

A TEACHING PLAN FOR "FESTIVAL ALLELUIA" (CGA280)

by Allen Pote

I have often joked, "the printed music is just a mere sketch of what the composer had in mind." Of course, that is a bit of an exaggeration, but it is true that some composers are not as meticulous as others in notating exactly what they want. Ultimately, the music must come alive and communicate to both performer and listener, and the director's job thus becomes one of an enabler. So, using the printed music as a guide be as creative as possible in making this song festive, joyful, merry and alive!

Here are some suggestions and questions that might be raised:

1. What does "with sparkle" mean? Why didn't the composer use a term like "moderato?"
2. Let the children hear the piece played on the piano at different tempos and have them decide which one "sparkles." Then list on the board some other words that might have been used to indicate the feeling needed.
3. Set the metronome at 80. Then experiment with different settings, (88, 76, 92) until an easy, lilting tempo is felt.
4. Does "sparkle" have anything to do with facial expression?
5. At measure 11, to achieve a legato crescendo, have the children use their hands to simulate a jet plane taking off (no bumps, please).
6. At measure 17, practice the pianissimo, first by only mouthing the words together, then whispering, and then on pitch, but very softly. Remember, soft does not mean slow. Then sing m.13-16, followed by m.17-19, and hear the difference.
7. Point out the difference between m.9-13 and m.25-30. Then practice by speaking in rhythm each of the following lines, with the children imitating after each line.

Clap your hands (clap, clap)
Clap your hands (clap, clap) rejoice
Clap your hands (clap, clap) rejoice and sing
Clap your hands (clap, clap) rejoice and sing a joyful song

then

Celebrate (snap, snap)
Celebrate (snap, snap) and with
Celebrate (snap, snap) and with a cheerful
Celebrate (snap, snap) and with a cheerful voice

8. What are the things that make the B section (listen to the rhythm) different from the A sections? List on the board some things that make up the rhythm(s) of creation.
9. Whisper the words in rhythm, beginning at m. 37. Then speak them and finally sing them. Be sure to know the difference between:

☹ cre - a - SHUN and cre - A - (shun) ☺

☹ cel - e - bra - SHUN and cel - e - BRA - (shun) ☺

10. What are some things that make the repeat of the A section (m.45) different from the first A?
11. Say the word "alleluia" and ask what the stress syllable is.

Al -le-lu-**IA**
or?

AL -le-lu-ia
or?

Al -**LE**-lu-ia
or?

☺ Al -le-**LU**-ia

(Translate this into a musical phrase, by singing several of the "alleluias" and having the children imitate)

12. What does the word "alleluia" mean?
(Latinization of the Hebrew "hallelujah," meaning "praise the Lord." An expression of joy...)*
13. Sing from the heart, and make your life a song to God!

**HARVARD DICTIONARY of MUSIC*, Willi Apel, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Anthem and teaching plan by Allen Pote.
Teaching plan from Choristers Guild *LETTERS*,
January 1983.