



PENINSULA
WOMEN'S CHORUS



Style Guide for Composers

Updated 07.2024





from the AD

Dr. Anne K. Hege

This **Style Guide** has been designed for composers collaborating with the **Peninsula Women's Chorus**. This document is not meant to be limiting, but rather to serve as a starting point for conversation, collaboration, and expression with the understanding that rehearsal time is limited and that a clear, efficient, and effective score will lead to the strongest performance. Composers are welcome to stretch beyond these guidelines when their artistry and creativity demands it. We highly recommend communication in advance if going outside these guidelines.

We have many programs, including our two-year **composer-in-residence** program and **collaborations** with academic institutions, which include workshop sessions and work-in-progress collaborations. This style guide outlines what will be needed for final scores for PWC season concerts and also what is helpful for any score reading.

In general, we highly recommend reaching out with any questions in advance to our artistic director, Anne Hege (annehege@pwchorus.org).

General Guidelines

- When pitches are notated, all scores should be written for **treble voices** using the **treble clef**.
- **Piano** may be included in any composition. Instruments beyond piano must be discussed in advance. See piano guidelines (p. 8) for specifics on piano scoring.
- Please write for **SSAA** or **SSA** treble voices. Please consult in advance if you would like to divide into more parts than this, although short moments of divisi are fine. Please do not change voice divisi within a piece (don't start in SSAA and move to SSA in the middle of the piece). Up to two solo parts are fine. Please consult with the AD if you would like any of the following: more than 2 solo parts, double choir, unique spatialization, or movement. We are happy to include these elements, but we need to know in advance during our programming stage to plan accurately.
- **Range:**
 - **SSAA:** Sop 1 - C4 (middle C) - Bb5, Sop 2 - Bb3-A5, Alto 1- G3-F5, Alto 2- F3- D5.
 - **SSA:** Sop 1 - C4-A5, Sop 2 - Bb3-G5, Alto - G3-E5. Some ranges can be extended for short times, especially our A2s (some can go as low as D3, but the ranges suggested are most successful for our sections).
 - When writing **unison** for the whole chorus C4-D5 is best.
- For repertoire to be performed in PWC-produced concerts, the PWC AD must review and approve all **text** before the composer begins composing. PWC strives to internalize and convey the meanings and emotions of the texts we sing and we want to make sure that the words we sing and speak represent us. Composers are expected to obtain and secure all rights to texts used in the piece in advance.
- **Video** or **fixed tape track** may be possible, but these elements must be discussed in advance to confirm their possibility at our venues.
- We welcome **movement**, but the scale of staging or movement should be discussed in advance (see below for more notes on movement).
- We **memorize** most of our repertoire. This should be considered when composing for PWC (see below for more notes on memorization).
- Scores should be **full scores** (see order of parts below in score guidelines). Please do not send parts unless the work includes instruments (and this is agreed on in advance). If the work is for chorus and instruments, please provide the chorus with a score for chorus and piano reduction of the instrumental parts along with a full score (C score), and instrumental parts.

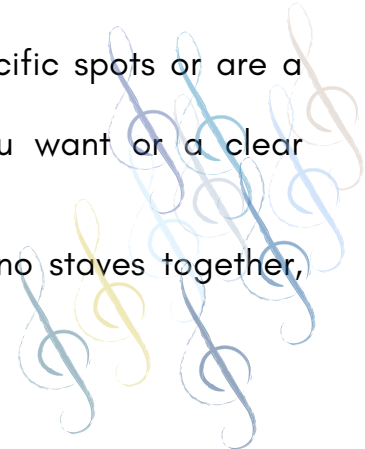
Scores should be emailed as PDFs by the agreed-upon due date to annehege@pwchorus.org.

Score Guidelines

- The score should be portrait layout on **8.5"x11" letter paper**. If landscape is the much better option, that is also possible in the 8.5"x11" size.
- The preferred score order, from top down:
 - **SSAA + piano**: soprano 1, soprano 2, alto 1, alto 2, piano (2 staves)
 - **SSA + piano**: soprano 1, soprano 2, alto, piano (2 staves)
 - Where a **solo** or solos are present in addition to the chorus, they should generally be notated on a separate staff above the S1 line. If the solo replaces a section, it should be noted on the appropriate voice-part staff with solo and tutti clearly marked.
- No **key signatures** should appear in the score, unless the piece has a key.
- All **tuplets** should be bracketed.
- Please note that a longer score is preferred to small print, especially with text. Please make sure your score is **legible**. Handwritten scores are generally discouraged, as they are often hard to read. To ensure efficient rehearsals, please make sure your score is clear and easy to read.
- Strong scores show a composer's **priorities** in what is shown on the page. If what you care about is best notated with a **graphic score**, direction score, or new form of score, please use this form with clear directions.

Please make sure to follow these notation expectations including:

- **Measure numbers** on every system
- **Rehearsal numbers** for longer pieces
- **Page numbers** on every page
- Score **date** on each page (in case there are future edits)
- **Slurs** on vocal lines to denote a continued syllable.
- **Text extensions** to also show a continued syllable, vowel or vocal sound.
- **Tempo markings, time signatures, key signatures** (all where applicable), if this does not support what you are trying to express, it is fine to not include them.
- **Breath markings** are helpful if you want breathing in specific spots or are a vocalist and know where they should be.
- If using vowels alone, give **IPA** to clarify the vowels you want or a clear description (for example a in father).
- Use **beat spacing** and make sure that beats align vertically.
- **Group and bar** choral parts together, group and bar piano staves together, systems should have bracket for the full system.





