

TEACHING PLAN

Anthem: 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (CGA1064)

Anthem and teaching plan by Jeff Reeves

REHEARSAL 1

1 Introduce the song.

- Have pianist and drummer play meas. 1-28.
- Ask choristers to describe how the music sounds.
(*Native American, mysterious, etc.*)
- Choose 3 choristers to read the stanzas aloud (one for each stanza).
- Identify words and phrases that reflect Native American culture.
(*Gitchi Manitou, hunters, lodge of broken bark, rabbit skin, chiefs, fox and beaver pelt, children of the forest free*)
- Have everyone read the “Did You Know?” section on page 2.
- Quiz the singers about the history of the song.
- Challenge them to speak the Huron phrases on page 2. (Real tongue twisters!)

2 Teach meas. 22-28.

- Practice speaking “in excelsis.” (Pronounced: *een egg-SHELL-cess*)
- Echo sing the phrase “in excelsis gloria” (meas. 25-28).
- Encourage singers to lightly sing the low “D” on beat 4, meas. 26.
(*Goal: Avoid “punching” the low D when the melody drops from the high D.*)
- Echo sing meas. 22-28.

REHEARSAL 2

3 Vocal warm-up.

- Use the phrase “in excelsis gloria” (meas. 25-28) as a warm-up.
- Sing the phrase as written; then move pitches up by 1/2 steps.
- Have choristers target the sound into the head (*head voice*).
- Practice singing pure, beautiful vowel sounds:
“in” (Pronounced: *EEN*); “gloria” (Pronounced; *GLOH-ree-ah*)

4 Teach the melody.

- Echo sing meas. 9-13 on “loo.”
- Repeat for meas. 14-17. (Start with beat 4, meas. 13.)
- Ask if the phrases are the same or different. (*different*)
- Identify the measures that are different. (*meas. 12 and 16*)
- Echo sing meas. 18-21 on “loo.” (Start with beat 4, meas. 17.)
- Complete the melody by singing meas. 22-28.
- Challenge choristers to locate where the melody reappears. (*meas. 33-51*)

5 Do a breath control exercise.

- Place hands just above the waist (lower abdomen).
- Inhale deeply and feel expansion.
- Hold breath, exhale slowly.
- Using stanza 1, practice singing 4 measure phrases on one breath.

REHEARSAL 3

6 Practice crisp consonants.

- Have choristers locate these words in stanza 2:
bark (meas. 34); *found* (meas. 36); *round* (meas. 40); *knelt* (meas. 42);
pelt (meas. 44)
- Ask them to speak the words without the ending consonant. Repeat, dropping the beginning consonants.
- For fun, lead choristers in singing meas. 33-36 dropping all consonants from the text. Help them discover the importance of articulating consonants in both speaking and singing.
- Everyone sing stanza 2 with crisp, clear consonants.

7 Practice pure, beautiful vowel sounds.

- Write these vowel sounds on the board:
ah, eh, ee, oh, oo
- Demonstrate mouth shapes for each vowel sound helping singers recognize appropriate lip shapes and jaw/tongue placement.
- Have choristers find words in the anthem with these vowel sounds.
- Practice singing words that choristers find.

8 Discover music “road signs.”

- Draw on the board: repeat signs, Coda sign.
- Challenge singers to locate the signs in the anthem.
(Repeat signs – meas. 10, 53; Coda signs – meas. 26, 54)
- Explain that these signs indicate “where to go” in the anthem.
- Sing stanzas 1-3 following the road signs.

REHEARSAL 4

9 Introduce phrasing.

- Draw the shape of the melody in meas. 9-13 on the board. *(Melody should arc up, then down, back up slightly, ending with a small dip and back up.)*
- Everyone sing meas. 9-13 on “loo” as you trace the shape on the board.
- Sing the phrase again having choristers trace the melody with their arms.
- Repeat with other phrases in the anthem.

10 Learn the Coda.

- Echo sing meas. 57-61 singing the cue notes in meas. 59-61.
- Emphasize breath support and head voice to sing the high “G” (meas. 60-61)
- Determine whether or not choristers are comfortable singing the cue notes. If not, have them sing the regular size notes.