

**B6 workshop, MYSTERIES**  
**STUDY GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Dear singers of *Mysteries*!

I am very happy to greet you and really excited with the opportunity to share with you this adventure in **Europa Cantat Pécs 2015!** I am really looking forward to meeting you and spending a wonderful week together with this project.

As you know, *Mysteries* has been created to be much more than a repertoire for women's choir. It goes a big step beyond the traditional concept of the choral music concert and tries to integrate other disciplines, as choreography, movement, staging, light and sound design, recorded and live music, make up, hair dressing and clothes... During this week we will try to pay attention to all these areas to create a surprising and disquieting show that will not leave anyone indifferent.

The structure of this project is based on eight pieces of contemporary choir music for female choir and some linking sections between them. As all the pieces will be staged, it is very important that we all can share some ideas in advance so that you can prepare some material at home to start singing by heart and working on movements from the first rehearsal. I really need your full commitment in this previous work to build an amazing performance and to enjoy the rehearsal time during our week, thank you for it!

We are 49 singers in *Mysteries* (S1 - 18, S2 - 10, M - 4, A1 - 11, A2 - 6). Sometimes we will be divided into three voices and sometimes we will be divided into four voices and with some extra divisions. So, first of all, some ideas to take in account:

-When divided into three voices we will have 18 S1, 14 S2 (10 S2 + 4 M) and 17 A (11 A1 + 6 A2).

-When divided into four voices, mezzos you have to think and decide depending on the lines you have to sing and on how they fit your voice if you join S2 or A1.

-When some extra divisions appear in your line, please prepare at home both options so that we can make a balanced division during our rehearsals in the most positive way.

Now let's work on each piece individually and let's share some ideas and sections that you should discover and prepare at home. I will try to give you clear instructions and all the help and the support I can.

## 1. MEDIA VITA (IN THE MIDST OF LIFE), Michael McGlynn

This beautiful song has been composed by Michael McGlynn, founder and singer of *Anuna*, a well-known Irish professional vocal group. It is based on a medieval melody from the XII century about the proximity of death. We will sing this song from the audience walking in procession to the stage.

- First two bars will be sung by a soloist that will be alone already on the stage.
- Bars 3 to 10 will be sung by all the choir in *mezzoforte* with a very strong feeling.
- On bar 11 the choir starts walking to the stage. We will work with the division in four voices. S1 and S2 will sing S line and A1 and A2 will sing A line. Notice that altos start singing already divided in two (first and second alto).
- On bar 23 sopranos join altos for the long *oo* while soloist sings from the stage the solo part.
- On bar 33 the choir goes on with a similar section. Notice that when we arrive to bar 41 we will change lines and S1 will sing Mz line (bars 41, 42, 43, 44, higher notes) and S2 will sing S line (bars 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 lower notes).
- On bar 45 we came back to the original division in four voices. Notice that S2 is divided in two lines. Please second sopranos, practice both lines from bar 45 to bar 56. It may happen that we can ask some S1 to join S2, so please, practice it also.
- On bar 57 we all join altos for the final *oo*. This is supposed to be sung already on stage after the procession.

-I attach a file with the pronunciation of the Latin (in Italian style).

-I attach some YouTube links in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGfBwWrNOic>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUG7D9b0kWY>

-If you would like to sing this solo part, please prepare it so that I can listen to you in Pécs and decide who will sing this beautiful melody.

-When we finish *Media Vita* we will hear a recorded section (2'00'') in E and over this recording we will sing and move to a new position for the next piece.

## 2. ZAI ITXOITEN (HOPING), Javi Busto

This piece by the well-known Basque composer is written inspired by a text by Ederne Martínez Juanaberria, a teenager who used to write poetry as therapy to her mental problems. The piece is dark and sad but opens the gate to a white butterfly of hope in the end.

-We have different divisions in this piece but mainly we will work with the division in four voices.

-Bars 1 to 6 are unison choir and quite free.

-Bars 7 to 15 we will work in three voices. S1 will sing S line and S2 and A1 and A2 (altos together) will sing A line. On bars 13, 14 and 15 S2 will sing top notes and altos will sing the notes below.

