

Come, Let Us Join

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Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs

This hymn by Isaac Watts (1674–1748) is a versification of Revelation 5:11-13:

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in the heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Watts, the acclaimed “father” of English hymnody, was a pivotal figure in the transition from psalm-singing to hymn singing in the English church. By birth and choice, Watts’ did his work as a Dissenter rather than as an Anglican. His belief that the Psalms failed to provide adequate expression for Christian worship led him to write both “Christian psalms”—verses David might have written had he lived in the Christian era—and hymns. “Come, Let Us Join” was first published in Watts’ *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707. Watts conceived this book for use in worship, and to encourage its adoption, he used only four meters, suited to well-known tunes. The songs manifest Watts’ command of literature and language.

“Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs” is generally considered Watts’ first hymn, written in 1696 in response to a challenge to produce something better than the psalms sung in the Southampton Chapel he attended. Known best by its first line, this hymn originally carried the title “Behold the Glories of the Lamb” and consisted of eight four-line stanzas. Watts also used the title “Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God worshipped by all the Creation.” The hymn has been widely published in Britain and America. It first appeared in Watts’ 1707 *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

In Britain, “Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs” is generally sung to NATIVITY, a tune by Henry Lahee, organist at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. In the United States, it is often set to Nun Danket All’, a German tune by Johann Cruger first published in a mid-seventeenth-century hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*. Also known as GRAFENBERG, the name of an Austrian town, this tune was set to a hymn by Paul Gerhardt, “Nun danket all and bringet Ehr,” hence its name.

Alice Parker

As the founder and artistic director of Melodious Accord, Inc., Alice Parker supervises a busy schedule of educational activities, recording and concerts. She is well-known for her musical arrangements for the Robert Shaw Chorale, and has composed a wide variety of musical compositions, including four operas, twenty-five cantatas, and numerous short chamber works. Her music is frequently heard, and well-received, at conferences and conventions.

Parker is a graduate of the Juilliard School, in New York City, and Smith College. She now resides in western Massachusetts.

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Come, Let Us Join

SATB and organ, opt. cong.

"A Song to the Lamb," para. Isaac Watts, 1696

NUN DANKET ALL UND BRINGET EHR, by Johann Crüger, 1647

setting by Alice Parker

Bright, bouncy * (♩ = ca. 80)

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) features a piano introduction with a treble clef staff (mf non legato), a bass clef staff (mp), and a separate bass clef staff (mp). The second system (measures 6-10) continues the piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 11-14) includes a vocal line (Unison + cong. f) with the lyrics "Come, let us join our" and piano accompaniment (f and mf).

*Think Renaissance style for registration and articulation

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4

16

cheer-ful songs with an-gels round the throne;

20

Ten thou-sand thou-sand are their tongues, but all their joys are

24

one. S. *mp* Wor -

A. *mf* "Wor - thy the Lamb that

mp *sempre non legato*

29

thy the Lamb ex - alt - - - ed

died," they cry, "to be ex - alt - ed thus."

32 *mf*

thus: "Wor - thy the Lamb," our lips re - ply, "for

"Wor - thy the Lamb," we cry,

36

he was slain for us."

"for he was slain for us."

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6

41 S.T. *mf*

Je - sus is wor - thy of hon - or

f A.B. + Cong.

Je - sus is wor - thy to re - ceive hon - or and pow'r di -

— and pow'r di - vine; — and let our bless - ings —

vine; — and bless - ing more than we can give be,

— be, Lord, — for - ev - er thine. —

Lord, for - ev - er thine.

sim.

54 *mp*

60

Choir *mf warmly, poco legato*

S.A. *mf*

T.B. *mf*

Let all that dwell a - bove the sky and air and earth and

70

seas _____ con - spire to raise thy glo - ries high, and

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8

75

speak thine end - less praise.

78

82

S. *f* The whole cre - a - tion joins in one

A. + cong. *f* The whole cre - a - tion joins in one to

T. *f* The whole cre - a - tion, one

B. *f* The whole cre - a - tion joins in one

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system (measures 75-81) features piano accompaniment in G major with a 2/4 time signature, transitioning to 3/4 time at measure 81. The vocal parts enter at measure 82 with the lyrics 'The whole creation joins in one'. The Soprano part has a fermata at the end of the phrase. The Alto part includes a 'cong.' (congregation) instruction. The Tenor and Bass parts also have fermatas. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

36

to bless the sa - - - cred Name _____ of

bless the sa - cred Name _____ of him that

to bless the sa - - - cred Name _____

to bless the sa - cred Name _____

90

him that sits up - on the throne, and to a - dore the

sits up - - on the throne, and to a - dore the

of him that sits up - on the throne, and to a - dore the

of him that sits up - on the throne, and

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10

93 *poco rit. al fine*

Lamb, and to a - dore the — Lamb, a - dore the — Lamb.

Lamb. ————— A - - - - men.

Lamb, a - dore the — Lamb, a - dore the — Lamb.

to a - dore the Lamb. A - - - - men.

poco rit. al fine

The musical score consists of five systems. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment line. The second system continues the vocal line with a long rest for the first part and a vocal line for the second part. The third system continues the vocal line. The fourth system continues the vocal line. The fifth system includes a piano accompaniment line. The score is marked with 'poco rit. al fine' at the beginning and end of the piece. A large diagonal watermark 'FOR REVIEW ONLY' is overlaid on the score.