

Christchurch Schools' Music Festival 2024 Massed Choir Programme - Teaching Notes

God Defend New Zealand

Sing our national anthem with pride and at a fairly brisk pace! In our Festival we sing a straight choral version with no riffs or melismas ("twiddley bits"!)."God" is pronounced as it is written with a short "o", rather than the "Gard" often heard at sports fixtures. Keep the mouth shape north-and-south especially on the "a" vowels e.g. "God", "na -tions" [nay-shones]. Ensure that the final consonants are produced, especially on words ending in "d" e.g. New Zealand. It is important that students sing the version we have created, not one that may be sung at their school or in their assemblies. This version has been specifically arranged for the music festival and is in the correct key that it should be sung in. Make sure students sing in their head voice rather than chest voice throughout the anthem.

Anthems

Speaking of anthems We now have a very special arrangement provided to us by our previous Music Director, Dr Patrick Shepherd. This is a medley of national anthems from across the world to accompany our theme for this year's concert, with the theme being about the Olympics and showing strength and resilience. We thought this would be a great way to start the concert off with singing snippets of different national anthems. This piece will be accompanied by the Concert Band and begins with the Olympic Anthem theme written by Spyridon Samaras. The anthem was performed for the first time for the ceremony of opening of the first edition at the 1896 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece. It would be good for the students to get a wee back story on this hymn and where it was performed etc. It may take a while to get buy-in with this one but if they know the background, this may help. It is a very majestic, stirring start to our festival so make sure students sing with energy and vigor. Make sure students sing to the end of the phrase on love _____ cutting off at the next bar line. Adhere to the dynamics with a clear, strong head voice and not a 'shouting' voice. The rest of this piece introduces students to a small part of different national anthems. The French anthem we included due to the Olympics being held in Paris this year - there is a pronunciation guide on the learning tracks for you to listen to to help with the language. Eleisha has provided us with a clear guide for the Japanese anthem and this language is quite phonetic so it should not be too difficult! At letter K, the representative choirs will sing the Samoan national anthem on their own - listen out for Dr Shepherd's clever arrangement in linking our own anthem into this piece!

The song then finishes with World in Union which was performed at the Rugby World cup. In this section, students need to sing with beautiful line and legato phrasing. All the breath marks have been marked in by rests so if there is no rest in the music, students should sing through the phrase. This song builds up in dynamics to a stirring finale at the end.

This song will provide a great learning tool for your teaching, students can learn about different national anthems, where in the world the Olympics is being held and they can

identify which country is in which continent - once students know more about why this song is being performed they will enjoy singing it! Have fun!

Imagine a World

The awareness of the state of our world amongst this generation of children is at an all-time high and this uplifting song will hopefully inspire our students to continue imagining the world in a positive light. This is a straightforward song – a couple of things to note with dynamics, it starts super soft with the soft whispers ‘imagine’ then moderately soft as the song begins at letter A and moderately loud at letter B – it would be great to have that contrast between these two opening verses. Also remind the children to sing through the phrase on the words ‘world’, ‘place’ and ‘time’ connecting smoothly to the next world in the phrase like ‘that’ and ‘where’. e.g These small ‘hold and connects’ are reinforced with the long held notes of the same words in the coda before the song fades beautifully away with the soft final whisper, ‘imagine’.

Try Everything

A fantastic song sung by Shakira for the Walt Disney film, Zootopia. Because this is a popular song, students may know different versions. It is important that we all sing the same notes and rhythms when we perform it for the festival, listen carefully to the learning track and follow along closely with your books. This piece needs to be sung with plenty of life, the mood is positive with good articulation and energy. The end consonants of each phrase end on the following rest so we all put our ‘t’ and ‘p’ in the same place. At letter B, it repeats but you then go onto where it is marked 2. for ‘look how far’. At the end of that verse we go back to letter B, repeat and then jump down to the Coda at D. Please watch the dynamics markings that are in this piece. These help create the overall feeling of the piece with the chorus being louder than the verses. At letter E, watch the syncopated rhythms, singing these short with a slight glottal on each ‘oh’.

Under Southern Skies

This song was written to celebrate the eternal youthfulness of the Olympic spirit, and reminds us that the world's children represent our future. This iconic song was performed by Nicki Webster in the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. A key to achieving accurate rhythms in this song will be to help the children observe the rests. e.g. Letter B, bar 24 –between skies (quaver rest) together and bar 32, southern skies (quaver rest) and bar 22 after ‘as one we rise’, (quaver rest). There are a couple of leaps to be aware of in the melody line, the most significant occurring with the words ‘all the wonder of the future in’ - try to help the children pop the high note into their head voice without straining by practising the note to a light ‘Oo’ sound – ‘all the wonder of Oo future in’.

