

SECULAR CONCERT PIECES

The levels of difficulty are from 1 (easy) to 5 (difficult). Each piece bears a number. A title bearing an asterisk indicates that a recording is available upon request. A plus or minus sign, beside a word showing the difficulty of a piece, adds more or less power.

PRAYER TO THE MUSE, A (unison or two-part singing by treble voices / piano. Another arrangement is for S or A and T or B voices. When sung in unison, the second voice may be transferred to the right-hand part for the pianist. When the piece is sung in two parts, the pianist has the option of playing both the treble and bass staves or using both hands on the music in the bass staff. This piece may serve as a secular benediction for the end of a concert of music.

This prayer is not a religious work, but it has that character. The piano part emits an "antique flavor" that will entice a listener. The music should be sung in English; however, the musical message may be easily understood by an international audience.

Let me bathe in music when the heart within me falls.
Let me feel the sound vibrations touch against the walls.
Let great music thrill me as I live from day to day.
Let me witness beauty when an instrument will play.

Hear my prayer, O lovely muse who calms my anxious soul.
Help me share your radiant voices.
Let it be my goal.
Forever more, I say amen. WD

The poetry is in simple iambic pentameter. The music is an example of lyrical simplicity. Anyone who has taken two years of piano lessons should play the keyboard part very well.

Ranges are: Treble voice #1, F1-f2; Treble voice #2, c-C1 (2:00) #2 EASY+

ANIMAL FUGUE, THE is all *Sprechstimme* (spoken) in four voices, and may be done by any choir. Audiences respond to it wildly! The piece is in four parts: 1) Teacher, 2) Kitty Kat, 3) Rooster, and 4) snake. A sound byte and a score are available upon request. (1:30) #1+ VERY EASY+

COUNTRY-DANCE, A (SATB / Violin or two wind instruments, such as flute and clarinet) is of English origin and is found in *Musick's Handmaiden, Part 1*, 1678. The violin part may be played by practically anyone who is able to play the instrument, inasmuch as it is composed mostly of open strings and major scales. Two wind instruments that possess the appropriate ranges could also play the instrumental line. "A Country-Dance" is designed to please an audience and to interest those who sing it.

Fiddler, play some country music. Try to keep it country style.
Tune up the violin. Now let the songs begin. Make the people smile.
Fiddler, keep the party dancing longer than a little while.

All those who don't know how seem to be dancing now!
Good fiddling does beguile.
Fiddledy, diddledy, come what may! Fiddledy, diddle, continue to play.
Can it be wrong, having such fun the whole day long?
Play the whole day; but, you should know, we cannot pay. WD

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–g2; Alto, b–d2; Tenor, d–E1; Bass, G–b. (1:15) #2 EASY+

***ALEXANDER'S LULLABY** (SATB) was written for the birth of the composer's second son, Alexander, to welcome him into the world with music.

Now close your eyes, 'cause the time has come for sleeping.
I'll sing a song that my mother sang to me.
The melody is easy to remember, and when you hear it, you'll sail on Slumber Sea.

Bye-ah, bye-ah, bye-ah, little baby. Bye-ah, bye-ah, bye-ah, bye, my love.

Bye-ah, bye-ah, bye-ah, little baby. Bye-n-bye-n-bye-n-bye.

Now, while you slumber and revel in you dreaming, I'll read a poem that is
beautiful and true.
The words are few, and easy to remember; they simply say how dearly I love you. WD

The middle part of the piece is based on an 1899 hymn tune by Robert Lowry. Alexander's grandmother, Dorothy Kallman, used to sing the piece, "Follow On" to him. The musical effect is one of great beauty and peace. It is chiefly a melody accompanied by humming voices.

Ranges are: Soprano, Eb1–g flat2; Alto, g–Bb1; Tenor, Bb–F1; Bass, Gb–b flat. (3:30) #2 EASY

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?” WD

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

TWO FROTTOLE

The *frottola* (fruit) was a favorite kind of music and poetic form for Northern Italian composers of the late 15th-and early 16th-centuries. The style of the *frottola* is choral, in three or four parts. The melody is featured while the lower parts accompany. Often, instruments were used to accompany instead of voices. The *frottola* was the forerunner of the madrigal.

