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A Study Plan for Margaret R. Tucker's Song of Celebration

(CGA-512)

This is not a difficult anthem for children to learn nor one that is very demanding to interpret. It does however provide opportunities to teach about various aspects of music construction: style, form, use of a major scale, formation of melody line, and use of rhythm.

Rehearsal I

1. Tell your singers that they are going to learn a celebration song. Ask:
 - a. "What is a celebration?" Write key words from their definitions on chalk board or paper. (e.g., party, happy time, cake, etc.)
 - b. "What different kinds of celebrations have you experienced?" List these. (e.g., birthday party, Christmas, anniversary, etc.)
 - c. "What song might we sing at each of these celebrations?" List their responses. ("Happy Birthday or Happy anniversary to You," Christmas carols, etc.)
 - d. "Does anyone have a birthday this week?" If so, have everyone sing "Happy Birthday to You."
 - e. "Have you ever thought that countries and cities/towns and even churches have birthdays?" Talk with the children about how old the U. S. A., their city/town and their church are.
 - f. "The song we are going to learn is a celebration song written for the birthday of a church. What kinds of musical sounds could we use to celebrate a church's birthday?" List them (might include organ, piano, bells, singing, etc.) Underline the sounds that are used in this anthem and add those the singers had not mentioned. Then teach the sound that the drum and cymbal make in the anthem, starting with saying the words in rhythm, then adding the melody.

Rehearsal II

1. Draw an E flat major scale on the board, extending it to the top line F in the treble clef. Explain to the singers that this scale is a picture of all the sounds they will sing in this song.
 - a. Ask one child to come to the board and number each note in the scale, beginning with the lowest note.

- b. Point to various intervals (1-5, 1-3, 5-3, etc.), singing the interval using the number of each note. Have the children echo each interval.
- c. After the singers feel comfortable with the intervals, reverse the process and let some of them select intervals to sing, with you and the rest of the group echoing the interval.
- d. Ask each child to write down a series of eight numbers, using only the numbers under the scale. The numbers may be in any order and may be repeated. Select one child's series and write it on the board. Point to each note in the order selected and sing it as a melody. Then ask all the children to sing it with you. If you can't sing each child's melody today, save some melodies to sing in later rehearsals.
- e. Write out the number series for, "With a rum-pum-pum, etc." Sing it for the children and ask them to sing it with you the second time. Explain that a composer does the same thing they have been doing: deciding in what order to put notes to make a melody.

Rehearsal III

1. Use the method in Rehearsal II to teach the other sounds in the anthem.
2. You sing the first two lines of each verse and have the choir enter with the appropriate sounds.

Rehearsal IV

1. Distribute the anthem to the singers, asking them to find the different sounds made by each instrument. By now they will know the opening lines of each stanza from your singing and they should be able to sing it with you.
 - a. Explain that each instrument sound is sung twice: it's repeated. Explain what various repeat markings do.
 - b. Ask the children to find the one part of the anthem that is different from the rest. Use images of light-dark, round-square, etc., to explain what contrast is. Ask them to describe the sound of the parts they have already learned (peppy, bouncy, etc.) and have them think how this new part should sound in order to provide a contrast.
 - c. To attain the feeling of syncopation in the contrasting part, have the singers give a small clap on the rests. Have them internalize this clap by tapping their toes, then a finger, then giving a nod of the head, then simply thinking it. Have them do this while you sing it, and then do it as they sing it.

Rehearsal V

1. Sing through the whole anthem in unison, omitting any optional voices.
 - a. If the whistling is too difficult for the age of your singers, ask an adult to do the whistling part.
 - b. If your singers are able to sing second parts, learn them at this time.
 - c. If your singers are older children, some of them may be able to play the drum and cymbal parts and, even, the bell part. □