

Hello everyone, and congratulations on being part of what is sure to be an amazing PMEA Allstate Choir experience! Many would shirk at the idea of being part of a virtual allstate but I hope that you, like me, are excited to be amongst the innovators of this process. Much work has been done behind the scenes to make this festival happen, including your own work to get to this place. I am so excited to meet each one of you and make fantastic music together!

General Notes:

- **Please number your measures.** This will help keep the pace moving forward in rehearsals.
- **Text pronunciations should be written in your music.** Those pronunciations have been provided.
- We will almost always **phrase according to punctuation**. If there is punctuation, breathe. If there is not punctuation, carry the breath through. I've outlined exceptions to this rule in the accompanying documents.
- **Crescendo slightly into all dissonances**
- **Clearly enunciate text.** Text is the driving force for this piece.
 - Flip all r's
 - See accompanying documents for more specific information
- **Cut off on rests, not before**
- **Read through the text as part of your preparation.** I have also provided some historical/biographical notes which I believe will help set a context for this piece. Some essential questions that I hope to focus on as part of our time together include:
 - Do you relate to the text in present tense, or do you hope for it to be part of your future?
 - What parts of the text speak to you most, and why?
 - How is the word "Proud" used in this piece? As a model for a lack of humility? Confidence? Assuredness?
 - What sound of nature has become the music to your soul?
- **Articulation**
 - If articulation were a number, what number might it be? In the attached score, you will see numbers written above most of the articulation. These numbers are on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being the least articulated and 10 being the most articulated. Here are a few general rules:
 - Accents that happen consecutively should be performed at a level of 8
 - Accents that do not happen consecutively should be performed at a level of 6-7 with the note following at a level of 2-3
 - Tenuti markings should be performed the same as accents but with the stress of a tenuto not an accent
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Biographical and Historical Context

From modest means, Walt Whitman always found great joy in the written word, as can be evidenced by his immense output of poetry. Whitman was very much one who gave of his time willingly; he was immensely compassionate towards other people and showed it through helping to care for their physical needs.

Whitman lived through the Civil War, spending the majority of his time in the Northeast. For a time he worked in New Orleans which gave him an interesting insight into the purpose of the war. Amidst what came to be known as “unstable and inconsistent beliefs”, Whitman was ultimately known to be a man who “celebrated human dignity.”

Notes about the text

The text used for this piece is taken from the larger *Proud Music of the Storm* text written by Whitman. It has six verses total and the text included in the piece is primarily from verses 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. I would encourage you to take the time to look through the text in its entirety as it does help to provide some context.

Some basic facts about this text include:

- It’s been called by some a “symphony of sound”
- Others believe that it falls into the category of an operatic overture because of the many contrasting passages
- The event in the poem describes an emotional reaction to music which was, in part, Whitman’s inspiration for writing this poem.
- The poem was originally titled, “Proud Music of the Sea-Storm”
 - The sea symbolized Whitman’s conception of cosmic-like processes
- The poem is a display of how the poet dreams that a storm would sound
- Overall, the dream – the poem – was not really about a storm, but more a song of life and death and how nature provides the music for every scene therein.

I would encourage you to look up the words that are unfamiliar to you and write those in your scores.

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