1. Destiny

O my blind and cruel fate, continually nourished by sorrow,
O misery that is my life, sad harbinger of my death.
I am more sorrowful and unhappy than anyone who lives.
I am the tree the wind blows down because it no longer has roots.
It is well and truly said that evil walks with him who has an evil destiny.

Ranges are: Soprano and Alto, E1-e2; Tenor e-F1; Bass, A-a (1:30) #2 EASY

2. Non Val Agua (Water Avails Not)

Here is a highly unusual *frottola*, inasmuch as the alto may or may not be included in a performance. *Frottole* were in three or four voices; this one may be in either three or four. #3 MED.-

Water avails not for my great fire which is not quenched by tears.
On the contrary, it increases more, the more I weep.
My fire has become such a habit that it even increases by tears
and takes on greater power when my purpose does not succeed.
And my fire is like the fish which has its proper place in the water.
Water avails not for my great fire which is not quenched by tears. #3 MED.

Ranges are: Soprano, E1-e2; Alto (if used), C1-b2; Tenor e-E1; Bass, G-b (1:30) #2 Easy

GREATHEART (SATB/piano) is appropriate for general use, but highly appropriate for a academic ceremonies. The music is “audience friendly,” but modern. One can imagine the hero on a horse when listening to the piano accompaniment imitating various equestrian movements such as galloping, prancing, walking, etc. The text, by John Oxenham is:

Where are you going, *Greatheart*,
With your eager face and your fiery grace?
Where are you going, *Greatheart*?

“To fight a fight with all my might,
For Truth and Justice, God and Right,
To grace all Life with His fair Light.”
Then God go with you, Greatheart!

Where are you going, *Greatheart*?
“To beard the Devil in his den;
To smite him with the strength of ten;
To set at large the souls of men.”
Then God go with you, Greatheart!

Where are you going, *Greatheart*
“To cleanse the earth of noisome things;
To draw from life its poison stings;
To give free play to Freedom’s wings.”
Then God go with you, Greatheart!

Where are you going, *Greatheart*?
“To lift Today above the Past;
To make Tomorrow sure and fast;”
Then God go with you, Greatheart!

Where are you going, *Greatheart*?
“To break down old dividing lines;
To carry out my Lord’s designs;
To build again His broken shrines.”
Then God go with you, Greatheart!

Where are you going, *Greatheart*?
“To set all burdened peoples free;
To win for all God’s liberty;
To ‘stablish His sweet sovereignty.”
God goeth with you, Greatheart!

Ranges are: Soprano, D1-ab2; Alto, ab-c2; Tenor, d-G1; Bass, G-Db1 (3:32) MED.

***WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN** (SATB) was published by Moon of Hope Publishing, but is distributed only by Picardie Court Publications. Wallace De Pue, Sr. set music to A. E. Housman’s lovely poem:

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.

This piece is somber in nature and provides an excellent contrast to a program of up tempo music. The piece is as pensive and delicate as the soul moving text.

Ranges are: Soprano: C1–g2; Alto: g–c2; Tenor: G1–g2; Bass: G–D1. (1:53) #3 MED.

RHYTHM CLOCKS (SATB) is written with each voice singing within a different meter. The composite rhythms that result, give a stunning effect. This is a novelty piece that may fit well between fast or slow pieces for good programming. Young people who sing “Rhythm Clocks,” are challenged by it, but not beyond their abilities; their rhythmic sense is greatly enhanced. The premiere of this piece was given by children from grades five through eight.

Set a musical clock in motion; turn the wheel and tune the chime.
Make a rhythm to give the notion that the clock is keeping time.
Rhythm is like a clock. Ticking is rhythm.
All clocks have rhythm.
We all know that a clock, any kind of tick-tock clock has a rhythm.
Melody, rhythm is. Counterpoint, rhythm is. Harmony, rhythm is.
Wonderful, that’s what rhythm is!

Now go through the rhythm again, again and a gain and again!
Practice the rhythm.
Practice again on the rhythm.
Make a rhythm to give the notion that the clock is keeping time. WD

Ranges are: Soprano, D1–g2; Alto a–c2; Tenor, c–F1; Bass, B–C1. (2:50) #3 MED+

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 music there is a lovely dialogue between the choir and soloist.

