

When Winter Calls

Composer: **Mary Lynn Lightfoot** | Text: **Bruce Still**
 Rehearsal Resource Page by **Victor C. Johnson**, *Sing!* Choral Editor

VOCABULARY

<i>mp</i>	<i>mezzo piano</i>	medium soft
<i>cresc.</i>	<i>crescendo</i>	to gradually get louder
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzo forte</i>	medium loud
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i>	loud
<i>poco rit.</i>	<i>poco ritardando</i>	to slow down a little
<i>cresc. e rit.</i>	<i>crescendo e ritardando</i>	get louder and slow down
<i>a tempo</i>		return to original tempo
‘		breath mark

PREPARATION

Sing the following warm-up in unison on a neutral syllable or by using solfège. Focus on matching vowel space and a unified, blended tone color.



MUSICAL FORM

Section	Measures	Tonality	Rehearsal Focus
A	1 - 11	g minor→G Major (measure 11)	Opens with a unison melodic line that grows and crescendos to a G Major chord (Picardy third) at measure 11. Teach the unison line for unity of tone and phrase shape before building the crescendo. The Picardy third is a pivotal moment, preparing singers to lean into its brightness as it opens the door to section B.
B	12 - 22	B^b Major→ G Major→g minor	Tonality shifts between B ^b Major and G Major; early 4-measure phrases resolve to G Major. A later phrase settles into g minor. Rehearse each phrase separately by tonal area so singers internalize each harmonic color before linking them.
A (return)	23 - 31	g minor→G Major	Return of section A tonality. Singers should bring deepened expression to this repeat, having traveled through section B. The Picardy third arrival at the close carries even more emotional weight the second time.
C	32 - 37	G Major→F Major (fanfare)	Fanfare-like character with bold tonal shifts between G Major and F Major. The juxtaposition of G Major and F Major creates energy and momentum.
CODA	38 - 42	g minor→G Major (final chord)	Returns to section A material in g minor with a soft, intimate character. The dynamic contrast from the section C fanfare is essential. The piece closes on a G Major chord, with the Picardy third heard one final time, now as a quiet, radiant resolution rather than a climactic arrival.

FOCUSED TEACHING STRATEGIES

Unison Opening (mm. 1–6)

Have all three parts sing the opening line on “Ooo” before adding text, listening for a single unified color rather than three individual voices. Once text is added, ask singers to trace the melodic contour in the air to externalize the phrase shape and identify where breath weight and the phrase peak belong.

Building to the Picardy Third (mm. 9 - 11)

Loop mm. 9–11 repeatedly: Crescendo through measure 10 and land on the G Major chord with full intention. Cue singers to raise their inner resonant space (lifted soft palate, open vowel) as they approach the major chord, so the Picardy third feels like a radiant arrival rather than a harmonic accident.

Section B (mm. 12 - 22)

Rehearse the B^b Major phrase and the g minor phrase in complete isolation before connecting them. After each, ask singers to name the emotional character of that tonal area. Then rehearse the seam between them so the color shift becomes a deliberate expressive choice.

Section C (mm. 32 - 37)

Sing the G Major and F Major chords out of context first so singers hear how bold the tonal shift is. Ask: “What does this feel like? Triumphant? Expansive?” Then sing the section with that image. The F Major chord should increase energy, not cause hesitation. Forward consonants, tall vowels, and lifted resonance are the keys to the fanfare character.

Coda Contrast and Release (mm. 38 - 42)

Before singing the coda, have singers speak the text in rhythm with deliberate attention to word stress and emotional weight. Then sing it at a genuine pianissimo. The dramatic shift from Section C’s fanfare to the coda’s whispered intimacy is the emotional climax of the piece. The final G Major chord should be held with a warm, glowing tone until the director releases.

STUDENT ENRICHMENT QUESTIONS

1. This piece is written in g minor but uses G Major chords at key moments, the Picardy third. As a singer, how does the shift from minor to major feel in your body and breath? What emotion does that sudden brightness carry, especially in a piece about winter?
2. *When Winter Calls* is scored for SSA voices *a cappella*, with no accompaniment. How does singing without a piano change your responsibility as a choral singer? What do you have to listen for differently when there is no instrument to anchor your pitch?
3. The title is *When Winter Calls*. Before examining the text, what images, feelings, or memories does that phrase bring to mind? After learning and performing the music, do you feel the composers captured that imagery? Where in the piece do you feel it most powerfully, and why?