



A Study Plan for

Allelu, Sing Praises!

Michael Jothan

Allelu, Sing Praises! is an anthem that encourages and provides opportunities for musicians of all ages and abilities to join in singing thanks and praise. In creating the composition, I tried to imagine a large group of people gathering casually. From somewhere in the group a chordal, percussive rhythmic accompaniment is heard. Then a chant-like melody sung softly with great energy and conviction begins Melody #1, (measures 5-17).

Gradually others join in singing. This melody is repeated several times before a second melody (measures 27-39) is introduced. As the volume builds, a third melody is added (measures 49-61). All three melodies grow in intensity as the music approaches a climax of sound (measures 57-61).

Suddenly, as the three melodies are repeated, individuals and small groups of voices are heard, singing highly personal, improvised, short melodic descants (measures 63-66). Here is the composition's climax. Here, everyone is engaged in expressing praise in either a group or individual manner. Here the overall form and length of the composition become dependent on the extent of the excitement and jubilation present within the group gathered. A unison concluding statement of praise serves to summarize the oneness of those gathered.

LOOKING AT THE MUSICAL SCORE

An awareness of the background and the structure of *Allelu, Sing Praises!* can help in preparing the teaching process. Think in terms of a simple idea becoming more complex.

Introduction ms. 1-4	Section A Mel. 1 ms. 5-17	Section A' Mel. 1(heard 2X) ms. 19-39 Mel. 2 added ms. 27-39	Section A'' Mel. 1 & 2 (heard 2X) ms. 41-61 Mel. 3 added ms. 49-61	Section A''' Melodies 1,2,3 ms. 63-66 (sections of) (repeated as appropriate) Improvised descants ms. 63-66	Conclusion Melodies 1,2,3 conclude ms. 67-72 Unison Closing statement ms. 73
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To help accomplish this, plan to help singers:

- accent rhythms by using crisp diction and emphasizing short and long vowel sounds as appropriate to individual expressive markings;
- emphasize stylistic contrast between melodies by exaggerating the staccato, accented, and tenuto markings as appropriate;
- contrast the g minor and G Major quality of Melodies 1 and 2 by carefully learning to sing each melody before performing the two together;
- learn all three melodies so that they can become comfortable in singing any of the melodies as they desire;
- understand the concept of becoming more complex by discussing the concept of praise in individual and collective terms;

LEARNING ALLELU, SING PRAISES!

There are several activities through which singers might come to know this composition. Three steps should be considered:

- (1.) learning each of the three basic melodies,
- (2.) learning to sing two and then three melodies combined, and
- (3.) developing improvisations to be sung with the three melodies.

In learning the three basic melodies, try starting with MELODY #2 which emphasizes singing in G Major and begins with long note values concluding with shorter note values. Have the singers establish a steady pulse and then, using a unison pitch, sing the note values with the words. Emphasize sustaining the vowel sound through each word.

G A B B C D D
 Al - le - lu! Sing, sing prais - es!

When the rhythm and the vowels are established, sing the melody using the pitch names. Pay close attention to the pitch B, as here it is B natural and contrasts later with a B flat. Then combine pitch and words taking care to sustain the vocal tone as the melody ascends.

Finally, have the singers find, learn and sing the repeated rhythms ending this melody in measures 35-39. Perhaps read and speak the words in rhythm, then sing on a neutral pitch as above. Have them experience the triplet figures in measure 38 as contrasted with the repeated rhythms in measures 36 and 37.

After learning to perform MELODY #2, have the singers find and then sing the entire composition using only MELODY #2.

For learning MELODY #1, you might have them learn to sing "Allelu, Sing Praises" in measures 72 & 73 by listening as you provide a vocal model and then having them echo sing. Then using only MELODY #1, have the singers examine the musical score and find this melodic and rhythmic pattern in other places. Depending on the ages of the singers, this pattern might also be notated on a chart. Also, have them find and then learn other patterns in MELODY #1 that are similar but not exactly the same.

Al - le - lu, sing praise - ses!

Using aspects from MELODY #2, have the singers learn the ending of MELODY #1 (measures 13-17) by comparing and contrasting the endings of the two melodies. Try having the singers sing either the ending portion of MELODY #1 or #2 as you indicate which one to sing. Try using a visual aid such as the following to indicate which ending to sing.

MELODY #1
 MELODY #2
 Sing prais - es

After learning MELODY #1, have the singers combine the two. Begin by having all singers perform MELODY #2 several times and then as this continues to be repeated, have identified singers join in with MELODY #1. Continue singing, changing parts back and forth between the two groups until both are comfortable singing each melody. When this is accomplished, have singers sing the entire composition using MELODIES #1 and #2.

