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Study Plan for

So Long, Joe!

CGC33

by Catherine B. Malmstrom

The music of *So Long, Joe!* is accessible, uncomplicated and easy to remember. It can all be easily and effectively performed by unison chorus and keyboard; the added instruments and two/three part vocal textures are all optional — intended to make use of additional resources if they are available. Each director should feel free to modify the score to suit his/her own needs. Our own performances ranged from one on a large sanctuary stage with all the instruments listed and 50 children, to one on a small stage in a tent, with a tiny electronic keyboard, 16 children, two coffee cans and a tambourine. My wish is for *So Long, Joe!* to work for you, whatever your resources.

. . . **Catherine B. Malmstrom**

I strongly suggest having a copy of the demonstration tape or a well-rehearsed older singer or two at your first meeting. These songs do not require a great deal of repetition, but a few accurately performed demonstrations will start your choir on its way toward memorization.

A first meeting can start with asking the children to take turns telling as much of the story as they already know, followed by a listening session with scores in hand. Before each song is played, guide the children with a listening question, asking them to identify recurring refrains, to

describe textures or perhaps to identify instruments heard in the accompaniment. (If obbligato instruments will not be used in the performance, you can describe how the accompaniments will be performed, emphasizing that the instruments heard on the tape are just one way of performing the work.)

If a tape is not available, two prepared singers might sing through the music as the children read the script. If children will be auditioning for specific roles ask them to pay attention to what is required of each of the assigned roles so that they can make an informed decision about auditioning. Alerting children to which parts require some ability in dance or movement will also be helpful to them in making decisions.

So Long, Joe! was originally performed by a group of children who rehearsed for one week in a day camp setting that also offered other activities. Our procedure has always been to have the children learn the music before incorporating any staging or dance into a song. Basically, songs learned on Monday morning are blocked Monday afternoon, etc. so that they are getting the full "production" experience on the first day. We believe that the music is best rehearsed initially in a choir-room setting where the emphasis can be on good singing habits and sound alone. Our rehearsals focus on particular musical concepts or learning tasks in each song. These are listed in italics next to the title, with a rehearsal plan that revolves around that concept or task, rather than around simple repetition for memorization.

Daddy's Best Boy

- *syncopation; ragtime; minor mode*

1. Identify and set the meter (4/4) and tempo. Ask the choir members to alternate slapping lap and clapping hands to quarter notes. The louder clap on the second and fourth beats will give them the feeling of the forward momentum of the syncopated ragtime style of this piece. Against this pulse, ask them to imitate you as you recite some of the text in syncopated rhythms.

(Note: While it is important that singers are able to articulate the rhythms as they are written, you may notice later that as a group they feel the text rhythmically different from the way it is notated. The style allows for these variants. If the group as a whole continues to make the same "mistake," call it a "variant" instead and tell them a little about jazz improvisation. Then notate what they have done on a marker board and perhaps even photocopy their own variants for your performance. Our two groups sang it two different ways and I rewrote measures more than once. Play a recording of a Scott Joplin rag, if one is available to you.)

2. Ask the choristers to sing an ascending minor scale with a lowered third, but a raised sixth and seventh. Ask them to sing a descending minor scale will all three degrees lowered. After this ask them to sing ms. 139 -145 to distinguish the two different versions of the scale.

3. Divide the entire group into two parts, "Joe" and "Boys" and sing through stanza 2 (p.18) alternating parts. Have them turn to the reprise (p. 50) and sing their assigned group parts.

Psalm 34

- *antiphonal; major/minor modes; legato; marcato*

Explain to the children: The words "Let us proclaim . . . God's name together" are sung by the choir and repeated by the congregation as a response after each stanza of the song. That recurring section is called an antiphon and the technique of having groups alternate singing is called antiphonal. In this Psalm, the first verse and the antiphon encourage us to praise God, while the second and third verses tell us why we should do that. What are some of the reasons given in the Psalm? Ask the children to give some of their own reasons for praising God.

