

John Horman, a Past President of Choristers Guild, is well known for his many children's anthems in the catalogs of Choristers Guild and other major publishers. In the spring, he will celebrate his 25th year as Director of Music at Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. Among his current assignments are that of Editor for grades 4 - 6 in a new curriculum series, and, with Mary Keithahn, a quarterly series of children's music published by Abingdon. Son Todd is working on a graduate degree in voice at the Manhattan School of Music and daughter Amy has just completed the doctoral cycle in violin performance at the Paris Conservatory and will be a featured soloist with the National Symphony in March.

## A Study Plan for John D. Horman's "Tell All the World"

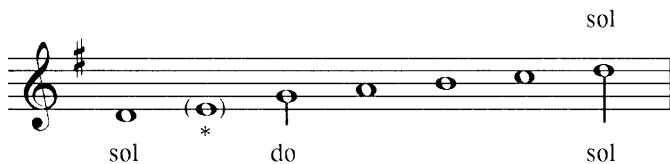
CGA681



"Tell All the World" is a multi-purpose composition which can be used in segments as an introit, antiphon, or in its entirety as an anthem. I think that it is easy to teach and fun for young singers to learn. As with any anthem, there are many ways to approach it in rehearsal. The following techniques are just a few of many possibilities.

The refrain is a perky pentatonic tune, which, when extracted from the larger work, can be used in a variety of ways. It can be sung as a simple choir warmup or serve well as a festive praise and thanksgiving litany response in which the whole congregation can participate.

For the most part, the refrain is based upon the G pentatonic scale, with an added C (or fourth) to create interest and color.



\*used in passing

It bounces about, from high SO (D) to low SO (D), returning to DO (G) for its tonal center. I would refer to the visual above — charted, or simply drawn on the chalkboard — when singing the refrain, and also when the children correctly echo.

Break the phrases of the refrain into manageable bits and keep adding until the entire refrain is learned.

I will give thanks.....ECHO  
I will give thanks, give thanks unto the Lord.....ECHO  
I will give thanks, give thanks unto the Lord with all my heart.....ECHO

To reinforce the refrain, and also have some fun, you can play the "Stand on Do" game. As you sing the refrain (slowly at first), stand up every time the melodic line touches Do (G). This should be done with the children holding their anthem scores in their hands, and only after you've devoted some time to trying it on your own. Don't attempt this in front of your choir without a little personal practice. This activity is enjoyable because the body wants to rise or fall on the strong beat, and the strong beat doesn't always occur on DO. This is definitely a laugh producing activity (internal jogging is good for the body). Loosen up and have a good time with it.

At another rehearsal, the "Stand on Do" activity can be tried as a canon. This can be challenging for the children. It demands that they closely follow the notation of their own part. Encourage the children to use their index finger to follow the music until their eyes begin naturally to locate the melodic contour.

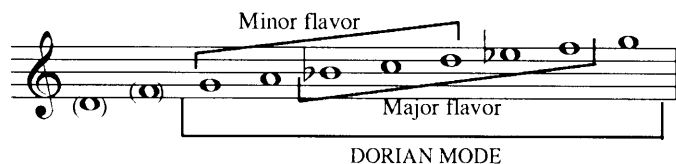
To review the refrain at another rehearsal, use the "hand staff" to echo sing the phrases one by one. This will reinforce note reading skills and aid in memorization. The "hand staff" originated in the Renaissance and was first used by the music theorist/ teacher, Guido d'Arezzo. A greatly simplified version of the original serves well today as a teaching tool. The fingers and thumb of one hand become the 5 lines of the staff as illustrated below:



The middle section (beginning with measure 55) of the anthem is written in a parallel modal key for variety and contrast. Its tonal center is still G, but the added flats create a mode called Dorian, which

contrasts very well with the G major sound of the refrain. Dorian, coincidentally, is a mode that was also used extensively by composers in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Modes predate the advent of major and minor and actually contain the flavor of both.

#### Dorian Mode



Dorian is said to create a feeling of calm and introspection. Each mode used in the Middle Ages and Renaissance was carefully chosen to create a *special feeling*.

The modal section of the anthem should be sung more *legato* than the refrain. Sing it in 4 measure phrases. This will require more attention to breath support to insure an effective rising and falling of the phrase. Curling the toes on breath intake is a means I often use to help the children visualize and physically feel the diaphragm in action. Each of these phrases moves forward toward a specific word, which then is accented before the phrase lessens in intensity and comes to an end.

- Phrase 1 \_\_\_\_\_ *a bound*
- Phrase 2 \_\_\_\_\_ *grand*
- Phrase 3 \_\_\_\_\_ *psalm*
- Phrase 4 \_\_\_\_\_ *God of  
creation*

Some of the longest notes in the anthem are found in the middle section. Use these half notes and dotted half notes to build the sound as the you move toward the climax or high point ("God of creation"). Don't allow the accented vowel sound on the word "creation" (Kree-EH—shuhn) to become harsh and unpleasant. Encourage the children to "round" the inside of the mouth, relax the jaw, and lift the soft palate to create a "north- south" mouth position. That EH (some will say AY) is one of the toughest vowel sounds to manipulate and make beautiful. Play with it, and alter it early in your teaching sequence so that the children will have sufficient time to "memorize" and "recognize" the specific feeling that produces the best sound.

The final section of "Tell All the World" is nearly identical to the opening section. A new text is used here — "I will be glad, be glad and praise your name, O Lord, most high!" . . . . The word, "glad" is often misunderstood when used as a Biblical quote. It means "to be willing and ready,"

rather than the usual association with "happy." The text literally translates to mean, "I will be willing and ready at anytime to praise God for all that has been given to me." It's a significant difference to think of it in this way.

In both the opening and closing sections, forward motion and interest is dependent on how well the children perform the *crescendo* which occurs midway through the melody. This is especially important when the children sing the two part canon. A single dynamic level maintained throughout this section is really bland. When the two canonic parts are each growing in intensity along independent lines, the result is very exciting and musical. This takes work, but is well worth the effort. I intentionally return the anthem to unison at measure 60. This provides both the conductor and singer with the focus and confidence necessary for a strong final statement.

The Orff style accompaniment and handbell part are colorful and designed to be learned without major difficulties. I would invite some older children to come to rehearsal 10-15 minutes early and teach them the instrumental parts. This should be possible to teach in just a few sessions. Doing this before rehearsal is better than after, for it allows incoming singers to arrive amidst the wonderful sound of these instruments. You may hear comments like "Wow! When are we going to use *those* instruments?" or "Can I do that next week?"

I hope the ideas I have provided help you to enjoy singing my anthem as much as I enjoyed writing it. Some anthems come to composers with great difficulty. Others are born with no labor pains at all. This one had an easy birth, so sing it with joy. I have great respect and admiration for the hard work done by children's choir directors everywhere. There are stars in your crowns for the wonderful things you do. Continue to "sing songs of praise, every day, in every way and praise God's name!"

. . . John D. Horman □

*T*une your ear,  
To all the voice of nature,  
and your heart  
Shall turn to truth and goodness,  
as the plant  
Turns to the sun.

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*