

The monthly newsletter of

Viva Voce!

Carol McClure, editor

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March, 2010



Greetings!

February
Burns, Tennessee

My Valentine's Day present from my husband was a pair of tickets to the King's Singers February 14th concert in Nashville. What a wonderful gift! Every time I hear this group perform live, I listen in awe to their superb intonation and exquisite diction, their incredible spectrum of tone, their flawless attention to details of period style, their uncompromising commitment to a standard of musical excellence; and, I hear the joy that they communicate as they perform.

Bob Chilcott, former member of the King's Singers, once described the King's Singers' approach this way: "What we want to communicate is that singing,... not only is it incredibly skilled and communicative, but it's also incredible fun, and it's there for everybody."

I regularly play King's Singers CDs for my choristers, reminding them (and myself) that these gentlemen all began singing as children, learning their basic music skills in the context of choir. Although my choristers only gather for an hour and fifteen minutes each week (in contrast to the daily rehearsals for English cathedral choristers), I want them to keep focused on excellence as the standard as I help them discover the joy of communicating through music.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Carol McClure, Editor



Grade K-2 Anthem Overview

Anthem: *Praise the Lord for Spring*

Text Source: Text by Carol McClure

Composer: Robert J. Powell

Worship Use: Praise/Easter Season

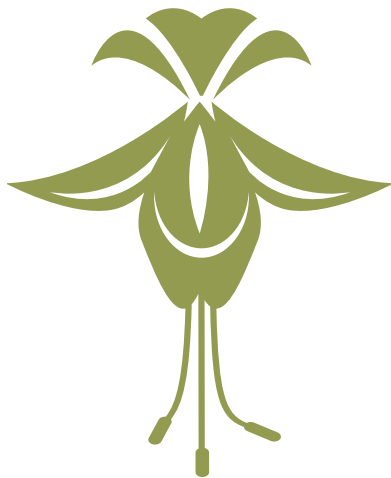
Feature: Congregational participation

Vocal Range: d-d'

Meter: 3/4, 2/4, 4/4 – very easy to follow

Accompanying Instruments: Violin (or flute), organ (or piano)

Teaching Overview: Praise the Lord for Spring is a lovely anthem for the conclusion of the choir year. Robert Powell's memorable refrain is sung easily by both choir and congregation. The greatest challenge for the choir is the memory of the three verses. Use rhythmic chant warm-ups with pictures as they learn the text. Use descending fourths and fifths (m. 4, m. 14), as well as "Praise the Lord" (*la-ti-do* in m.16-17), as warm-ups for this anthem.



Reminder: Viva Voce Anthem Text Competition

Open to: Choristers in a choir using Viva Voce

Deadline: March 1, 2010 (via email to mark@sjmp.com)

Parameters: We're looking for a new Easter text written by a chorister (age 6-12), maximum of four stanzas, to be set by a composer of our choice, for use in the 2010-2011 Viva Voce curriculum.

Prize: \$100

Announcement of winner will be made in the May newsletter.

Winning text will be copyrighted by St. James Music Press.

Choristers may enter as many times as they like!!!!!!



This is my
Father's world,
and to my
listening ears
All nature sings
and round me
rings the music
of the spheres.

This is my
Father's world:
I rest me in the
thought of rocks
and trees, of
skies and seas;
His hand
the wonders
wrought.

Maltbie Babcock



April Rehearsal Plan

Grade K-2

Arrival at Choir Rehearsal

Background Music – Play recordings of Brahms' *A German Requiem* every week as the choristers arrive.

Early Arrivers Activity – Play "Music Baseball". Have the choristers take turns "at bat", defining the meanings of musical symbols and terms (learned throughout the choir year) shown to them on large flashcards, or echo singing or clapping melodies or rhythms played or clapped for them. The game can be varied each week to cover the topics you desire. Take the time to mark out a baseball diamond in the choir room. If you have the money in your budget (or a choir parent who wants to make a donation), have baseball caps marked with treble or bass clef signs (to designate teams) on the bills for the children to wear during this activity. (Choristers will get to take the caps home on the last day of choir.)

Vocal Warm Ups (10 min.) Start every week with *legato* fire whistle sounds, continuing with the *legato* counting warm-up. Each week, let the choristers suggest a warm-up they would like to sing. Finally, use a portion of an anthem (learned earlier in the choir year) for putting into practice increased attention to detail.