1. Sing the antiphon and ask the children to repeat it after you. Then have them sing it first, and you answer them. From then on that should always be the pattern in rehearsing this section. (We used parent helpers or counselors when we were rehearsing. We asked them to learn the antiphon and sing it with us. They were our congregational mainstay during performances.)

2. Point out the descant in m. 371 and ask them to pronounce the word "proclaim" as "pro-clehm." Remind them to drop the 'r' at the end of "together." Ask them to sing the antiphon once, followed by the descant. Sing it a second time, with the director singing the antiphon response while children sing descant.

3. Once the antiphon and descant are learned, ask the children to sing the Psalm by sight as well as they can, with piano doubling the vocal line plus a bass note accompaniment. Keep the piano texture as transparent as possible, so that the children hear their pitches. As they stray, correct an entire phrase, asking them to repeat it and then go on.

4. The Psalm was the most difficult song for the children to memorize because the verses are through-composed. Memorize the opening measures of each verse always in the order in which they occur, noting the legato style of the first and second verses and the marcato style of the third. Note also that the second and third verses are in a minor mode, while the first verse and antiphons are in major mode.

Joseph's Dream

- *consonants: pitched and unpitched; open vowels; legato; decrescendo*

1. Practice with the singers spitting out "ch - k - p - t" consonants on quarter note beats, starting slowly and gradually speeding up *following your beat*. Correct any inclination to include a spoken vowel sound in exercise.

2. Practice singing "m—oo—m—oo" on a single pitch, sustaining the pitch while opening and closing lips. Do the same with "l—oo," raising and lowering the tongue from the roof of the mouth. Point out that the pitch can be sustained through these consonants. Ask the children to sing the first phrase of vs. 2 and identify pitched and unpitched consonants.

3. Ask students to speak the following words as written and notated:

Sight = Sah -- t; Night = Nah -- t; Working = wohh-king;



binding = bah -- nding; grain = grehh -- n; down = dohh - n.



Locate other diphthong words for your singers to practice without clenching down on the diphthongs.

Demonstrate and ask them to practice the second verse, emphasizing open vowels, giving pitches full duration, and connecting consonant to following syllable for more *legato* singing. Divide the chorus into four groups, alternate groups singing phrases as all listen for clear consonants and *legato* singing.

4. Put a huge *decrescendo* sign on the marker board and ask them to recite measures 64-72, becoming progressively quieter. Listen for and correct any breaks within a phrase. Repeat using pitches.

Pastorale

- *melodic intervals and direction; whole step, half-step*

Tell the children: "Pastorale" was a term used in the sixteenth century and later to refer to a little play about shepherds and shepherdesses. It came to be used to describe music that evoked the atmosphere of a quiet field with sheep and shepherds, usually using a wind instrument, such as flute or oboe, prominently. The *Pastorale in So Long, Joe!* pokes fun at the musical tradition, by using kazoos as wind instruments, and by having a well-known song hidden in the instrumental introduction. Ask the children to listen to the entire opening texture and identify the "sheep" song within it.

1. Sing one phrase of the vocal line at a time for the choir, moving your hand to indicate direction and distance in the melody. Ask the singers to imitate the singing with hand motions. Notice the wide leaps of the A section and the stepwise motion of the B section. Practice singing the opening measures with wider intervals but without slurring.

2. Ask the choir where the closest intervals occur (ms.118-125).

Practice singing half step progressions: G-Ab-A-Bb-B; G-F#-F-E-Eb; G-Ab-G-F#-G; then sing measures 118-125.

"Pastorale" is a section that can be sung easily by younger members of the group.

Caravan

- *counterpoint; ostinato; crescendo*

The music for "Caravan" is simpler than it looks. The essential elements are Voice I, the percussion part marked bongos and the keyboard. The scene can be performed quite effectively with those parts alone and the remaining lines added if vocal and instrumental resources are available. In one performance, the percussion parts were played by seated adult instrumentalists; in another, instruments were played by children in a procession from the rear of the sanctuary. (In the tent performance, Libby played tambourine, I played coffee cans!)