-Bar 16 unison choir, *molto accelerando*.

-Bars 17, 18, 19, 20. S1 will divide in two (B and F sharp), S2 sing E, A1 sing C sharp and A2 sing G sharp.

-On bars 21 to 47 we go back the division in three voices. S1 sing S line, S2 sing A line and A1 and A2 together sing A line.

-On bars 48 till the end when four notes appear A1 go to second line to sing A sharp and back to G sharp. All the S2 sing B sharp and C sharp.

-I attach a file with the pronunciation of the Basque.

-I attach some YouTube links in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i31UzqNjnb0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvCf1W8FM7I>

-I Attach also translation to English:

HOPING

for sweet hope

afraid of something

Seagull feathers on the beach

A day

a special

horrible day

there are still

a few hours left

Hoping

and something is moving

inside of me

A white butterfly in the path

-When we finish *Zai Itxoiten* there will be a recorded sound effect of cathedral bells that will make us fall to the ground. The next piece is *An Aboriginal Song* by Veljo Tormis and we will sing it lying on the stage so it is really very important to be very sure with these notes!

### 3. AN ABORIGINAL SONG, Veljo Tormis

This is a song about everything that is forbidden, and even if the composer writes that the song is in Polynesian it is thought that this melody was also a hidden way to fight against Russia, trying to promote and strengthen Estonian culture.

-We will work with the division in three voices but in a different way. Pay attention to this piece, it seems to be easy to read but when we sing together it is full of dissonances and it is very easy to mix lines. I need you to be very sure and to defend strongly your line!

-First page S1 will sing S line and S2 and A1 and A2 will sing A line. On bar 5 A2 will keep the long B and A1 will join S2.

-Nº 1. S1 sing S line and S2, A1 and A2 sing A line.

-Nº 2. S1 sing S line, S2 and A1 sing together A line and A2 keeps the long B.

-Nº 3. S1 sing S line and S2, A1 and A2 sing A line.

-Nº 4. S1 sing S line, S2 and A1 sing together A line and A2 keeps the long B.

-Nº 5. S1 sing S line and S2, A1 and A2 sing A line.

-Nº 6. S1 sing S line and S2, A1 and A2 sing A line. Work this section deeply, it is quite difficult!

-Nº 7. S1 sing S line and S2, A1 and A2 sing A line.

-I attach some YouTube links in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB2bQjOljlo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQSyOvFwpqo>

-When we finish *An Aboriginal Song* (lying on the floor) we will hear a recorded melody and we will creep very slowly to a new position sitting in circles to sing *Past Life Melodies*.

### 4. PAST LIFE MELODIES, Sarah Hopkins

This is a very special and interesting song inspired by two melodies that appeared very often in Sarah Hopkins' dreams when she was pregnant. The piece includes a different way to produce the sound and overtone singing. Don't worry! It seems to be difficult but in fact it is not! It will be very fun to prepare this song together and to try different singing techniques.

-We will work with the choir divided in four voices (S1, S2, A1, A2).

-Please, study very carefully the first unison.

-A. S1 and S2 sing 1,2,3,4, 5 line and A1 and A2 sing 4,6,7 line. At the end of this section sopranos are divided in two voices (S1 and S2).

- B. S1 sing 1,2,3,4,5 line, S2 sing 6 line, A1 sing 4 line and A2 sing 7 line.
- You don't have to study this piece from C, we will discover it together.

-I attach some YouTube links in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o87rD29rl-4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpX60cTo2QY>

-When we finish *Past Life Melodies* (sitting on the floor) we will hear a recorded sound effect of doors slamming to go to a new position.

## **5. ON SUURI SUN RANTAS AUTIUS, Matti Hyökki**

This is a well known Finnish traditional song about sadness and loneliness. It was written for *Tapiola* choir and has spread around the world in different choirs' programs.

