

- NOTES FOR COMPOSERS -  
ABOUT THE BROOKLYN YOUTH CHORUS MEN'S ENSEMBLE  
FOR THE 2019-20 SEASON

The Men's Ensemble is Brooklyn Youth Chorus' professional level all-male ensemble. The group is comprised of approximately 30 changed voice singers of various cultural backgrounds. The group's tenor and bass repertoire ranges from classical to contemporary to barbershop to pop. Musicianship experience varies greatly among the group's singers.

#### VOICE RANGE

The main tessitura (comfortable range) is roughly an octave and a half – A2 to D4;

#### RANGE EXTENSION

Some basses can reach down to G2, and some tenors can reach up to A4, but extended ranges should be approached carefully – easier by step or small skips rather than large skips – and should not be sustained for long periods of time or over extended phrases (a place to visit, not to live)

#### PASSAGGIO/REGISTER EVENT

Most of our singers switch from pure chest voice into either head voice, mixed voice, or falsetto around D4. It is comfortable for most tenors to sing through D4, but be mindful of extended passages that lay within the passaggio zone (D4, E4, and F4) – again this should not be sustained for long periods of time.

#### VOICE PARTS/DIVISI

Typically the Men's Ensemble has been most successful with pieces written in 3-parts (Tenor 1, Tenor 2/Baritone, and Bass). The group has also performed 2-part (Tenor and Bass) and unison repertoire.

In general, learning pieces comprised of more than 3 parts requires considerable rehearsal time, and is easiest to achieve with limited divisi on isolated chords or for limited sections of a piece, or by incorporating solo/small (no more than two at a time) group lines on top of the main choral texture.

#### VOCAL COLOR/TIMBR

The vocal sound of the Men's Ensemble can range from light and clear to full and robust. Generally speaking, the full sound often associated with all-male singing groups is easiest to access in the C3 to C4 range. Pitches along this range can also be sung comfortably in any register quality or 'mix' of qualities.

#### PERFORMANCES

The group performs roughly 10-12 times during each season for galas, parties, and community events. Pieces that are rhythmic, fast-paced, and uplifting generally appeal to the group's membership.

#### CROSS-CHORAL TRAINING™ METHOD

Brooklyn Youth Chorus is known for its "cross-choral training™" method, which prepares singers to produce a wide range of vocal qualities and timbres, and supports the belief that authentic performances within a musical style include a vocal quality that is distinct and appropriate. Singers enjoy using the full range of their voices in their programming. That said, it is easier to 'add weight' in their sound as a program progresses than to take it out, meaning that songs sung in a lighter quality (classical, musical, sweeter and more gentle sounds) typically precede those sung in a heavier quality (pop music, belting, loud gospel, etc.). Abrupt and extreme changes in vocal quality can be very difficult, although variation between sections or even between voice parts is certainly doable.