The following rehearsal plan helps to build the full texture.

1. Review the consonant exercise "ch-k-p-t" (See "Joseph's Dream"). Ask everyone to recite spoken voice I (p. 24) rhythmically, in a whisper, with clear consonants. Repeat twice, louder each time. Turn to p. 29 and read the second text together.

2. Have everyone read the "geegaws" line starting on p. 27. Divide the group into two parts and combine Voice I and "geegaws." Switch parts. Explain counterpoint as a texture of two or more parts, each of which can stand alone and make sense, but which also makes sense when put together. Repeat one more time, but this time instruct the singers to watch you conduct as they chant, and to follow carefully. Cut them off, as in m.182 and say in rhythm "I don't sell nothin' but I do buy kids." Let them know that after a long *crescendo*, this is how this section will end and that the number of times everything is repeated depends on the way it will be staged.

3. Ask everyone to learn both Voices II and III. Each has a short phrase that keeps repeating (*ostinato*). Have the pianist double those voices as they learn them. Divide your singers into two groups and combine II and III with

the pianist doubling both parts. Divide into three groups and combine II, III, and "Geegaws." When those parts are secure, divide into four groups and combine. Start with voice I alone, adding a new group after a complete chanting of the spoken part. The pianist may double II and III once, but should then drop out. Warn the singers that they will need to watch you for that sudden cut-off (m.182) and remind them that for now they must start quietly and become louder and louder (*crescendo*) as if they were an approaching caravan.

Jacob's Clan and So Long, Joe!

- *maintaining head tone in lower range; giving pitches full rhythmic value*

These two songs have common characteristics: simple melodies and constructions that are easy to memorize; they are high-spirited and tempt singers to use forced vocal quality and cut off words too quickly.

Exercise: sirens on "hooooo" E, Eb, D, C#, C



Concentrate on keeping head-tone at the lower pitches.

In "Jacob's Clan" have everyone learn both vocal lines, emphasizing the full voice of the upper part, the long duration of held pitches in both parts, and the detached style and lower volume of "kids of Ja-cob" in the lower part. Divide the group into two sections for two part singing, then switch parts. Change the division of voices and sing again.

In the song, "So Long, Joe!," some time must be spent in coordinating the forces in m. 217 and again in m. 221. The accompanist(s) must be sensitive to the children's approach to the downbeat in m. 218. One solution is also to put a *fermata* on the last eighth note of m. 217 and let the children take their time. Although it is not so notated in the score, at every performance we extended the refrain two more rounds at the end of the song and had the congregation join us.

You Don't Always Reap What You Sow

- *dynamic contrasts; crescendo; accelerando; detached vs. legato style*

This is technically the most difficult song of the musical and can be performed by a divided group or, by Pharoah, Joe or a "work-leader" on Part I and full chorus or a smaller group on Part II. We let six girls

sing on the recording, but had the whole chorus sing in performance with Pharoah singing a solo from m. 288 - 297. In the two part sections the harmonizing voice is always optional. Time is better spent on the dynamic contrasts and styles of articulation that make the song effective.

1. Instruct your singers to circle all the dynamic markings and speak the song rhythmically and dynamically over piano accompaniment.

2. Ask the singers to listen to the piano introduction again and identify the staccato style. Ask them to sing the opening measures of Part II in a similarly detached manner, almost whispered but with exaggerated consonants.

3. Ask them to sing the opening phrase of Part I louder, with a more deliberate accenting of beats 1 and 3.

4. Skip to m. 293, speaking triplets in a *legato* style, in a gradual *crescendo*. Repeat with pitches.

5. The interplay between the two voices throughout the song and the broadening in the second stanza are dramatic gestures. Before describing how the scene will actually be played, ask your singers to describe the formations, motions and changes that are suggested by the music. (This discussion will help them internalize some of the dramatic shifts in the song. Besides, some of our children have come up with interesting staging ideas when our wells have run dry!)

