



November, 2009



Viva Voce!

Greetings!

October
Nashville, Tennessee

Late one night last week, as my husband and I drove home from a trip to Louisville, a large buck ambled in front of the car. Both Bambi and my Volvo are legally dead, but we escaped shaken, only slightly bruised, and very grateful to be alive and unhurt. Upon finally arriving at home, the first thing we did was put on a cd of the choir of King's College Cambridge singing great hymns of the Christian faith. Both the texts and the melodies were and always are a source of great comfort to us. That night they helped us to calm down, as we heard and sang along with those familiar hymn texts delivered on wings of clear voices and moving harmonies.

By the next morning my head had begun to clear, and I found myself musing about the power of sacred choral music to uplift, comfort, and inspire congregants through the centuries. I reflected on a note handed to me by a fellow parishioner when my children's choir sang in worship two weeks ago. It simply stated, "I NEEDED to hear those children sing today. When they sang, I was reminded that God is omnipotent -- and today, I NEEDED to be assured of that."

As we approach the culmination of the Church Year, and prepare for the cycle to begin again, I am keenly aware that I must always communicate to my choristers that they are not learning texts for immediate disposal upon their singing them in worship, nor are they learning texts and tunes and improving their musical knowledge only for their own sakes. As choir members, the choristers have the opportunity to serve as messengers of both truth and beauty in congregational worship. I look forward to continuing to teach them what a wonderful responsibility this is.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Carol McClure, Editor



Anthems

Grade K-2 Anthem Overview

Anthem: *Morning Star, O Cheering Sight*

Text Source: Johann Scheffler (1624-1677), trans. Bennett Harvey, Jr. (1829-1894), adapted CM

Hymn Tunes: EMMA (McClure), HAGAN (E.F. Hagan) (Moravian)

Composer: Carol McClure

Worship Use: Advent Vocal Range: g-d' Key: G major

Meter: 4/4 Accompanying Instrument: Organ (or piano)

Teaching Overview: *Morning Star, O Cheering Sight* is quickly learned by a young choir. The choir sings the text to EMMA; HAGAN is used as the introduction and interlude material. Suggested preparatory warm-ups include m. 5-6 and m.11-12, sung on syllable "loo". Point out to the choristers which *single* phrase (of the four similar phrases within each stanza) ends on the tonic pitch.

Grade 3-6 Anthem Overview

Anthem: *Song of the Ship*

Text Source: *Andermacher Gesangbuch*

Composer: Robert J. Powell

Worship Use: Advent/Christmas

Vocal Part(s): Unison Vocal Range: d-e' Key: G major

Meter: 6/8

Accompanying Instrument: Piano (or Harpsichord or Organ)

Anthem Warm-Ups: *Anthem-Based Warm-Up: Song of the Ship* (Nov. ed.)

Melodic fragment, m. 5-6 (*fa-sol-mi-la-sol*)

Melodic fragment, m. 10-12 (*ti-do-re-mi-fi-sol*)

Staccato singing of a stanza for pitch accuracy

Teaching Points:

- Clarity of diction - this is a "wordy" text
- Correct pronunciation of diphthongs ("sailing", "fying")
- Full value of final note of each phrase
- 6/8 time - duple meter

Grade 3-6 Anthem Overview

Anthem: *Splashing and Dancing*

Text Source: Traditional Castilian carol Melody: Castilian folk tune

Composer: Carol McClure Worship Use: Christmas

Vocal Part(s): Unison w/ optional second part

Vocal Range: d-d'(solo), f#-g' (Treble I), d-d' (Treble II)

Key: G minor Meter: Solo stanza in 4/4, refrain in 2/4

Accompanying Instruments: Flute, bassoon (or cello), triangle and harp

Anthem Warm-Ups: Refrain on "loo"; Two parts together, m. 35-45

Teaching Points:

- Following the "road map" of the anthem
- Understanding terms - *quasi recitativo*, *coda*, *solo*, *tutti*, *da capo*
- Learning Spanish pronunciation
- Understanding tempo change between stanza and refrain



As we approach the culmination of the Church Year, and prepare for the cycle to begin again, I am keenly aware that I must always communicate to my choristers that they are not learning texts for their immediate disposal upon their singing them in worship, nor are they learning texts and tunes and improving their musical knowledge only for their own sakes.



