

Types of Choral Arrangements

Notation

- Two types of score layout:
 - 1) Open - each voice is written on its own staff. Use when the vocal parts have different texts.
 - 2) Close - SA on one staff, TB on the other. Use when the vocal parts have identical texts.
- Dynamics and expression marks go above the staves.
- Use beamed groups rather than flags (antiquated).

Four-Part Arrangements

- Often set a cappella due to the richness of the voices.
- The high tessitura of the SSAA often leads the arranger to add an accompaniment.
- TTBB is rich in overtones (as is SATB) and does not require accompaniment.

Textures:

- 1) Note against note -
 - Emphasizes the text.
 - Used when the melodic line has fairly fluid rhythmic motion.
- 2) Animated homophony -
 - The melody is accompanied by melodic embellishment in the other three parts.
 - May be used as a textural variant as it produces more rhythmic motion than note against note.
 - When two voices move together as melodic embellishments they usually move in parallel 3rds or 6ths.
- 3) Melody line with harmonic support -
 - Treble dominated texture.
 - One voice has more rhythmic motion than the rest which are identical in rhythm.

Contrapuntal Textures:

- 1) Countermelody - Harmony added at the end of an SATB arrangement to help achieve the climax.
- 2) Figuration - non-continuous fragmentary lines that provide rhythmic and melodic punctuation to the original melody. In four-voice textures, figurations appear in three voices with the 4th voice being melody.
- 3) Ostinato - short repeated motive. In four-voice textures, one voice sings the melody while the other three combine in either note against note or contrapuntal texture with ostinato. Use when the melody has little harmonic change.
- 4) Imitation - Points of imitation are most frequent. Afterwards a section may become more homophonic. Imitation often occurs at the interval of a 4th or a 5th so that it falls in a comfortable range for all the voices.

All-Female Arrangement

- Three common types: SA, SSA, SSAA.
- SSAA Range: (F) G - g2 (a2)
- Because the tessitura is high for the fundamental bass in the alto to provide the full harmonic support that is available when male voices sing an octave lower, a keyboard accompaniment is often included.
- Melody most often appears in the soprano 1. Melody may also in alto 2 for contrast.
- Homophonic textures predominate with contrapuntal textures used as contrast.
- There are frequent close spaced chords and parallelism.

All-Male Arrangements

- Most for TTBB, but some for TBB and TB.
- Rich in resonance and overtones and therefore may be set a cappella.
- Range: (F) G - g1 (a1)
- Melodies may appear in the outer or the inner voices. The melody may migrate among the voices.
- Homophonic textures predominate with occasional contrapuntal textures.
- Close chord spacing with parallel and contrary chord connection is used.
- Not write perfect 5ths below Eb.

Two-Part Arrangements

- Since complete harmonies are not possible, keyboard accompaniment is normally included.
- Two-voice combinations: SA, SB, TB, children's chorus (I+II).

Homophonic textures:

- 1) Note against note - most common. The 2nd voice parallels the first usually by a 3rd or a 6th. 4ths and other intervals are possible. Excessive parallel 3rds may become dull.
- 2) Animated Homophony - Begin with note against note texture, then embellish the rhythm of the second voice.

Contrapuntal textures:

- 1) Countermelody -
 - Independent melodic line that sounds against a given melody, maintaining separate pitch, rhythm, and contour. Achieves independence primarily through rhythm - it complements the rhythm of the melody.
 - May be above or below the main line.
 - May be text or a vocable ("ah"). If text, it is usually derived from the original text.
- 2) Decant -
 - like note against note but the added voice takes on the character of a 2nd melody. It usually appears above the main melody.
- 3) Figuration -
 - a non-continuous fragmentary line that provides rhythmic and melodic punctuation to the original melody.
 - Used to fill in rhythmic gaps.
- 4) Ostinato -
 - repeated motive with rhythmic and pitch components. 1-2 measures long.
 - ostinati work best with one harmony sounding for several measures.
- 5) Imitation -
 - use points of imitation at the unison, octave, 5th, or 4th.

6) Canon -

- Not all melodies have the musical properties that allow for canonic treatment. Look for a static tonic harmony throughout.

Three-Part Arrangement

- Not all chords may be fully expressed. Therefore, keyboard accompaniment is included.
- Two main arrangements: SSA, SAB (SCB)
- SSA, SA, and SSAA - high tessitura. Use a keyboard accompaniment for the fundamental bass. The lowest voice either doubles the bass of the keyboard accompaniment or sounds another pitch in the harmony.
- SAB -
 - 1)Used in choirs with few male voices.
 - 2)Used in junior high choirs where boys voices are changing. The SCB arrangement is normally used. Many SAB arrangements may be sung by a SCB choir.

Homophonic Textures -

Note against note textures will normally have much parallel motion and close voicing is the norm. In SSA, the alto does not provide the fundamental bass.