

## THREE MADRIGALS for DEVELOPMENTAL CHOIRS

Madrigal literature, from the Renaissance/Early Classical periods, provides a rewarding musical experience for both teacher and student. This secular body of choral music provides literally hundreds of clever and well written compositions, primarily in English and Italian. There are many excellent collections widely available and most pieces are available on CPD. These arrangements are terrific for intermediate and advanced choirs. However, many of these CPD arrangements place great demands on the range of young voices, making them inappropriate for developmental choirs, both middle and high school ages. These arrangements will work for singers with limited range without sacrificing the integrity of the piece.

### OPTIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

While Madrigals are frequently performed a cappella, they would certainly have had some type of accompanying instruments, either lute or keyboard. While teaching Madrigal literature a cappella can be an excellent teaching strategy, many developmental groups do not sing in tune consistently without some support. The accompaniment provided for these Madrigals is completely optional, but will provide more performance possibilities.

### DYNAMICS and TEXTURE

Use contrasting dynamics on the repeated sections, and consider using a quartet or a small ensemble to vary the texture on the repeats. Including instruments such as guitar, recorders, or keyboard on repeats or as interludes can add variety and contrasts....don't be afraid to improvise! Expressive markings have not been included so teachers will feel free to make decisions about dynamics and texture that fit their individual choirs.

#### 1. **So ben mi ch'a bon tempo, Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605)**

A Cathedral musician from Modena, Italy. Vecchi was widely famous for secular compositions. This text is believed to have been written around 1440. The lyrics describe a deceitful romance, and like many madrigal text focuses on secular love, with double meanings and humor.

So ben mi ch'a bon tempo-A Poetic Translation

I know a lucky fellow, but I can't say who.  
He seems to be quite a favorite, but my lips are sealed.  
If I could only tell you! Who comes, who goes, who stays?  
But if I did tell you, you would be jealous and probably despair.

This arrangement of, "**So ben mi. Ch'a bon tempo**," has modified the alto and tenor lines to provide more accessibility, and has simplified the bass line found in CPD versions . This arrangement would be appropriate for most 9-10th grade mixed choirs. An optional keyboard part is provided.

#### 2. **In These Delightful Pleasant Groves, Henry Purcell (1658-1695)**

A prominent English composer who held royal appointments under three Kings, and became organist at Westminster Abbey. Purcell wrote many secular works for theatre, opera, and chamber music. In These Delightful Pleasant Groves in one of the last madrigals written in the English tradition and was incidental music for a theatrical work, The Libertine.

Henry Purcell's madrigal, "**In These Delightful Pleasant Groves**," is another exciting piece that has been arranged for young voices. This arrangement lowers the key and simplifies the lower three parts, while preserving the character of the piece. The ranges will work with young

singers in developmental middle school or high school choirs. An optional keyboard part is provided.

### **3. Now is the Month of Maying, Thomas Morley (1557-1603)**

This is a well known English madrigal by one of the most well known and prolific composers of this period. The text freely uses double-entendre; a practice common during this period of Renaissance composition.

"**Now is the Month of Maying**", is typically in the form AABB, with contrast of dynamics or texture on the repeated AB. Sometimes instruments are used to play the repeat. This arrangement actually changes the form from AABB to AAB for each verse, and provides a variation of A, with each part singing a few ornamental passages that provide an interesting line and provide contrast to the original A section. The keyboard part is optional.

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