

# THE ART OF FORMING CONCORDS: MUSIC AND THE MASONIC LODGE

W.: B.: ANDREW HAMMER, PM

ALBA LODGE N<sup>o</sup> 222

*Revised in part from unpublished notes for 'Observing the Craft'*

Music has always been perceived to be an essential part of speculative Masonry. From the inclusion of Masonic songs in the Book of Constitutions, to the use of musicians by William Preston in the ceremonies of the Lodge of Antiquity, the use of music as both a means of meditation and method of bonding among the brethren is well-established, if not actually codified. It simply is an intended aspect of the Masonic assembly.

Ritually, music is one of the seven liberal arts and sciences revered by the Craft, and is referred to at least twice in most Masonic jurisdictions in the world. These references are publicly available from many sources, but they find their origin in Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry*:

*'Hearing is that sense by which we distinguish sounds, and are capable of enjoying all the agreeable charms of music.'*

—and—

*'Music teaches the art of forming concords, so as to compose delightful harmony, by a proportional arrangement of acute, grave and mixed sounds. This art, by a series of experiments, is reduced to a science, with respect to tones, and the intervals of sound only.'*

As with most of those other liberal arts, the use of music has become woefully absent from many Lodges in North America. However, in those Lodges where it is present, it has become almost unimaginable to conduct a meeting without it. Indeed, in an observant Lodge, music is a full partner with the ritual, whether it be in the form of Masonic opening and closing odes sung by the brethren, or the performance of, or playing of recorded music throughout the meeting, as well as at significant points during the degrees. Then of course, there are the songs meant to be sung by the brethren at the Festive Board after the meeting.

Some observant Lodges offer a Moment of Reflection, which, while often being a period of silence, can just as well be an opportunity to silently meditate with a reflective piece of music. In many Lodges where this is implemented, this occurs after the programme of the evening; the lights are dimmed, and the brethren are asked to reflect on what they have just heard presented while the musical selection fills the Lodge room. While silence is equally powerful, the use of music for such a moment has an additional advantage: it allows the Master to be fully engaged in the meditation as well, rather than having his mind occupied

with the responsibility of closing the period of silence. This provides for every brother to focus on the reflection, leaving the keeping of time to be determined by the end of the music.

When planning a Moment of Reflection, a note on duration is useful: unless one knows his brethren to be particularly indulgent, care should be taken to use compositions that are no longer than three to four minutes in length. At the same time, owing to the preoccupation of the mind with sound, music does allow for longer periods of meditation to be employed; thirty seconds of silence can sometimes seem as long as three minutes of music. As with everything in a Lodge, the intent of the exercise is what matters. What one wants to keep in mind, however, is that a good way to have this experience meet with opposition in a Lodge where it is being tried for the first time, would be to play an entire fifteen-minute concerto. If a Lodge has not yet mastered the art of silence, then the Master should not be surprised if his attempt to have the brethren patiently attend to a longer piece of music results in dissatisfaction.

As for the choice of music to be used in a Lodge, it should go without saying that one should avoid sectarian or nationalistic music, unless the choice is *both* instrumental and more obscure in terms of its meaning. This requires more diligence than one might initially expect. Any words in a selection should be carefully examined to ensure that no appeals to specific religions or nations, or political sentiments are brought within the tiled Lodge. That means that selections of Gregorian chants, or the beautiful works of Palestrina (which were used in one Lodge until the brethren were made aware that the Lodge was essentially playing a Catholic Mass) are not to be used, because these works are actual services of a particular religion, which very clearly appeal to the sectarian aspects of that faith, even though they are being performed in a language not readily understood (Latin). On the other hand, if one uses a choral performance of the Hebrew prayer *Adon Olam*, one is struck by the completely universal, non-sectarian language of a prayer that might well have been known to the builders of Solomon's Temple in some form. If these guidelines seem overly cautious, I would merely remind the reader that they are very similar to—and even a bit less cautious than—those laid down by the United Grand Lodge of England in their instructions related to music for the Lodge.

A further note is in order in relation to the use of music which might be easily recognisable as 'religious' or 'political' by its melodies, but has verses that pertain solely to Masonry, or which are placed in a Masonic context. One of the most common cultural practices in almost every civilisation has been to take melodies understood in one context and render them into another. From the bawdy 17th century English drinking song that would become the American national anthem, to the ancient Chinese folk melodies which would become the propaganda songs of the Chinese Communist Party, people from all walks of life have taken one popular melody and put new words to it which change its meaning and purpose. William Preston himself offered up two separate Masonic texts to be sung to the tune of 'God Save The King'.

