



# **Men's Choir**

# **Programming Music**

**May 14, 2020**



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**Objective/Learning Target:**

**The student will learn the elements of choosing repertoire for a choir concert.**



## Warm Up

On a separate piece of paper, answer the following in regards to your experiences in choir:

1. Do you wonder why your director chose the pieces that you learn in class?
2. Have you ever felt that you would like input in the songs that your group sings?
3. What do you think are the criteria that your director uses to pick songs?



## Why Are We Doing This?

While most of you will not become a choir teacher in the future, knowing why your director picks a piece is still relevant to you. You could be singing two pieces that you may not understand how they are connected. The goal for this lesson is that you will learn the countless ways directors try to pick pieces that work together so that you may understand the pieces more.



## The First Steps

The beginning of the year provides time for a director to get to know the group. What type of voicing is it? How many people are in the group? What are their strong/weak points? Directors must assess every voice and make the best possible ensembles. Throughout the year, the ability of the ensemble will grow so the repertoire level should be picked strategically to help the group maintain a high level of growth. Here are some criteria that must be followed:

1. Must be within the choir's capabilities
2. Builds on strengths, but also helps improve the areas where they are weak
3. Is something they can learn quickly and experience success early.



## What Are You Teaching?

Once the ensembles are set, the director has a choice to make. Usually the choice is made to plan out the year's worth of concerts. This sets up learning targets for the ensemble to meet. As the year moves on, these targets should increase in difficulty and should be reflected in the choice of music. Why is large ensemble in the spring? Ensembles are getting increasingly better throughout the year, and we start planning with the end goal in mind.



## Timing is Key

A big deciding factor for programming is the time of year the music will be performed. The music for Fall should be different from the music for Winter. Directors could also pick a central theme to shape their concert around. Themes might be centered around the following:

Holidays like Veterans Day or Christmas

Seasons- Fall, Winter, or Spring

Personal themes: Love, friendship, life etc.

Pop music/musical theatre



## Style

When we pick music, it needs to not sound the same. It is human nature to like what we like, however we need to be pushed out of our comfort zone to help us grow as human beings. We should delve into music from around the world to gain an appreciation of every type of music. MSHSAA contest has a rule that our pieces must be in contrasting styles. Here are some criteria to consider: Language, Cultures, Tempo, A Cappella vs. Accompanied, use of instruments other than piano, time period, Styles/genres of music





## That's Entertainment!

A big part of our class is the performance for an audience. The music that directors pick for concerts must keep the ensemble mentally stimulated, but also must be something that any audience will enjoy. **YOU CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE!!!** As a singer, you may not enjoy every single piece of music, but you will more than likely enjoy singing something. Audience entertainment value must be approached in the same manner. There may be only one piece they like, but the person next to them may enjoy only one different piece. Keep that in mind!



## Reflection

After this lesson, consider the following questions:

1. Have you ever considered any of the previous factors (Ensemble capabilities, learning targets, time of year, contrasting styles, entertainment value)?
2. Do you now feel like you have an understanding of why your director picks the music that they pick?



## Individual Practice

Now here is your challenge. Think of all the choirs at your school. You need to pick 2 songs for every choir as if it was a fall concert. Make a list and label the songs each group will sing and send it to your director. Use the elements that you have learned in this lesson. Here is a website to help you pick music:

<https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/school-choir-music.jsp>

For additional practice, plan the whole year for all groups!