

CALIFORNIA MUSIC FESTIVALS 2025 DATES

Rehearsal notes from the directors:

1. All the copied and shared music was purchased and available by contacting Dr. Fong.
2. Please note that each regional music festival has slightly different music lists because of each festival's emphasis.
3. Contact Pastor Dave Stertzbach for MP3s of the songs and or part rehearsal tracks for "Gloria" at dave.stertzbach@tricityministries.org
4. After the choir has listened to the song and followed along in their music several times, have them mark their music while they are listening, using the notes I've written below. Start and stop the recording as needed.
5. When I say "do not breathe," I mean that the choir *as a whole* should not take a breath there. Individuals should find somewhere else to "sneak a breath" as needed. That is called "staggered breathing."

"Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi

Big idea: festival Baroque song

Pronunciation

Gloria

- Means "glory"
- Strong "g" farther front in the mouth, almost like a "k" sound
- "o" vowel is almost like "aw," that is it is open as opposed to closing to the "oo"
- "r" is flipped, not rolled; a "one tap trip;" for students who cannot flip the "r" use a soft "d" sound
- "a" is "ah," not "uh"

in

- Means "in," but in Latin is pronounced with a long e sound, as in *seen*
- (If half the choir pronounces it *ihn*, and the other half of the choir pronounces it *een*, the choir sounds out of tune on every note that has that vowel sound! #truth)

Excelsis

- Means "high" or "the highest"
- "E" vowel is a short e sound as in "bed"
- The x sounds like *ks*
- The c is a soft *ch* sound, as in *cheese* (not an s sound)
- I like both the x sound (as in "ks") and the *ch* sound (as in "cheese") in the word *excelsis*
- S = soft s, as in the word *sin*
- The vowel *i* is pronounced with a long e sound, as in *seen*

Deo

- The vowel e is short, as in *bed*
- The vowel o is open, more like *aw*. Do not close to the "oo" sound

Breathing

- mm. 18 and 20—cut off the second *gloria* on beat 3, without punching the final *ah*
- m. 21-24 or 25-27—don't breath
- m. 28-31—we will breathe after each "gloria"

- m. 32-35—no breath, carry through, stagger breathing as necessary
- m. 39-48—breath after the first *gloria*, but carry through across the page, stagger breathing as necessary
- m. 51—breathe after *excelsis*
- m. 53—do not breathe after *excelsis*
- m. 57-58 do not breath after *excelsis*
- m. 65—do not breathe in the niddle of *excelsis*
- m. 68-69—do not breathe in those two measures

Styling

- Insist on “snapped” rhythms when there is a dotted eight note followed by a sixteenth note. For instance, mm. 17-18 at the very beginning of the song: the second syllable of *gloria* is very short and energized.
- mm.21-24—crescendo to the second syllable of *excelsis*, then decrescendo
- mm. 25-27—same as above, but at a softer dynamic level
- mm. 28-31 each *gloria* gets a little louder
- mm. 41-48—each measure gets a little softer
- m. 67—all eyes on the conductor of the fermata!
- m. 68-70—no ritard

Lesson Plan Ideas

Since “Gloria” will be a new musical style to most of your students, a good recording is essential. You should insist they listen to it every class period. Not usually more than 1-2 times per class. But more than just one or two rehearsals. I recommend every class period for 2-3 weeks. Here are some ideas to keep them engaged in “active listening”:

1. Listen to the song with eyes closed.
 2. Listen to the song following along (staying on the right page).
 - a. Every couple of pages, I shout out, “What page?” and the whole group shouts back a number of the page the recording is on at that moment.
 - b. I tell the singers, “When I call your name, you tell me exactly what page we are on.”
 - c. I don’t tell the singers I am going to call on them to see if they are tracking. And I look for people not following along :)
 3. Listen to the song following your part with your finger (You may have to explain “open score” and/or the piano part.) This is called “tracking” and is essential to master before the singer can follow his or her part.
 4. Listen to the song writing in the breath marks and carry-overs we’ll be using
 5. Listen to the song and write in what you hear that is not in the score (crescendos, decrescendos, fast cut-offs, breathing in the recording which might be different from our choices, etc.)
 6. Listen to the song following your part closely, noting how your part sounds in this choir.
 7. Listen to the song, following along in your music, and tapping the rhythm of your part on your leg. “Tap with the left hand, turn pages with the right hand.” Then switch hands. (Note that, except for mm. 62-63, the choir all has pretty much the same rhythm.)
- “Gloria” is a good opportunity to teach solfege. Though initially it seems like more work, I promise that it will make your life easier when the choir recognizes “do” and “sol”! Here are some ideas for teaching (what I call) “do’ awareness”:
1. Show the students what “do” looks like on the staff. I write it on a whiteboard. You could use PowerPoint or even a flip chart.