Anthem Preparation:

Praise the Lord for Spring

Week 1 - Read the text of *Praise the Lord for Spring*. Play the anthem CD for the choristers. Teach the refrain. Use the suggested warm-ups.

Week 2 - Play the anthem CD for the choristers. Review the refrain. Teach the first stanza of the anthem. Sing the refrain, first stanza and refrain again.

Week 3 - Use warm-ups and anthem CD to review the anthem. Teach the second stanza. Sing through the portions of the anthem the choristers know.

Week 4 - Use warm-ups and anthem CD to review the anthem. Teach the third stanza and the coda. Sing through the entire anthem several times.



Glory be
to the Father, and
to the Son, and to
the Holy Ghost.

As it was
in the beginning
is now, and
ever shall be,
world without
end.

Amen.

Easter Season Information

During the Season of Easter, Christians continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

Easter's date is different each year, unlike Christmas. In about 325, the Nicene Council set the date of Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21st. Easter can be as early as March 22nd or as late as April 25th.

Easter Season Symbols

Easter Lily: The white lily is a symbol of purity and light, the purity of Christ and the light of the resurrection.

Easter Egg: The egg is a sign of new life.

Lamb: Christ is the lamb of God, sacrificed for us. In some traditions, a cake in the shape of a lamb is served during the Easter season. (Your choristers might like this!)

Butterfly: The butterfly represents the new life of believers in Christ's resurrection, just as the butterfly, seemingly dead, emerges from the cocoon to a new life.

Learning Time

This is variable, depending on the length of your rehearsal.

Activity #1: Hymn-of-the-Month - *This Is My Father's World*
Sing through the first stanza of the hymn each week. Ask choristers questions about the month's hymn text. Sing additional stanzas as desired.

Activity #2: Music Skills Game Time: Baseball

Each week, play an additional baseball game based on skills learning, including musical terms and symbols, warm-up singing, rhythm reading and echo singing. Award prizes each week.

Activity #3: Liturgics - Season of Easter/*Gloria Patri*

Talk about the season of Easter, including discussing a different symbol of the season of Easter (lily, lamb, Easter egg, butterfly) each week. Teach the *Gloria Patri*. Discuss the text.

Listening Time

Listen to selections from Brahms' *A German Requiem*. Also during April, make time for any K-2 choristers (or guest Grade 3-6 choristers) who are taking music lessons to play during listening time. Take the opportunity to discuss the instrument and music being played, and to talk to the choristers about options for private instrumental study.

Rehearsal Conclusion

Thank the choristers. Sing the *Gloria Patri* as the closing prayer.

Grade 3-6 Anthem Overviews

Anthem: *God Made Mountains*

Text Source: Psalm 121

Composer: Andrew J. Walker

Worship Use: Praise

Vocal Part(s): Unison

Vocal Range: d-e'

Key: A major (with modulations) Meter: 3/4 (with one measure of 4/4)

Accompanying Instrument: Organ

Anthem Warm-Ups: Melodic fragment, m. 14-18

Phrases in lower vocal register, m. 23-27

Teaching Points: Listening for and understanding key modulations

Singing fortissimo line with beautiful tone

Maintaining consistent tone in lines constructed of ascending fourths and fifths



Anthem: *As the Wind*

Text Source: Text from *Ode 6, Odes of Solomon*, adapted

Composer: David Ashley White

Worship Use: Pentecost

Vocal Part(s): Unison

Vocal Range: e-g'

Key: E major/E Lydian, with shifting key center Meter: 4/4, 3/4

Accompanying Instrument(s): Flute, harp (or piano)

Anthem Warm-Ups: Melodic fragment (with accompaniment), m. 16-17

Melodic fragment (with accompaniment), m. 18-19

Phrase (with accompaniment), m. 24-29

Teaching Points: Listening for and understanding changing key center

Executing subtle dynamic changes

Singing fortissimo line with beautiful tone

Maintaining pitch with little pitch support from accompaniment



Although my choristers only gather for an hour and fifteen minutes each week (in contrast to the daily rehearsals for English cathedral choristers), I want them to keep focused on excellence as the standard as I help them discover the joy of communicating through music.



April Rehearsal Plan Grade 3-6

Arrival at Choir Rehearsal

Background Music – Play recordings of Brahms' *A German Requiem*.

Early Arrivers Activity – Play a game that early arrivers can join easily.

