

Ode to Joy: Theme and variations for internal audiation.

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Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Schiller, adapted by Beethoven

Joy, the lightning of the Gods, the
Daughter of Elysium,
We come to you, fire-drunken,
To your inner sanctum.
With your magic, reunite us,
Spite the years of suffering.
In the end we are all brothers
Safe beneath your gentle wing.

Singable English translation by Joel Sattler

Theme

Sing this anthem of freedom and inclusivity to yourself. You might choose to sing it in German, or English, or use a sort of 'pom pom pom da-di-dum' throughout. Feel free to stand, to sway, to conduct yourself. Complete the verse and imagine the rapturous applause!

Variation 1

The notoriously difficult vocal parts have been arranged for three-part community choir. They are humming through the work accompanied by a slightly out-of-tune upright piano. Listen to the range of voices poking out from the unblended texture; enjoy the wrong notes as part of the process; don't try to balance up the outnumbered men's line. They finish the verse and chuckle happily. Next week they will attempt the German.

Variation 2

The voice you hear in your head is now pompous, male, and English. As it sings, the song slows down... and slows some more, each word drawn out... the tune and words scarcely comprehensible... until it grinds to a complete halt well before the end of the verse.

Variation 3

A crowd of thousands is singing, in many languages, accompanied by orchestras, joyfully. But it's quiet – somewhat *lontano* - and now moves even further away, out of reach and hearing. Again, the music is lost before the end of the verse. Listen to the loss.

Variation 4

A child plays the tune on a violin. Imagine every hesitation, error of rhythm, flaw in intonation. Luckily the instrument is only on loan so the child has to give it back before the end of the verse, ending her music training forever.

Variation 5.

A school choir is singing the *Ode to Joy* in beautiful harmony.
Don't be stupid; they're singing Christina Aguilera in unison into microphones.