- We will work with the division in four voices (S1, S2, A1, A2).
- Bar 1 to 8 will be sung by everybody (not a soloist).
- Bars 9 to 16 S1 sing lower line and S2, A1, and A2 sing top line.
- Bar 16-17 till the end, A1 sing first line (main melody, solo line), S1 sing second line (starting from a high D), S2 sing third line (starting from low D and B flat), A2 sing fourth line (starting from low D and E flat).
- On bars 28-29 we have a solo or small group's descant for some high sopranos. Please, prepare it if you want to sing it.

-I attach a solo version of the song by a Finnish singer to hear the pronunciation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoZwHkYu6aM>

-I attach some YouTube links of the choir version in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvezeDomChk>

-When we finish *On Suuri Sun Rantas Autius* we will hear a recorded section (4'18'') in F and over this recording we will sing and move to a new position for the next piece.

## **6. BEASTS IN BEATS, David Azurza**

This is a piece commissioned by Europa Cantat for our workshop to a close friend of mine and talented Basque composer, David Azurza. I met him some months ago to tell him about the general ambiance of *Mysteries* and he wrote this original piece inspired by the character of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The subtitle of the piece is

*The monster in me*, so as you can imagine the music describes a classic female choir that gradually becomes a choir of monsters...

-This piece is written for three voices, S1 sing S line (first line), S2 sing S line (second line) and A1 together with A2 sing A line (third line).

-Prepare please your line in between bars 1 and 39.

-When S2 sing TR you should add a I sound (TRI)

-When A sing TN you should add an A sound (TAN)

-When A sing K you should add an A sound (KA)

-We will discover together the piece and the *monster* part from bar 39.

-When we finish *Beasts in Beats* we will hear a recorded section (1'53'') and during it we will go out from the stage to take a chair, come back and sit.

## **7. LACRIMOSA, Boaz Avni**

This is a very interesting piece by the Hebrew composer that belongs to a *Missa Brevis* for SSA choir and electronics. The piece is written in minimalist style and will be performed sitting on a chair.

-This piece is written for three voices, SSA, as we did before and will be sung with a recorded electronic accompaniment without conductor.

-Prepare please your line to be able to sing it from the beginning and start with the choreography as soon as possible.

-When we finish *Lacrimosa* we will hear a strong wind (2'03'') and during this sound we will move to a new position to sing *Hoc Est*.

## **8. HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM, Karmina Silec**

This is an experimental piece to create a live choir sound over a recorded sound with some solo parts *ad libitum* and a staging proposal using small led flashlights. You don't have to prepare it in advance, we will work on it during the week.

-When we finish *Hoc Est* we will start straight away with *Ikimilikiliklikik*, almost in the same position.

## 9. IKIMILIKILIKLIK, Tobin Stokes

This is a strong piece written for my children's choir *Leioa Kantika Korala* by the Canadian composer Tobin Stokes. It is based on an *Akelarre*, a party of witches that according to a Basque legend was held in the summer nights around the fire. The text is a very famous tongue-twister, often included in children's games and songs.

- We will work with the division of four voices (S1, S2, A1, A2).
- S1 and S2, prepare very well the onomatopoeia rhythms from bars 1 to 16.
- Bars 25 to 37 A2 sing divided in two groups. Please, prepare both.
- Bars 38 to 57, prepare this spoken rhythm with steps.
- Bars 60 to 71, prepare this part with knocking on your body.
- Bars 72 to 79, prepare this part with steps.

-I attach a file with the pronunciation of the Basque.

-I attach some YouTube links in order to help you practice the piece.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2haITJzFMk>

Next week I will send you some make-up guide (make-up, hairdressing, clothing).

Remember: in the final list of repertoire we leave out *Aglepta* (original repertoire) to put *Beasts in Beats*. Information about scores are still available here:

<http://www.kotta.info/campaign/EC2015B6>

**-PLEASE TRY TO PREPARE MUSIC YOU CAN IN ADVANCE FOLLOWING THESE HEADLINES. USE THE VIDEOS (even if sometimes the quality is not very good) TO SING WITH THEM AND TO GET USED TO SOME STAGING PROPOSALS. I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST AND SEE YOU VERY SOON IN PÉCS!!**

**Basilio Astulez**

Conductor of *B6 Mysteries*