Rehearsal Plan Grade K-2

Arrival at Choir Rehearsal

Background Music – Play recordings of Christmas carols every week as the choristers arrive.

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

Week 1 – Play “Music Symbol Review”. (Have all the symbols on flashcards for quick review. Have a choir helper review all the symbols with everyone; then, have choristers compete for the fastest time in which to identify all the symbols.)

Week 2 - Play Christmas Carol “Rhythm Echo”. (Have a choir helper clap the opening rhythm pattern of a familiar Christmas carol the choristers clap the rhythm back and attempt to identify the carol. When they identify the carol correctly, have them sing the first line together.)

Week 3 - Play Christmas Carol “Rhythm Echo”.



Vocal Warm Ups (at least 5-7 minutes)

Vocal warm-up time is at a premium with Advent/Christmas worship service preparation taking priority. This month, streamline your warm-ups as follows:

1. Start every week with legato “fire whistle” sounds.
2. Continue with the legato counting warm-up, making a point of how many counts the chorister can sing in one breath.
3. Use the first stanza of a different Christmas carol each week, not only to familiarize children with your church’s “canon of carols”, but additionally to work on both diction and interval singing.
4. Sing the suggested preparatory warm-ups for *Morning Star, O Cheering Sight*.



As choir members, the choristers have the opportunity to serve as messengers of both truth and beauty in congregational worship.



Anthem Preparation:

Morning Star, O Cheering Sight

In preparation: Make an audio CD of *Morning Star, O Cheering Sight* from the CD-ROM MP3 file. Your CD player *may* play directly from the CD-Rom.

Week 1 - Read Revelation 22:16. Play the anthem CD of *Morning Star, O Cheering Sight* for the choristers. Tell the choristers a little about the Moravians. Show a picture of a Moravian Star. Sing through each phrase of the anthem with the choristers, having them echo. Remind them how easy this text is to learn.

Week 2 - Play the anthem CD of *O, Morning Star, O Cheering Sight* for the choristers. Review mm. 5-6 and 11-12, as well as the ending of each phrase.

Week 3 - Use warm-ups and anthem CD to review the anthem with the choristers, reminding them to pay attention to details of diction and pitch. If they are singing this anthem with the organ in worship, practice several times in the sanctuary to get the choristers comfortable.

Learning Time

Activity #1: Hymn-of-the-Month - *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night* Sing through the first through third stanzas of the hymn each week. Ask choristers questions about the hymn text.

Activity #2: Cracking the Code - Symbol Identification In preparation, make flashcards of musical symbols in *K-2 Musical Symbol Game*. Review the symbols, adding additional terms, signs and symbols as the choristers are ready; see who recognizes and can name all the terms, signs and symbols taught during the semester.

Activity #3: Liturgics - The Church Year/*Advent* Introduce the choristers to a new Advent carol (*O Come, O Come, Immanuel, Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*) and symbol each week. Teach *We're Getting Ready for Jesus to Come*.

Listening Time

Take a few minutes to listen to bits of Handel’s *Messiah*.

Rehearsal Conclusion

Sing *We're Getting Ready for Jesus to Come* as the benediction each week.

Rehearsal Plan Grade 3-6

Arrival at Choir Rehearsal

Background Music – Play recordings of Handel’s *Messiah*..

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

Vocal Warm Ups (at least 10 minutes)

Choose from the compilation of previous months’ warm-ups, as well as incorporating both the *Anthem-Based Warm-Up: Song of the Ship* and the warm-up suggestions for *Splashing and Dancing*, both found in this newsletter. Review the semester’s *Echo Singing* and *Interval Identification*, as well as including Christmas carols. You may wish to include the Hymn of the Month, *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*, as part of warm-up activities.



Anthem Preparation

Review any hymns needed for upcoming worship services singing. for worship presentation. Focus on a beautiful tone and unified diction.

