

Conditions for the Printing of Lyrics for the Songs of Andrixos / Steve Boyd

Rule 1.1

No copies of these lyrics in font larger than 10 point (or 20 point if specific permission is given by the author) are to be brought to an official event or gathering of the SCA, Inc, unless the performer has completed at least 2/3 of the drills listed below.

I have given much thought to the issue of lyric sheets and have made many modifications to my requirements. It remains my firm belief that songs are best performed from memory, as that allows the performer to concentrate on the nuances of the piece. I accept that this is difficult for some people, and that I have been making a demand without providing a roadmap of how to fulfil it. In this document I hope to provide a start.

Some of the methods listed below are adapted from theatrical practices, others have different origins. Try them and see how much more of any given song sticks in your mind. I continue to maintain my exclusive publication rights of my works, and though I am relaxing the standards previously imposed, I require that these current stipulations be adhered to.

Can I enforce this by any legal means? Perhaps not, but my work is published in the context of a Society whose coin is honor. If you use or republish my work in a manner contrary to my expressed desire in this matter, you have dishonored me. You may well be called out for such actions. I leave it to you to imagine what form that might take. The guiding principle is that I expect a singer to invest some time and effort in learning my work.

It is the intent of the songwriter that any lyrics sheets brought to official events of the SCA are printed in a font no larger than 10 point,:

- In the first two years since the publication of the song. Henceforth, all of the author's songs will have a publication date appended.
- When you have been an active member of the SCA for fewer than three years.
- When you have received permission from the author to use a larger typeface due to vision issues. The maximum size for such exemptions will be 20 point. Contact me at calontirtrim@gmail.com for such permission.
- When you are "singing along" rather than performing or leading the song.
- When you have made a good faith effort by following at least two thirds (10+) of the suggestions in the "Steps to Memorization" section which follows **and** have received explicit permission from the author.
- At the author's wake, funeral, or memorial service.

Lyrics sheets are specifically prohibited in the following situations:

- When you are leading a song, except in the first two years after publication.
- When you are entering a competition.

The songwriter strongly suggests that if you must print lyric sheets, you maintain two sets of lyrics to his works, one at 10 pt, that goes to events, and one larger, that you use at home for the purpose of learning and/or maintaining the piece.

Steps towards Memorization

A bardic colleague stated to me, and I paraphrase, “My particular form of autism drives me to memorize, and makes it easier to do so.” I don’t know if the same applies to me, but I cannot dismiss it as a possibility. I can easily see the opposite being true for others. In light of this awareness, I offer the following exercises.

- Be able to tell the story of the song in your own words.
- Analyze the rhyme scheme (eg ABAB, or ABCABC, etc.)
- Note any literary devices used in the lyrics: alliteration, symbolism, simile/metaphor, onomatopoeia, foreshadowing, non-linear storytelling (Requiem) et al.
- While referring to the text write it out long hand 10 times.
- While referring to the text type it out 10 times.
- Record yourself singing the song from a lyrics sheet. Using this recording:
 - Sing along with your recording 10 times using the lyrics sheet
 - Fold the lyrics sheet in half vertically: Sing 10 times along with your recording using the first half of the lines
 - Using the other side of the vertically folded lyrics sheet: Sing 10 times along with your recording using the second half of the lines
 - Sing it four times (twice each half) from your vertically folded lyrics sheet without your recording.
- Prepare for yourself several Cloze tests: From a text file of the lyrics, replace approximately every third word with a blank. (At the end of the document, there is a website that will help.)
 - Set the Cloze test aside, and then later come back and see how many of the blanks you can fill in while reading the test.
 - See how many of the blanks you can fill in while singing the song.
- Sing three times along to the music (such as the MIDI file accompaniment on Calonsong) without referring to the lyrics sheet.
- Try to type out the lyrics from memory. Mark areas where you struggled.
- Try to write out the lyrics longhand from memory. Mark areas where you struggled.
- Prepare a tip sheet of the first 3-4 words of each verse. Sing twice from that. If this is a source of particular difficulty, prepare a sheet with the last three words of one verse, followed by the first three words of the next verse. This can help you remember which verse is next (a particular problem for this writer).
- **If there is a particular section that is causing repeated difficulty** create an exaggerated gesture (not necessarily connected to the narrative of the piece) to accompany the rough spot. Drill that section with the same gesture tied to the same syllables, perhaps 10 times. When the thought of the gesture triggers the memory of the missing lyrics, the gesture may be discarded.
- Create for yourself a substitute Dolan’s shoulder. (In Calontir, when you forget the next line of a song, a practice among bards has arisen that punching Master Dolan’s shoulder will magically bring the words back to you.) This works because the singer stops thinking about the forgotten words for a few seconds and concentrates on something else. With the pressure removed, the words often pop to the surface. You might snap your fingers, slap your thigh or stomp your foot. Don’t think about the missing words while doing this. The words may well be recalled while your concentration is elsewhere.
- Record yourself singing from memory. Try to recall, before listening to the recording, where you had issues. Repeat three times.
- Listen to the recording of yourself singing from memory while following along on a printed sheet. Mark areas of weakness or hesitation and apply earlier strategies to those areas.

A close reading of these exercises reveals that the aspiring performer is engaged with the lyrics approximately 70 times, with various forms of support. Repetition is truly the foundation of memorization, but just singing the song 70 times back-to-back is mind-numbingly dull. By varying inputs, you are building a scaffolding for memorization. I truly hope these strategies help.

Andrixos Seljukroctonis, OP OL
mka Steve Boyd

I used the website <https://www.spf.io/free-cloze-fill-in-the-blank-generator/> to produce [this cloze test on Requiem for a Huscarl](#) (PDF). When using cloze tests as a language assessment, it is more pedagogically sound to skip words at a regular interval (every third word, every fourth, etc.). For memorization practice, I chose more strategically important words.