Week 1 - Composer Facts Matching Game

Week 2 - Terms and Signs Matching Game

Week 3 - Rhythm Pattern Bingo

Week 4 - Interval/Major-Minor Chord Identification Game

Vocal Warm Ups (at least 10 minutes)

Use a selection of warm-ups (let the choristers request some) that the choristers have learned during the entire choir year. Focus intensely on one or two elements each week: intonation, choral line, choral blend, etc. Add anthem-based warm-ups as needed. Build in time at this point to work on interval recognition with the choristers, using anthems or hymns learned during the choir year.

Anthem Preparation

April is a great time to work not only on end-of-the-choir-year anthems *God Made Mountains* and *As the Wind*, but also on review of anthems and hymns learned earlier, polishing them to a higher degree of performance readiness as the choristers prepare for an end -of -the-choir-year special service, mission opportunity or program for parents.



Learning Time/Listening Time/Liturgics

April offers the opportunity for the choristers (and for you) to appreciate their increased skills and musical knowledge, and to apply these to the new anthems they have sung and are singing. Discuss the modulations, modalities and the changing key centers in not only *God Made Mountains* and *As the Wind*, but also in the Easter season anthem the choristers learned during March, *It Is I!*

Continue to build in some time for the choristers to review memory of previous hymns of the month (to aid each child's memory retention in preparation for earning the *Hymn-Knowledge-y Certificate of Distinction* -- certificate included in this newsletter), even as the choristers learn *This Is My Father's World*, the April hymn of the month. Although an altered version of this text is included in some of your hymnals (*The Hymnal 1982*, *The United Methodist Hymnal*) I think it is important for the choristers to learn the first three stanzas of this hymn in their original form.

This writing of this month's composer of the month, *Johannes Brahms*, offers you the opportunity to teach your choristers about the liturgical form of a *requiem* mass. Discuss with them how Brahms' text differs from the traditional text, and the difference between a concert setting of the *requiem* and the traditional service form.

Have the choristers listen to and discuss the music of Brahms. You may want to use this opportunity to teach the children more about the characteristics of Romantic period music, or about different composers' settings of a *requiem*. You might want to play a movement each of the Faure, Verdi and Rutter settings for the choristers.

This month, discuss the origin of the *Gloria Patri* and its uses in different liturgical traditions.

Rehearsal Conclusion

Sing the *Gloria Patri* to conclude the rehearsal.

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y

Hymn-of-the-Month Information Page

Hymn of the Month: *This Is My Father's World*

Hymn Tune: **TERRA BEATA**

Text Writer: **Maltbie Babcock** (1858-1901) was born in Syracuse, New York. He was a Presbyterian minister who attended Syracuse University and Auburn Theological Seminary. Maltbie Babcock was also a musician; he played several instruments, including the organ. He directed his college orchestra, composed music and wrote poetry. Nothing of Babcock's was published during his life, but after his death, Babcock's wife Catherine published a volume of his poetry which contained *This Is My Father's World*.

Composer: **Franklin L. Sheppard** (1852-1930) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was the valedictorian of his class at the University of Pennsylvania in 1872. He became the editor of the Presbyterian Board of Publications and Sabbath-School Work.

Text: This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world: the battle is not done:
Jesus Who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heav'n be one.

Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y

Ideas for Using the Materials

Week 1

Hand out a hymnal and a copy of the *Hymn-of-the-Month Information Page* to each chorister.

Sing the hymn (as many or as few stanzas as you like).

Ask questions from the *Introductory Discussion* page.

Remind the choristers about the Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y certificate each of them will be earning at the end of the choir year, by memorizing the first stanza of each *Hymn-of-the-Month*.

Week 2

Hand out a hymnal and a copy of the *Hymn-of-the-Month Information Page* to each chorister.

Sing the hymn (as many or as few stanzas as you like).

Continue with or review questions from the *Introductory Discussion* page.

Hand out a copy of Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y Word Scramble to each chorister for work during rehearsal or as a take-home project.

Week 3

Hand out a hymnal and a copy of the *Hymn-of-the-Month Information Page* to each chorister.

Sing the hymn (as many or as few stanzas as you like).

Ask the choristers to tell you anything they can remember by memory from the previous weeks' discussions about the hymn text, its writer and composer.

Hand out a copy of Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y Memory Game to each chorister for work during rehearsal or as a take-home project.

Week 4

Hand out a hymnal.

Sing the entire hymn.

Ask any students who would like to do so to sing as a group, by memory, the first stanza of *This Is My Father's World* to earn the April credit for his/her Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y certificate.

