

I shall write out some comments in this email. And do know that you are welcome to forward these to the chorus, if you have a group email list. Otherwise, wait until we are all together at the rehearsal.

Merlin's Song:

I try to put accents and other markings in the music to help guide the chorus in the manner of presenting the various phrases. But often, singers do not give much attention to these markings...even though the notations are fun and helpful. So, looking at m. 18, "sing it loud", those marcato marks are there for a reason, just as are the staccati in m. 21 ("very, very proud"). Enjoy these!

Instructions like "enthusiastically" (m. 42) and "Celebratory" (letter G) add character to the singing. Try to capture these moods.

And, MOST IMPORTANTLY, I **DO** want a "toasting gesture" in mm. 81 and 105. This is fun for the audience to see.

In Praise of Music:

This is scored for Soprano and Baritone soli. I should ask you if the chorus has the scores (i.e., if the complete choral score is used, vs. just the octavo for this one song, in which case the rest of the chorus may not even have the music). At letter I, it would be so charming for the women vs. the men to raise their hands as though cheering their team! They would alternate every 2mm. phrases.

In the meantime, the soloists (who need to be theatrical, with a large dose of "ham") may continually try to upstage each other as they sing. [Do I need to encourage such a thing!!!] Each steps in front of the other, to take center stage, as it were.

The Lost Chord:

These are especially beautiful lyrics. So singers, do your best with diction, while also observing the dynamics, markings and tempi. In other words, just sing what is written on the page, lovingly! This song endeavors to portray the mysterious beauty of harmony. It goes straight through with a flow of its own.

Refuge...and the rest of the songs:

Kaitlin, I do not see the need to offer comments song-by-song from now on, for most of my comments would be *more of the same*. In other words, the essence of the expression is guided by dynamics, articulation, tempi, and adverbs. **Refuge** is a song which is performed quite often, just as a stand-alone selection. There are some lovely videos on YouTube (such as the Gateway Men's Chorus).

I notice in this song a good variety of adverbs, such as the opening *gently, almost recited*, followed by *cantabile, triumphantly, with the mystery of singing*, with *energy and celebration*.

I think that once the singers are comfortable with their notes, all that is needed is for them to follow your lead in these different moods. And this will keep/heighten the interest in the music as it reflects the wonderful poetry.

Oh, a favorite spot is m. 53, where the singers sing "a house of shining words," while the piano patterns are marked *shimmering*!

So, I shall leave off now, and encourage the singers to enjoy following the variety of expression in the music, in the poetry! I will of course be happy to answer any questions, perhaps during a break in the rehearsal. But these written comments ought to be a good start.

Good luck! (or perhaps I should say "Good health!" with a toasting gesture!)

Gwyneth Walker

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