

Helenclair Lowe is a noted leader in children's music in America and has arranged several anthems in the Guild's Masterworks Series. She is a frequent clinician at workshops and festivals for young people, especially on the West Coast. A resident of Pasadena, California, she is a Past President of Choristers Guild Board of Directors.

A Study Plan for Helenclair Lowe's

Alleluia, Sing Hosanna! (CGA-520)

This anthem combines two important elements. The first is a text describing the excitement of the Palm Sunday processional with some additional thoughts about the Savior King who came so humbly. The second element includes some wonderful music of Beethoven from a famous piece for piano.

Preparation

We want our choirs to know and understand great music and master composers. But sometimes we forget that they are not really interested in the dates and statistics that often appear in short biographies. It is more important for them to know what kind of a person wrote the music, why it was written and how it was done. So, perhaps you will want to use the short biographical sketch that appears on the inside cover. If you have time, follow it with a discussion of how we can all overcome difficulties, disappointments and hardships to develop and use our God-given talents, great or small.

Encourage one of your choristers who is studying piano to play the excerpt on the inside cover, or better yet, ask him or her to play the whole piece, if they have studied it. Someone else might "favor" the rehearsal with *Für Elise*. Have the choristers ever heard the adult choir sing "The Heavens Are Declaring"? Or do they know about the famous *Fifth Symphony* with its famous rhythmic "Victory" pattern? I'll wager someone knows about it from *A Fifth of Beethoven*!

Rehearsal 1

The choir should be able to recognize rondo form . . . ABACA. Point out that you will be looking for this form since the music is found in a rondo by Beethoven. Let them hear this bright, sparkling piece and recognize the different sections. Start with section A. You might find it helpful to make a chart with a single unison line of the melody.

Al - le - lu - ia, sing Ho -

san - na, run to greet the King of

kings. Here he comes, the Son of

Da - vid, who for us sal - va - tion brings.

It's easy to present the melody by speaking the words rhythmically. Then add the piano while the children speak. Finally have them sing it with the accompaniment. Now they can find the same melody somewhere else in the music. How about page 6 (m. 49-57)? Where else do they discover it? There it is on page 4 (m. 24-32). Are the words the same? Let's make sure we have them right. Now see how this section A is found in the anthem three times as we would expect it in rondo form.

Rehearsal 2

After a brief review of section A, look at the little musical exclamation that follows (m. 13-16). It's easy to sing.

Pre - pare the way! Pre - pare the way!

Assist the singers to discover that it appears again on the last page (m. 58-61). If the children know the word *codetta* or *coda*, they will easily find the fancy little ending that follows. This codetta is the place for some careful part study.

Al - le - lu - ia, sing Ho -

Al - le - lu - ia, sing Ho -

san - na to the King.

san - na to the King.

hum - bly as has been fore - told.

hum - bly as has been fore - told.

Starting with the last count of measure 61, ask Part I singers to speak the words rhythmically, noticing the even 8th notes. Now Part II singers will find that there are twice as many notes for them on the words “sing Ho-.” Do they know about 16th notes? After each part has been learned, both groups can sing it together. Be sure to point out the ritard. Tell the choristers that it is something like the way their parents pull up to a stop when driving a car. They gradually put on the brakes so the passengers don’t go right through the windshield on a totally abrupt stop!

Rehearsal 3

Start work today on the B section (m. 16-24). This is the most challenging part of the anthem. Start with the text. Read the words. This will assist the choristers in feeling the building of excitement as the words *looking*, *searching*, *shouting* and *asking* pile one upon the other. Now the choir can speak it rhythmically. Here is the opportunity to call attention to the phrasing. Breath should be taken after “singing” (m. 20); the word “asking” is followed directly by a question so the next spot for a breath is after the word “crown” (m. 24).

You may find it easier to teach the melody using a neutral syllable. When notes and intervals are secure the fast-moving words may be added.

Rehearsal 4

After review time, turn to page 5. Sing four measures of the C section for the choir. Can the choristers recognize a change to the minor tonality? Have the whole choir learn the melody (Part I), measures 32-40. A very short canon begins in measure 37. Can they sing that phrase with both parts in canon?

The Sav - ior King comes

The King comes

Now a little exploring will show that the next phrases are melodically the same but the canon ends quite differently. You will want to work both rhythmically and melodically on these two measures (m. 47-49).

He bless - es us with hope and peace, and

He brings us hope and peace, and

new life He of - fers to us all.

new life He of - fers to us all.

Call attention to the phrasing again; breath should be taken after “peace,” then the singers can connect “new life He offers to us all.”

Rehearsal 5

Now all the musical matters have been taught. Review, especially the more challenging parts. Polish the dynamics; contrast the joy and excitement of section A with the thoughtful section C. The first is clear and sparkling while the minor section is slower, quieter and very flowing. Here is the place to point out that Beethoven’s music often has many contrasts like dark and light, or happy and sad, or staccato and legato as it reflects his own life and temperament.

Try to make the composer become a real person in the minds of the choristers, not just a name over some music. Then imagination is stirred and listening and learning are possible. Assist your singers in their enjoyment of this zestful outpouring from a master composer. Then combine it with the excitement and understanding of the Palm Sunday observance. Happy singing!

... Helenclair Lowe