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y

This Is My Father's World

Introductory Discussion

Materials Needed for Each Chorister:

Hymnal

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y Hymn-of the Month Information Page

1. Have the choristers sing *This Is My Father's World*.
2. Have the choristers read the information page.
3. Choose from the following questions to ask the choristers about the hymn text writer and composer:
 - Who wrote the hymn text?
 - Tell me something about the hymn text writer.
 - What is the name of the hymn tune?
 - Who composed the hymn tune?
 - Tell me something about the composer.
4. Choose from the following questions to ask the choristers about the hymn text:
 - STANZA 1 Questions*
 - What does the phrase, "music of the spheres" mean?
 - What are four "wonders" created by God that Maltbie Babcock lists in this stanza?
 - What are the sounds that you think of when you sing the phrase, "All nature sings..."?
 - STANZA 2 Questions*
 - Read the first two lines of this stanza. Can you paraphrase these?
 - What does the phrase, "He shines in all that's fair" mean?
 - What do you think the author meant when he wrote, "He speaks to me everywhere"?
 - STANZA 3 Questions*
 - Read the third stanza. Can you paraphrase this stanza?
 - What does the phrase, "Jesus Who died shall be satisfied" mean?
 - What does the phrase, "And earth and Heav'n be one" mean?

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y Word Scramble

Unscramble the words found in the text of *This Is My Father's World*.
As you unscramble each word, find the word in the hymn text and circle it.

Note: some words appear more than one time in the text.

Circle the word EVERY time it appears in the text.

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world: the battle is not done:
Jesus Who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heav'n be one.

HTFEAR _____

RIAF _____

GORNTS _____

HEINSS _____

THWEI _____

DROWL _____

SREDOWN _____

SCMUI _____

GRINSTUL _____

SOLRAC _____

LEURR _____

KESSI _____

TABLET _____

REPESH _____

HOWTURG _____

PRISEA _____

RETUNA _____

DEFISSITA _____

SKORC _____

DHNA _____

Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y Memory Game

Text: *This Is My Father's World*

Fill in the blanks with missing words from the *This Is My Father's World* text from memory. Word choices appear at the bottom of this page.

This is my Father's world, and to my _____ ears
All nature _____, and round me _____ the _____ of the _____.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the _____
Of _____ and trees, of skies and _____;
His hand the _____ wrought.

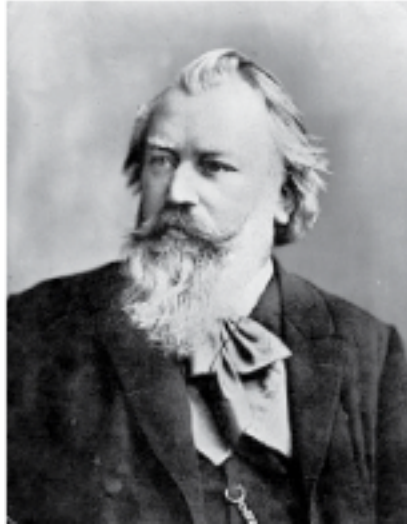
This is my Father's world, the _____ their _____ raise,
The _____ light, the _____ white, _____ their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: He _____ in all that's _____;
In the _____ grass I hear Him pass;
He _____ to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er _____
That though the _____ seems oft so strong, God is the _____ yet.
This is my Father's world: the _____ is not done:
Jesus Who died shall be _____,
And _____ and Heav'n be one.

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| earth | ruler | rings | birds |
| shines | thought | lily | seas |
| carols | satisfied | battle | spheres |
| morning | wonders | rocks | listening |
| wrong | declare | sings | forget |
| speaks | fair | rustling | music |

Listening/Music History

Composer of the Month: Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)



Brahms was a **German** composer of the **Romantic** period. He was born in **Hamburg** in 1833. As a child, he studied **piano**, first with his father, a town musician. He **helped to support his family by playing in restaurants and theaters**.

When he was twenty, Brahms met the famous composers **Franz Liszt** and **Robert Schumann**. **Schumann wrote an article** about Brahms' music that made Brahms famous. In 1862, Brahms **moved to Vienna**, where he spent the rest of his life.

Unlike many other composers, Brahms **composed full-time**: he did not need to be employed in any other job. Brahms was **known for his hard work** and for being **critical of his own work**.

