

# COUNTERPOINT

Partner Songs and Canons for Singers of Any Age

Compiled and Edited by

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## Introduction

Put yourself in the shoes of a new singer. You may join your family in singing “Happy Birthday” from time to time, have learned a game song or two at summer camp, or occasionally belt out a song in the shower, but you’re definitely not *trained* in any sense of the word.

That description fits the vast majority of people joining a choir for the first time. And while we typically envision a beginner as an energetic fourth grader, they could just as soon be an older volunteer joining a group at the community center. Directors are continuously surprised and delighted by the number of high school students and adults signing up for the first time. Whether elementary students, high school freshmen, or inexperienced adults, all of these people are bravely walking into a rehearsal to try something brand new.

To sing is to be vulnerable. It is completely and utterly personal in a way that few other human activities are. And we owe it to new musicians to craft an experience that helps them find success. In her brilliant resource *Growing Musicians*, Dr. Bridget Sweet says: “Making music is not a competition ... It is not a race to the top ... It is a unique chance to work together, feel together, emote together, create together, and more.” Setting up a successful and *musical* performance will do much more for the long-term growth and engagement of beginning singers than laboring through repertoire that is overly complicated.

This is where unison folk songs, canons, and two-part partner songs are so valuable. And while there is a wealth of this kind of music available for young singers, it is more difficult to find for older singers. A freshmen treble choir may have fun singing a silly warm-up, but when it comes to performance music for a concert, those students crave literature that reflects their emotional maturity. They require music that is thematically appropriate for their age, but developmentally appropriate for an inexperienced musical ear and a limited vocal range.

This collection is designed to build skills and confidence, with accessible independent lines and mid-range vocal parts. The songs were selected for their universal themes and timeless melodies, making them appropriate for any age. There are folk songs, classical melodies, holiday tunes, and more—all skillfully arranged for successful rehearsals and performances.

Every rehearsal should end with a positive musical experience. On the first day of the year, that may be as simple as singing a unison melody somewhat in tune. Later on, it may be the performance of a two-part passage, beautifully shaped with phrasing and dynamics. You know your singers. Set achievable goals and work towards them bit by bit, taking pride in each success along the way. Exiting your rehearsal, singers should take with them a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth. That feeling is what creates lifelong musicians.

*Anna Wentlent*

Music Educator and Alfred Music Author



# I. ALLELUIA! I WILL SING

(A Partner Song)

Words and Music by  
DAVID WAGGONER

Joyously rhythmic (♩ = ca. 138)

PIANO

1st time: PART I only (or unison)  
2nd time: PART II only (or unison)  
3rd time: both parts

7 PART I *mf* 9

Al - le - lu - ia! I will sing.

PART II *mf*

Make a joy - ful noise.

12 *cresc.*

Al - le - lu - ia! I will sing. Al - le -

*cresc.*

— Come lift your voice on high. Let



## 2. CIRCLE OF OUR SONG

(A Partner Song Based on Beethoven's "Pathétique")

Based on a theme by  
**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** (1770-1827)  
 Arranged, with Words and additional Music, by  
**GREG GILPIN**

1st time: PART I only (or unison)  
 2nd time: PART II only (or unison)  
 3rd time: both parts

Simply and gently (♩ = ca. 72)

3 *mp*

PART I

PART II

PIANO

*mp*

Let our

*mp*

Al - le - lu - ia,

4

hearts re - flect the sound of joy.

al - le - lu - ia. Let this place re - sound in mu - sic.



# 3. HOW I LOVE MY AMERICA

(A Partner Song with "America, the Beautiful")

Words by  
KATHARINE LEE BATES (1859-1929)

Music by SAMUEL A. WARD (1848-1903)  
Arranged, with additional Words and Music, by  
SALLY K. ALBRECHT and JAY ALTHOUSE

1st time: PART I only (or unison)  
2nd time: PART II only (or unison)  
3rd time: both parts *mf*

Majestically (♩ = ca. 96)

PART I

PART II

PIANO

*mf*

5

beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of

*mf*

How I love my A - mer - i - ca, from the moun - tains to the