Potiphar Says

- 4/4; 6/8; *lightly accented vs. legato*

This is the only song completely performed by soloists. Much of what they are able to do musically is a by-product of their understanding of what each character is thinking in the drama.

1. Joseph's words must be clipped and lightly accented. Practicing going from consonant to consonant with almost no vowel is an amusing way to exaggerate consonants.

2. Lucille's phrases are longer and *legato*. Ask her to practice using sweeping hand gestures, coming from inside, up and out, to describe an entire phrase.

3. Once or twice, practice the song with Joe marching lightly as he/she sings and with Lucille using sweeping hand gestures as she sings. The alternating of these contrasting gestures will help make the stylistic and metric differences clear. □

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Production Ideas for

So Long, Joe!

CGC33

by Libby Calhoun

Directing and producing *So Long, Joe!* can be a wonderful, fun challenge for you and your choristers. Having directed two distinctly different productions of the musical, I can tell you that it offers many exciting opportunities for you, both as a musician and as a person with a theatrical flair. After some general production hints, I will take you through the musical, scene by scene, with suggestions for you to consider when you stage the musical with your own groups. Remember, however, that these are based on our own productions in Dallas. The best guides are your own imagination and creativity. The sky's the limit!

. . . Libby Calhoun

Casting

So Long, Joe! can be performed by groups as small as 15-18 or by a cast of thousands. If you are performing with a small group, all characters with the exception of Joe and Benjamin may be drawn out of the chorus. If that is the case, the child can simply step forward for

his/her scene and then return to the chorus. If you have a large number of children in the production, you may spread the parts around a bit more. In one of our productions, all ten brothers appeared as a group throughout the play. The second production involved only 16 children, so whenever brothers were required, only the four with speaking parts (Judah, Levi, Reuben and Simeon) were seen, while the other brothers merely stepped out of the chorus to deliver their "Good morning, Father" line in the song "Jacob's Clan."

If you are working with a really big group of children, say an entire Sunday or parish school, you could also break out semi-choruses by age. Pre-school or kindergarten children might enjoy being sheep and older kids might have a good time as the caravan drivers or as Egyptians (or both). Potiphar, Lucille, Pharaoh, Mr. Baker and Mr. Butler may also appear with the chorus until the caravan scene, at which time they may slip offstage to put on their Egyptian attire.



Joe (kneeling) interprets a dream of Pharaoh (Michael Walker) as the Butler (Amy Calhoun) pleads for more information.

As far as choosing a cast, I recommend that your first consideration be to use children who can sing well for the leads. It is usually easier to teach a child how to deliver a line than it is to teach him/her to match a pitch. Actually, you need only two strong singers: Joe, who sings two solos, and Lucille, who has a solo part in a duet with Joe. If you

are blessed with three solo-quality singers, you may also want to give a portion of "You Don't Always Reap What You Sow" to a special singer. (We had Pharaoh sing the section beginning with the upbeat to m. 284 as far as m. 301.) The remainder of the parts require speaking only. Here is an outline of parts and their requirements:

JOE: Needs to be able to sing alone and speak with confidence.

BENJAMIN: Acts as narrator of the story, and should have a strong, clear reading/speaking voice. He may read lines if necessary.

JUDAH, LEVI, REUBEN, SIMEON: Need to be confident speakers.

POTIPHAR: An opportunity for a little humor is here. Though Potiphar is the commander of Pharaoh's army, Lucille is clearly the commander of Potiphar! Play this part for fun, and in casting, look for someone who can understand the joke! A confident character actor is needed.

LUCILLE: Needs to be able to sing alone and in a simple duet. A strong character, the person who plays Lucille must act a bit like a floozy.

BUTLER and BAKER: Both should be confident speakers.

