

Mass Director Notes

2018 SE Regional Festival

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Speak, O Lord

This is the theme for this year's festival. I would love to ring this piece as expressively as possible. Dynamics will be vital to this piece. The beginning should be played soft and prayer-like. The melody at seven needs to be brought out. At 15 we are only at a mezzo forte, make sure you give yourself room to grow later in the piece. I would like to treat m. 23 as an echo – it mirrors the beginning of the piece. Let's try to get to a *piano* level at that point. The melody needs to be heard at 37, so everyone else needs to hold back quite a bit. We will try our best to make the sixteenth and eighth note patterns as smooth as possible.

The transitions for each stanza have a written *ritardando* – please watch for a slight tempo change there. Measure 49 is *forte*, but again, give yourself room to grow for the fortissimo at 57. This is the high point of the piece, GO FOR IT! Be ready for the drastic *decrescendo* at 64-65, followed by a *rit.* in 68 and another *decres.* in 68. We end very gently. Please observe LVs as written.

O God, Beyond All Praising

The tempo for this piece could be a challenge. I would like to take it a bit faster than indicated – possibly in the 66-70 range. The meter changes happen regularly, please watch for those. Chimes will ring the diamond notes at 39 through 46, which will mean bells will need to ring at an *mp* or even softer. Measures 46 and 54 (although not written) are natural places to include a *cres.* to lead into the next section. Let's try to stay together on the 16th notes and the slow down at the end.

Angels from the Realms of Glory

This piece is just fun to play! The congregation might bring the tempo down a bit, so we will need to adjust on the fly 😊 Accuracy is needed at the beginning and again when that theme is repeated in M. 74-75. The transition to stanza two can also present challenges. Please bring out the melody for stanza 2, which means treble bells will need to hold back until they get to shine at measure 47.

Stanza three is our moment for this piece; no brass, organ, choir, or congregation. This stanza is unlike the other three. It needs to be smooth and connected; it should flow like a gentle brook. There will be a slight *rit.* in 76-77 and we prepare for stanza 4. The final stanza praises our Triune God, and I would like to take that stanza at a more 'regal' tempo. I will direct all the 8th notes at 93, so please watch.

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Alleluia! Let Praises Ring

Observe LVs as written (they happen throughout the piece). In measures 1-25 we will strive to keep those all even and together. Allow the melody to come forward throughout the piece. Watch for the *rit.* at measure 53, but we will push forward at 54. At measure 60 we will strive for a majestic tempo and sound. Don't get caught off guard at the rhythm change in measures 68-69. Let your volume grow at 78-79 to the *ff* section as we begin the end of the piece. We will try for a climatic *fp* to *ff mart. lift*.

Faith of Our Fathers

Don't lose focus! This is a wonderful setting. Play the LVs as indicated. Chimes have the melody at 37, so treble bells need to let them have their moment. Be ready for the meter change at measure 64. After the fermata at 75, we will cut, so please watch.

Abide With Me

This selection has a great deal going on. This piece begins very slowly, so it is vital that we watch and stay together.

I would like to begin the piece by letting the singing bells in the first measure build a bit before we move too far into the piece. I will begin directing measure 1 after we hear some singing. Watch the counting in measures 2 and 7 as those are both 5/4 measures. Be ready for the *rit.* in measure 10 followed by the *accelerando*. I would like to be at our new tempo in measure 14.

I would like to push the tempo a little on when we return to a tempo in m.34. We will begin our slowdown in M46. I will direct each 8th note in measure 50. We will let the fermata at 50 just fade away. The last two lines have some interesting tempo markings. We will really need to watch at the end in order to stay together. We will observe them as written, but I cannot give you specific values.

General comments:

- Please observe LVs as written. They add so much to a piece.
- Dynamics, dynamics, dynamics. I know there is not much of a difference from *mp* to *mf*. I tend to have my choir ring softer than what may be called for. If we can have a difference in our louds and softs I think that will come across to the audience.
- Smile! Remember why we are here. Smile and have fun.

I look forward to working with you all in April. If you have any questions or thoughts, please feel free to ask. My e-mail address can be found above.