2. Choose one section of music (for instance pages 5-7)
 3. Have the students circle “do” in every part, in every octave
 4. Have the entire choir sing each part (in their octave), but don’t sing the word that is on the pitch “do,” instructing students to fix any errors they have made
 5. Same as above, except substitute the word “do” on that pitch. So sing the words as written, except when the pitch is “do.” Then sing the word “do” instead.
 6. Do the same for “sol,” except use a square instead of a circle. So circle “do” and square “sol. It is really tough to sing words, substituting “do” and “sol” on those pitches. Go slowly!
- If you don’t have a pianist that can play the fast thirds in the piano part, have him/her play only the top note. Or have the choir sing with the recording.
 - If you have extra time, you can introduce the students to Antonio Vivaldi and the orphanage at which he taught music.
 - If you have time, you can introduce Baroque music style traits. That is, how they handle the following musical elements during the Baroque era (1600-1750): rhythm, melody, harmony, tone, texture, dynamics, etc.
 - If you have extra time, you can introduce the choir to the rest of the movements of Vivaldi’s *Gloria*. This is only the first song in this relatively short work written for school age students.

“Keep Your Lamps” arr. by Andre Thomas

Big idea: deep spiritual

Pronunciation

- On the word “trimmed,” close right to the “mm” sound, instead of keeping the vowel sound open.
- Put the “mps” of “lamps” on beat 2

Dynamics

A Section (m. 8-24)—first time medium loud, second time soft

B Section (m. 24-40)—both times sopranos loud, rest of the choir softer

C Section (m. 40-56)—first time loud, second time soft

D Section (m. 56-68)—first time soft, second time loud

Coda (m. 69-73)—decrescendo to soft at m. 70

Breathing

- m. 10—don’t breathe after “burning”
- m. 14—don’t breathe after “burning”
- m. 30—don’t breathe after “weary”

Styling

Don’t let this one get too fast. Thomas’ tempo is specific and spot on. This is a true spiritual with all the heavy, weighted feelings of oppression that go with it. If your choir learns the pitches and rhythms quickly, work on a darker, rounder tone with more vibrato than high schoolers want to use. Especially sopranos on page 4.

Lesson Plan Ideas

- Read together Matthew 25:1-13. Lead a discussion about how a slave might have felt when hearing this parable. What would the themes of Jesus' return, hope, and deliverance mean to a slave?
- You could fill an entire semester with the history of the African-American Spiritual.
- You could fill another entire semester studying the Jewish wedding ceremony and the significance of the return of the bridegroom.

“Nothing but the Blood of Jesus” arr. by Craig Courtney

Big idea: layering (from simple to complex)

Pronunciation

We will consistently use “white” instead of “bright” as the author of the hymn intended. (Even at m. 42 where the editors accidentally left off the option.)

Breathing

Sing 4 bar phrases instead of 2. For instance, do not breathe between m. 10 and 11 or m. 14 and 15. The most important “carry overs” are m. 54 to m. 55 and 58 to 59.

Styling

- You will be doing me a great favor if you can teach your singers to notice when their parts move in anticipation (that is, slightly before the beat) as in m. 25 and 47, and when they move on the beat as in m. 66 (women), 67 (men), 92 (everybody).
- We will sing the rhythms as written. But we will use a gentle, folk song approach. I will not let the choir “punch” the syncopations like a fun Disney song. The lovely demo recording will do a good job of demonstrating the tone and the rhythm that makes this song successful.
- I will assume the piano will play the choral parts with us mm. 53-60 and m. 78 until the choir is confident and secure singing those sections *a cappella*.

