



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

# University of North Texas College of Music

Doctoral Lecture | Friday, March 8, 2024 | 2:00 pm | M230

**Jacob Augsten, choral conducting**

**A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO SERGEI RACHMANINOFF'S  
SIX CHORAL SONGS FOR TREBLE VOICES, OP. 15**

This dissertation aims to investigate and provide a conductor with an educational resource guide to Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Six Choral Songs for Treble Voices* (1895). This project will provide music educators with a comprehensive guide with many of the details that a conductor might need to successfully teach the work, including suggested pedagogical techniques; potential musical challenges and subsequent strategies; gestural conducting; historical and political context surrounding the two different versions of the work's first movement and how a conductor might approach the choice between the two; literal and poetic translations of the texts; and an IPA transcription for the work.

Despite the eminence of Rachmaninoff's oeuvre and his objective place in the canon, the rationale for this project stems from the rarity of the work itself, its merit, its accessibility to a wide range of treble ensemble ability levels, and its lack of attention both in performance and academic spheres. This set of choruses is the composer's only contribution to the collection of music for treble ensembles and is part of a relatively minuscule amount of treble choir repertoire composed by early and pre-twentieth-century Russian composers. Op. 15 is also the only work written for choir and piano accompaniment. Performances of the work are also rare, and few recordings exist. Though published in 1895, all sources suggest that the work did not receive its premiere performance until 1973.

The choral writing is vastly accessible. Though many challenges and educational opportunities exist throughout the work for ensembles of all levels, this is music that can be performed not only by advanced collegiate and professional choirs, but by developing collegiate ensembles, community choirs, and even high school choirs. With these details in mind, a comprehensive guide and set of resources is a project that will serve our field and increase this underperformed work's visibility within the canon for treble choirs.

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**Five hundred ninetieth program of the 2023–2024 season**  
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