At your discretion, follow the teaching suggestions for *Song of the Ship* and *Splashing and Dancing*. Both anthems afford you the opportunity to work on diction. Early memory work on the text of *Song of the Ship* is also advisable. Both anthems are appealing to choristers because of their pacing, and are learned quite easily. *Splashing and Dancing* gives you the opportunity to discuss the use of *recitativ* -- ideal for the month when Handel is the *Composer of the Month*. Make sure to allow yourself time to run the instrumental parts of *Splashing and Dancing* with only the instrumentalists before you rehearse with both choristers and instrumentalists together.



Learning Time

During December, rehearsal time is always at a premium. Use any available non-singing time as a skills review opportunity. Continue to sing *The Church Year*. Talk about Advent as a season of preparation of heart and mind and hands and voice. Include the singing of one stanza of an Advent hymn each week..

Listening Time

Each week, take a few minutes to listen to and discuss the music of the *Composer of the Month* (Handel), using the questions and game provided.

Rehearsal Conclusion

Thank the choristers for their work, make announcements, give the choristers any instructions they may need about upcoming Advent worship service singing, collect prayer requests, and conclude by singing the Hymn of the Month or *The Choristers’ Benediction*.

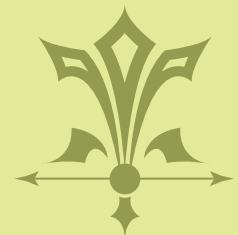


*There comes a
ship asailing, with
angels flying fast;*

*She bears a
splendid cargo,
and has a
mighty mast.*

*This ship is fully
laden, right to her
highest board;*

*She bears the Son
of Heaven, God’s
high eternal Word.*



The Symbols of Advent

***Advent means "coming."** Christians celebrate this season as a time of preparation, and acknowledge our gift of salvation through God's son Jesus. Also during the Advent season we look forward to the promised second coming of Christ. Advent symbols remind us of both these themes.*

***Advent Wreath** - An Advent Wreath provides a reminder of our journey through the four Sundays of the season. The wreath's **circle** has no beginning or end, symbolizing God's love never-ending love. The **evergreen** symbolizes everlasting life. Blue candles symbolize hope and anticipation, while purple symbolizes the color of royalty. Pink is for joy. Traditionally, three purple candles and one pink have been used together, but recently some churches use blue. The central white candle represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve.*

***Advent Calendar** - Advent Calendars help us observe this time of waiting every day, as we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' coming into the world.*

***Star** - The star guided the wise men as they sought the Christ Child; the star is, therefore, also a symbol of Epiphany. Jesus is also called "the bright morning star" in Revelation 22:16.*

***Creche** - St. Francis of Assisi popularized the creche, or Nativity Scene, when he created one in a cave near his village, using live animals. Many cultures and churches use this symbol, leaving the manger empty until Christmas Eve or Christmas morning.*

***Angel** - "Angel" comes from the Greek word for "messenger." Angels communicate good news from God. Angels appeared both to Mary and Joseph, bringing the news that Mary would be the mother of God's son Jesus. Angels also appeared to shepherds in the fields to announce Jesus' birth.*

***Jesse Tree** - Jesus, the Messiah, a descendant of King David, whose father was Jesse, was expected by the people of Israel to come from David's line, "a sprout from the root of Jesse." A Jesse tree is usually made from a bare branch decorated with symbols of those who prepared the way for the coming of Christ, beginning with Adam and Eve.*

***Christmas Ornaments** - Many Christmas ornaments are round, reminding us that God's love has no beginning and no end. God loved the world so much that He gave us the gift of his son Jesus. The orbs also represent the world into which Jesus came as Emmanuel, "God with us."*