PHARAOH: Should be a strong speaker with regal bearing. Though on stage for a short time, Pharaoh has several fairly long speeches, and thus should be good at memorizing. Pharaoh may sing a portion of "You Don't Always Reap..." if desired.

SLAVE TRADER: Though there are only two lines, it is important that the trader be able to concentrate, since one of the lines is spoken in rhythm, and is central to the "Caravan" song.

CHORUS: Members of the chorus play three different roles. In the opening scene, they are members of Jacob's household (servants, friends, sisters, etc.). During the Pastoral scene, all cast members except Joe, Ben and the other brothers play sheep. In the scenes that follow, the chorus plays caravan sellers, then, following the "Caravan Reprise," they become part of the Egyptian marketplace crowd.

Note that, though most of the characters are male, they can be played by children of either sex. Indeed, our second production was done by an all-girls chorus. In my own opinion, Lucille should always be played by a girl, but that's really up to you, as director.

Sets

You can produce *So Long, Joe!* on a set as simple or as elaborate as your space, energy and resources provide. Since all the productions were performed on a basic platform stage, we used a very simple set design with risers at the rear of the performing area, a well at center back, and a tall Egyptian-like monument.

Our well was constructed of cardboard boxes taped together and painted to look like stone. It was about 2-1/2 feet tall. Remember that Joe needs to be able to climb in and out of it easily. It was placed at center back.

Your well could be made of any material you choose — cloth on a frame, cinder blocks, wooden pieces painted like stone, even an overturned coffee table would give the effect. If you're not into sets at all, you could outline a well with 5-6 children. They would stand in a circle, holding hands, and when the brothers prepare to throw Joe into the well, they would stoop down to allow Joe to climb in, and then stand up as Joe calls, "You'll be sorrrrry!"

Since we wanted an Egyptian touch to the set, but had limited space, we opted for a 6-foot-tall monument which was, in fact, shaped like the Washington Monument. It was constructed of foam-core board painted off-white and sponge-painted with "hieroglyphics." It was constructed to sit on top of the well, and was put in place during the reprise of "Caravan Song." Your set designers could have a lot of fun with creating the right Egyptian flavor for your production. A *papier-mâché* sphinx would be terrific, as would flats or cardboard cutouts of pyramids. (Furniture boxes come in very handy!) One suggestion that was made to me was to cut large pyramid shapes out of cardboard, and paint one side to look like tents for the opening scene. The other side would be painted in the Egyptian style, and would be turned around at the appropriate time.

While the rest of Potiphar's house was left up to the imagination of the audience, we felt that we needed a visual dividing line between Lucille's quarters and the rest of the house. To accomplish this we made a beaded curtain on PVC pipe which was walked into place and held by two chorus members during the last speech before "Potiphar Says." It was later used to suggest prison bars. The actors could still be seen, but the idea of separation was clear.

Remember that your set for *So long, Joe!* will be unique to your own venue. If you have limited space, be assured that simplicity works in this musical. However, if you have lots of space and some willing workers, you can create as elaborate a set as you wish. You might wish to construct a tent for the opening scene, meadow scenery, a more elaborate Egyptian set, Potiphar's house, the prison, and the palace. Remember, however, that changing scenery adds to the length of the play. Additionally, you might wish to have the accompanist play background music while sets are being changed.

Costumes

The old saying, "Clothes makes the man" applies as well to children in theatrical productions. Adding a costume, no matter how simple, helps a child assume his/her part, and certainly adds fun to the experience. Your own time and resources will determine how elaborately you costume your actors. Here are some suggestions.

CHORUS and MEMBERS OF JACOB'S CLAN may wear simple Middle Eastern-style tunics with headpieces. In one production, we made tunics out of men's discarded dress shirts. Collars, cuffs, pockets and buttons were removed. The shirts were then tie-dyed in a single color and worn open or belted over tee shirts and shorts. In the second production, the players wore tie-dyed extra large men's tee shirts, which really looked like tunics. (Both are inexpensive and look great!) You might want to keep the color simple and probably not too bright, so that Joe's beautiful coat will be in sharp contrast to the dull clothing his brothers are forced to wear. A simple tunic can also be made by taking a length of cloth twice as long as a child's height from the shoulder, cutting a hole in the center for the head, and belting with a cord. If you are interested in sewing, most of the major pattern companies now have Biblical character costumes available in a variety of sizes.

