

*Gwyneth Walker*

*Directions for Singing*

*an educational adventure for*

*Chorus and Venerable Instructor*

*Commissioned by the Thetford Chamber Singers*

*in celebration of their 25th season  
1978--2003*

*Premiered by the Thetford Chamber Singers  
Valerie Miller, Music Director  
Thetford, Vermont  
May 10, 2003*

*Duration: 7 minutes*

Notes

*John Wesley's preface to the hymnal, Sacred Melody (1761), forms the basis of **Directions for Singing**, a light-hearted educational adventure for Chorus and Venerable Instructor. Professor Wesley pays a visit to our local chorus. His ever-relevant instructions are taken to heart by the singers, who endeavor to follow his advice. Singing correctly, modestly and in time take some effort. However, the instruction to "sing lustily" seems to catch on quickly with the chorus!*

*Professor Wesley imparts his wisdom with a stern demeanor. However, once the lessons are completed and the singing abounds, he enjoys the fruits of his labor. In his own words: "Sing all, and with good courage!"*

*Performing resources:*

*Able-bodied Chorus*

*Able-bodied Conductor*

*Guest Artist to portray Professor John Wesley (does not need to know how to read music!)*

[Conductor addresses the audience with the following words (or similar sentiments, ad lib.)]:

I have had the pleasure of conducting our chorus for the past 25 years. With each season, we have made steady progress and I am proud of how much the singers have grown. Hard work is rewarded by improved musicianship. I congratulate the singers.

However...

There is always room for growth! And today, as we celebrate our 25th season, I feel that it is both appropriate and necessary to turn our focus once again to the basics of singing. One can never overdo the attention paid to the fundamentals!

With this in mind, I have enlisted the help of a True Musical Scholar, Professor John Wesley of the Society for the Preservation of Propriety in Hymnology. Professor Wesley has journeyed far to join us for today's lesson. Let us welcome him now.

[Conductor gestures to stage door. Professor Wesley appears, dressed in 18th century garb with a wig. He is holding a parchment scroll from which he will read the "Directions for Singing". Professor Wesley walks to center stage. After many bows, he slowly opens the scroll. The Chorus and Audience are asked to sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," verses 1 & 3 (see p.4), with much emphasis on trying to sing very correctly. The chorus continues to hum the hymn tune as a background while Professor Wesley reads the first three "directions".]

## Directions for Singing

- I. "Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please."
- II. "Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can."
- III. "Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing."

# A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Based on Psalm 46  
 Martin Luther, 1483–1546  
 Tr. Frederick H. Hedge, 1805–1890

EIN' FESTE BURG 8.7.8.7.6.6.6.7  
 Melody by Martin Luther, 1483–1546

1. A might - y for - tress is our God, A bul - wark ne - ver fail - ing;  
 2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, Our striv - ing would be los - ing,  
 3. And though this world, with de - vils filled, Should threat - en to un - do us,  
 4. That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, No thanks to them, a - bid - eth;

Our help - er He a - mid the flood Of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.  
 Were not the right man on our side, The man of God's own choos - ing.  
 We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri - umph through us.  
 The Spi - rit and the gifts are ours Through Him who with us sid - eth.

For still our an - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are  
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is He; Lord Sab - a - oth His  
 The prince of dark - ness grim, We trem - ble not for him; His rage we can en -  
 Let goods and kin - dred go, This mor - tal life al - so; The bod - y they may

great, And armed with cru - el hate, On earth is not his e - qual.  
 name. From age to age the same, And He must win the bat - tle.  
 dure, For lo, his doom is sure: One lit - tle word shall fell him.  
 kill; God's truth a - bid - eth still, His king - dom is for - ev - er.

[The Chorus finishes humming the hymn. Professor Wesley concludes reading the first three “directions”.]

[Then the Chorus sings:]

$\text{♩} = 132$  With energy

Soprano  
Sing all! Sing all! Join with the con - gre - ga - tion if you

Alto  
Sing all! Sing all! Join with the con - gre - ga - tion if you

Tenor  
Sing all! Sing all! Join with the con - gre - ga - tion if you

Bass  
Sing all! Sing all! Join with the con - gre - ga - tion if you

5

S.  
can. nn,

A.  
can. nn,

T.  
can. nn,

B.  
can. nn,

[Repeat pattern during next reading.]

[Professor Wesley continues:]

IV. “Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.”

[Chorus responds immediately:]

♩ = 132 With energy

S. *f* Sing lus - ti - ly! *div.* Sing lus - ti - ly! *unis.* And with good cour - age Be -

A. *f* Sing lus - ti - ly! Sing lus - ti - ly! And with good cour - age Be -

T. *f* Sing lus - ti - ly! Sing lus - ti - ly, — and with good cour - age. Be -

B. *f* Sing lus - ti - ly! *div.* Sing lus - ti - ly, — and with good cour - age. Be -

*rit.* *Slowly* *a tempo*

5 S. *p* ware of sing - ing — as if you were half dead. — Lift up your voice, and

A. *p* ware of sing - ing — as if you were half dead. —

T. *p* ware of sing - ing — as if you were half dead, — or half a - sleep.

B. *p* ware of sing - ing — as if you were half dead, — or half a - sleep.

9 S. *f* *div.* lift up your voice, and lift up your voice with strength, and sing — lus - ti - ly,

A. *p* Lift up your voice, and lift up your voice with strength, and sing — lus - ti - ly,

T. *p* Lift up your voice with strength and sing — lus - ti - ly, —

B. *p* Lift up your voice with strength and sing — lus - ti - ly, — *div.* *f*



(accel.) . . . . . Quickly ♩ = 120 molto rit.

