 “her flight”, mm. 5-6 “beneath her”, and mm. 7 “sings” along with the final phrase, really emphasizing “knowing she hath wings.”

We will talk about breaths and phrases when we meet for our first rehearsal, but we will take a stop breath in the first measure between “like” and “the” and there will be no breath in mm. 7 between the “sings” and “and sings”...you can bring in mm. 8 after the sings, at the comma.

\*\*\*Lastly, if there are any members of the ensemble who can really whistle, let me know on Thursday. The whole piece ends with the melody being whistled once through as the last groups finish the round.

**If You Can Walk You Can Dance**

The most important thing to keep in mind in this piece *is to sing it with joy!* Even though its written in 4/4 - we’ll definitely be feeling in it 2.

After that, there are a few other things to keep in mind.

First, the phrase “If you can walk you can dance, if you can talk you can sing” is repeated throughout the song. Make sure you really emphasize the words “walk” and “dance” and “talk” and “sing.” That may seem obvious - but it will help keeping the repeated phrases energized.

Also, be aware of the little rhythmic nuances found at mm. 25, mm. 28-29, and mm. 45 - 64. This is a very vocally percussive piece, so being solid on the different rhythm patterns will help the rehearsal process. And really knowing where there are more legato dance like phrases, versus staccato dance like phrases (for example the difference between mm. 8-23 and the different rhythms starting on pg. 6) will be very important.

**Rise My Soul**

This is one of the most beautiful pieces I have encountered in recent years for a Treble Chorus.

It is challenging but worth it, and while it won’t be the showstopper of the concert - it will certainly be the centerpiece musically and with its emotional build-up.

You’ll notice that the tempo marking includes my favorite word “joy” - so even though this has a different feel than our more uptempo percussive pieces, it still has joy and confidence written all over it.

Be careful with the opening line - as unison singing is always tricky, especially acapella.

Then be aware of how important the balance is when the harmony is added at mm. 5.

The piece continues fairly straightforward rhythmically - so concentrate on being as solid and secure on your vocal lines from page 3 - to 8. The texture really changes at the bottom of page 8, and culminating at the top of page 10. We will work to really shape the growth of the phrases as more parts add in on the quarter note phrases in mm. 53 - 62. Then we are at our strongest and boldest at mm. 63 going forward, recapitulating the theme, and concluding with a quiet and subtle, yet confident end, really carried by the Soprano 2’s from mm. 78 to the end with their moving “rise, oh rise”. It’s going to be stunning!

**Let the River Run**

This will most likely be the last song in our set, as it conveys a message of hope and excitement and the whole piece builds with energy and abandon. And even though there are optional parts for percussion, just like in “If You Can Walk, You Can Dance” the arranger has really made each vocal part like a percussion line.

The biggest thing to tackle in your preparation of this piece are the rhythmic patterns and parts that start and build upon at the beginning. Alton 2’s start with the first phrase (1-e-and-a 2-and e-and-a 4-and), then Soprano 2’s join in with that same rhythm, then Alto 1’s tackle a new rhythm at the top of page. 4 (roughly: 1-e a-2 and-a e-and 4-e-and-a...if that seems odd, just think that the runnin’s come right before the beat, a little syncopation) followed by Soprano 1 with (1-and 2-and-3-e-and-a-4-and). We will repeat each line 3 times before adding the next one, to really build excitement.

The rest of the piece is really straightforward. :-)

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