

**2022 Florida All-State Choir  
Conductor Notes - Jake Runestad**

Hello Florida friends! For the 2022 All-State Choir, I want to share some information about the repertoire, recommend some recordings (click the “Listen” links below), and offer practice tips. These are all great recordings for you to sing along with as you’re practicing!

**Katerina Gimón: Fire**

[Listen](#)

Katerina’s “Fire” is a thrilling exploration of sound and emotional intensity. The trick with this is to really engage with the uniqueness of vocal timbres — these are not your “traditional” choral sounds and that’s what makes it so engaging! In the recording, note the energy that the singers bring to their sounds. There’s a constant, forward-moving direction — try to find that energy and intensity when you’re practicing your parts!

**Reena Esmail: TaReKiTa**

[Listen](#)

Reena Esmail is an amazing composer who uses influences of Classical Indian music in her work. This piece incorporates syllables based on the sound of the tabla, an Indian drum. Note the way the choir pronounces these words and *please* listen to the videos below in which Reena explains the vocal sounds. Enjoy the glissandos and sing all the way through them!

Pronunciation guides:

[Video Part 1](#)

[Video Part 2](#)

[Video Part 3](#)

**Undine Smith Moore (arr.): We Shall Walk Through the Valley**

[Listen](#)

This gorgeous arrangement of an African-American Spiritual is by the important American composer Undine Smith Moore. Notice the compelling musicality that the Capital University Chapel Choir uses in their singing! They take time with each phrase, and shape each line with beautiful arcs. Sopranos — allow that opening phrase to soar without vocal tension or too much power.

**W.A. Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus**

[Listen](#)

One of the most-performed choral works from Mozart, this “Ave Verum Corpus” is a cornerstone of Classical European choral music. We’ll talk much more about its meaning when we’re together, but I hope you’ll embody the reverence of this music and the sensitivity of each musical line. Notice the delicate way the choir begins each phrase. Think about tall, open vowels — like there’s a large cathedral inside your mouth!

**Jake Runestad: Wild Forces**

[Listen](#)

This is all about energy! Every note needs forward direction with driving, dance-like propulsion! Here’s a [Guide to Overtone Singing](#), which is featured in this piece.

**(continued)**

**Jake Runestad: Let My Love Be Heard** [Listen](#)

This is a very, very special piece to me and I can't wait to hear you sing it! Note the way the choir sings the triplets (especially when there's a tie or rest on the first note) — they are always *s t r e t c h e d* and never made to sound like 16th notes. That's really crucial! Take your time with every line and let it breathe. This should never feel rushed. Tenors — when you're singing into the higher parts of the melody, think about finding a head-voice quality and avoid tension.

**Jake Runestad: We Can Mend the Sky** [Listen](#)

The piece has a great deal of meaning and also a great deal of variety in the emotional worlds we will need to create. Listen to how the choir has great intensity at the opening — the word “Naftu” means *life* or *soul*, and the bass drum has a threatening insistence, as if chasing the voices. The fugue that begins around measure 43 requires a lot of rhythmic precision — lean in to those accents (and find a similar intensity to the opening)! We will have auditions for the solo part, so sopranos and altos, please prepare this if you'd like to be considered for singing it! Here's a [Pronunciation Guide](#) for the words in Somali.

It means so much that you're giving voice to the messages in these pieces. I can't wait to be with you in January!



Jake Runestad