

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.

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Part II, Part I, Metallophone*, Xylophone*, and Piano. Part I begins with the lyrics "Come in - to God's pre-sence,". The second system includes staves for Part II, Part I, Met., Xyl., and Piano. Part II begins with the lyrics "Come in - to God's pre-sence," and Part I continues with "sing-ing songs of joy!". The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb).

*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.

Descant

1. Come, Christ-ians, join to sing: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 2. Come, lift your hearts on high: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 3. Praise yet the Lord a - gain: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!

Choir

1. Come, Christ-ians, join to sing: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 2. Come, lift your hearts on high: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 3. Praise yet the Lord a - gain: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!

Piano

5

Descant

Loud praise to Christ our King: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 Let prais - es fill the sky: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 Life shall not end the strain: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!

Choir

Loud praise to Christ our King: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 Let prais - es fill the sky: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!
 Life shall not end the strain: Al - le - lu - ia, a - men!

*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.

Descant (verse 3)

Be near; I ask Thee to stay close

Choir

1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the
 2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but
 3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay close

Piano

Descant

by me for - ev - er, and love me, I pray. Bless

Choir

lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The
 lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes; I
 by me for - ev - er, and love me, I pray. Bless

Piano

*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 Off 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.

Choir

①

Take the light of Christ to the world,

Instrument 1

Instrument 2

Instrument 3

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

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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.

①

Choir

Clap your hands and sing Hal-le-lu-jah,
Clap your hands and shout Ho-san-na,

Piano

5

Choir

Glo-ry to God a-bove! Clap your hands and sing Hal-le-lu-jah,
Lift up the gates and sing. Clap your hands and shout Ho-san-na

Piano

②

Choir

Glo-ry to God a-bove! Shout for joy, Hal-le-lu-jah,
wel-come the King of Kings! Shout for joy Ho-san-na,

Piano

The musical score is written for a choir and piano. It is in 2/2 time and B-flat major. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked with a circled '1' and contains the first line of lyrics. The second system (measures 5-8) is marked with a '5' and contains the second line of lyrics. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked with a circled '2' and contains the third line of lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. A large 'DRAFT' watermark is overlaid diagonally across the page.

*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.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two systems of music. The first system, marked with a circled '1', includes a choir part with the lyrics "Come, Lord_ Je - sus, be our_". The accompaniment includes Djembe, Conga or Hand drum, Finger Cymbals, Claves, and Piano. The second system, marked with a circled '2', includes a choir part with the lyrics "guest. At this_ ta - ble_ In your_ pres - ence_". The accompaniment continues with the same instruments. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid across the entire score.

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