

Dear Choristers,

Congratulations on your acceptance as a member of the 2025 PMEA All-State Choir! You represent the very best young artists throughout the state of Pennsylvania. I am excited to be selected as your conductor for this year's conference. Here is a little more information about me: <https://boyer.temple.edu/about/faculty-staff/rollo-a-dilworth-radclif>

I look forward to having a wonderfully positive experience with you as we work together in rehearsals and the performance. In keeping with the all-state reputation for excellence, the expectation is that each singer come to the first rehearsal knowing all the repertoire. This includes reading the liner notes of the scores and exploring the history and context of each piece on your own. As you prepare the music, I offer you the following ideas regarding what I believe it means to make **M.U.S.I.C**:

M = Mastery of all pitches, rhythms, dynamics, articulations, text, etc. (anything that is on the written page);

U = Understanding of text, context, and symbolism in the music;

S = Soul (Fully investing oneself in the music);

I = Internalization of Rhythm (Taking responsibility for the rhythmic underpinnings of the piece);

C = Communicating the composer's/arranger's intentions.

Identities – Paul Rardin

<https://sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=1516>

The opening statement, “I am” should be clearly articulated each time. Try to avoid making the word sound like “I yam.” There are many unison phrases that split into harmony. Each of those moments should be magical! Use a lighter and brighter vocal tone when the music splits into eight-part harmony (mm. 53, 87, 183, 186, 189).

Jasmine Flower (Mo Li Hua) – arr. Chen Yi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4UNDEwIUFU>

“Jasmine Flower” is likely the most popular folk song in China. This piece is sung in a variety of regional dialects. In addition to the YouTube recording, please listen carefully to the audio pronunciation guide as you practice. Be mindful of the grace notes that appear in the score; all of them should be articulated on the beat of the note they immediately precede. All mordents, such as the ones in measures 10 and 24, indicate a quick alternation between the written pitch and the one above it. For all words that involve diphthongs (two vowel sounds, such as “hao,” “duo,” “hua,” “xue,” “cie,” “die,” “xiu,” “lie”), it is important to immediately go to the second vowel sound, especially when the vowel sound is sustained.

El Cumbanchero – Rafael Hernandez, arr. Suzzette Ortiz

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/292304/el-cumbanchero>

This piece requires a vocal jazz tone that is warm and smooth. Be mindful of all the articulation markings, particularly the staccato markings and accents. There are solo opportunities for tenor

voices (mm. 13-16, 21-24, 29-32, 124-127, 134-137, 163-168). In measures 143-151), the full choir can participate in imitating instrument sounds!

Sally Goodin' – arr. Ken Berg

<https://sbmp.com/SR2.php?CatalogNumber=898>

Performing this piece song requires the use of bright vowels and a “folk” vocal tone. Observe all articulation markings. As you rehearse the piece, keep in mind that the beats 1 and 3 should receive the most emphasis in each measure. Also, each time you sing the name “Sally,” place stress on the first syllable and de-emphasize the second syllable.

The Bridge Builder – Eleanor Daley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWEdoUnixnM>

Read the text before rehearsing this piece. The poem is a powerful story in which the singers are the messengers. In each measure, the first beat should be slightly stressed; the second beat should be unstressed, and the with the third beat should be slightly shorter so as to provide a “lift” into the downbeat of the measure that follows.

Daniel – arr. Rollo Dilworth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKNh1wxT-1o>

This arrangement combines two spirituals. Please read the performance before you begin rehearsal. Throughout the piece, we will use the three-syllable, Hebrew pronunciation of “Daniel” (pronounced Da-nee-yel). Also, each sixteenth note should be sung with a slight swing rhythm.

I look forward to seeing you in April!

Sincerely,

Dr. Rollo Dilworth