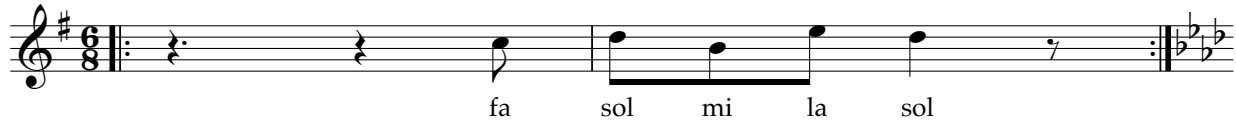
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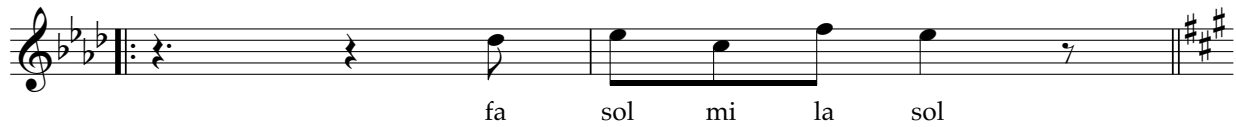
Viva Voce Supplementary Warm-Up for Grades 3-6
November edition

Anthem-Based Warm-Up: *Song of the Ship*

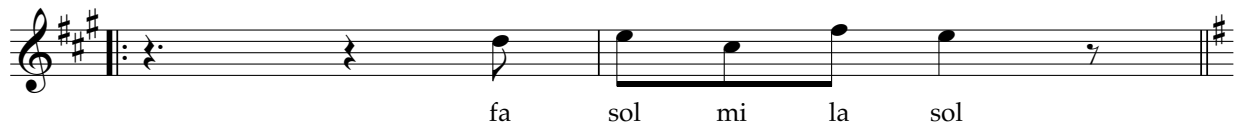
♩ = 78



fa sol mi la sol



fa sol mi la sol



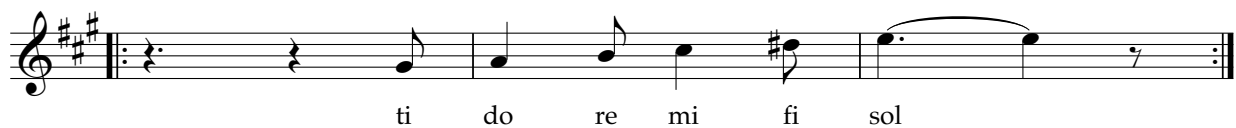
fa sol mi la sol



ti do re mi fi sol



ti do re mi fi sol



ti do re mi fi sol

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y

Hymn-of-the-Month Information Page

Hymn of the Month: *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*

Hymn Tune: **WINCHESTER OLD**

Hymn Tune Source: melody from **The Whole Book of Psalms**, 1592

Text Writer: **Nahum Tate** (1625-1715) Nahum Tate was born in Dublin in 1652, the son of an Irish clergyman, the writer of a poem on the Trinity entitled *Ter Tria*. Nahum Tate graduated from Trinity College, Dublin with a BA in 1672. By 1676, he was writing for a living, while residing in London. In 1677, he changed the spelling of his surname to *Tate*, when he published a volume of poems. Tate is best known as a writer of plays, as well as for the famous *New Version of the Psalms of David* (1696), his collaborative work with Nicholas Brady. *As Pants the Heart* (Psalm 42), one of Tate's best texts, appeared in this collection. *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks* appeared in print in a supplement to this same collection. Nahum Tate died in 1715 in Southwark, London, England.

Text: While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shown around.

- . "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind;
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and all mankind."
- . "To you, in David's town, this day is born of David's line
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be a sign:
- . "The heavenly Babe you there shall find to human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands, and in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high and on the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from heaven to men begin and never cease."

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 Memory Game to each chorister for work during rehearsal or as a take-home project.

Week 3

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 *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks* to earn the December credit for his/her Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y certificate.

Hymn=KNOWLEDGE=y

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
Introductory Discussion

Materials Needed for Each Chorister:

Hymnal

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

(The director/leader will need a Bible.)

1. Have the choristers sing *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*.
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 other well-known hymn text did Nahum Tate write?
 - What is the name of the hymn tune?
 - What is the source of the hymn tune?
4. Choose from the following questions to ask the choristers about the hymn text, after reading aloud Luke 2:8-14.
 - STANZA 1 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 1.
 - What would be another way of saying, “glory shone around”?
 - STANZA 2 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 2.
 - What would be another way of saying, “dread had seized their troubled mind”?
 - STANZA 3 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 3.
 - What is, “David’s town”?
 - STANZA 4 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 4.
 - What are swathing bands or swaddling clothes?
 - STANZA 5 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 5.
 - What is a seraph?
 - STANZA 6 Questions*
 - Paraphrase Stanza 6.
 - What does “good will from heaven to men” mean?