Ranges are: treble Soloist, Eb1–e flat2; Soprano, Db1–f2; Alto, a flat–Ab1; Tenor, e flat–Eb1; Bass, Gb–b-flat. (2:33) #2 EASY+

YELLOW LARK'S PRAYER (SATB/recorder or flute/large drum/rattles) is based on a poem attributed to the famous Native American chief, Yellow Lark. The beauty of his words is impossible to describe.

O Great Spirit, whole voice I hear in the wind,
and whose breath gives life to all the world,
O hear me! I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty. Let my eyes behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made.
Make my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise, so that I can understand the lessons you have taught my people.
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock!
I need strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy, myself!

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes;
so when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit will come to you without
shame.

The musical setting maintains the essence of the Indian music culture. The composer's intention is to honor the great Indian tribes who set the standards for integrity, courage, fairness, compassion and selflessness that underlines the character of America.

Ranges are: Soprano, Eb1–g2; Alto, a flat–d-flat2; Tenor, d–G1; Bass Gb–Db1. (3:45) #3
MED.

***FATHERLAND, THE** (TTBB / vln. or two woodwinds / optional yodeler) is a unique program offering and will add much contrast to a concert of men's voices. The violin part may be played by anyone who has studied the instrument, even for a short time. The singer may be either a tenor or a bass, that is, if a singer is used. The Bowling Green State University Men's Chorus toured this piece all over America. Audience reception was excellent.

I remember the mountains I knew in the Fatherland.
Scented pine trees were towering everywhere. They are still on my mind.
There were snowcaps on lofty peaks, glist'ning on sunny days.
In the wind was my Father's voice, calling me, in the clear mountain air.
Yodelee. Yodelaeeyee who? Yodeloh. Yodelee. Yodelaeeyee who? Yodel who?
Do you? Many who? Do you yodelaeeyeeoh?

Years have gone bye me now.
Still, in my mind I see all the friends I had, back in those good old days,
harmonizing with me.

Ranges are: Tenor 1, G1–g2; Tenor 2, d–E1; Baritone, d–D1; Bass, G–C1. (1:53) #3
MED.

***MY, O MY, OHIO!** was written in honor of the 2003 Ohio Bi-centennial so that it can be sung by practically an choral group. The text is full of the various symbols adopted by the state of Ohio: BIRD, Cardinal; TREE, Buckeye; FLOWER, Scarlet Carnation, etc. The poem is one of appreciation for living in such a great state. The melodic line lingers in one's memory. The harmonic language is traditional. The piano part is optional and, if used, can be played by any pianist capable of playing from a church hymnal.

My O My, Ohio, what a wonderful home you always are for me.
You're the state that I know is a model for a nation strong and free.
I hear the cardinal in the morning, perched on my highest tree,
the one with all the buckeyes as lucky as they can be.
I have a fresh, scarlet carnation, a symbol that all is well.
Your emblematic flower looks fine in my lapel.

My O My, Ohio, what a wonderful home you'll always be for me.
You're the state where I owe my allegiance to the pennant all can see.
Ohio flint is on my finger, in a ring of solid gold;
It's a gemstone I am proud to wear as a member of the fold.
I see the white-tailed deer go running. I see ladybugs fly away.
I drink some cold tomato juice and really make my day!

My O My, Ohio, what a wonderful home you've always be for me.
There is nowhere else on Earth I'd rather be. WD

Ranges are: Soprano, F#1–e2; Alto, b–d2; Tenor, f#–E1; Bass, A–D1 (3:15) #2 EASY+

MADRIGALS TO GREAT POEMS , THREE (medium difficulty)

"I Never Saw a Moor" by Emily Dickinson. (3 treble voice parts, tenor, 2 bass voice parts)
(1:08)

I never saw the sea,
and yet I know how the heather looks, and what a wave must be.
I never spoke with God, nor visited in heav'n.
And yet, certain am I of the spot, as if a chart were given.

Ranges are: Soprano 1, A flat2; Soprano 2, F1-e flat2; Alto, b-c2; Tenor (or Alto 2), f-G1; Baritone (or Tenor), c-E flat 1; Bass, F-a flat (1:08) #3 MED.

