



Pennsylvania Music Educators Association

www.PMEA.net/allstate

Dear PMEA All-State Contemporary A Cappella singers,

Congratulations on being selected to perform in the **2026 PMEA All-State Contemporary A Cappella Ensemble**, April 22–25, 2026, in the Poconos! This is a tremendous honor. Your selection places you among a very small group of singers across Pennsylvania chosen not only for musical excellence, but for your potential to help define what **contemporary a cappella** looks and sounds like at the highest scholastic level in our state.

This marks only the third iteration of All-State Contemporary A Cappella within PMEA. That alone makes your participation historically significant. You are not simply joining an ensemble, you are actively shaping a vision. How we rehearse, perform, and present ourselves this year will help determine how contemporary a cappella continues to grow, evolve, and be valued within Pennsylvania's music education community.

My name is Spencer Camacho (he/him), and I am honored to serve as your music director. I am an instructor of music and leadership at West Chester University of Pennsylvania where I teach music theory, aural skills, music technology, and leadership courses, and I am currently completing my PhD in Leadership at the University of Southern Maine with research focused on leadership behavior and cultural influence in collegiate a cappella. I have spent much of my professional life at the intersection of music, education, creativity, leadership, and technology, working extensively as a clinician, arranger, and educator in contemporary a cappella.

I have had the privilege of serving as the inaugural clinician for both the District 12 and District 4 PMEA A Cappella Festivals, directing collegiate ensembles, producing several a cappella studio albums, and working with groups and festivals across the country. Most importantly, I care deeply about helping singers grow not only as musicians, but as collaborators, communicators, and leaders within an ensemble.

Find your [ensemble part assignment here](#) or type: <https://tinyurl.com/39zzvrwb>

Because contemporary a cappella is rhythmically complex by nature with voices emulating full instrumental textures, our work together requires a very high level of preparation before we ever sing as a full group. Each singer is expected to arrive with:

- Complete mastery of their assigned part. **This means all your parts are memorized** (text, pitches, rhythms, dynamics) as you will not have music while performing.
- Strong rhythmic independence
- Comfort and confidence performing accurately against the full ensemble track

Our rehearsal time is intentionally limited. As a result, rehearsals will not focus on learning notes, rhythms. Instead, our time together will be devoted to:

- Refining ensemble blend and balance
- Locking groove and internal pulse
- Developing expressive phrasing and dynamic shape
- Enhancing visual performance and communication as a unified ensemble

I hold the expectation that every singer arrives fully prepared, focused, and ready to contribute at the highest level. This shared commitment allows us to move quickly from accuracy to artistry and from individual excellence to collective impact.

Program Notes: To Breathe Again

This set follows a journey that mirrors one of the most powerful traditions in a cappella set design: telling a complete emotional story through sound. This set is themed: To Breathe Again. Beginning with joy and connection, moving through loss, doubt, and self-questioning, and finally rising toward confidence and hope, these songs trace what it feels like to grow through relationships and rediscover yourself. Along the way, moments of vulnerability, reflection, and resilience remind us that healing is rarely linear but it is always possible. Two selections, ***When the Party's Over*** and ***Little Blue***, feature no soloist, emphasizing that some emotions are best expressed not by one voice, but by a unified community.

Levitating

This opening captures the thrill of connection, the rush of feeling seen, excited, and completely lifted by another person. It sets the emotional spark for everything that follows.

When the Party's Over (Shared Ensemble Solo)

The energy drops into quiet heartbreak as the connection begins to slip away. With no soloist, the full ensemble shares this moment of collective vulnerability and emotional honesty.

Good Life (Upper Voices Only)

Here comes the "I'm fine, I'm thriving" phase: bold, confident, and a little forced. The optimism is real, but so is the effort it takes to believe it.

Little Blue (Shared Ensemble Solo)

This song turns inward. It explores reflection, uncertainty, and the late-night thoughts that surface when everything finally gets quiet.

Holding Out for a Hero (Lower Voices Only)

With a touch of humor and drama, this piece captures the feeling of wishing someone would swoop in and fix everything. It reflects that midnight mix of longing, imagination, and hope.

Creep

This is the emotional low point. Doubt and insecurity take over, leading to the honest and difficult question: "Is it me?"

You Will Be Found (Finale)

Out of reflection comes reassurance. This song reminds us that no one is truly alone and that support often arrives when we least expect it.

High Hopes (Encore)

The journey ends with confidence and clarity. Having moved through heartbreak and doubt, the set closes with renewed belief in possibility and purpose.

Solo Auditions

With the exception of **Good Life** reserved for assigned treble singers and **Holding Out for a Hero** reserved for lower voices, solo opportunities are open to all voice parts, regardless of what is indicated in the sheet music or vocal references. Below you will find the breakdown of solos and excerpts to sing for the audition:

Song	Opportunity	Length of Part	Audition Excerpt
Levitating	Solo	Full Song	mm5-21 and then skip right to mm62-69 (attempt ad lib riffing starting at 63)
	Harmony (Harms) Upper Split	Full Song, top split when harm splits to 2 or 3	If you want to also be considered for middle harms, indicate in your video. You can sing just mm58-69 top split
	Harmony (Harms) Middle Split	Full Song, middle split when 3 parts, top split when 2 parts	If you want to also be considered for lower harms, indicate in your video. You can sing just mm58-69 middle split
	Harmony (Harms) Lower Split	Full Song, bottom split when harm splits to 2 or 3	mm13-24 bottom split
When The Party's Over	No Solos	-	-
Good Life	Tr. Solo (only for those singing this song)	Full Song	mm67-end
Little Blue	No Solos	-	-
Holding Out for a Hero	Solo (only for those singing this song)	Full Song	mm21-33 AND mm69-83 (chest voice where possible)
Creep	Solo	Full Song	mm41-64
You Will Be Found	Solo 1	Full Song (in mm55-56, you would sing upper split)	If you want to be considered for both Solo 1 or 2, indicate in your video. You can sing just Solo 1: mm5-12, 48-55



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	Solo 2	Full Song (in m43 and mm71-73, you would sing lower split)	If you only want to be considered for Solo 2, sing Solo 2 line: mm33-40, 48-63
High Hopes	Solo	Full Song (in mm24-27, you would sing lower split)	The audition for both the solo and harmony are the same. Sing mm17-28. If in your range, please sing the upper split in mm24. If it is too high, you may still audition with the lower split.
	Solo Upper Harmony	mm24-27 (upper split)	
	Harmonies	mm33-36 (upper and lower splits)	Sing mm33-36 upper split, you will be considered for both.

You were selected because you are capable of this level of work. I am excited to challenge you, collaborate with you, and create something meaningful together. If we do this well, we will not only perform outstanding music, we will set a standard for what contemporary a cappella can be within PMEA and beyond.

I very much look forward to making music with you this April.

With respect and excitement,

Spencer Camacho

Conductor, PMEA All-State Contemporary A Cappella
Instructor, West Chester University of Pennsylvania