MELODY #3 contains melodic fragments based on a limited number of pitches. Given the range and placement of the melody, this would be a good part for boys with changing voices to sing. Begin by having the singers sing the repeated word "Praises!" as you sing the remainder of the melody (I will sing praises!).

After several repetitions, change parts and have the singers sing the other part. Then have the singers sing the entire melody.

As when learning MELODY #1, have the singers learn the ending of MELODY #3 by comparing and contrasting the endings of the three melodies. How are they similar? Different? Challenge them to sing the ending of MELODY #3 by reading the musical notation.

After learning MELODY #3, have the singers combine all three melodies. As when they learned the two melodies, begin by singing MELODY #2 several times and then as this continues, have identified singers join in with MELODIES #1 and #3. Continue singing, changing parts back and forth between each of the three melodies. Then, have the singers use their music and sing the entire composition with all three melodies.

In learning the IMPROVISED SECTION (measures 63-66), explore vocal improvisation by establishing a steady pulse and having the singers:

- read and learn to sing optional DESCANT I. They can find similar patterns rhythmically and melodically in the three basic melodies and given only two pitches, DESCANT I is a good challenge for beginning music readers.
- learn to sing optional DESCANT II using an appropriate octave placement for the voice. Have them speak the text in rhythm taking care to emphasize the rhythmic quality. Then using vocal modeling, have the students echo sing, complete the phrase, and finally sing the entire descant with rhythmic, pitch and stylistic accuracy.
- sing either DESCANT I or II as a leader sings the other descant. Try different leaders. Gradually move to having an equal number of singers on each of the two descants at the same time. In doing this, be aware of singers who are intentionally or unintentionally adding new ideas (descants) to the performance.

- identify characteristics of DESCANTS I and II: new texts, short statements, higher, one is very short and the other longer than the three basic melodies. Relate these ideas to what some of the leaders were doing above.
- suggest words that could be used to add new melodies to the praising nature of this section: i.e. Lord, Hosanna, Shout, etc. Then provide singers with an opportunity to create new musical statements using their own words and musical material. Note carefully those singers who are more comfortable with MELODY #1, 2 or 3 than improvising. Some examples of rhythms and words that might emerge include:

Example A:

I will! I will!

Example B:

I will sing prais - es I will sing prais - es

After learning DESCANTS I and II and exploring creating and performing new improvised descants, have the singers combine and perform the three basic melodies with the descants. Again, as when they learned the two melodies, begin by singing MELODY #2 several times and then as this continues, have identified singers join in with MELODIES #1 and then #3. Take care to sing only the four measure section of each melody present in measures 63-66.

Continue singing as first DESCANT I and then DESCANT II are added by identified singers. Taking care to make sure that MELODIES #1, 2, and 3 continue, indicate that singers may add improvised descants as appropriate and then should return to their appropriate melody. Since this section, measures 63-66, is repeated many times, establish a signal by which the singers will know how to stop.

Then, have the singers use their music and sing the entire composition as written. Emphasize singing their assigned part as confidently as possible and being prepared to perform their improvised section in a similar manner.

The CONCLUSION of *Allelu, Sing Praises!* is easy to learn in that it consists of the unison ending learned in conjunction with MELODY #1 above and varied entrances of the concluding section of all three basic melodies.

- Begin in measure 71 by having all singers use their music and perform MELODY #3 to the end. If they have difficulty in entering with the syncopated pattern in measure 72, try having them place a finger snap on the fourth pulse as they take a breath.
- Divide the singers into two groups and beginning in measure 70, have them read and sing MELODIES #1 and #2 to the end, again using the finger snap to emphasize accuracy of the syncopation.
- With the singers in three parts, begin in measure 70 and read and perform all three parts to the end.
- Beginning in measure 67, have the singers read and perform to the end of the composition.
- Beginning with the improvised section as above, have the singers perform from measure 63 to the end.
- After learning the conclusion, have the singers use their music and sing the entire composition.

PERFORMING ALLELU, SING PRAISES!

The rhythmic and improvisational quality of this selection can be enhanced through adding varied percussion instruments to the accompaniment. Try starting with voices alone and then adding percussion and keyboard. Also try starting with percussion, adding keyboard, and then voices. Encourage the percussion and keyboard performers to improvise during measures 63-66. Performance flexibility and creativity should be a part of the praise process. Then, everyone will enjoy participating in and experiencing *Allelu, Sing Praises!*

Dr. Michael Jochen serves as Associate Professor of Music at Towson University, Towson, MD. He is past president of the Choristers Guild Board of Directors and Chairperson of the 50th Anniversary Committee.