Brahms wrote a number of major works for orchestra, including **four symphonies, two piano concertos, a violin concerto, a double concerto for violin and cello**, and the major **choral work *A German Requiem***. Brahms also composed important orchestral works in the **theme and variation form**. Brahms also wrote many works for smaller groups of musicians to perform: **chamber music, solo piano** and about **200 lieder (songs)**. Brahms **never wrote an opera**.

Suggested Listening:

Fourth Symphony (first movement)
A German Requiem
Hungarian Dances

Composer of the Month: Suggested Listening Activities

1. Have the choristers listen to the opening of the first movement of the *Fourth Symphony*.
Ask these questions:
 - How does the movement begin, loudly or quietly?
 - What instruments do you hear?
 - What are some words that describe the music?
 - Is the pulse (beat) of the music prominent (easy to hear) or not?
2. Have the choristers listen to *How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place* from *A German Requiem*. Then, read the text aloud to the choristers.
Ask the following questions:
 - Is the piece loud or always soft?
 - What instruments do you hear?
 - What voices do you hear?
 - What are some words that describe the music?
 - Is the pulse (beat) of the music prominent (easy to hear) or not?
 - How does the music help to convey the meaning of the text?
3. Have the choristers listen to *Blessed Are They That Mourn* from *A German Requiem*. Then, read the text aloud to the choristers.
Ask the following questions:
 - Is the piece loud or always soft?
 - What instruments do you hear?
 - What voices do you hear?
 - What are some words that describe the music?
 - Is the pulse (beat) of the music prominent (easy to hear) or not?
 - How does the music help to convey the meaning of the text?Play *Brahms Word Search* as the choristers continue to listen to *A German Requiem*.
4. Have the choristers listen to Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* while they play *Music History Matching Game: Johannes Brahms*.

Music History: Brahms Word Search

H Y V A E A E C M L I Q K A N
A S Z T R N I O J H B W G A O
M S E E Q T Q C M P M E V Y I
B T P I N I H Y O H R K F Y T
U O H A N S C H U M A N N B A
R B M E J O B H A B P F Z Q I
G O R T M R H N G M H O K R R
R J J E A E R P A L N X S V A
O Y P H D E I X M Y Z C C E V
N D M Q Q E U B J Y O E U X R
A S C U R L I S Z T S E B U G
I X I X K C P L Q F Y R E K M
P E A N N E I V R Q M G U T T
M O T R E C N O C E L B U O D
N H I H G K M M B B N O I Y F

BRAHMS

ROMANTIC

HAMBURG

VIENNA

A GERMAN REQUIEM

PIANO

DOUBLE CONCERTO

LIEDER

OPERA

FOUR SYMPHONIES

LISZT

SCHUMANN

VARIATION

THEME

COMPOSER

Music History Matching Game
Johannes Brahms

Fill in each blank with one of the words from the column on the right.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Johannes Brahms was born in (city) _____, but lived in _____ the second half of his life. | double father |
| 2. Brahms was a composer of the _____ period. | opera four |
| 3. Brahms played the _____; his _____ was his first music teacher. | choral |
| 4. Brahms wrote _____ symphonies and _____ piano _____. | Vienna music |
| 5. Brahms composed a _____ concerto for violin and _____. | two |
| 6. Brahms' most famous _____ work is <i>A German</i> _____. | Romantic Hamburg |
| 7. Brahms wrote about 200 songs, or _____ in German. | concertos |
| 8. Brahms wrote chamber _____ but never wrote an _____. | <i>Requiem</i> <i>lieder</i> piano cello |

Liturgics

Gloria Patri

Gloria Patri is a doxology, a short hymn of praise to God.

Gloria Patri is known as the *Minor Doxology* or *Lesser Doxology*, in contrast to the *Greater Doxology*, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*.

The translation of the original Greek text is as follows:

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
Both now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

The Latin version (translation below) was ordered to be used following the Second Synod of Vasio in 529.

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, both now and always,
and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

The *Gloria Patri* in its current form has been in use in the Western Church since about the seventh century.

The *Gloria Patri* in Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches is best known in this translation:

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.*

The translations of *semper* as 'ever shall be', and *in saecula saeculorum* as 'world without end' appear in Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*.

In Anglican churches, the *Gloria Patri* is used primarily to conclude the singing or recitation of psalms and canticles at the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer.

Hymn-Knowledge-y

*Viva Voce Certificate of Distinction
for
Hymn Memorization 2009-2010*

Awarded to



Choir Director

Date