

Dear Students and Teachers,

I am so delighted to be leading the VMEA District 9 Middle School Chorus. I have enjoyed selecting the repertoire and I thank you in advance for the work that will go into preparing these pieces.

If music be the food of love arr. Gregg Smith

This is one of my favorite pieces as it combines a new melody with the classic George Gershwin tune “I’ve got rhythm.” The fast section should be felt in ‘2’ and care should be taken with the octave leaps so that they are accurate.

Stabat mater by Pergolesi (SA)

Italianate Latin will work well in the movement. We will focus on tension and release with the suspensions throughout. Think of a ‘bloom’ effect.

The Drinking Gourd by Andre Thomas

“The Drinking Gourd” is one of the most evocative of the Freedom Songs. We will do a soprano split where there is a three-part split.

Will The Rain Fall Down by Braeden Ayers (T/B and percussion)

We will do this piece with percussion. There is a lot of text so everyone in the choir will need to be prepared with crisp diction. The text should always be more prominent than the ‘oos’ and ‘ahs.’

Seal Lullaby by Eric Whitacre

Please observe the *crescendi* and *diminuendi* carefully throughout the whole piece. Tenors and Basses should make sure that they are secure with entrances and the solo section; there are some tricky parts to this.

You’ll Never Walk Alone

This arrangement is all about pacing. The opening melody on page 3 should be in head voice—avoid chest voice, please!

All splits should be done within the section as indicated by placement on the stave.

Thanks again and I look forward to meeting you all!!

Sincerely,

Malcolm J. Merriweather, D.M.A.