Headpieces consisted of a square or rectangle of cloth with a contrasting band. It is well worth taking time to sew a piece of elastic at the back of the bands, as it prevents lots of fidgeting with too-loose headbands.

JOE's tunic should be similar to those of other cast members, but of a plain color to highlight the vibrancy of the wonderful coat. The coat should be of very simple design — easy to put on and take off. Ours was sleeveless — actually more like a vest. The coat should be made of the brightest, most colorful fabric you can get or make.

If you are using tie-dyed men's dress shirts as tunics for your chorus, you might try making Joe's coat in the same style. This time, remove the sleeves from the shirt and tie-dye it in many different, rich colors. Joe would then wear it over his other shirt. Joe could leave a small part of his costume behind as "evidence" when he escapes Lucille's quarters. This could be the belt, collar, or headpiece. Additionally, when Joe is promoted to Pharaoh's assistant, he may be handed an Egyptian-style collar and headpiece, which would be put on during the narration preceding "You Don't Always Reap What You Sow."

The **SHEEP** are sure to add a whimsical touch to your production. Since our sheep were part of the chorus and needed to make a quick change from playing clan members to playing sheep and on to becoming caravan vendors, we had only the hint of sheep costumes. Our sheep removed their Middle-Eastern headgear and put on headbands with fuzzy sheep ears attached. As a final touch, each sheep received a black nose from a washable stamp pad just before going on stage. A few of the kids had small cowbells around their necks. If you are going to use a different group

of children as the sheep, you will, of course be able to have more “sheepish” looking costumes.

After “Silly Old Sheep,” our sheep hurried offstage, where they took off their ears, washed their noses with baby wipes, and put on their headpieces again. They then picked up their caravan wares and were quickly in line for the next scene.

The **EGYPTIANS (POTIPHAR, LUCILLE, BAKER, BUTLER, PHARAOH)** in our first production wore simple tunics which they slipped on over their other costumes. Each had a large round collar that was decorated with beads, feathers or other trims. These are easily made out of felt, with a hole for the neckline and a slit up the back to enable quick costume changes. Those worn by Pharaoh, Potiphar and Lucille were quite ornate, while those of the baker and the butler were simpler. Pharaoh, Potiphar and Lucille also wore headpieces in the King Tut style. These are easily constructed from poster board and a 2-ft. square of fabric. I have also seen Egyptian patterns in fabric stores. Joe should also have a collar and Egyptian headpiece to be given when Pharaoh commands “Bring him something to wear!” immediately before “You Don’t Always Reap What You Sow!”

Properties

One of the joys of producing *So Long, Joe!* is that you won’t need to spend a huge amount of time gathering properties. By far the most interesting props grow out of outfitting the **CARAVAN VENDORS**. Each child should carry colorful, interesting bazaar wares as he/she enters in “Caravan.” Use your imagination and the materials you see around you. Here are some suggestions: baskets tied together in a bunch, ornate cookie tins, wooden jewelry boxes or boxes painted black or brown, old jewelry or Mardi Gras beads piled in a basket or box, brightly colored fabric scraps, fake furs draped across a vendor’s arm, brass bric-a-brac; the list goes on and on! Have fun! The rest of the props are listed in the script, and become obvious as you read the text.

Staging

Scene 1. Our performances began with Benjamin alone on the stage. Jacob joined him and, after their dialogue, the rest of the kids rushed through the congregation onto the stage. They moved to the risers for the first part of “Jacob’s Clan,” and at the cue, “In alphabetical order, if you please,” the brothers, with the exception of Joe and Zebulon, came forward in turn to “salaam” their father. If you have ever seen the scene in “The Sound of Music” with the children singing goodnight, you will have a clear picture of what Jacob’s kids might do.

