

SATB A CAPPELLA PIECES

The levels of difficulty are from 1 (easy) to 5 (difficult). Each piece bears a number; following it is a + to raise the difficulty, or a - to lower difficulty. A title bearing an asterisk indicates that a recording is available upon request.

***BELLS, THE (SSAATTBB)**, by Edgar Allan Poe, may be the most musical poetry ever written. Each of the four parts, Alarm Bells, Iron Bells, Silver Bells, and Golden Bells, is based on the metal referred to in their respective titles.

ALARM BELLS (SATB, divided) is based on the brass, the metal used on fire engines. The music is fast moving and frantic to portray the urgency of the poem.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1-a2; Alto, a flat-d2; Tenor, f-G1; Bass, F-C1 (2:00) #3 MED.+

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad exostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows.
By the twanging
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

IRON BELLS (SATB) portrays the unfair and heartless angel of death. The tempo is slow and pensive, except in the center section when the music expresses the delight that death enjoys when breaking the human heart.

Ranges are: Soprano, E1-g2; Alto, a-c2; Tenor, e-F1; Bass, E-D1 (3:00) #3 MED.+

Hear the tolling of the bells—
 Iron Bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
 In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
 At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people—
 They that dwell up in the steeple.
All alone,
 And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls:
 And their king it is who tolls;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
 A paeon from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
 With the paeon of the bells!
And he dances and he yells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the paeon of the bells—
 Of the bells:
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the throbbing of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the sobbing of the bells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,
 In a happy Runic rhyme,
 To the rolling of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

Ranges are: Soprano 1, E1-a2; Soprano 2, D#1-a2; Altos, a-d2; Tenor 1, d-G1; Tenor 2, c#-F#1; Bass, F#-C1 #3 MED.

SILVER BELLS (SSAATTBB), such as found on a sleigh, give the sound of excitement and enjoyment. This piece expresses the merriment of the poem.

Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that over sprinkle
All the heavens seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Vocal ranges are: Soprano 1, F1-a2; Soprano 2, F1-e2; Alto 1, b-d2; Alto 2, a-c2; Tenor 1, g-G1, Tenor 2, e-F1; Bass 1, Bb-D1; Bass 2, G-C1 (2:30) MEDIUM difficulty

GOLDEN BELLS (SSAATTBB) is the metal of engagement rings and wedding bells. They are joyful, shining and precious. The music texture is “chiming” at all times while the poem unwinds.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden Bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells!
On the future!
How it tells

Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells--
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

ENCHANTING WALTZ, AN (SATB) is an arrangement of a piece by Henry Purcell (1659-1695) that was published in *Musick's Hand-Maid*, Part ii, 1689. The melody is graceful and lovely. The text is a conversation between a lady and a gentleman concerning their plans to join in a dance. All of the parts are melodious and fun to sing. High school or college choirs sound wonderful singing this piece.

“Gentleman tell me, and tell me true,
Is this the dance I promised to you?”

“Beautiful lady, don’t you recall?
I am the one who asked for them all; so come and dance!
The waltz is enchanting; hear how the violin melodies play?
Feel how the rhythm commands us to sway.
Hear how the tunes demand that we stay?”

“Gentleman, will I see you again?
If it shall be, then please tell me when.”

“Beautiful lady, when shall I call, summer or springtime, winter or fall?”

Ranges are: Soprano, F#1–e2; Alto, a–d2; Tenor, d–E1; Bass, G–a (1:35) #2 EASY+

CALL, THE (SATB / treble-voice soloist / optional piano or organ accompaniment) by poet, George Herbert, and composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, is arranged in such a manner as to reveal the beauty of both harmony and text.

Come, my way, my truth, my life; such a way as gives us breath; such a truth as ends
all strife, such a life as killeth Death. Come, my light, my feast, my strength,
such a light as shows a feast, such a feast as mends in length,
such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my joy, my love, my heart, such a joy as none can move,
such a love as none can part, such a heart as joys in love.

The text may be considered sacred or secular, depending on the occasion. Throughout the piece there is a lovely dialogue between the choir and soloist.

