

*Harriet Ziegenhals, Founder/Director of Community Renewal Chorus and All God's Children, is a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where she served on the faculty, and the University of Cincinnati. She received a Master of Sacred Music from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She sang under Robert Shaw for 12 years in New York City and Cleveland and was one of a select group of singers who went with Shaw to San Juan to sing under Pablo Casals for three summers at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico.*

*Mrs. Ziegenhals has worked in church, school and community, serving as music director, organist, worship and workshop leader, lecturer, composer and arranger. She writes much of the music the Choruses sing, has a number of published anthems and has written articles for the Choral Journal, Choristers Guild LETTERS and the Christian Century. She is active in the American Choral Directors Association, a member of the National Board of Choristers Guild, and a member of Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest. She is the wife of the Rev. Walter E. Ziegenhals, Associate Executive Director and Director of Development for the Community Renewal Society. Together, they served parishes in East Harlem in New York City, Cleveland, and the Naval Air Station in Kingsville, Texas. They have two children, Timothy and Gretchen, who were charter members of All God's Children in 1971.*

## Harriet Ziegenhals' "Tapestry" (CGA-533)

The unison anthem "Tapestry" gives us choral directors the opportunity to teach the beauty of a long, flowing phrase line and the variety of rhythmic patterns in 6/8 meter, including the hemiola; but most important it enables us to teach children about the world and their special place within it.

The concert given in Chicago each spring by our two community choirs of diverse backgrounds always has a theme. In 1989 it was "Tapestry," but octavos to illustrate it were difficult to find. The dictionary defines the word tapestry as

a fabric made up of many individual threads woven together to produce an integrated and harmonious whole.

This concept became the source of inspiration for the anthem. It was written for youth but can be used whenever unison is feasible.

Because rehearsal times vary, I treat the following material by subject and let you fit it into your own schedules.

Begin by reading the text to the children and use it as a springboard for discussion. What does it mean for our choir? How do we fit it into the larger "tapestry" of our church, our school, our community? Show how each individual child is really a thread that adds beauty and importance to the whole. Tapestries are priceless treasures in homes and in the great museums of the world. Our children are priceless treasures in the lives of our churches and schools.

"Tapestry" can be used as the theme of an opening choir devotion about "the Creator's design." We are all God's children around the world. "Our colors ev'ry hue." This may also open the door to an outpouring of concerns and fears the children may have about war and racial tensions here at home as well as in the Middle East. What is it like for God's children in Ireland or Iraq who see their worlds crumbling? Is that part of the Creator's design, too?

Isolate phrases from the anthem and use them as warm up at the beginning of rehearsal. For example, sing on "loo," demonstrating only with your voice, not the piano. Have children repeat each of these 5 examples after you:



Studying rhythmic patterns can be lots of fun!

a. Identify first the 4 notes and 4 rests and their values found in the piece. If possible write them on the board. In 6/8 time:



 or  = 1 count

 or  = 2 counts

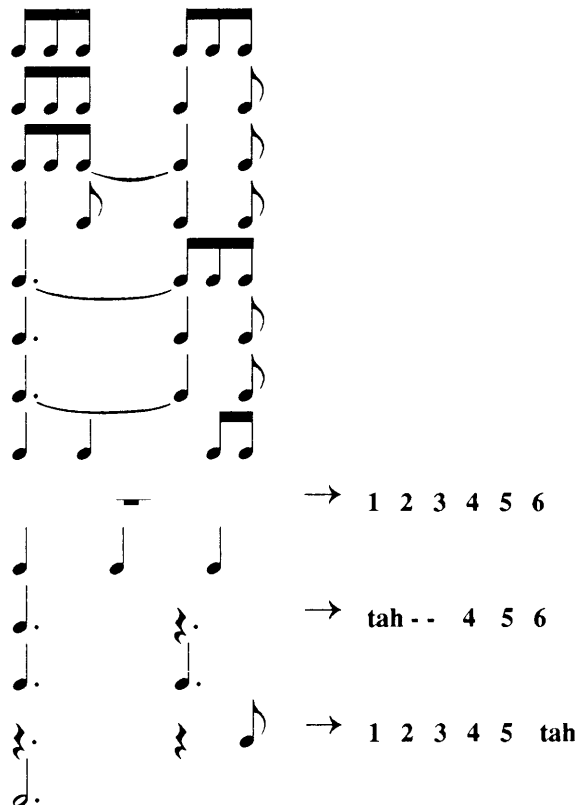
 or  = 3 counts

 or  = 6 counts

(The way to remember which rest has the greater value,

 or , is to think of them as hats. Which hat then, would hold the most water?!)

b. There are actually 14 different rhythmic patterns found in the piece. Write them on the board or a big poster and make a game of “tah,tah” - ing each one of them. Repeat each of the 14 patterns several times, to be sure the children understand them, then “tah” them all in order in strict rhythm.



