Introduction

One of the most exciting experiences in the choir year is the moment when singers discover the joy of part singing for the first time. Hearing two or more different parts sounding at the same time, being able to sing one part and hear your fellow chorister sing another – these are deeply satisfying moments for the young (and even the not-so-young) musician. *The Joy of Part Singing* is intended to be a resource that will help children's choirs experience greater success with this important step in their musical development.

These experiences certainly happen through the repertoire when choirs get to sing a fully-developed two or three-part anthem, but I often find that young singers first need some shorter, more accessible ways to experience part-singing. This book provides a variety of short, attainable part-singing experiences that can be used throughout the year. These include warm-ups and vocal exercises to begin rehearsal, short rhythm chants called "rhythm rumbles" that can be learned quickly and layered in parts, simple echo songs, short mini-descants, and a collection of rounds with various options for instrumentation.

Even as you are working to solidify beautiful, unison sound, these activities will help singers build the foundation for singing in multiple parts later in the year. Some are just appropriate as rehearsal devices, and some can be shared in worship or concert settings.

Everything presented in *The Joy of Part Singing* has been born out of my own need as a teacher and conductor of children's choirs. My choristers present new challenges each week at rehearsal, and thus new opportunities for me to reach and teach them. Leading and learning at the same time, I continue to find joy in helping them become confident, independent singers. I hope this volume of songs and teaching ideas provides inspiration and practical support to you in this most important work of equipping the next generation of musicians.

Mark Patterson

The Joy of Part Singing

A Resource for Children's Choir Directors

by Mark Patterson

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Come into God's Presence

When first teaching this piece, the director should sing Part I, inviting the choir to echo as Part II. Gradually add choristers to Part I until there are even groups of singers on each part. At that point, the director should be able to drop out. For accompaniment, use Orff instruments alone, piano alone, or a combination of the two. Try using this piece as a choral introit or call to worship.



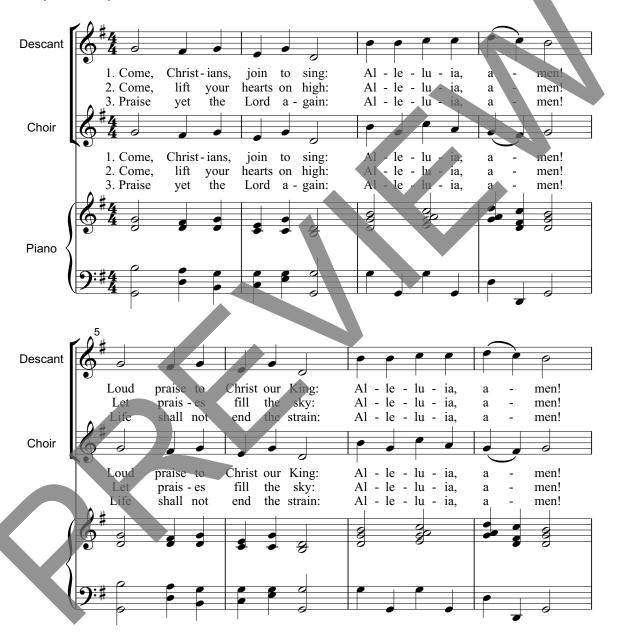
^{*}If not using piano, Orff instruments should play ms. 3 and 4 as an introduction.

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Mini-Descants

Come, Christians, Join to Sing*

This is designed to be an easy, first introduction to hymn descants. Teach the hymn and the descant part to all singers and then take turns having different groups try the descant each time. Use the descant on as many verses as you like.

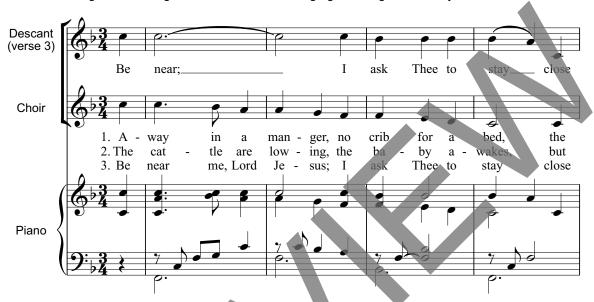


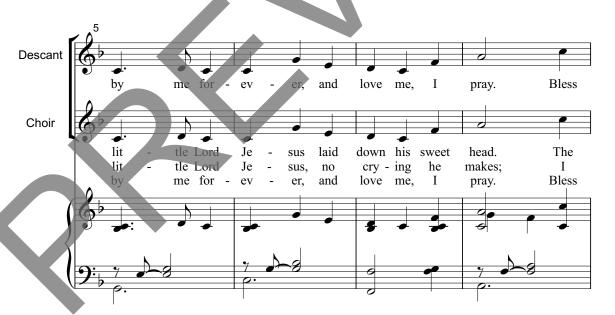
^{*}Spanish folk melody. Text: Christian Henry Bateman, 1813-1899. Arrangement: Benjamin Carr, 1768-1831. Descant and accompaniment: Mark Patterson.

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Away in a Manger*

Teach this descant to all of your singers and consider using a flute or recorder to reinforce the part. Encourage small groups of singers to take turns trying the descant while others sing the original melody. Sing verses 1 and 2 in unison, and use the descant on verse 3. If singing this carol with the congregation, consider having the choir sing the descant while the congregation sings the melody.





*Traditional carol. Text: anonymous. Music: James R. Murray, 1841-1905. Descant and accompaniment: Mark Patterson.

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Rounds

Share God's Love*

This simple song may be performed as a unison song, a two-part round, or a three-part round, and may be sung a cappella or with accompaniment. The instrumental parts can be played by any combination of Orff instruments, handbells, or handchimes, depending on what you have available. Feel free to use just one or two of the parts, or all three. The instruments can all begin together or you can layer them in as the round progresses. Use one or more playing the four-measure pattern as an introduction. The parts can also be played on the piano in various octaves, if desired.



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^{*}Text: Mark Patterson. Music: based on O wie wohl ist mir am Abend, anonymous German canon.

Clap Your Hands and Sing Hallelujah*

Teach this song in unison first, and then try it as a two-part round. Add tambourine on the off-beats of one and two if desired. For Palm Sunday, use the alternate set of lyrics provided.



^{*}Text: Mark Patterson. Music: Traditional Hebrew round.

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Come, Lord Jesus

Sing in unison or as a two- or three-part round. (The accompaniment is optional.) Consider starting with piano, and then have the piano drop out, featuring the voices a cappella. Add percussion as desired. If not being used for communion or table blessing, use the alternate text.



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