Ranges are: Treble Solo voice, Eb1–e flat2; Soprano, Db1–f2; Alto, a flat–Ab1; Tenor, e flat–Eb1; Gb–b flat. (2:33) #2 EASY+

****GLORY TO ALMIGHTY GOD** (SATB) is a remarkably exciting piece that is published by Picardie Court Publications (www.wallacedepue.com). As an opening number, the audience will respond immediately and afford its attention. This work was taken on a national tour by a university choir and was a favorite with audiences from coast to coast. This is good for all occasions.

Glory be to God on high and on Earth, peace and goodwill to all men.
We praise Thee. Lord, we bless Thee. Lord, we give thanks to Thee.
Lord, we adore Thee, and we glorify Thee. Lord, God, our heavenly Father,
Alleluia!
Lord, we give thanks and glorify Thee. Glory be to God on high!

Ranges are: Soprano: G1–a2; Alto: D1–d2; Tenor: f–G1; Bass: a–D1. (1:45) #4 MED.

HEAR OUR PRAYER! (SATB) is an unusual setting of a *kyrie* text, inasmuch as its mood is urgent, demanding, and full of terror. The emphasis is on immediacy, as if impending doom is imminent. The music is contemporary in harmony and counterpoint; however, well within the performance capability of a good high school or community chorus. The text is composed of variations of the following lines:

Now, hear our prayer, O Lord!
Lord, have mercy upon us!

Ranges are: Soprano, C1-a2; Alto, b flat-c2; Tenor, c-A1; Bass, A-D#1 (3:10) MED. 5
CHALLENGING

CHAPEL PRAYER, A (SATB) is a piece designed for loveliness of atmosphere in a service of worship or in a concert. It may be sung either a cappella or accompanied by the piano reduction. The melodic lines are very expressive, and the text, meaningful: A chorale style harmony is employed. The worshipful atmosphere that “A Chapel Prayer” creates is appropriate to practically any denominational service.

Lord, we need Thy presence in this hour.
Grant us hope and wisdom, through Thy power.
Father, by Thy light, lead us aright.
Keep us in Thy sight and save us from our plight.
O Savior, take us in Thy care.
Love us, though unnumbered sins we bear.
Life is at Thy call.
Let us not fall from Thy grace and perfect love, divine. Amen. WD

Ranges are: Soprano, F1-g2; Alto, D1-c2; Tenor, g-F1; Bass, A-D1 (2:00) #3 MED.

NUNC DIMITTIS SATB (Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace.) This piece is perfect to use after the final encore of a program or as the postlude for a service of worship. “Nunc Dimittis” is a lovely contemporary piece that employs asymmetric rhythm and tasteful seventh-chord harmony.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face
of all people, a light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of Thy people, Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–a2; Alto, b–d2; Tenor, g–G1; Bass, G–C1 (1:45) #2 EASY

***WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN** (SATB) Wallace De Pue, Sr., set music to A. E. Housman’s beautiful poem. This piece is somber in nature and provides an excellent contrast to a program of up-tempo music. The music is as pensive and delicate as the soul moving text.

With rue my heart is laden, for golden friends I had,
for many a rose-lipped maiden and many a light-foot lad.
By brooks too broad for leaping, the light-foot lads are laid.
The rose-lipped maids are sleeping, in fields where roses fade.

Ranges are: Soprano: C1–g2; Alto: g–c2; Tenor: g–G1; Bass: G–D1. #3

***OUT OF THE DEPTHS** (Psalm 130 - SATB divided)

The wonderful choral works from the Eastern Orthodox Church inspired this piece. Voices are divided to simulate a “built in organ” effect that soars to spiritual heights. This work was performed by a college choir and taken on a national tour. The audience response was amazing. The music is written in a contemporary harmonic style.

Out of the Depths Have I Cried Unto Thee.
Let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?
There is forgiveness with Thee.
I wait for the Lord, and in His word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.
Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy and everlasting hope.
There is plenteous redemption.