Lesson Plan Ideas

- The most difficult sections are pp. 11-13 because the rhythms for each part are different. You can practice the rhythm separate from the pitches by speaking the words in rhythm. I use this song as an opportunity to show the singers that the rhythms line up. Literally. For instance, note m. 81-82. I point out that the tenors enter when the sopranos sing the first syllable for the word *precious*. The altos enter when the sopranos sing the word *is* (and the tenors sing *precious*.) The basses enter when the sopranos sing *the* and the tenors sing the second syllable of *precious*. And the layout of the page visually shows exactly that. They can literally “read” their rhythms by watching the other parts!
- When I am teaching this concept, I base all the other parts on the melody. So, at m. 81-86, I have the sopranos sing the melody with the altos as I teach the altos their part. Then with the tenors. Then the basses. It's a bit tedious for the sopranos, but it helps anchor the other parts. And for this song, this method seems easier than teaching the choir to read rhythmic syncopations in cut time.

- The other trouble spot is the page turn from p. 9-10. The pitches are not hard—the men both go down a half step. The ladies both go up a half step. But the rhythm seems to throw us off. And then (to add to the fun!) the men move on a syncopation at m. 63.

“You Are Salt and Light” by Pepper Choplin

Big idea: musical depiction of light

Breathing

- m. 16 breathe after “flavor” (not in m. 14 after “world”)
- m. 18—don’t breathe after “light” (Again, generally 4 bar phrases)
- Girls should stagger breathing at m. 51-54. Don’t breathe after “light” at m. 52.
- M. 55-58—no breath

Styling

This song has a lot of words that end with sharp consonants: light, salt, bit, world, earth. We will be working to get those final consonants right on the rest that follows the word.

Lesson Plan Ideas

- The music is repeated m. 13-20 and 32-39, except for a slight change in rhythm to accommodate the text. Spend some time helping the basses sing the half steps and whole steps in this section. Then whole choir can tune to the basses true pitch.
- Notice pp.8-9, at m. 43 the ladies have the melody and the men have the bell-like harmony. Then at m. 47, the men take the melody and the ladies have the bell-like harmony.
- Notice the parallel writing at m. 63-68. That is, the alto and bass sing the same pitches, as do the soprano and tenor.
- At m. 71, the soprano melody is noted with regular size noteheads. The “cued notes” (smaller notes on the upper pitches) are optional. Teach all the sopranos the melody pitches. Then we can add a couple confident singers to the top pitches, if we have some girls that sound good up there.
- I’ll take some dramatic liberties with the tempo starting at m. 85. Encourage your singer to watch me as I put a fermata over the rest at m. 86!

“Great Is Our God” by Craig Courtney

Big idea: big anthem with congregation

Rehearsal Ideas

Section A (m. 9-28)

- For this section basses should sing very loudly. Altos sing loud using a full, round tone. Tenors, do not shout. Sing only medium loud using a heady tone. If the basses are doing their jobs, sopranos can “float” those higher pitches, focusing on relaxing the throat, tongue, and jaw, and letting the tone vibrate in their sinuses. Basses should not make the sopranos lead. The sopranos have the

melody and they are singing higher in their register: we will hear them just fine without them oversinging.

- M. 10—put the *th* of *earth* on beat 3
- M. 12—put the *nds* of *lands* on beat 3
- M. 13-16—stagger breathing
- M. 22—*d* on *Lord* on beat 3
- M. 24—*f* of *half* on beat 3
- M. 25-28—stagger breathing

Section B (m. 31-46)

- It's the rhythm that is tricky on this section. Go over the rhythm with the words only. Then add pitches.
- M. 34-38—stagger breathing
- M. 45—do not breathe after “rejoice”

Section C (m. 59-90)

- Since the congregation is singing with us on this section, you may consider having the tenor and bass just sing the melody here. If the tenors and basses read music well, they are welcome to sing the parts as written, of course. But it is not essential.
- I would teach the sopranos their rhythm first, and teach it separate from the pitches. So just speak the words in rhythm without singing the notes first. Several times. Many times. When they are comfortable with the rhythms, add the pitches.
- I would make my altos sing the soprano at m. 75-90. They will hate you. And they will tell you they can't do it. But their voices can do it, even if their minds may not let them yet. The truth is: even the lowest contraltos can sing high f's and g's in their youth.
- 1) It is the perfect place to practice “head voice” because the entire room is singing and no one will hear you.
- 2) Young female singers need to learn to use their head voices. Altos don't want to sing higher than a B-flat or so. But they need to. And they can.
- 3) Because the congregation is singing along at this point, we need all the sound on the descant we can get. Whatever they can squeak out will be a help.
- 4) If they sing the alto part as written, no one will hear it anyway. So they might as well practice a new skill.

Coda (m. 93-99)

- Stagger breathing m. 96-99—no big breath right before the word *Lord!*