

# Kirby Shaw Satb Puttin On The Ritz

**kirby shaw satb puttin on the ritz** is a stunning arrangement that has captivated choirs and audiences alike with its lively energy, sophisticated harmony, and timeless jazz standards. This particular arrangement of "Puttin' on the Ritz" by Kirby Shaw, tailored for SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) choirs, showcases Shaw's exceptional skill in blending jazz idioms with choral textures, making it an ideal choice for concerts, competitions, and musical theater performances. In this article, we will explore the background of Kirby Shaw's arrangement, its musical features, performance considerations, and why it remains a popular choice among choir directors.

## Understanding Kirby Shaw's SATB Arrangement of "Puttin' on the Ritz"

### The Origin of "Puttin' on the Ritz"

"Puttin' on the Ritz" is a classic American jazz and pop standard originally written by Harry Warren (music) and Gus Kahn (lyrics) in 1929. It gained widespread popularity through various performances and recordings, most notably by Fred Astaire and other vaudeville acts. The song is characterized by its upbeat tempo, swinging rhythm, and witty lyrics, making it a favorite for musical theater and jazz ensembles.

### Kirby Shaw's Musical Interpretation

Kirby Shaw, renowned for his dynamic choral arrangements, reimagined "Puttin' on the Ritz" for SATB choirs, infusing it with jazz flair while maintaining vocal accessibility. His arrangement emphasizes:

- Rhythmic drive: Capturing the lively swing feel with syncopation and jazz articulation.
- Harmonic richness: Incorporating jazz chords and voicings that add depth and color.
- Vocal interplay: Creating opportunities for the different voice parts to interact and showcase their unique qualities.
- Expressive dynamics: Using contrast to enhance the song's playful and sophisticated mood.

This arrangement is designed not only to entertain but also to challenge singers to develop their jazz phrasing and stylistic awareness.

# Musical Features of the Arrangement

## Arrangement Structure

Kirby Shaw's "Puttin' on the Ritz" for SATB typically follows a traditional song form: - Intro: Sets the rhythmic and harmonic foundation. - Verse: Features the main melody with jazz embellishments. - Chorus: A lively, harmonized section that highlights the song's catchy hook. - Bridge: Provides contrast and showcases expressive singing. - Outro: Concludes with a rhythmic flourish and energetic finish. This structure allows for effective storytelling and dynamic performance.

## Harmonic and Rhythmic Elements

The arrangement employs various jazz techniques, including: - Extended chords: 7ths, 9ths, and 13ths adding richness. - Swing feel: A prominent shuffle rhythm that drives the performance. - Syncopation: Emphasizing off-beats to enhance the jazz vibe. - Imitative passages: Call-and-response moments between voice parts. These features require precise timing and rhythmic precision from the choir, making it an excellent piece for developing ensemble cohesion.

## Vocal Considerations

Shaw's arrangement balances accessibility with sophistication, making it suitable for intermediate to advanced choirs. Key vocal aspects include: - Range: Well within standard SATB tessituras, with optional parts for flexibility. - Diction: Clear enunciation to capture the playful lyricism. - Expression: Encouraging performers to interpret the swing feel authentically. - Balance: Effective blending of voices to highlight harmonies. Proper coaching on jazz stylings and phrasing will maximize the impact of this arrangement.

## Performance Tips and Interpretation

## Preparation Strategies

To deliver a compelling performance of Kirby Shaw's "Puttin' on the Ritz," consider the following: - Rhythmic Practice: Isolate tricky syncopations and swing patterns. - Harmonic Study: Familiarize singers with jazz chords and voicings. - Stylistic Emphasis: Encourage a relaxed, jazz-infused approach rather than a straight-laced choral style. - Listening: Study recordings of classic performances and jazz versions to inform interpretation.

## Conducting and Dynamics

Effective conducting can enhance the arrangement's energy: - Maintain a steady swing beat with a clear downbeat. - Use dynamic contrasts to highlight different sections. - Incorporate expressive gestures to cue jazz articulations. - Foster ensemble synchronization to ensure tight rhythmic execution.

## Audience Engagement

A lively and energetic performance will resonate with audiences: - Incorporate movement or choreography if appropriate. - Use theatrical gestures to bring out the song's playful character. - Encourage singers to perform with confidence and joy.

## Why Choose Kirby Shaw's "Puttin' on the Ritz" for Your Choir

### Educational Value

This arrangement offers multiple learning opportunities: - Developing jazz phrasing and improvisation skills. - Exploring harmonic complexity within a choral context. - Improving rhythmic precision and swing feel.

### Performance Impact

The lively nature of the piece makes it a crowd-pleaser, often becoming a highlight of concerts and festivals. Its humorous and sophisticated tone appeals to diverse audiences.

## Versatility

Suitable for various occasions, including: - Spring or holiday concerts with a jazz theme. - Musical theater showcases. - Competition programs aiming for energetic, stylistically rich repertoire.

