

K-12 Resources: Combined Choir Ideas

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<https://acdaeast.org/2022/11/23/combined-choir-ideas/>



We are often charged with combining older and younger choirs together for a culminating song. This can offer a great opportunity for younger students to see what their future might look like in choir, as well as show the community the power of choral music across the district. We wanted to offer some of our favorite pieces for combined choirs for you to include in your next district concert! Contributors: Will Gunn, High School R&R Chair; Juan Carlos Tavarez, Elementary R&R Chair; Karla McClain, Middle School R&R Chair.

Combined High School/Middle School

“Vive La Compagnie” arr. Audrey Snyder (TB)

If you do any kind of Tenor/Bass only event, this is a great song for the students to sing together. The ranges work well for middle school voices, and the message of long live friendship is perfect. I have done this piece with soloists singing the call, which gives students opportunities to shine as well.

“Can You Hear?” by Jim Papoulis (SATB)

Kids love Papoulis. It’s as simple as that! His lyrics are always meaningful and intentional, and they give opportunities to talk about things that are important to children and how their voices matter. This piece has opportunities for solos. There are other voicings as well if this is something you would want to do with just treble singers.

“The Cuckoo” arr. Robert Hugh (SABB)

This was a huge hit when we had our combined concert with all the sending schools. Great range for the baritone voices and gives a lot of opportunity for claps, cajon, and additional folk instruments.

“Somewhere Only We Know” arr. Ed Lojeski (SAB)

This *Glee* arrangement is really popular and has great ranges for all voices. Add a drum set and you’ve got a hit!

“Seize the Day” arr. Roger Emerson (SAB)

Very repetitive and quick to put together! It also has several different voicings if the baritone part gets too low.

Combined High School/Middle School/Elementary

“It Takes a Village” by Joan Szymko

This works really well for combining large groups! I have performed this with the younger students singing the “solo” at the opening, and then staying on the melody, and then the older students sing the parts that best fit (MS might do SAT or B, and high school picks up the SATB parts). The message behind the song is beautiful and a great way to closer the concert hearing young and older voices together. I have also done this piece with community members singing with us!



“Turn the World Around” arr. Mark Hayes

When we did this as a district-wide concert finale, we split up the song so the younger kids sang certain parts, and the older kids sang other verses and then we came together at the end. It was a great way to make it more doable to teach and made an antiphonal effect as we performed this in a gymnasium around families.

“This Christmastide (Jessye’s Carol) HS and Elementary” arr. Donald Fraser.

This is one of my favorite pieces! We put the younger students on the solo sections and then they sang the soprano line. Hearing those beautiful unchanged voices with the mature sound of high school students is beautiful.

“The Road Home” by Stephen Paulus

One idea with this piece is to put the younger students on the melody and have the high school students fill out the rest of the harmonies. Gorgeous melody throughout!

“Sisi Ni Moja” by Jacob Narvarud (SATB)

I know so many choirs did this when it first came out, but it works so well for combined groups. It is repetitive, and the message of “we are one” is always a great one when doing a combined concert.

“I Am the Voice that Sings” by Michael Bussewitz-Quarm (SATB)

Very accessible and beautiful melody throughout! A great text to dive into about the power of choirs. Many different voicing options to fit what you need!

“Jambo by Teddy Kalanda Harrison” arr. Jacob Narverud (SSA)

Also available in SAB, SATB, TBB. Beautiful and consistent melody throughout the piece. I love the solo option for singers to sing freely to play with phrasing. Piece offers the opportunity to fill in the space with percussion and movement.

Combined Middle/Elementary

“I’m Going Up a Yonder” arr. Martin Sirvatka

This piece is stunning! It basically works as a double choir piece, so you can have the little ones sing the melody on part one, and then split the older singers on part two in 3 parts.

On the last page, I keep the younger students on the melody, and then have the older students sing the descant because it is pretty challenging.

“The Water is Wide/Bring Me Little Water Sylvie” arr. Rollo Dilworth (2 part)

I always love how Rollo Dilworth takes a folk song we all know and gives it a Gospel filter with his rhythmic and harmonic treatment of it. This arrangement is great for teaching phrasing and articulation.

“Tue, Tue” arr. Ruth Morris Gray (2 part)

Vocal ostinatos join one by one in the opening of this rhythmic arrangement of the authentic Ghanaian folk song. Unison lines, block triads, and a reset of the dynamics in the choral bridge are a blast. Repeated sections make for quick learning and easy memorization. I love the simplicity of this piece, yet with the layered ostinatos, it makes space for a sophisticated fun piece.

“Sing to Me” by Adrea Ramsey (SA)

This is just an absolutely gorgeous piece! An uplifting text by Ella Wheeler Wilcox is set to charming music in this wonderful piece with melodic interest in all parts and conservative ranges. Wonderful piece to practice mixed meters, duration, breath support.

“As Long As I Have Music, Words” by Don Besig and Music by Nancy Price (2 Part)

This beautiful lyric ballad, which practically sings itself, tells about the special power music has to lift our hearts and minds.

“I See the Moon, Words and Music” by Douglas Beam (2 Part)

Do you ever look out at the moon and just think about how beautiful it is? So far, yet so far away. This is a beautiful two-part piece partner song. A simple yet sophisticated piece!

“Kuku Eé” by Eva Ugalde (SA)

This is really just a fun, playful piece to introduce to your upper elementary students and beginning middle school to perform. This piece has room for body percussion and movement opportunities. You can explore dynamics, solo sections at the beginning and end, and diction work! Find many interpretations on YouTube. 