

TAILOR-MADE: COMPOSING AND ARRANGING FOR YOUR ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL SINGERS

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HELPFUL ARTICLE ABOUT PARTNER SONGS:

Junda, M. E. (1997). Part singing revisited. *Music Educators Journal*, 83(6), 35–40.
doi: 10.2307/3399023

WHY COMPOSE YOUR OWN PARTNER SONGS?

- Save money by not having to purchase published octavos/collections
- Renew your musicianship by exercising some creative muscle
- Customize to your students' needs (ranges, literacy goals, etc.)

WHAT MAKES PARTNER SONGS WORK (BESIDES THEIR HARMONIC COMPATIBILITY)?

Swing low, sweet cha - ri - ot, com - in' for to car - ry me
Oh, when the saints go march - ing in, Oh, when the saints go march - ing

home; Swing low, sweet cha - ri - ot, com - in' for to car - ry me home.
in! Lord, I want to be in that num ber, when the saints go march - ing in.

FEATURES TO NOTE:

- Uses of contrary motion
- Rhythmic activity in one part against rhythmic stasis in another
- Melodic “clues” that help with finding starting pitch

TRY YOUR HAND!

We shall not, we shall not be moved; We shall not, we shall not be moved. Like a

5

tree that's plant-ed by the wa - ter, we shall not be moved.

SOME RELATED THOUGHTS ABOUT ARRANGING:

- Apply the wisdom of partner songs: independent lines are easier for younger singers
- Instrumental “licks” from the original song make great source material
- Listen to great pop a cappella arrangements (collegiate groups, Pentatonix, etc.) and think about how to apply their techniques on a smaller scale

STUART'S EXAMPLE PARTNER SONG:

We shall not, we shall not be moved; We shall not, we shall not be moved. Like a

I have plant-ed my two feet right here. I will live in hope and not in fear: My

5

tree that's plant-ed by the wa - ter, we shall not be moved.

des - ti - ny is to be set free, so I bold-ly plant my feet.