

Conductor's Notes – Drill Ye Tarriers

Background:

This work song was composed by in 1888. The title refers to Irish workers, drilling holes in rock to blast out railroad tunnels at the time when railroads were being built across the country. The word tarriers has a number of possible origins. It may refer to the word “tarry” - to delay or it may come from the French word – tariere – which means to drill. It is one of many worksongs through history that villainized an unkind “boss man”.

This was the only arrangement of this song that I could find online when I ordered it. It is far too easy for a community choir and the original arrangement did not offer enough harmony to be satisfying to our Jubilate Community Singers. So we added parts suggested by the chords and the accompaniment. For that reason, sopranos and basses will need to read their parts off of the separate documents. Baritones can sing the lowest parts an octave higher if needed. Tenors can read the men's part as written, and altos can read their parts as written in the original publication.

Vocalizations: There are several places in the score that call upon the singers to shout a few short phrases. In vocalizing these, the quality of the shout is more important than the dynamics. In other words, allow the words to be staccato and energetic – but probably *mf* or even *f* rather than *ff*. Make sure to emphasize the “st” in the shouted word “blast.”

Breathing: Breathe at breath marks and rests. Breathing is no a challenge in this arrangement.

Phrasing: The phrases tend to follow the rise and fall of the pitch arcs – with 2 small arcs in the verses and one long one in the refrain. Let that guide your phrasing.

Diction: This is American, not British English. It should not sound as if it is being sung by a group well-versed in English diction for singers.

Basses – on the “doom”s close quickly to the “m” when you sing these words to make the sound more percussive.

Dynamics: Observe dynamics as written. Notice that verses crescendo from *mp* or *mf* to *forte* – with the phrase “yes it's work all day for sugar in your tay” always peaking at a *forte*.

Articulation: Keep the work rhythms in you head as you sing this. Observe all rests and accent marks to help emphasize those rhythms. This should be sung with a lot of energy. Think 19th century work crew.

**** Important: Everyone watch the conductor for the fermata – page 6; second staff, measure 2.