6

S. nite your voi - ces to - geth - er to make — one, clear, me - lo - di - ous sound.

A. nite your voi - ces to - geth - er to make — one clear, me - lo - di - ous sound.

T. nite your voi - ces to - geth - er to make — one clear, me - lo - di - ous sound.

B. nite your voi - ces to - geth - er to make — one clear, me - lo - di - ous sound.

[Basses start to sing, and continue as a background during the reading.]

♩ = 132 Very strictly

B. *p* Sing in time. — Sing in time. — [Repeat pattern during following reading.]

VI. "Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first."

♩ = 132 Very strictly

rit.

S. *f* Sing in time. — Sing in time. Do not run be-fore, or run be - fore. —

A. *f* Sing in time. — Sing in time. Do not run be-fore, or run be - fore. —

T. *f* Sing in time. — Sing in time. or — lag be - hind. — *p*

B. *f* Sing in time. — Sing in time. or lag be - hind. — *p*

**a tempo**

5 *f* >

S. Sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first, at first, at

A. Sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first, at first, at

T. Sing. *f* > *p* *f* First, at first, at

B. Sing. *f* > *p* *f* First, at first, at

*rit.*

8 *p*

S. first, at first. Oh, sing in time, Oh, sing in time, in time.

A. first, at first. Oh, sing in time, Oh, sing in time, in time.

T. first, at first. Oh, sing in time, Oh, sing, Oh, sing in time.

B. first, at first. Oh, sing in time, Oh, sing, Oh, sing in time.

VII. "Above all sing spiritually."

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 100

*p*

S. Ah, — Ah, —

A. Ah, — Ah, —

T. Ah, — Ah, —

B. Ah, — Ah, —

[Continue pattern during reading]

"Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven."

[When reading ends, sing:]

At a moderate tempo ♩ = 100

rit.

S. *p* He com - eth in the clouds of hea - ven, the clouds of heaven. *p*

A. *p* He com - eth in the clouds of hea - ven, the clouds of heaven. *p*

T. *p* He com - eth in the clouds of hea - ven, the clouds of heaven. *p* *falsetto*

B. *p* He com - eth in the clouds of hea - ven, the clouds of heaven. *p*

5 ♩ = 132 With energy

S. *f* Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! *div.*

A. *f* Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,

T. *f* Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

B. *f* Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

9

S. Al - le - lu - - - - ia! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing

A. la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing

T. Al - le - lu - - - - ia! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! -

B. Al - le - lu - - - - ia! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! -

(Professor Wesley encourages the chorus with occasional gestures of instruction.)  
 (Chorus sings in straightforward chorale style, similar to p. 4)

13 *unis.*

S. all! Sing all! And though our song with er - rors filled, should threat - en to un -

A. all! Sing all! And though our song with er - rors filled, should threat - en to un -

T. — Sing all! — And though our song with er - rors filled, should threat - en to un -

B. — Sing all! — And though our song with er - rors filled, should threat - en to un -

17

S. do — us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His voice to tri - umph through us. For

A. do — us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His voice to tri - umph through us. For

T. do — us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His voice to tri - umph through us. For

B. do — us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His voice to tri - umph through us. For

22

S. still our ac - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe. Our la - zi - ness is

A. still our ac - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe. Our la - zi - ness is —

T. still our ac - cient — foe Doth seek to work us woe. Our la - zi - ness is

B. still our ac - cient foe Doth seek to work — us woe. Our la - zi - ness is

very energetically  
as quickly as possible

27 *p* *f*

S. great. But we won't hes - i - tate to sing with joy a - bound - ing.

A. great. But we won't hes - i - tate to sing with joy a - bound - ing.

T. great. But we won't hes - i - tate to sing with joy a - bound - ing.

B. great. But we won't hes - i - tate to sing with joy a - bound - ing. A -

32 *div.*

S. A - - - - men. Sing all! Sing all! Sing

A. A - - - - men. A - - - - men. Sing all! Sing all! Sing

T. A - - - - men. A - - - - men. Sing la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,

B. - - - - men. A - - - - men. A - - - - men. Sing all! Sing all! Sing

(Professor Wesley waves arms in celebration.)

36 *rit.* *unis.*

S. all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! all!

A. all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! all!

T. la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la. all! Sing all! Sing all! all!

B. all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing all! Sing lus - ti - ly all!

*div.* *unis.*