



The GREAT CHORAL TREASURE HUNT 15

Slowly, Gently Raising the Bar for Better Choral Music (for Fifteen Years!)

Margaret Jenks, Randal Swiggum, Mike Ross • Thursday, October 27, 2017 • Monona Terrace

DANCE FOR THE NATIONS

John Krumm

Round and round we turn, we hold each other's hands, and
weave our - selves in a cir - cle. The
time is gone, the dance goes on.

I. WHAT MAKES IT GREAT?

- Great art rarely reveals its greatness at a quick read-through. (This is the problem with Reading Sessions in general—they get us excited about very surface-y features, like “catchy melody”—the things you can pick up on in just a few minutes, and not see that the piece might actually be quite shallow.)
- Using CMP style Analysis helps us see deeper. What is the piece actually made of? Does it have any depth?
- We don't need more music. We are swimming in music possibilities (thank you, Internet). What we need is discernment.
- CMP Outcomes: 1) Skill 2) Knowledge 3) Affective

II. “Great” does not mean “Complicated”

- Forest Sounds* (canon) by John Krumm
- Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* (Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming) by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

III. Connections (Madison Youth Choirs “Sister Cities” focus)

It's not that hard to come up with concert “themes.” The real challenge is going deeper than clichés and what's plainly obvious. That takes some extra thought and asking “why?” A definition of critical thinking: not taking things at face value. What is the true value of studying and performing music of other cultures?

National Anthems: why do most of them sound so similar in style? (lots of dotted rhythms and grand Western European musical gestures). It's fascinating to study national anthems that don't sound like ours—many are quite beautiful.

Japan

Music by Hiromori Hayashi (1831-1896), arr. R. Swiggum. Words selected from the 7th volume of *Kokinshu* (9th century)
First performed: November 3, 1880 on Emperor Meiji's birthday. Approved as National Anthem on August 12, 1893.

Ki - mi - ga yo - wa Chi - yo - ni Ya - chi - yo - ni Sa - za - ré - i - shi - no,
I - wa - o to na - ri - té Ko - ké no mu - su ma - dé.

May thy peaceful reign last long!
May it last for thousands of years,
Until this tiny stone will grow into a massive rock
and the moss will cover it deep and thick.

Other interesting national anthems: Jordan (very short!), Israel (gorgeous) Finland and Estonia (same tune—quite catchy), Guyana (beautiful, singable melody, English words), Czech Republic (gorgeous), the Netherlands (old, 1572, with a history)

III. Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

1. O rosetta, che rosetta (SAB)
2. "Pur ti miro" (I Adore You) from *The Coronation of Poppea* (2 pt)
3. "Zeffiro torna" (Return, O Zephyr) (2 pt)
4. Angelus ad pastores ait (The angels said to the shepherds) SSA CPDL
5. Ecco mormorar l'onde (Hear the murmuring waters) SSATB madrigal—a classic!
6. Chiome d'oro bel tesoro 2 pt treble (another classic!); with a rollicking (not too hard) 2 violin or flute part

IV. Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

1. Noel des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons (unison or 2 pt)
2. Trois chansons de Charles d'Orléans (SATB) especially 1. *Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder*

Any great work of art... revives and readapts time and space, and the measure of its success is the extent to which it makes you an inhabitant of that world - the extent to which it invites you in and lets you breathe its strange, special air.

Leonard Bernstein

IV. Happy Birthday, Leonard Bernstein! (1918-1991)

Young voices:

- *Gloria Tibi* from Mass, 2-part treble, tenor solo, piano, drums (Boosey and Hawkes)
- *There is a Garden* from *Trouble in Tabiti*; unison, piano (B & H)
- *Simple Song*, from Mass, unison, piano, flute (B & H)
- *West Side Story* (lots of new arrangements appearing) Kids need to know *West Side Story*.

High School and Older

- Make Our Garden Grow (from *Candide*), arr. Robert Page SATB
- Take Care of this House/My House (from *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*) arr. Rob Fisher SATB, piano, cello feature *very imaginative arrangement, in contemporary choral style*. Highly recommended.
- Chichester Psalms (it's not impossible), Missa Brevis, Music from *The Lark*

V. Five treasures

1. The Echo Song by Orlando di Lasso SATB (and echo) CPDL

2. A Miner's Life—traditional, arr. Seth Houston. SATB, piano, fiddle, flute, bodhran, Santa Barbara Music Press
3. Tournion by Pierre Attaignant SATB Swiggum edition; for free instrumental parts/score contact Randy
4. Bawo Thixo Somandla by Sidumo Nyamezele, arr. Scott Tucker, SATB earthsongs
5. Gamelan by R. Murray Schaffer

Great art asks questions. It often has a quirk. It invites us in and says "let's talk."
It gives us something new to ponder. It bears repeated hearings. It continually opens dialogue.