Tōia Mai Te Waka Nei

A fun, lively Maori piece that the children are sure to enjoy. When singing in another language, it is important we take the time to ensure our pronunciation is accurate. Listen to the pronunciation track, speak the text slowly and methodically along with the pronunciation guide and then sing along with the teaching track. Take note of the translation that is printed at the end of this piece. It will be sung in unison throughout, no harmonies from the representative groups. Each time this song is sung and it modulates, it will be slightly louder than the last time. Be careful to ensure we don't move into shouting and using our chest voice and we keep a steady pulse throughout. When we sing a phrase, it is important we sing the length of notes written rather than holding on for longer so we have plenty of time to prepare for the next phrase. The 'A Hi!' at the end needs to be said in a deeper spoken voice rather than our singing voice.

Touch the Sky

From the Disney movie "Brave", this Scottish-style Folk Song is a really enjoyable song to sing, and is full of character. As always when we are singing well-known songs, it's important we sing the exact notes/rhythms/words that you can see in your Music Festival Song Books and hear on the Teaching Tracks as our version might be slightly different to the version from the movie soundtrack. Because this is a fast song, try and work on the text/lyrics separately to the notes and rhythms - speak the text/lyrics like you are reading a poem to make sure you can wrap your mouth around them all. Then you can go back to singing the song and you should find it is easier now that you have practised the text/lyrics separately. At bar 114, you will see **D.S. al Coda** which means we go back to Letter E (the chorus) (notice there is a strange looking **S** on top of Letter E). At bar 72, you will see **To Coda** which means we jump to the Coda (two bars before Letter J, where it says **CODA**). Think of the Coda as the "outro" of the piece. There are 5 sets of "Na Nas" that we sing when you sing the chorus for the 2nd time and go to the outro - count these in your head as you're singing them and make sure not to sing a 6th set of "Na Nas"! There is quite a long (but very exciting) instrumental introduction to this song, as well as a few other instrumental moments (one in the middle, and one at the very end), so make sure you stay absolutely still and silent during these instrumental moments - just because you are not singing in those moments, it does not mean the song isn't still going.

Golden Slumbers/Carry That Weight

This medley is of two Beatles songs arranged together and has been made famous again from the 'Sing' movie. This song will be sung with the orchestra and is bound to be a favourite with the students. The phrasing has all been marked with rests so the two bar phrases at the beginning of the song should be sung in one breath. At bar 9, we have arranged the massed students to sing a C rather than an F which is what is in the original so just make sure students sing what is written in the massed line.

At Letter B, make sure the whole line is sung without a break and on "Smiles - make the 's' late on 'awake' so we have no long 'ss'. At Letter D, watch the syncopated rhythm on

'pi-llow'. At Bar 38 on 'I break, I break' - make sure students sing those short so they do not sing over the quaver rests. Adhere to all the dynamic markings in the piece. The last 'Hmm' can be sung with a closed mouth but with space so not a pinched hum sound. With this piece being well known and students possibly knowing different versions of the song, make sure to listen to the learning track and have students learn the song exactly as it has been arranged for the festival.

Hand in Hand

This song was the official song of the Seoul (South Korea) 1988 Summer Olympics. It was performed during the opening ceremony of those olympics by Korean band *Koreana* and it was sung in both Korean and English. Our version is completely in English, except for the word "arirang" ("*a-ri-rang*") which we sing at the end of each chorus. This word does not have a specific meaning in Korean or exact translation to English, but it likely means, "beloved one" or it refers to someone you cherish or you care about greatly. Listen carefully to how the word is pronounced on the Teaching Track we have provided you and copy this. The English lyrics are full of passion and the message is very powerful, so make sure to convey this in your performance.

You'll Never Walk Alone/Climb Ev'ry Mountain

This is our finale piece for "E Tu" and will be a stirring finish to the concert. "You'll never walk alone" has been made famous at many sporting events and is often sung at many football games. "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" is the well known song from "The Sound of Music" but fits our theme so well, talking of never giving up and striving to be the best.

At Letter A, make sure students sing right to the end of each phrase. On the word 'dark' - the consonant 'k' should be put on the crotchet note so students can breathe on the rest before the next phrase. The breath marks have been indicated by rests so phrases should be sung through if there is no rest indicated in the music. At Letter C on 'walk on' - each phrase should be legato with the 'k' coming late onto the word 'on'.. At bar 43 'a-lone' should be sung with lots of space and open mouth, so the vowel is round to give a good tone. At bar 46, make sure students sing the E not the G as they may be tempted to join the representative choir in the higher note there.

At "Climb ev'ry mountain", the 'c' should be more like a 'k' when sung and 'mountain' is pronounced with a dropped jaw rather than clipped. Make sure students sing the dotted minims to the end of the phrase. At Letter F, the first phrase is sung in one breath up to the crotchet rest. At bar 79, 'rainbow' needs space and dropped jaw here as well to get a round sound. At letter H, the song goes back to the original tune but picks up in pace with the tempo increasing until the end of the song. Again at letter K, watch the note E is sung rather than the G. Students can breathe at the quaver rest at bar 103 but then sing the last phrase without a breath until the end!