

Notes for Bass clef Reading Session 2015 — Kelly Truax

My intention was to provide a list of songs that might work for your *younger* men's choirs — your 9/10 group or MS guys. Finding pieces for advanced men's ensembles is pretty easy; composers love to write complicated, lush pieces! But it is much harder finding good lit for a less experienced group. Hopefully there are pieces on this list that can help you with your younger guys' groups.

We have performed many of these pieces at my school (I teach 7-8-9 men at Prairie Point in Cedar Rapids.) If you would like detailed ideas about pieces I have taught my guys, I'd be happy to chat with you about it — just ask!@

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MS guys

* Music's Echo

- a partner song — friendly for beginners/harmony
- percussion accompaniment — finger cymbals!
- sounds like music from the past
- key can be easily shifted up to suit MS ranges
- a cappella!

* Go

- two part piece with comfortable range for both tenors and basses
- singable by young men (my 8th graders sang it) or HS guys
- the clapping adds a rhythmic dimension that makes the piece pop
- DO THIS PIECE!!!!!! :) My guys really loved it!

* Jambo

- the middle line sits a little low for MS tenors, but is comfortable for most young baritones
- harmony chorus (m. 9) can be subbed in to all other choruses if desired
- add some congas
- the translation makes the boys smile . . . and helps bring life to their performance
- a great closer

* Buffalo Gals

- one of my favorite MS guys pieces!
- there are lots of different sets of harmony in this piece . . . it's harder than it appears
- can be performed a cappella
- great ranges for MS guys

* Jump Down, Spin Around

- the arrangement is for SATB, but it works well for younger guys by re-imagining the parts
- have tenor 2 guys sing the soprano line down an octave throughout the piece. This range is comfy for them
- have tenor 1 guys sing the alto line AT PITCH — this range is comfy for unchanged guys
- have the bari-basses sing the bass line as normal. My guys loved the range
- we left the tenor line un-sung; the harmony sounded full without it, and it sits in the same general range as the melody
- I played “boom-chick” chords on the piano throughout to give support; we used it as the 7-8-9 combined piece, and the younger guys couldn’t handle it a cappella. It is I - V throughout.
- solos can be unchanged voices
- DO THE ACTIONS suggested in the front. They are goofy and playful

Playful a cappella for young guys groups

* Brown Eyed Girl

- uses three parts + soloist(s)
- we use falsetto a ton for the highest line
- my guys LOVE this piece
- the solo range is awkward and challenging for many young guys — consider using a group of boys to cover the melody

* I’m Yours

- a hybrid barbershop/doo wop arrangement
- very accessible to young guys . . . repetitious
- tenor line uses falsetto

HS guys

* Majko, majko zelena

- very do-able by a young group
- a good fit for learning on solfege (solfege is easier than the Czech text :)
- adaptable — can lessen the “burden” on the full choir by assigning verses to soloists or small groups
- works with or without violin
- the pronunciation is available from the publisher — get it! It is very helpful.
- work on text slowly — spread it out over time

* I Dreamed of Rain

- lovely, lovely song . . . your men will adore this piece
- very do-able by a young group

- * The King of Love and Grace
 - a lush and lovely pairing of two hymn tunes. The range is great for HS men
 - great piece for building tone

- * Ritmo
 - need a capable pair of pianists (it isn't that hard, but is active and fast)
 - note that it is labelled Choir 1 and Choir 2

- * Close Now Thine Eyes
 - very pretty, lush harmony

- * The Name of Jesus
 - rhythmically interesting (clapping!)
 - 6/8 + 3/4 gives the melody a medieval feel

- * How Firm a Foundation
 - big, grand — men need to be able to sustain and build