## Conclusion

Kirby Shaw's SATB arrangement of "Puttin' on the Ritz" exemplifies how a classic jazz standard can be revitalized for modern choral performance. Its combination of rhythmic vitality, harmonic richness, and expressive potential makes it a compelling choice for choirs seeking to showcase their versatility and musicality. By understanding its musical features and employing thoughtful preparation and interpretation, singers can bring this lively arrangement to life, captivating audiences with its timeless charm and energetic spirit. Whether performed as a spirited showcase piece or as part of a jazz-themed concert, Kirby Shaw's "Puttin' on the Ritz" remains a beloved and enduring arrangement that continues to inspire choral ensembles worldwide.

Kirby Shaw SATB Puttin' on the Ritz: A Masterpiece of Arranged Elegance and Vocal Brilliance

## Introduction to Kirby Shaw's Puttin' on the Ritz SATB Arrangement

Kirby Shaw, renowned for his exceptional arranging prowess and deep understanding of vocal ensembles, has crafted a stunning SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) arrangement of the classic tune Puttin' on the Ritz. This piece is more than a simple arrangement; it's a vibrant reimagining that captures the glitz and glamour of the original while infusing it with contemporary choral artistry. For choirs, directors, and vocal enthusiasts alike, Shaw's version offers a rich tapestry of musical textures, stylistic nuances, and expressive opportunities.

## Historical Context and Significance of the Song

Before delving into the arrangement itself, it's essential to appreciate the song's historical and cultural background.

## Origins of “Puttin’ on the Ritz”

- Originally written in 1929 by Harry Warren (music) and Ira Gershwin (lyrics). - The song became a jazz and big band standard, notable for its upbeat tempo and playful lyrics. - The title refers to the upscale Manhattan hotel, Ritz, and the phrase “putting on the Ritz” became synonymous with dressing fashionably and showcasing luxury.

## Revival and Cultural Resurgence

- The song experienced a major revival in the 1970s when it was featured in the film “Young Frankenstein,” sung with exuberance by Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder. - Its popularity has persisted, partly due to its jazzy, lively character and its association with elegance and showbiz glitz. - The tune lends itself well to theatrical and choral arrangements, making it a favorite for holiday concerts, jazz festivals, and musical theater scenes.

## Overview of Kirby Shaw’s Arrangement

Shaw’s SATB arrangement of Puttin’ on the Ritz stands out for its meticulous craftsmanship and dynamic interpretation. It transforms the familiar tune into a compelling choral piece that balances historical homage with modern musical sensibilities.

## Arrangement Style and Approach

- Stylistic Fusion: Combines jazz idioms, swing rhythms, and traditional choral techniques. - Vocal Texture: Rich harmonic voicings, with opportunities for solo passages, sectional contrasts, and expressive dynamics. - Rhythmic Drive: Maintains the energetic pulse characteristic of the original, emphasizing syncopation and swing feel. - Expressive Elements: Opportunities for stylized diction, playful articulation, and theatrical flair.

## Structural Elements of the Arrangement

- Introductory Section: Features a lively unison or homophonic opening that sets an upbeat tone. - Verse and Chorus: Adapted to showcase the band-like swing feel, with intricate harmonies and rhythmic interplay. - Bridge and Solo Sections: Designed to highlight individual voices or small groups, adding contrast and interest. - Outro: A punchy, spirited conclusion that leaves the choir and audience energized.

# Vocal and Musical Challenges in the Arrangement

Any ambitious choral arrangement must balance musical complexity with performability. Shaw's version of Puttin' on the Ritz presents several notable challenges:

## Harmonization and Voicing

- Dense Harmonic Textures: The arrangement often employs close voicings and rich chords, requiring careful balancing and tuning. - Soprano and Alto Lines: These often carry the melody or serve as harmonic support, demanding clarity and precision. - Tenor and Bass Lines: Sometimes feature counter-melodies or rhythmic ostinatos, requiring agility and confidence.

## Rhythmic Precision and Swing Feel

- The swing rhythm demands a strong internal pulse, with precise syncopation. - Ensemble synchronization is critical in passages with rapid rhythmic shifts. - Conductors and singers must internalize the jazz idiom, emphasizing groove and timing.

## Stylistic Diction and Articulation

- The playful and jazzy character calls for expressive diction—dips, slides, and stylized consonants. - Articulations such as staccatos, accents, and legatos must be executed with musical taste and consistency.

## Technical Vocal Requirements

- The arrangement may feature high tessituras, especially for sopranos. - Dynamic control is essential to navigate from soft, intimate moments to loud, exuberant sections. - For solo or sectional passages, singers need a good command of phrasing and emotional delivery.

# Performance Considerations and Interpretive Tips

Bringing Kirby Shaw's Puttin' on the Ritz to life involves more than just accurate notes; it calls for expressive storytelling and stylistic authenticity.

