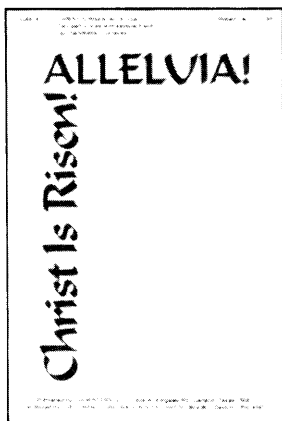


Robert Lau lives in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, where he is Organist/Choirmaster at Mt. Calvary Episcopal Church, Music Director of the Harrisburg Choral Society, and an adjunct member of the faculty of Penn State Harrisburg. He also maintains a private studio, teaching violin, viola and composition. Former chairman of the music department at Lebanon Valley College, Dr. Lau holds degrees from that school, the Eastman School of Music and Catholic University of America. His works for organ and choirs are represented in catalogs of leading American music publishers.

A Study Plan for Robert C. Lau's

"Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!"

CGA674



"Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!" is written for two equal voices. The children, therefore, should learn both Parts I and II of the entire work. If the children are usually assigned to soprano or alto sections, mix an equal number of singers on each part so that voice qualities blend as much as possible.

Week 1

1. Rehearse all the children singing Part I (letter A to letter B). Emphasize that they should sound joyful, not loud. Use words like "bright" and "happy" to describe the mood of the piece.
2. Show the children that what they sing at letter A is repeated at both C and E (Voice I).
3. Sing Part I with accompaniment as provided at letter A.
4. Explain that this anthem contains a portion of an Easter hymn which was written before this anthem was composed, and that the composer did this on purpose.

If possible, show the choir the source of the tune they are singing. It is the hymn "Christ is Risen! Alleluia!" with a text by John S.B. Monsell to a tune by Frederick C. Maker. The hymn may be found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (#131). Compare letter D of the anthem with the beginning of the hymn.

5. Teach the 8 measures of letter D. Everybody sings both parts.
6. Review Part I (letter A). Divide the choir in two parts. Have each section sing Part I independently with accompaniment. Mix the choir members again. If you are working with a larger group in which physically moving children presents a problem, divide the choir arbitrarily — by rows, for example.
7. Review the 8 measures at letter D.

Week 2

1. Review Part I. Rehearse all voices singing it together, then divide the choir into smaller sections. Have each section sing Part I separately. Stress that the phrases are two measures in length and that the singers should be careful not to "punch" the last word of each phrase when taking a breath to begin the next phrase.
2. Teach Part II (letter B to letter C). This part should be sung in a more *legato* style. The tone should not be forced, especially at the leap from the first to second notes. Stress "ah" sound for the first syllable of the word "al-le-lu-ia."
3. Show them that this part is also repeated — at C and E.
4. After Part II has been learned, rehearse the choir singing it while the pianist plays the accompaniment at letter C.
5. Divide the choir into smaller groups, checking the ability of each section to sing Part II independently. The piano should use the accompaniment at letter C.
6. Have everyone review Parts I and II as separate melodies. Can they sing each melody separately with the accompaniment at letter C?
7. Divide the choir into two parts. Rehearse both parts simultaneously (with accompaniment at letter C).
8. Reverse the parts, making this whole process as much a game as possible. It is important, however, to tell them that this is not a contest as to which part can sing louder, but that these are equal parts which must sound balanced.

Week 3

1. Place the word **polyphony** on the blackboard. Explain that this is the term which musicians use to

describe a piece of music in which several musical ideas ("many sounds") are performed at the same time. In this piece these "sounds" are Parts I, II and the handbell part. Each is performed separately, but all are presented together in various combinations. They are performed together at letter E.

2. Review Parts I and II by singing them independently.
3. Review the 8 measures of letter D.
4. Sing Parts I and II together, practicing both parts with various combinations of singers.
5. Add the handbell bell part. Have each part sing "against" this part separately at first. Use the term "polyphony." Combine all the parts.
6. Teach the final "Alleluia" at the end of the anthem.

Week 4

1. Review all parts separately. Is it possible for your singers to sing each tune by memory? Even if the piece will not be performed this way, this is good practice in ear training.
2. Ask for the term which means "many sounds" (polyphony).
3. Combine all parts. Assign specific voice parts — I and II — making certain that the children know which "part" they are to sing. (At letter E, it could be challenging for the singers to reverse parts.)
4. Commend them by explaining that in the future it will be easy for them to perform this work, since everybody knows **ALL** the parts.

. . . Robert C. Lau

Composer of the Month



Although the bulk of the music Robert Lau writes belongs to the world of adult choirs, he vividly remembers his own experience in both the after-school rehearsal of the "junior" choir and singing in church as he was growing up. This experience eventually led to his devoting a significant portion of his life's work to the church and—more recently—composing music for it.

CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA! was "born" out of remembrances of participation in Easter Sunday services at the church he attended as a youngster. "At my church, it was the tradition to begin the Easter Sunday service with the hymn I have quoted in this anthem." The "big deal" of church on Easter Sunday was made even bigger by the fact that the junior choir was allowed to process IN FRONT of the adult choir—leading the way and announcing the Easter message of the hymn: CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA!

As an adult, Robert has presented church music workshops in summer camp settings for both adults and children. "Here, as well as the work I do with my own children's choir, I am constantly reminded that many of us have a strong relationship with the church because of the experiences we had as children."

Recently, while attending a church dedication which featured a performance of a newly commissioned work he had written for the adult choir, the children's choir sang his THIS IS THE DAY, another Choristers Guild publication. "It was wonderful! Although I love to hear any of my music being performed, there always seems to be a special thrill when I hear one of my children's anthems."