

An Old-Fashioned Song

(Don't You Hate It?)

Performance Notes

The musical team of Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell wrote "An Old-Fashioned Song" for their off-Broadway revue "Showing Off" which ran from May to October in 1989. This arrangement of their song is intended to be a fun and funny addition to your choir concert. You can feel free to adapt it in any creative way that works for the choir and your performance needs. It is also available in an SATB version. Here are some general tips for performing the piece:

1. The piano accompaniment can be played as written or improvised using the general harmonic structure if it is played rhythmically and supports the upbeat feel of the piece.
2. You can have a spoken introduction at the beginning of the song during the repeated vamp, or you can skip the speaking and just begin the piece. What you say is up to you. For example, if you end with the song, you could thank the audience or your choir or your volunteers during the vamp, or refer to something in the news or something happening at or relating to your school or organization.
3. This TTBB version is arranged in a "close harmony" style with the melody primarily in the tenor 2, with the tenor 1 harmonizing lightly above the melody. Though it may seem high at times, it should be sung in a light head voice with an easy and free production. "In tune is always loud enough!"
4. In m. 36 during the first refrain, sing as if you agree that "singing along" is something you don't like. Then, in m. 52, change your attitude and encourage the audience with smiles and gestures to join you while you sing the refrain again. It is supposed to make the audience laugh a little!
5. In each of the verses feel free to use hand gestures and facial expressions to tell the story. Remember that the original song came from a Broadway revue and was supposed to be fun, engaging, and entertaining.
6. In m. 118 you may need to adapt what you do based upon your performance constraints. If you are in a theater and can have the houselights turned on, that works best. If you are in a gym or space without dimmable houselights, you can shout something like "Here we go!" as you move toward the audience. If logistically it's difficult for the whole choir to exit the stage and go into the house, you could have a small group of singers move toward the audience. As the note at the bottom of p. 9 explains, if you can turn on the lights but can't go into the house, change the words to "Don't you hate it when they turn on all the lights." Make it work and make sense for you and your performance situation, changing the words as needed.
7. In measures 146–149, sell the fake ending like it's the real ending with a full tone and gestures that make it seem ended. For example, you can lift your arms up over your head in m. 149 on the fermata and hold a pose until the cut off on beat 4. Then, on the downbeat of 150 you can drop your arms and continue with the song.
8. There are dynamic markings in the score to add variety to the performance. However, all sections should be sung confidently at a dynamic loud enough to be heard clearly, but never belted or over sung. Measure 184 to the end can build to the loudest dynamic you can sing with a good and healthy vocal production.
9. Measures 179–183 can be repeated as many times as you want, depending on the jokes you want to insert. In m. 179 the score recommends a "siren whistle" blown by one or more people, a "honk" sound where the choir members all pull out cheap "New Year's Eve" type paper horns, honking once on beat one, and then a big "kiss" gesture by the choir together. In m. 181 one person, or the whole choir, can shout the suggested texts, and then on the third repeat the director can stop the song completely and quickly move the choir to center stage as the director moves down stage center to take a group selfie. The Director can then restart the song with the pickup to m. 184. Be creative and use these suggestions or make up your own to fit your specific performance needs or your local inside jokes. Have fun and enjoy yourself!

If you have any questions about performing this arrangement, feel free to email Dr. Christopher Peterson: cpeterson@fullerton.edu



CHRISTOPHER W. PETERSON

is Professor of Choral Music Education at California State University, Fullerton and is a teacher, conductor, choral clinician, author, editor, composer, and choral arranger of music and books published in the United States and around the world. In his over thirty years as a music educator Dr. Peterson has taught in elementary, middle school, high school, church, community, festival, and collegiate settings.



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