

1. Rise up, o flame, _____ 2. by thy light glow - ing.

5 3. Show to us beau - ty, _____ 4. vi - sion and joy.

choir



RISE UP, O FLAME

USING THIS CANON

Compiled for the Presto project
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FOR DEVELOPING YOUR POLYPHONIC SKILLS

Rise Up, O Flame is firmly rooted in the triad of chord i, the tonic triad (l-d-m). In fact, the note occurring directly on every beat of the song is a note of the tonic triad, with passing notes (non-harmony notes) occurring in between, on the off-beats. Use the tonic triad as a strong point of reference in your singing, keeping the overall tonality secure by making sure the fifth degree (mi) is 'tall' and well-shaped, the third degree (do) is carefully placed, and the home note, la, is energetic and well-supported, not allowed to 'sit down'.

For an extra challenge with the sing-and-play task, transpose to other keys.

WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

Singing this canon with text offers an opportunity to work on vowel blend. Use unified, rounded vowels wherever possible, to enhance the choral tone. In the words 'rise', 'by', 'thy' and, 'light', experiment with the placement of the diphthong: the moment when the singers move from the first vowel, ah, to the second, ee, to find the best result for clarity of diction and blend of voices. Similarly, in the word 'joy', find the best placement for the diphthong. Usually, the blend works best when we remain on the first vowel for considerably longer than the second.

This canon works well in two parts or four parts. If your choir or group is secure in four parts and would like an extra challenge, increase to eight parts by placing a new entry at the start of every bar. The eight-part texture works because the harmonic basis for the canon is so simple, in this case using only chord i.

IN THE MUSIC LESSON

Add a simple rhythmic ostinato using body percussion, such as 'clap-click-click', to help keep a steady pulse and a relaxed sense of momentum while also further developing the singers' polyphonic skills. Experiment with creating other rhythmic ostinatos to suit the canon. Divide into groups and perform multiple patterns consecutively or simultaneously.

Create exercises using the solfa hand signs for la, ti, do, re, and mi: show a selection of hand signs for the singers to sing, first one hand sign at a time, then two, then more, to increase the challenge. This is a great way to develop inner hearing skills as well as tonal feeling. The singers can then take turns to be the leader, showing the hand signs for others to sing back.

LEARN MORE

To explore challenges and solutions for tuning in this canon, see the 'Intonation Awareness' section of the Presto Choral Resources. To learn more about diphthongs and their impact on choral tone, explore the 'Visualising Vocal Sound Using Spectrogram Technology' area of the Presto project website. For more about hand signs, see the 'Classroom Resources' section of Presto.