This revising of lyrical content is done precisely because the tunes are already known to most people, thereby making them easier to be sung in groups. Also, it was easier to use common

melodies than to teach specially composed melodies in a time before recorded music was available. Therefore, in most Lodges in the British Isles, as well as those working under their respective constitutions, Masonic odes are sung to the melodies of common hymns. The important point to be made here is that with specifically Masonic verses being sung, they are no longer sectarian hymns, despite the more popular application of the melody as such. Our Craft has been engaging in this kind of modification at least since the establishment of the Premier Grand Lodge.

With these aspects of duration and content being established, we can move on to the question of what style of music should be played. While any Lodge can implement the practice of singing the aforementioned opening and closing odes, as well as other well-established Masonic songs for use at the Festive Board, the selections chosen for use in the tyled Lodge should have a sense of distinction. By this one means that they should not be overly common, so as to lend some uniqueness to the experience of them in Lodge. Pachelbel's *Canon and Gigue in D Major*—yes, you *have* heard it—is a sweetly beautiful piece of music, but it is also heard at nearly every wedding in North America, has been rendered into both rock and rap songs, and will most likely have the brethren thinking about *other places where they heard the piece*, which defeats your purpose of offering it in a Masonic Lodge. Of course, it is next to impossible to find a classical piece that no one has heard before, and that's not exactly the goal anyway. But in today's world, some compositions are better known than others, and some evoke specific moods better than others. We should seek selections that even if well-known, can still become to some extent *identified with the Lodge experience*.

The works of Debussy, Satie, and the Swedish composer Peterson-Berger are ideal for Moments of Reflection, because they are calm but arguably complex, often using only one instrument—the piano—in such a way that one can almost sense the contemplation of the composer as the work is played. Even those pieces from these composers that are more lively are, at certain times, very suitable for the atmosphere of a Lodge.

For the actual ceremonies of the Craft, one might choose from the works of Purcell or Handel, or even some of Mozart's Masonically-themed pieces. But while it may seem obvious to go to Mozart for musical selections, one should keep in mind that many of Mozart's works—even those composed for the Craft—are more stimulating than meditative. There is also the risk of the automatic nod to Brother Mozart becoming somewhat clichéd, or overly common, as mentioned above. The mood and tone of the music is far more important than the Masonic biography of its composer. Jean Sibelius composed a full body of music for the Grand Lodge of Finland [*Musique Religieuse, Opus 113*], one performance of which was recorded in the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Yet some might find much of his work to be an acquired taste. *De gustibus non est disputandum!*

As the two documents added as an appendix to this one will illustrate, a Lodge may use a combination of styles chosen to fit each particular aspect of the meeting. I have also added some songs which are sung in the English Emulation Lodge of which I am a member [Fiat Lux Lodge No. 1717], and also at Festive Boards or *Harmonies*, the latter being the far more preferable Scottish term for the Masonic dining experience.

A final historical anecdote is also interesting to note in relation to the intimate connection between music and Masonry. One of the oldest known written records of what would apparently become the third degree of Freemasonry, is the conferral of the same by what appears to have been a Lodge musical society. In 1725, *Philo-Musicae et Architectura Societas Apollini – The Apollo Society for the Lovers of Music and Architecture*, was formed by the brethren of Hollis Street Lodge, and despite being a *society of* a Lodge, was nevertheless among the London *lodges* listed in that year by the Premier Grand Lodge.

Whether or not such a thing was what one might consider as regular must be left to debate. But the fact that music and architecture were so early united in such a way among men who were regular Masons, and who sought to explore music through a Masonic lens, does seem to confirm the genuine importance of music to the institution, in both its sensory and intellectual application.



