

GOOD KING WENCESLAS - in Canon in 2 or more parts

a fun unaccompanied arrangement for audience - suitable for a carol concert
arr. by John Bertalot (1967)

The conductor should address the audience, telling them that

1. The KING should be sung by lower voices, and the PAGE by upper voices, and EVERYONE should sing when telling the story.
2. That they should STAND when they sing, and SIT when not singing (*this will add an air of happy confusion once they begin!*)
3. That it will be sung IN CANON - i.e. that one side will begin and the other side come in after exactly one bar.

The words may be printed on the programme, but omit the instructions 'stand' and 'sit'

(The conductor asks the audience to stand, and then conducts the performance.)

If there is a choir present, some of them might like to sing the optional accompanying ostinato canon, continuously, to add more happy confusion!
But, to get the singing off to a good start, ask the choir to begin 'Good King Wenceslas', followed by the left hand side of the audience and then the right hand side. (i.e. a Canon in 3 parts). **It's important that verse 2 (and succeeding verses) follow after only 2 beats' rest - as marked.**

(All v. 1)

Good King Wen-ces - las looked out on the feast of Steph - en,

(All v. 1)

Good King Wen-ces - las looked out on the feast of

1: (ALL) Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

when the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and ev - en.

Steph - en, when the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and

2: (KING) Hither, page, and stand by me.
If thou know'st it telling:
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?
(PAGE) Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes' fountain.

Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cru - el,

ev - en. Bright-ly shone the moon that night, though the frost was

3: (KING) Bring me flesh, and bring me wine.
Bring me pine logs hither.
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither.
(ALL) Page and monarch, forth they went,
Forth they went together
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather.

when a poor man came in sight, gath' - ring win - ter fu -

cru - el, when a poor man came in sight, gath' - ring win - ter

4: (PAGE) Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger.
Fails my heart, I know not how.
I can go no longer.
(KING) Mark my footsteps my good page,
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.

el. (King) Hith - er, page, and

fu - el.

5: (ALL) In his master's step he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted.
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing

Optional ostinato canon (at half bar and/or whole bar) to be sung by a few choir voices during the audience's singing of the carol.

Fa - la - la - la - la, Fa - la - la - la - la, Fa - la - la, Fa - la - la.