

KCDA 2018 Reading Session: MSHS Tried and True  
Gretchen Harrison

### **Annie Laurie, arr. Earlene Rentz**

Unison, opt. 2-part

Music—Lady John Scott, Words---William Douglass

1. Read the inside front cover---good information for director and singers
2. Soprano line could serve as an entry-level vocal solo once learned with choir
3. Teach 4-measure phrases so the musical line and poetic idea are presented without break.
4. This piece is an excellent opportunity to teach an arc-shaped phrase
5. Consider gentle treatment of final “r” consonants so the American “r” sound doesn’t bring the line to a grinding halt
6. Eighth note pickups and dotted 8<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> note pickups are frequently confused.
7. Part 2 is a lovely line that “sings” beautifully as a compliment to the melody.
8. It can’t be overstated: use deep air all the time!
9. The 6/4 measure is a moment of choral luxury! Enjoy the stretch.

### **Auld Lang Syne, arr. Lee R. Kesselman**

2-part Treble

Traditional Scottish Folk Song, Words---Robert Burns

1. Read the notes on the inside front cover
2. Take care that singers understand the Gaelic words and meanings
3. By all means, use the pronunciation guide!!!!
4. In measure 10 and similar measures, there is no leading note between beat 4 and beat 1 of measure 11. Make sure you READ the rhythms. Don’t just assume it’s what you hear on New Years’ Eve. ☺
5. Take some time to research the poet.
6. Measure 25 ushers in a lovely new interpretation of the piece in terms of meter. Again---make sure you don’t just sing the USA NYE version. ☺

### **Boots and Saddles, words and music by Norman Tidball**

Two-part song

1. This piece works well for younger mixed choirs
2. Notice the copyright date---1963. If you choose to do this piece, an interesting study includes surveying other musical happenings in that year: *the Beatles began their first tour (Scotland); Bob Dylan portrayed a folksinger in a radio play for the BBC; Patsy Cline was killed in a plane wreck on her way to Kansas City; March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; electronic synthesizer music made it’s debut in Berkeley, CA.* You get the idea!! When you introduce a piece that may be out of the choir’s collective experience, it’s a great idea to create connections for the students--or guide them to create their own connections.
3. Measures 1-38 and mm. 56-end are very easy to solfege. This piece opens a fine opportunity to move from solfege drills to using solfege to learn a piece of music.

## **Cuatro Baladas Amarillas (Four Yellow Ballads) by Bob Chilcott**

*Note: Bob Chilcott provided the notes appearing in italics at a CME training held in Kansas City in (about) 2006.*

*Almost every line mentions a color---as an orchestration and arranger color was quite important [to Chilcott]. My choirs make sure that every color mention is treated with artistry.*

*Federico Garcia Lorca (1889-1936) died in the Spanish Civil war, reportedly killed by Fascists. Concepts of softness and femininity [are evident in these poems.]*

Read and perform the composer's intended tempo and character with integrity (except piece #3).

I

- 1) The light, swinging nature of the piece is critical. The 7/8-meter is not a plodding, effort-filled feel.
- 2) Dissonance in m. 8-11 is easy to teach using solfege or numbers. The chords are easier to balance as the choir members listen for each number or solfege syllable to be sounded equally.
- 3) Dynamics are subtle and CRITICAL.
- 4) Sometimes the piano articulation is different from the vocal parts (m. 22, 23).
- 5) *Feel the rhythmic content in the rests.*

II)

1. *Chilcott sees this movement as a landscape painting.*
2. *m. 48, m. 54, m. 61– make sure the emphasis is on beats 2 and 5. Swing it a little bit.*
3. *Measure 55 is a 2/4 measure. (My “first copy” has some engraving errors.)*

III)

1. ***Hypnotic-Quarter Note = c. 48 (this is drastically different than the marking in my score).***
2. *Still life landscape*
3. *This poem and it's musical setting represent an economy of thought.*
4. *The ostinato appearing in the piano part represents the bells hung around the necks of the red bulls.*
5. *Measures 95, 96, 97 – treat these measures like recitative.*

IV)

1. This poem is sassy! The voices should demonstrate the same sass!
2. Measure 121: The Alto part enters, but is (kind of) easy to miss. ☺
3. m. 124-131: Make sure the soprano part is NOT the primary part! When I work this piece, I divide the trebles into 3 equal parts to meet the demands of #1. When we get to m. 124 of #4, I only put ONE part on top. The other two parts sing the melody. The “La, la...” part will carry just fine!
4. Measure 137---the final measure---is performed with decrescendo. It's vital that the piece ends as a subtle “flip of the hair” rather than a slap in the face. ☺

**Joshua (Fit the Battle of Jericho), adapted and arranged by Kirby Shaw**  
**Traditional Spiritual**  
**TTB**

1. The boys LOVE this arrangement!
2. Cool piano part!
3. You may choose to re-write the tenor line. (My boys did as a Tenor Team-builder. They were instructed that EVERYONE had to be given a part on which they could be successful. They had to know everyone's range and someone had to be brave to use their notation skill set. See me if you want to see what my guys did.)
4. Repeated sections: vary the dynamics on the repeat. (Rehearsal A, rehearsal C and rehearsal D)

**Santa Lucia by Teodoro Cottrau; arr. Henry Leck**

1. Read the inside front cover. ☺
2. This is another piece that (the tenor part) can serve as a vocal solo for the young CV singer.
3. This edition is relatively lightly edited. Observe/perform the markings.
4. Make sure you do due diligence and study Cottrau
5. For today's reading purposes, do not take the D.C. ☺

**Alternate pieces**

**Ching A Ring Chaw (and Great Gittin' Up Mornin'), arr. Linda Spevacek**  
**TBB**

1. The boys LOVE this song!
2. You may/will need to rewrite some parts (or let your guys rewrite the parts.)
3. Breath and phrases are very athletic! The tempo is quick to fast. It's important to keep the line connected---for instance, do not breathe from m. 28-29, and in fact, add a crescendo between the measures to FORCE the no breath.
4. Measure 25---your MS changing voice (CV) tenors cannot sing a low D. Most of your MS CV "BASSES" can't sing a low D! Re-write the part.
5. Keep the "ee" vowel controlled and managed into a center space.
6. Measures 82-98 – add some yee-haws and howdy's! Have fun with this section!
7. Measure 98 – perform the volume as noted (**p**) so the subito **f** at measure 106 is impressive.

**I Bought Me a Cat, Aaron Copland**  
**Unison**