"O Flower in the Crannied Wall" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (3 treble voices, tenor and bass)

O flow'r in the crannied wall, I pluck you out of the crannies.
Oh, little flow'r, but if I could understand what you are, root and all,

I should know what God and man is.

Ranges are: Soprano, E1-a2; Alto 1, b flat-d2; Alto 2, C1-c2; Tenor, c-F1; Bass, F-C1 (1:00) #3 MED.+

"April Is In My Lover's Face" (3 treble voice parts, tenor and bass) unknown poet (1:30)

April is in my lover's face, and July, in her eyes, hath place.
Within her laughter is September.
But in her heart is cold December.

Ranges are: Soprano, F1-g2; Alto 1, g-d2; Tenor, f-G1; Bass, F-b flat (1:30) #3 MED.

MINI-MADRIGALS TO GREAT POEMS, THREE

LAST SLUMBER (unknown)

Last slumber eternal: end of tribulation,
 repose of mind and body,
 and calm, past all measure.
More do poor creatures need your liberation
 than they need life itself,
 their cherished treasure.
Port of the weary
 and worn of every nation,
 who wandering from east to west for certain pleasure,
 you burst our prison, our bitter chains you sever,
 and end the pangs of love forever.

Ranges are: Soprano, F1-f2; Alto, C1-B1; Tenor, e-F1; Bass, G-C1 (1:48) #3 MED.

QUIET WATERS (Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff)

Our lives float on quiet waters,
 and my love and I wander at twilight.
Then, flaming banners spread in the heavens.
How long, this beauty, this stately silence?
And once again we drift on the turbulent sea,
 the open sea. #3 MED.

Ranges are: Soprano, D1-f#2; Alto, D1-e flat2; Tenor, e flat-F1; Bass, G-C1 (1:08) #3 MED.

TEARS (Alfred Lord Tennyson)

Tears, idle tears,
 I know not what they mean.

Tears from the depths of some divine despair,
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes.
They rise in looking on the happy, happy fields,
thoughtful of the days that are no more.

Ranges are: Soprano, E1-f#2; Alto, C1-g2; Tenor, e-G1; Bass, G#-a (1:00) #3 MED.

MOBILES (for 12 or more voices in any combination) is a contemporary piece using minimalism for at least 12 voices in 12 voice parts. Percussion includes a large drum, educator tone-bells and foot stomping. Ingenious stage choreography is advised. The effect that “Mobiles” performance has on an audience is marvelous, perhaps because the piece is so unique in choral literature. A "mobile" is a dangling artwork that is sensitive to whatever currents of air are present.

Walking faster! We can run, traveling to get there.
Walking? Fascinating! Traveling? Run! We can! WD

The contrast that “Mobile” provides in a choral program is most effective. Foot-stomping and educator tone bells with good choreography can make this piece stunning. The world premiere of “The Mobile” was given by children in grades five to eight; however, “Mobile” is appropriate for any age group.

The range is: b flat–c2. (1:25) 2 EASY+

MOCKING BIRD, THE: (SSAA voices and “selected voices” or violin) Richard Milburn, 1855, composed this piece, but most people believe it is a folksong. A country fiddler may be used instead of selected voices. “The Mocking Bird” has had many performances and has been enjoyed by listeners all over America.

I am dreaming now of Hally, and the thought of her is one that never dies.
Listen to the mocking bird! Listen to the mocking bird!
Oh, the mocking bird is singing o'er her grave.
Listen to the mocking bird! Listen to the mocking bird!
He is singing where the weeping willows wave.

‘Twas in the mild September, when the mocking bird was singing o'er the lea.
Listen to the mocking bird! Listen to the mocking bird!
Oh, the mocking bird is singing o'er the lea.
Listen to the mocking bird! Listen to the mocking bird!

Oh, the mocking bird is singing just for me.

When the mocking bird is singing o'er her grave, she'll behave!

Ranges are: Solo, D1–a2; divided Soprano 1, C#1–F#2; divided Soprano 2, C#–e2;
Alto 1, a–d2; Alto 2, a–b1 (4:20) #4 MED.+

RUSTLER'S DAUGHTER, THE —an opera is one/thirty-second of an act (TTBB/narrator/violin or piano) is a comical farce about wild west days. The chorus comments on what the narrator is saying. Good choreography can make this “shtick” the hit of the show.