→ 1 2 3 4 5 6

→ tah - - 4 5 6

→ 1 2 3 4 5 tah

Note: If the children are old enough, explain the hemiola in measure #13, by explaining the ratio of 3:2. The measures in the piece have a feeling of 2 counts to a measure. Measure 13 has a feeling of 3 to a measure. See also measure 17.

c. Now you are ready to “tah” the rhythm of the piece itself. Have each child tap his or her thigh lightly in a steady 6/8 rhythm as they “tah” the piece. An interesting next step is to have the child tap a neighbor’s arm if it doesn’t cause too much commotion!

If you have used melodic samples from “Tapestry” as warm ups, some of the melodic line will already be familiar.

a. Sing through the melody on “loo,” striving for a light, clear and free sound. Sing *a cappella* if possible and don’t play the piano accompaniment yet.

b. Be aware of and rehearse measures 12 and 13 and measure 16. Measure 12 needs a very high E<sup>4</sup> to ensure a good major 3rd and measure 13 has a downward skip of a 5th. Measure 16 has an unusual skip which will not be difficult for the singers unless you tell them so!

c. To reinforce the rhythmic learning already in place, have the singers go through the piece singing the melody on “123-123” when they come to measures 13 and 17, have them sing “1 & 2 & 3 &” on the hemiola. For example:






We are working for long smooth lines even though this piece has phrases of various lengths. Young people are capable of longer phrases than we think if shown how to sing them. Use the oboist as an example: the player uses a steady stream of air in order to produce a long line even though his or her reed has a small opening.

Give each phrase a word toward which to "point," toward which the phrase moves. For example: in the first phrase, children will tend to use half of their breath on the initial word "Sing." Have them remember the oboe player and think towards the word "World" and then "design." The first breath occurs after "design."

Ideally, the second phrase should proceed without a breath until after "line" in measure 14. This is a good opportunity to teach "staggered breathing." Take a breath when you need it, but *not* after "earth."

The third phrase may be 2 two-measure phrases or one phrase of 4 measures with a breath after "hue." Then follows the 4th phrase, measure 19-21.

IV. Pronunciation

Guidelines for pronunciation in "Tapestry" are the same sensible ones as for any other anthem:

eliminate (by softening) all R's, especially in such words as "world," "earth," "master," "for," "pattern," and "colors."

be sure all beginning and ending consonants are clearly heard. Put the K on "Creator," L on "lives," P on "part" and "pattern," and the final D on "world" and "and."

be careful of words which contain diphthongs: "design" and "line" must be sung with a pure "ah" vowel until the very last consonant "n." the "ee" of the diphthong is added at the last possible second as "n" is sung.



Unison anthems are wonderful for working on tone quality and blend. Since the range is a comfortable E-flat - E-flat octave, do not permit any chest voice. Work for a light, clear floating quality. Be very insistent on good intonation. On page 4 divide your young people into 2 groups, I and II. As they sing their respective equal phrases, measure 25 and 26, 27 and 28, help them listen to themselves to achieve equal balance and blend.



IX. Dynamics and Tempo

Each phrase generally follows the dynamic pattern:



except the last phrase which consists of a long crescendo. The chord at measure 33 is intended to be held even though harmonies in the accompaniment underneath are constantly changing. The tempo must be such that the piece moves but is not rushed.

X. Accompaniment

When all lines are musical and correct and phrases and pronunciation secure, then add the accompaniment. The children will be very secure, not having had to depend on the piano. The accompaniment will sound fresh as it adds rhythm, motion, and harmony to the vocal lines.

Enjoy your children, enjoy the music, as together you weave your own special tapestry!

... Harriet Ziegenhals