## Stylistic Authenticity

- Emphasize the jazz swing feel through articulation and rhythmic accents. - Use diction that captures the playful, theatrical spirit—think “vocal jazz” with a touch of vaudeville. - Incorporate subtle dynamics and tempo rubato to enhance groove and expressiveness.

## Rehearsal Strategies

- Rhythmic Precision Drills: Use clapping and conductural exercises to lock in swing feel. - Harmonic Balancing: Focus on tuning and blending, especially in dense harmonies. - Solo and Sectional Work: Practice expressive passages separately to ensure clarity and stylistic accuracy. - Stylistic Coaching: Encourage singers to embody the character and mood of the piece, fostering a sense of fun and showbiz pizzazz.

## Performance Tips

- Engage with the audience through expressive gestures and eye contact. - Use body language to convey the lively, upbeat mood. - Remember that Puttin' on the Ritz is as much a performance piece as it is a concert selection—embody the glitz and glamour.

## Arranging and Adaptation Aspects

Shaw's arrangement is notable for its flexibility and adaptability.

## Voicing and Transposition Options

- The arrangement can be transposed to fit different choir ranges. - Suitable for a variety of ensemble sizes, from smaller groups to full SATB choirs.

## **Instrumental Accompaniment**

- Often performed with jazz combos or piano, but can be adapted for full orchestra or band. - The arrangement's rhythmic drive makes it versatile for backing tracks or live band settings.

## **Potential Variations and Customizations**

- Directors can add solos or improvisational sections. - Incorporate choreography or movement for a theatrical effect. - Adjust tempo and dynamics to match the performance context.

## **Audience Reception and Educational Value**

Performing Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' offers numerous benefits beyond musical enjoyment.

## **Engagement and Entertainment**

- The lively, familiar tune captures audience attention. - Its theatrical flair makes it an excellent showcase piece.

## **Educational Opportunities**

- Introduces singers to jazz phrasing and swing rhythms. - Develops ensemble blend, tuning, and stylistic interpretation. - Encourages expressive storytelling through music.

## **Final Thoughts and Recommendations**

Kirby Shaw's SATB arrangement of 'Puttin' on the Ritz' is a shining example of how a classic tune can be revitalized through expert choral arranging. It combines historical charm with musical sophistication, offering choirs a lively, engaging piece that challenges and delights performers and audiences alike. Recommendations for Performers and Directors: - Approach the piece with a playful, theatrical spirit, embracing its jazzy character. - Invest time in rhythmic and harmonic rehearsals to ensure tight ensemble performance. - Use expressive dynamics and diction to highlight the arrangement's

stylistic nuances. - Consider staging options that enhance the visual impact—perhaps with costumes or minimal choreography. In conclusion, Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' is not just a concert piece; it's a celebration of musical style, vocal artistry, and performance charisma. Its richness and versatility make it a valuable addition to any choral repertoire, inspiring performers to "put on the Ritz" with style and flair.

## Questions & Answers About kirby shaw satb puttin on the ritz

| No | Question                                                                                       | Answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | What is the significance of Kirby Shaw's arrangement of 'Puttin' on the Ritz' for SATB choirs? | Kirby Shaw's arrangement of 'Puttin' on the Ritz' is celebrated for its lively, jazz-infused style that brings a classic tune to modern choral settings, making it a popular choice for SATB choirs seeking a show-stopping piece. |
| 2  | How does Kirby Shaw's SATB arrangement of 'Puttin' on the Ritz' differ from other versions?    | Shaw's arrangement features intricate harmonies, a dynamic swing feel, and creative voicing that elevate the song beyond traditional versions, making it suitable for performance and concert settings.                            |
| 3  | Is Kirby Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' arrangement suitable for school choirs?                  | Yes, Kirby Shaw's SATB arrangement is often used by school choirs due to its accessible yet engaging arrangement, providing a fun challenge for students while delivering a lively performance.                                    |
| 4  | Where can I find sheet music for Kirby Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' for SATB groups?           | Sheet music for Kirby Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' SATB arrangement is available through music retailers such as Shaw's Music Publishing, JW Pepper, or online sheet music platforms.                                              |
| 5  | What are some tips for conducting Kirby Shaw's 'Puttin' on the Ritz' with an SATB choir?       | Focus on capturing the swing feel and rhythmic accents, ensure clear voicing and balance among parts, and encourage expressive dynamics to bring out the lively character of Shaw's arrangement.                                   |
| 6  | Has Kirby Shaw's arrangement of 'Puttin' on the Ritz' been performed at notable events?        | Yes, Kirby Shaw's arrangements, including 'Puttin' on the Ritz,' have been featured in various choral festivals, competitions, and concert performances worldwide, showcasing their popularity among choirs.                       |

Kirby Shaw, SATB choir, 'Puttin' on the Ritz', choral arrangement, vocal quartet, jazz standards, vocal music, choral sheet music, musical arrangements, SATB arrangements