One night, I went out with the boys to have a little fun.
We had all been on the trail a while to make a cattle run.
We landed in a honkytonk where girls gave us the eye.
One, over in the corner, was alookin' at me real sly!

I ordered up another round pretending to be drunk.
I told some jokes and chugaluged, but then my plan was sunk!
Before my eyes, her tattooed hand was serving me a drink;
and when I lifted up my eyes, I thought my heart would sink!

That woman's voice was twice as sweet as anything I've heard.
I listened, 'bout an hour or so, and never said a word.
She kept the rounds a-comin' up and talked on, real deep,
until, with eyes wide open, I sat there sound asleep!

To my surprise, our marriage is the best thing I have done!
Our ranch is full of cattle, and we hain't paid for none!
McDonalds and the Burger King make offers every day.
While my wife is a-makin' baby clothes, I'm really a-makin' hay! WD

Ranges are: Tenor 1, C1–b flat2; Tenor 2, c–G1; Baritone, c–D1; Bass, F–C1. (3:10) #3 MED.

ANIMAL FUGUE, THE is all *Sprechstimme* (spoken) in four voices, and may be done by any choir. Audiences respond to it wildly! The piece is in four parts: 1) Teacher, 2) Kitty Kat, 3) Rooster, and 4) snake. A free CD containing the piece and a score of it are available upon request. (1:30) #1 VERY EASY WD

BIRD, FROG AND TREE CLUB, THE

"The Bird, Frog and Tree Club," (full symphony orchestra / SATB chorale) was commissioned by Maestro Paul Stanbery, conductor of the Hamilton/Fairfield Symphony and Chorale. He requested a 35-minute work for his community orchestra and chorale. See Choral Pieces to be performed with Instruments for the poem. WD

Movement I, “The Sensible Bird” is for a soprano soloist who plays the role of a bird who tries to discuss how mankind can improve his relationship to nature. The mood of this movement is lyrical and lovely. #3+ MED.+

Ranges are: Soprano soloist, F1–a2. Soprano, D1–f#2; Alto, a–d2; Tenor, b–G1; Bass, F#–D1 (15:30) #3 MED.

Movement 2, “The Friendly Frog” is about a frog’s daily challenges as a member of a swamp community. Through all of the frog’s trials, he sings about the joy of life. This movement is quite rhythmic and full of sound affects and tone clusters. There are eight parts that divide. Pitches are secondary in importance to effect.

Rangers are: Soprano, E1–a2; Alto, g–d2; Tenor, e–G#1; Bass, E–D1 (8:00) #3+ MED.+

Movement 3, “The Servant Tree” describes itself as the earth’s guardian of life and beauty, sent here by the Creator to enable mankind to breath. His/her voice is heard in the sounds of whispering breezes, rustling leaves and stark, firm, sound structures.

Ranges are: Soprano, F1–a2; Alto, g#–d2; Tenor, d–G1; Bass, a–D1 (10:36) #3 MED.

This composition is also arranged for SATB with organ. Both versions may be performed apart from the others without any loss of musicality.

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+

THE AMERICAN MEN (TTBB) is a virile, patriotic piece that was composed to honor the American soldiers who protect our country. It moves along as would a march, and should be

sung with gusto. This piece would make a fine show opener.

Brothers, join in a solemn prayer for our nation to free.
We were made by a loving God who endowed us with equality.
We agree to respect the rights of all nations, colors and creeds.
We are men of a daring nature, meeting America's needs.
We are always faithful to our promise, always loyal to our land.
We are always mindful of our motto, "In God we trust, by Him we stand.
Love, life, liberty, and honor are values every man holds high.
May Old Glory be the sponsor of worldwide peace, as time goes by.
We will move with a mighty force if our freedom is ever denied.
We are the sons of a Holy Father who is America's guide. WD

Ranges are: Tenor 1, e flat-A flat 1; Tenor 2, c-F1; Bass 1, A-D flat 1; Bass 2, G-b flat (2:00)
3 MED.-