Deliverables

- **Score**
- **Translation**
- **Program Notes** (150–500 words)
- **Score/Conductor Notes** as needed
- **Composer Bio** (150–250 words)
- **MIDI** rendition or **audio mockup** of your score, if possible, as an MP3 file

- **Optional:** *A MIDI file with all staves saved as separate tracks; this allows us to make part-specific practice files*

Things to Consider

Our chorus is not amplified, and we do not use microphones. If the composer is interested in live processing, please consult the AD in advance to determine its feasibility.

Microtones or specific tuning systems beyond Western tempered tuning: Please consult with the artistic director before using any tuning system besides tempered tuning (A 440) or microtones (less than a chromatic step). Glissando or pitch bending are fine.

Duration: Please consult your contract with PWC for the expected duration. Programming and rehearsal time are based on this number, so if this length changes during composition, consult with the AD.

Pitch: Very few, if any, of our singers have perfect pitch. Please consider how pitches will be obtained or supported if the work is a cappella. Tuning forks are a possibility for a soloist within a work or for one singer to start/repitch a new section.

Memorization: PWC memorizes most of our repertoire. Please consider this in the way that you compose your piece. Long pieces with little or no repetition or patterns are very difficult to memorize. Repetition with many small changes in patterns are also hard to memorize. Long held notes of varying lengths or odd amounts of rest that must be memorized by counts are also difficult to memorize (although some of this can be cued by the conductor). If you do not want your piece memorized, please consult with the AD to consider this in the programming.



Things to Consider

Movement: Movement and/or staging or spatialization are possible and encouraged with PWC. Please remember that these elements take the performer's rehearsal time and brain space. Most PWC members are not trained movers, so all movement should be simple. Some members have limited movement ability or must be seated, and this should be considered. If using body percussion, this can be scored, if in unison, as an instrumental staff for all, or if by part, directly above the relative vocal part.

Community: The Peninsula Women's Chorus is a community chorus. Every member of the chorus is a volunteer. The group strives to balance artistic excellence within our supportive and deeply felt community. We the PWC are honored and committed to helping the composer realize their vision for their music, and ask that the composer honor and respect the gifts and limitations which come from the PWC being a high-level, all-volunteer chorus during the rehearsal and performance process. It is our goal to support the creation and life of new compositions through a deep, vulnerable engagement with the material and each other (including the composer). We feel that the composition/performance process is a reciprocal adventure with the goal that every chorus member and collaborator does their best to be clear, kind, respectful, and committed to the process.





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Prepared Piano and Extended Techniques Piano Style Guide for Anne Rainwater

This document was created to provide composers with some guidelines, both general and specific, that will serve as an aid throughout their compositional process. I am happy to be in conversation about any notational and technical requests that are not specifically mentioned in this document.

Contact Information:

email: anne.rainwater@gmail.com

website: <https://annerainwater.com/>



General Guidelines

- The score should be in portrait layout on 8.5"x11" paper
- No key signatures should appear in the score unless the piece itself has a key
- Transposed parts should be checked for proper enharmonic spellings of accidentals (e.g. avoid B#, Fb, etc. unless voice leading is clearer this way)
- All tuplets should be bracketed
- Regarding **graphic scores**:
 - I welcome the use of graphic scores but kindly ask that a composer uses standardized symbols to refer to extended piano techniques
 - For reference, please see Dr. Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa's **Safe Practice of Piano Extended Techniques**
- In that same document, Dr. Iwaasa's suggestion to "avoid inventing new notations for commonly used techniques" is greatly appreciated

Safety & Liability

If the composer is hosting the event on behalf of their school, institution, performance venue, or other location, Anne assumes no liability for damage done to any piano involving extended techniques or prepared piano materials. Any and all items used inside or on the piano must be cleared and approved by the venue location and appropriate contact person (management or other on-site personnel) before rehearsals and performances take place.

Considerations for the Piano Itself

- Each brand and model of piano has a different frame and thus a different layout of sections of the keyboard. Make sure that what you're asking for, e.g. a quick glissando gesture, can be executed given the piano that will be used in rehearsals and performance.
- In general, it is best to avoid moving, touching or manipulating the felt dampers on a grand piano. They are easily damaged and cannot really be repaired, only replaced.

Things I Enjoy Doing

- I love playing complex rhythms and large, percussive gestures, and I have really come to embrace the piano as a percussion instrument.
- Materials and techniques that I have used to varying degrees of success over the years include: hands, fingers and fingernails for pizzing, glissando-ing, and executing harmonics and mutes; glass, screws, plastic, and thimbles; horse hair for bowing the strings, a chisel (i.e. in George Crumb's *Vox Balaenae*); reusable Blu-Tack (good for muting or detuning individual strings); coins and a cloth bag filled with pennies. I welcome other materials and technique ideas!

Physical Limitations

- My regular reach is a M9 with a minor 10th (e.g. Eb to Gb) possible on a very stretchy day, but I can't reliably get to that interval quickly or hold it for very long.
- For singing or whistling while playing: my vocal range is generally from an A below to C to a D an octave and a 4th above that. For whistling, my range is an A below middle C to the C an octave and a 3rd above that.

Further Reading

- Please see Jean-François Proulx's dissertation called ***A Pedagogical Guide to Extended Piano Techniques***, available through the Temple University Library free and online to the public



GOALS

In the end, our intention is to:

- Support the **collaborative creation** of a successful new work (success is fulfilling the composer's vision)
- Create works that **highlight the beautiful and unique strengths** of a high-level treble community chorus
- Schedule **rehearsal and workshop** time to try things and hone things early in the semester (edits are ok!)
- Support **human connection**
- Support the **growth of community** through creation and adventure