Ranges are: Soprano, F1-a flat2; Alto, b flat-eb2; Tenor, d-Gb1; Bass F-Db1. (2:45) #3+ MED.

PSALM 130: "Out of the Depths Have I Cried Unto Thee." (SATB)

The great power of this text has inspired many music settings, this one being somewhat traditional in harmony, makes it more accessible for people who sing in less advanced choral groups. This piece may be sung by both high school and college choirs, either in concert or in church. Parallelism is the compositional technique used to provide a sweeping and eerie effect to the music and words. The sound is reminiscent of Russian Church literature.

Ranges are: Soprano, C1-a2; Alto, a-e flat2; Tenor, g-G1; Bass G-C1. (1:48) #2+ EASY

O BE JOYFUL (*Psalm 100–SATB) This piece is contemporary and possesses asymmetric meters with dissonant harmonies; however, it is easy to prepare and sing; it has a very positive effect on audiences.

O be joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord, He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful
unto Him, and
bless His name.
For the Lord is good;
His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.

Ranges are: Soprano, C1–g2; Alto, a–c2; Tenor, e–G1; Bass, G–C1 (1:40) #3 MED.

TRILOGY (SATB) is written for an advanced choir. There is dissonant harmony and counterpoint set to asymmetric meters of five-eight and seven-eight. The text is from *I John, in the Holy Bible*. There are three parts: God is Light, God is Love and God is Power. 3:20. The end result of considerable work will be a stunning piece, appropriate for both church and concert use. (3:20) #4 MED.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1-g2; Alto, b-D2; Tenor, d-A flat 1

DER JAGER ABSCHIED "THE HUNTER'S FAREWELL" (SATB), by Felix Mendelssohn, composer, and J. v. Eschendorff, poet, is a lovely piece that is good for any concert theme concerning nature. A program in need of a beautiful, slow tempo piece would prosper with the addition of this work. Both the German text and English translation are present in the score. This text is the translation from the German:

Who has you, you lovely forest, built so high above us?
Surely, the Master shall I praise while my voice can ring.

Farewell, you lovely forest.

Deep, the world in confusion sounds above the deer, grazing;
so we move away and shout, so it a thousand times resounds.
Yes, we shout, so it a thousand times resounds!
Fare you well! Fare you well!

What we promised in the forest, we honestly abide.
For eternity, the old ones will be loyal til the last song resounds.
Yes, the old ones will be loyal til the last.
Fare you well! Fare you well!

Bless you, God, for your lovely forest.

Ranges are: Soprano, Eb1–f2; Alto, a flat–Bb1; Tenor, f–F1; Bass, Ab–C1 (3:20) #1 VERY EASY+

***ALMIGHTY GOD, UNTO WHOM ALL HEARTS ARE OPEN** (SATB) is based on a text from the Prayer Book of the Methodist Church. The text is also used for a hymn in the Lutheran hymnbook. The imitative entries, flowing melodic lines and graceful text setting may remind one of pieces written in the Renaissance period. There is rich chromatic harmony employed in this work that is appropriate for setting the text.).

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known;
Almighty God, from whom no secrets are hid,
 cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, that we may perfectly love Thee
 and worthily magnify Thy holy name through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Ranges are: Soprano E1–e2; Alto, b–c2; Tenor, f–E1; Bass, F–a. (2:52) #3 MED.+

EARTH HAS NO SORROW THAT HEAVEN CANNOT HEAL (SATB) is a beautiful homophonic setting of a poem by an unknown Victorian poet. This is appropriate for either concert or church use.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish. Come, at God's altar, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts. Tell your anguish.
Earth has no sorrow, heaven cannot heal.
Joy of the desolate, light of the straying; hope, when all others die fadeless and pure;
now speaks the Comforter in God's name saying:
"Earth has no sorrow, heaven cannot cure.