Hymn-KNOWLEDGE-y Memory Game

Text: *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks by Night*
by Nahum Tate

Fill in the blanks with missing words from the *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night* text from memory. Word choices appear at the bottom of this page.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all _____ on the ground,
The _____ of the Lord came down, and _____ shown around.

“Fear not,” said he, for mighty _____ had seized their troubled mind;
“Glad tidings of great _____ I bring to you and all _____.”

“To you, in _____ town, this day is born of David’s line
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be a _____:

“The heavenly _____ you there shall find to human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in _____ bands, and in a manger laid.”

Thus spake the _____, and forthwith appeared a _____ throng
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their _____ song:

“All glory be to God on _____ and on the earth be _____;
Good will henceforth from _____ to men begin and never cease.”

heaven	glory	seraph	high
dread	swathing	peace	joy
angel	seated	mankind	sign
joyful	David’s	shining	Babe

Listening/Music History

Composer of the Month: **George Frideric Handel** (1685-1750)

Handel was a composer of the **Baroque** period, born in **Halle, Germany**, on February 23, 1685 (the **same birth year as Bach**).

Handel spent his early years in Germany, studying **organ, harpsichord, violin, and composing music**.

Handel **moved to Italy** in **1706**. While in Italy, Handel worked with many well-known composers; there, he **composed opera, oratorio, church music** (including **cantatas** in an **operatic** style), **keyboard music and chamber music**.

After **1712**, Handel made his **home in England**. While in England, Handel became **famous as a composer of opera and oratorio**.

Handel's **most famous oratorio** is the *Messiah*, which he **composed in fewer than twenty-three days!** It was **written to help raise money for a hospital in Dublin, Ireland**.

Suggested Listening:

Messiah: Comfort Ye, For Unto Us a Child is Born

Suggested Listening Activities

1. Have the choristers listen to a few minutes of *Comfort Ye*. Ask these questions:
In *Comfort Ye*, what voice part is the soloist?
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 *For Unto Us a Child is Born*. Ask the following questions:
Is the piece always loud or always soft?
Do you hear the *melisma* (define for them) in the vocal line?
What are some words that describe the music?
Is the pulse (beat) of the music prominent (easy to hear) or not?
3. Have the choristers listen to portions of the *Messiah* while they play *Music History Matching Game: George Frideric Handel*.

Music History Matching Game
George Frideric Handel

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

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. George Frideric Handel was born in (city) _____, Germany | 17 th /18 th |
| 2. Handel lived and composed during the _____ period, in the _____ centuries. | harpsichord |
| 3. Handel played the _____, the _____ and the _____. | twenty-three |
| 4. Handel moved to _____ in 1706, where he composed opera, oratorio and _____ in operatic style. | oratorio |
| 5. In Italy, Handel also composed _____ and _____ music. | England |
| 6. In 1712, Handel moved to _____, where he gained fame as a composer of opera and _____. | <i>Messiah</i> |
| 7. Handel's most famous oratorio is the _____, composed in fewer than _____ days. | violin |
| 8. The <i>Messiah</i> was composed to help raise money for a hospital in _____, Ireland. | Italy |
- Dublin
cantatas
Baroque
keyboard
Italy
chamber
organ

We're Getting Ready for Jesus to Come

CM

Carol McClure (BMI)

Gently

Soprano

Piano

mp

3 *mp*

S.

We're get - ting read - y for Je - sus to come.

Pno.

5

S.

What shall we bring to this ba - by, God's Son?

Pno.

7 *mf*

S. Bring Him our laugh - ter, Bring Him our joy:

Pno. *mf*

9

S. Gifts from our hearts for this small ba - by boy.

Pno.

11 *mp*

S. Bring Him our wor - ship, Bring Him our love:

Pno. *mp*

13 *rit.*

S. Gifts from our hearts for God's Gift from a - bove.

Pno. *rit.*