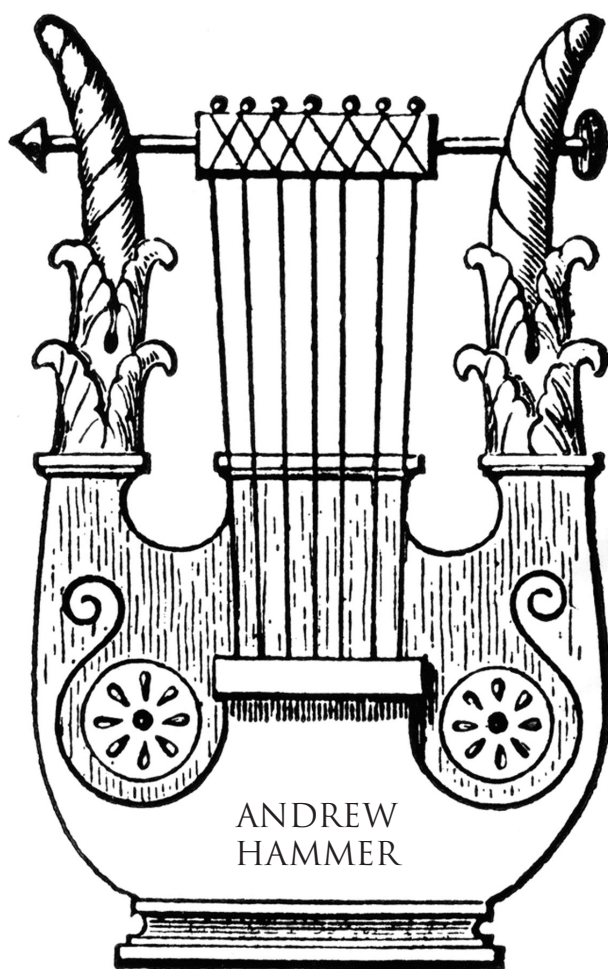
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# USING MUSIC IN THE LODGE

ONE IMPLEMENTATION  
FOR THE PRESTON-WEBB RITUAL



## Musical Selections for the Lodge

One of the special features of an observant Lodge is the use of music to enhance our assemblies. While the use of a Moment of Reflection—normally occurring after the presentation of the evening—varies in the piece of music selected, what follows are some commonly used pieces of music chosen for certain points in meetings. Explanations, text and references are provided in this document to better acquaint you with the music of an observant Lodge. The symbols indicate whether the Lodge is in darkness ● or light ☼ during the piece.

### STATED COMMUNICATIONS

#### Processional of Master and Wardens ●

*Jupiter - Holst [Hymn only] - London Symphony Orchestra*

or

*Chester [Edited Version] - William Billings - United States Air Force Band*

The opening orchestral used for the procession of the Master and Wardens is a forgotten treasure of American music. Known simply as Chester, it was composed by William Billings in 1778, and is actually considered to be the first [unofficial] national anthem of the United States. While our version is instrumental, in keeping with the careful avoidance of sectarian sentiments in religion, politics, and nationalism, a key verse of this composition speaks poignantly to desires familiar not only to the young nation, but to Masons as well.

*Let tyrants shake their iron rods,  
And Slavery clank her galling chains.  
We fear them not, we trust in God.  
New England's God forever reigns.*

#### Tying of the Lodge ☼

*Purcell - Chacony in G minor - Sarasa Ensemble*

As the Lodge is being opened and tyled, processional music is played as the deacons attend to their duties.

## Great Lights ●

*Master of the Universe (translated from Hebrew) - Rinat National Choir*

This prayer dates back to the time of the Temple of Solomon, and is unique in that while it strongly affirms a belief in deity, it is non-sectarian to the extent that it can be comfortably said by the adherents of almost any faith.

*Eternal Master, who reigned supreme  
Before all of creation was drawn  
When it was finished according to His will  
Then the King's Name was proclaimed*

*When this our world shall be no more  
In majesty He still shall reign  
And He was, and He is, and He will be in glory.*

*Alone is He, beyond compare,  
Without division or ally,  
Without beginning, without end,  
to Him is the power and sovereignty  
unfathomable and unimaginable  
unchanging and irreplaceable*

*He is without connections or separations  
His strength and valor are great  
He is my God, my Living Redeemer  
rock of my affliction in the enemy day*

*He is my banner and refuge  
filling my cup the day I call  
He is a healer and a remedy  
He watches and He helps*

*Into His hand I commit my spirit  
when I sleep, and I wake  
and with my spirit, my body  
The Lord is with me, I will not fear*



## Balloting ☀

*Onward Ye Brethren (translated from Finnish) - Sibelius - Osmo Vanska*

This piece was written by the Finnish composer and Mason Jean Sibelius specifically for the Grand Lodge of Finland, to be used for the procession of the brethren out of the Lodge. However, one finds that it fits perfectly for the balloting ceremony, when the brethren make a procession to the altar to fulfill that all-important Masonic responsibility of deciding whether or not a man will be admitted into their Lodge.

It also helps to give the brethren an opportunity as well as a sense of understanding that they are participating in ritual, even though they may never have taken a part in a degree or sat in a chair.

