

WE, THY PEOPLE, PRAISE THEE

By stretching your thoughts to the future, can you imagine a time to be on our planet when all wars are ended and the people of God of all nationalities are standing together and singing:

We, thy people, praise thee, praise thee, God of ev'ry nation.

As the stately music of St. Anthony's Chorale is played, walk in rhythm to feel the strength and dignity of the tune. Notice how the rhythmic pattern is repeated throughout the tune, but always keeping a majestic tempo.



Were you surprised at the source of the tune? Most of us think of Papa Haydn as a man with a great sense of humor because of the story about the "Surprise Symphony" in which his sudden loud chords are supposed to make the sleeping audience "wake up." But Haydn was also a very devout Christian and each of his compositions began with the words, "In Nomine Domini" and ended with "Laus Deo." Can you discover what these words mean?

The Choristers Little Hymnal tells us that Brahms used the theme also for an orchestral composition. You may want to make a collection of hymns whose tunes are based on themes by the great composers: Beethoven, Mozart, Handel, Brahms, Haydn, and others. If you are an extra sharp musician, you will want to trace some of the themes to the symphonies and compositions in which they were first used by the composer. Some public libraries have record collections which would help in your research.

Haydn used an interesting composition device on the words: "For the bounty, For the beauty, For the wonder." Look at the first pattern very carefully:

Each subsequent pattern uses the same rhythm and melodic intervals except that it begins one step higher than the previous pattern. Now look at the tune on the words, "May then our own best endeavor come of thy will..." Do you find how the same rhythmic and melodic interval pattern is used as the notes descend the scale?



Accents add to the strength of the tune also and give a sturdiness to the patterns. Music written in 2/4 has a natural accent on the first beat of each measure, but be careful not to chop up longer phrases like, "For the wonder of thy world" and "May then our own best endeavor Come of thy will ever!"

A day when all nations join in praising God *does* seem a long way off, but if all of us boys and girls who love Him, grow up and continue to express that love – the "people of God" will surely be closer to finding their way toward God's purposes for our universe!

We, thy people, praise thee, Praise thee evermore!