

What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor: traditional sea chantey arr. Jens Klimek

This song is a well-known sea shanty that is believed to have originated in the early 19th century or late 18th century. As with all shanties, this song was sung to accompany the sailor's work tasks. Sea shanties declined in use as ships were modified and along the modification, the kinds of work required of sailors changed.

In the 20th century, "Drunken Sailor" was revived as a popular song and became one of the best-known songs of the shanty repertoire.

Modifications and explanations pertaining to the score:

Measures 7-14 – alto and tenor: do not make the waves sounds. It just doesn't work. We can use a rainstick if we need a sound like that.

Measure 48 cross out the 1st ending sign; it will be a straight repeat with no 1st and 2nd endings

Measure 49 -53 – eliminate; it is too schmaltzy

Measure 54 – make the shhh sound without losing tempo

Measure 62 – observe the stomp on beat 4

Measure 79 – observe the measure of rest (unless we left it out of the recording)

Vocal tone – generally sing with a light and buoyant tone; the tempo is fast and it will be easier to sing with a lighter tone

Breathing – breathe with the pattern for verse 2 bar phrase, 2 bar phrase, 4 bar phrase; it is generally appropriate to breathe at commas or periods

Phrasing – when your vocal part has the melody, give special emphasis to the last three notes of each 2 bar phrase so that the changing pitches are given special emphasis – rather than the repeated pitches

Dynamics – observe the dynamics as clearly indicated in the score; especially the *ppp* m. 55-62 measure 71 to the end – *F* not *FF*

Diction – whenever your vocal part carries the words of the verse, enunciate the words as clearly as possible. This can be challenging with a quick tempo

Over emphasize all consonants – especially “t”, “d”, “k”, “p”

Altos and basses – your 2nd verse at measure 33 has a modified text – “Give him a dash with a bosun's rope end.” (That actually means something in old fashioned sailor language.)

Articulation - observe all rests, accents, and fermatas;

Hoo-ray – sections accompanying verses are short and detached; do not sing into the rests

Measures 33-38 – sopranos and tenors sing the glissandos on a vocalize “m” – do not begin them early; the glissando always begins on the second measure of each occurrence

Tempo: be ready to watch carefully for the accelerando and molto ritard on the last 2 pages

SSAATTBB sections: If it is not too difficult for you and within your vocal range, please record both voice parts in your section – for example: soprano I and soprano II