The Very Best Music Happens to Be Free!

1. cpdl.org (search by voicing! Look at the number of pages before clicking—that's a good clue to length/difficulty)
2. imslp.org (especially PD published pieces)
3. Wmea.com (Great Choral Treasure Hunts!)
4. Waldorfschoolsongs.com
5. Friday Afternoons Song Bank <http://www.fridayafternoonsmusic.co.uk/> Great composers, including Nico Muhly—all free!
6. MadisonYouthChoirs.org rswiggum@wisc.edu mjenks@tds.net mross@madisonyouthchoirs.org

CMP WORKSHOPS 2018

- **CMP Winter Weekend:** February 2-3. 2-18. Wisconsin Center for Music Education. 2 credits available.
Our traditional winter retreat, from Friday 5pm and all day Saturday. Join us. It's a blast.
- **Summer CMP Workshop** The original. UW-River Falls, June 24-29, 2018
- **Illinois CMP Workshop:** June 18-22, 2018 Northern Illinois University

Thanks for caring about giving your students the best music. It is hugely time-consuming, no one will understand how much time you spend, no administrator will give you extra time for it, and no one will pat you on the back for making it a priority. But you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your students are handling great art—art that changes them and helps them understand the world, and themselves in new ways—and your own imagination will be stirred in bringing it to life with your students.

Forest Sounds

John Krumm

3-part round at each line

As I went walk - ing in the green wild
shad - ows fell drift - ing through the
brace me so

3
F#7 B7 Em
won - der, the dance of lov - ing life a bout me wound. And as go to next line
wild wood, I float-ed in seas of sound em - go to next line
gent - ly in you my peace is found. go to next line

Es ist ein Ros

Melchior Vulpius (1570-1615)

Es ist ein Ros' ent - sprung
Low how a rose e'er bloom
en aus ein - er Wur - zel
ing from ten - der stem - hath
zart, wie uns die Alt - en sung
sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com
en von Jes - se kam die Art.
ing, as men of old have sung.

Check out the Wikipedia page on this fascinating tune's history.

Gamelan by R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933)

My Outcome and Strategies

By Mike Ross, Madison Youth Choirs

I knew that the heart of this piece was its “strange” (to our Western ears) scale and the myriad ways the composer manipulates that scale in imitation of a traditional Gamelan orchestra. I knew that the barriers to success would be:

--it sounds “weird”

--it’s just too hard! So many syllables...

My major outcome (both skill and knowledge, really):

Students will understand and be able to sing and read music using the Gamelan *slendro* scale.

So my first introduction took the skill/knowledge approach. Last year we focused on the Western major pentatonic scale, so we first reviewed and named it, practiced it in several ways.

I asked the question: “Is this the only 5 note scale that can exist?”

Singers broke into small groups, wrote their own 5 notes scales, and performed some of them. I handed out a sheet that compared our 5-note scale to another one--the *slendro* scale from the traditional Gamelan music of several countries in SE Asia. We sang the new scale using our normal solfeggio syllables, and then used the “sound” syllables that come from this tradition and that Schafer uses: dong, deng, dung, etc...We listened to a Gamelan orchestra performance and made some observations.

And it went fine. Not great--just fine. I knew I needed to refine my strategies. I wish I could say I had a vision for this from the very beginning, but at least I “caught a vision” after week one!

I see singers once a week for about 1.5 hours to 2.5 hours, depending on the week.

Here’s what we’ve done so far:

WEEK ONE: Introduction

WEEK TWO: Reviewed Western pentatonic scale, *slendro* scale, used basic handout with a few scale patterns to practice

WEEK THREE: Wrote their own 4-bar melodies using the new scale pattern, practiced and performed a few

WEEK FOUR: reviewed the scale, practiced/performed a few more compositions, worked on new handout that took actual patterns from the piece (didn’t tell them)

WEEK FIVE: Handed out 4 part example (that I stole out of the actual composition) for them to practice with. Got used to where the voice parts like (S-A-S-A), singing and reading in 4 parts together. Then they earned:

--handed out them music (finally! And there was much rejoicing...)

--listened to a recording

--found the measures we had just practiced

--worked on mm. 1-15 of the piece

WEEK SIX: Now it’s challenging, but they are up to the challenge! Got through 3 pages of the piece, making observations like “The composer takes the same material, uses it 4 times, but slightly changes the rhythm each time” in this section, etc.

As the weeks went along, we developed some new shortcuts for the new scale: using numbers to refer to scale degrees, using a hand motion that indicates up/down.

And we’ll see what’s next--we have 5 rehearsals left. I’m considering strategies to continue to refine their work, making it possible for them to learn confidently and quickly. I’m still not sure we’re going to sing it from memory...