

## Community Choir Repertoire

In this webinar we explored some 'tried and tested' repertoire which works well with community choirs of all types. We also looked at how we can use technology to help us with our online rehearsals.

### Kom - from *Sing aloud, Sing together* (Edition Peters)

This is a great piece which works well as a warm-up and can be developed nicely into a larger piece. There are no lyrics as such so the focus is on the melodic shape and rhythm. I would layer soprano, then alto, then tenor.

Layer each part in turn with the basses (or accompaniment) giving you a rhythm pedal note. Add either a backing track or a live drummer (djembe) to lift the performance.

### Da pacem Domine

This is a gem of a piece and a great introduction to polyphonic Renaissance music for any choir(!). It can be done with just SA or TB but works best with all four parts.

1. Teach the melody in the main key and sing this through with all voices. Remember to think about shaping the lines (this will really help when it goes into 4 parts).
2. Then teach the Alto/Bass part (the same as the melody a 4th lower).
3. Put two parts together (the Alto part comes in 1 minim beat after the Sop).
4. When this is confident add all four parts.

This piece tends to need to be repeated on loop a few times to 'settle' in and is fab in a good acoustic like a church.

### Think of Me - Community Choir Voiceworks

Another great, simple part-song written in the style of South African choral music. The whole book is pretty good but I use this often with new groups to see how quickly they can learn something and because it can work well SAT or SATB. The parts all work together too so encourage the choir to listen to each other and shape the music together.



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### Sing a Song of Joy - Build a Bridge

This is a good fun chorus and a great way to end a rehearsal on a high. I find teaching gospel style pieces works best by all learning the melody and then layering up the other parts. That way once one part has learnt their harmony, they keep singing.

Keep it fun, add a 'step, clap' movement and even a soloist to improvise over the top of it.

Finally end it with a big slow down for full cheesy, joyous effect!

### Technology

For the webinar I used a number of different bits of technology.

**iPad with Garage Band & a Microphone (Zoom)** which both plug into an 'audio interface' which then plugs into my laptop.

I then listen using headphones. This set up keeps me and my music perfectly in time with each other and has a better quality than just playing the sound out of speakers for Zoom (or facebook live or other) to pick up.

If you are not an apple user then look at audacity or search for apps which allow you to record or create 'loops'.

### Using Loops

One of the features of Garage band for iPad is that you record your music into sections which can then play on loop. For example, you can make a 8 bar chorus which will just loop round over and over. By then multi-tracking (recording yourself multiple times) you can keep adding in different parts. On top of this you can add instruments and have fun making your own backing track.

When leading a rehearsal, I first teach the music in the normal SfP way before adding in the backing track (with all voices muted). I then sing each part before adding it into the mix (unmuting it) this allows the singers to hear their part alongside the other voices.

I will often keep the loop going as I explain what is going to happen next although this takes some practice.



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Garage Band can be a little tricky and I had to practice quite a lot at which buttons to press to keep it looping and which to press when I wanted it to move onto the next section. However, after a few rehearsals I quickly got more efficient at pressing the right thing at the right time. The best thing to do is play around on it and watch some YouTube videos.

Note - In order to record my soprano/alto parts I use a voice transform (which is on the app under plug ins). Up 12 semitones and format to 2 or 3.

Stuart Overington, August 2020



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