Go, ask the infidel what book he brings us;
 what charm for aching hearts he can reveal,
 sweet as that heavenly promise hope sings us:
Earth has no sorrow, heaven cannot heal.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–f2; Alto, C1–c2; Tenor, f–E1; Bass, F–C1. (2:09) 2 EASY

CREDO (SATB double choir) is a setting of the Nicene Creed. It is composed with much use of *ostinati*. The composer's use of *ostinati* is appropriate for the text; repetition of the creed brings conviction to the ideas that the creed presents. The total effect of this work is awesome, because of the atmosphere that it creates. "Credo" is suitable for good high school choirs as well as for advanced or professional choral ensembles.

Ranges are: Soprano, E1–b flat2; Alto, b–e2; Tenor, e–F1; Bass, G–C1 (3:30) #3 MED.

***WE ARE ONE** America's Day of Wrath" (SATB) Dr. Cheryl Sawyer penned the following text to express her feelings about the terrorist attack on 9-11-01. This powerful poem has inspired a moving piece of music based on the chant, "*Dies Irae*," that will have a profound effect on any singer or listener.

As the soot and dirt and ash came down, we became one color.

As we carried each other down the stairs of the burning building, we became one class.

When we lit candles of waiting and hope, we became one generation.

As the firefighters and police officers fought their way into the inferno, we became one gender.

As we fell on our knees in prayer for strength, we became one faith.

As we shouted words of encouragement, we spoke one language.

As we gave our blood in lines a mile long, we became one body.

As we mourned the great loss, we became one family.

As we cried tears of grief and pain, we became one soul.

As we retell, with pride, the sacrifice of heroes, we become one people.

We are one color, one class, one generation, one gender, one language, one body, one family, one soul, one people.

We are the power of one, united!

We are America!

Ranges are: Soprano, E1–a2; Alto, a–d2; Tenor, d–F#1; Bass, Bb–D1. (2:50) #3 MED.

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Out of the Depths Have I Cried Unto Thee.

Let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?
There is forgiveness with Thee.

I wait for the Lord, and in His word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.
Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy and everlasting hope.
There is plenteous redemption.

Ranges are: Soprano, F1-a flat2; Alto, b flat–eb2; Tenor, d–Gb1; Bass F–Db1. (2:45) #4
MED.

***HOLD MY HAND** (SATB) This piece is a Negro spiritual that is practically unknown. Wallace De Pue, Sr., arranged it in traditional harmony, but with an unusual twist; it may be sung as written and then sung a second time with a doubling of the tempo! The effect is smashing!

Hold my hand. Don't let it go!
You can talk about me, just as much as you please.
I'm gonna talk about you on my bended knees.
When I get to heaven, gonna be at ease.
Me and my Jesus, gonna be at ease.
I'm gonna chatter with the Father and argue with the Son.
I'm gonna tell Him 'bout the world I just come from.

Ranges are: Soprano: C1–e2; Alto: b–B1; Tenor: e–E1; Bass: g–C1. (2:05) or (3:17) #3
MED.

***SOLI DEO GLORIA** (SATB, divided sopranos) is a composition for the artist choir to perform. Either in concert or in church, for general, Christmas or Easter use, this work has an astounding effect. The texture is polyphonic; the musical language is contemporary; and the rhythm is asymmetric. Bowling Green State University Collegiate Chorale performed this work all over the nation; rave reviews appeared in many newspapers. The text is simply "Soli Deo Gloria."

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–b2; Alto, g–c#2; Tenor, f–F1; Bass, b–C#1. (2:20) #5
CHALLENGING

KELSEY'S PRAYER (SATB) was written for Dr. Joseph Henry's daughter, Kelsey, to sing with her family at dinner time. The piece is canonic, starting with only one voice and finally arriving at four voices.

Thank you Lord, in heaven above, for your all embracing love.
Thank you for our bread today; thanks for listening while we pray,
and thank you, Lord, in every way, for everyone we love.

May we show our love for you, in the kindly things we do?

Help us be steadfast and true, until our lives are through.
When that time arrives, at last, and your book reviews our past,
we will go through heaven's door with the Lord whom we implore
to be with us forevermore and govern us with love. Amen.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–d2; Alto, C1–e2; Tenor, D–E1; Bass, G–g. (3:30-4:40 #2 EASY-