The brothers returned to the risers for the reprise, and everyone stood quietly in place for “Joseph’s Dream.” We used 6 interpretive dancers to enhance the scene. It was a nice touch, and we had a few kids who really liked dancing,

so we made use of their talents. However, it’s not essential since the song carries itself very nicely.

Scene 2A. In the Pastures. The opening line of this scene can be delivered from offstage. Children make lots of sheep noises as they enter. (Our herds came right through the congregation, baaa-ing all the way!) We had a couple of kids who enjoyed playing parts as lost sheep and were constantly straying about the sanctuary. As the introduction to “Pastorale” began, our sheep formed into small flocks and did what they called “sheep ballet.” These were graceful (well, sometimes!) little circle dances, and one group did an adorable bit with jumping over a shepherd’s crook held close to the floor while two of the brothers “counted” them. Everyone, sheep included, sang the song, which added to the charm. At Joe’s “Shoo!” the sheep all moved to the risers, and joined the brothers in singing “Daddy’s Best Boy.” A flock of “jiving sheep” was quite a sight to see! The stampede out was noisy and disorganized, but it was a great way to move everybody offstage to prepare for the Caravan.

Scene 2B. The Caravan. Our caravan came through the congregation, and the vendors were encouraged to show their wares to everyone as they passed by. The caravan rhyme was spoken by the brothers as many times as needed until the entire caravan had reached the stage. We encountered a little trouble in our first production getting the slave trader to speak that important line, “I don’t sell nothin’, but I do buy kids” at just the correct moment, so I warn you that it’s something you may want to rehearse often. A clear signal from the director is also helpful. The caravan stayed in place to sing “So Long, Joe!” and exited during the final chorus. For our productions, we encouraged the audience to join in the singing. It’s a good “seventh inning stretch.” After a short dialogue, the brothers left quietly to show Joe’s coat to Jacob.

Scene 3A. Egypt. The players, still in a caravan, re-entered the sanctuary, this time with the slave trader leading Joe. A couple of those chorus members on stage first set up the Egyptian monument. All market people sat until “You Don’t Always Reap What You Sow.” Potiphar and Lucille and the other Egyptians entered from the side of the stage, having slipped off for a costume change during the singing of “So Long, Joe!” The change from market to Potiphar’s house was simply done by having the beaded curtain brought into place by two chorus members. Audience and actors alike can have a great time with “Potiphar Says.”

It is important that Joe portray the perfect servant — crisp, detached, businesslike, and that Lucille be as sweet and smooth as possible. In our productions, I asked Lucille to show to the audience with facial expressions that she was not really seeing a rat or getting a bug in her eye or finding a fire in her apartment. I asked her to stamp her foot angrily with each rebuff, then change her expression to one

of fervent concentration as she worked on each next scheme. The "Lucy, I'm home!" line is supposed to be given like Desi Arnaz in "I Love Lucy." It's a cheap trick, but everybody laughs!

Joe was thrown into prison by kids holding Lucille's curtain in front of him as he held onto two of the strands like they might have been jail bars. The Butler and Baker joined him for their dialogue. When the Butler was sent to fetch Joe, the two kids with the curtain simply walked it offstage and then returned to their places on the risers.

The dialogue with Pharaoh and Joe took place on center stage, as did the singing of "You Don't Always Reap What You Sow." The brothers entered and stood far downstage until they were summoned by Joe to center stage. Joe delivered the "Daddy's Best Boy" reprise from far down center, with the brothers in a semi-circle behind him, and the chorus standing on risers behind them. Psalm 34 was performed as a choral piece, in simple, majestic praise.

In summary, I strongly stress how important it is for you, the director, to do what feels right with your own group of choristers. There is no right or wrong way to do it! Make creative use of the materials and talents that you have on hand and, most of all, delight in telling the story. □