*Onward ye brethren, strive for the light  
the light that the Lord hath given us for our guide  
Who through murk and darkness of night  
Hath led us in safety unto our reward.*

*See how the fiery pillar is gleaming,  
lighting our steps when dark is the way.  
And the Light of the World,  
It cleaveth the gloomy blackness of night that else would engulf us.*

*See the cloudy pillar to shield us safe when the sun would blister us.  
Then forward where faith revealeth the way,  
For God is our guide, and He will never fail  
Fires are gleaming, voices are singing forth  
from Mount Nebo's heaven-storming height*

*Salem! Salem!*

*Hark, they call us upward and on to our Father's home.  
Salem, Salem, on the horizon urging us on to God and our home;  
And the heavenly choir rings out from Mount Nebo.  
Piercing the blue like a living light.*



## At the Closing Charge/Chain of Union ●

*(translated from Hebrew) - Rinat National Choir*

A simple prayer derived from the Book of Psalms which is perfectly consistent with the sentiments of our own closing charge.

*Safeguard our going and coming,  
for life and for peace from now to eternity.*

## Postlude ☼

*Organ Concerto No. 13 in E, HWV 295 - Handel*

Played after the closing of the Lodge, this instrumental piece conveys both a sense of graceful comportment and harmony as the brethren prepare to go down from the Lodge to the Harmony or Festive Board.

## Alternate Selection

### Processional of Master and Wardens ●

*Jupiter - Holst [Hymn only] - London Symphony Orchestra*

The opening music is taken from the Jupiter movement in the symphony *The Planets* by Gustav Holst, but this music was also put to the famous patriotic poem composed by Cecil Spring-Rice, recalling the duty and sacrifice man makes to his earthly and his spiritual or undiscovered country. Here again, we do not play the vocal arrangement of the piece, but the orchestral one taken directly from *The Planets*. Written during the First World War, the words are extremely poignant to all who have served their country.

*I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;  
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,  
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.*

*I heard my country calling, away across the sea,  
Across the waste of waters she calls and calls to me.  
Her sword is girded at her side, her helmet on her head,  
And round her feet are lying the dying and the dead.  
I hear the noise of battle, the thunder of her guns,  
I haste to thee my mother, a son among thy sons.*

*And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;  
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;  
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;  
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.*

## **MUSIC DURING DEGREES**

Owing to the nature of Masonic degrees, the details of how the selections are used will not be explicitly referred to in this document. Depending upon their respective ritual, Masons will know the nature of the descriptions given. Further information may be transmitted under the usual Masonic protocols. As there are significant differences in how the Preston-Webb ritual is implemented from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, some of these suggestions will require further discussion in order to clarify what is stated below. The following applies to many jurisdictions, but not all.

The previously mentioned selections are used up to the Great Lights, after which time additional selections are placed in particular parts of the degrees. For all degrees, there is a portion where the candidate is moving slowly. During this section, we use Henry Purcell's *Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary*.

At another point in one of the degrees, the candidate is invited to sit in a chair for a short time. The Lodge at this point is in darkness,

and Henry Purcell's *Thou Knowest, Lord* is played [Alternate selection: *And Must This Body Die (St. Bride)*]. At yet another point in one of the degrees, the candidate is invited to stop moving. The Lodge is again placed in darkness, and Handel's *Sarabande* is played.

Between sections of the degrees, we have found that the use of music greatly helps maintain the focus of the Lodge during what might otherwise be an awkward lull during the transitions. Selections used include:

- *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, **performed by Maurice Ravel** [there are other versions of this piece, but Ravel's own solo performance on piano is unparalleled]

- *Nocturne for Piano No. 9*, by Chopin

- *Opus 16, Helsning, Flowers from Froso Island*, by Peterson-Berger

*Pleyel's Hymn* may also be used at an appropriate time.

## ACCESS TO RECORDED WORKS

The specific files for the music referenced in this document can be obtained by contacting Andrew Hammer at the following e-mail address: [author@observingthecraft.com](mailto:author@observingthecraft.com)

## MOMENTS OF REFLECTION

A number of diverse compositions may be used for Moments of Reflection in the Lodge. Sometimes the choice is made with a mind to the season, an occasion, or simply because its mood fits that of the presentation given. A list of a few of our preferred selections follows:

### **Erik Satie**

*Gymnopédies - No. 3 - Lent et Grave*

*Gnossiennes - No. 1 - Lent*

*Gnossiennes - No. 3 - Modéré*

*Gnossiennes - No. 5 - Lent*

### **Claude Debussy**

*Beau Soir*

*La Fille aux cheveux de lin*

*The Snow is Dancing*

*Reverie*

### **Wilhelm Peterson-Berger**

*Solhalsning - Book 2, Frösöblomster*

*Sommarsång - Book 1, Frösöblomster*

*Om många år - Book 3, Frösöblomster*

*Till rosorna - Book 1, Frösöblomster*

### **Gabriel Fauré**

*Trois Romances sans paroles, Op. 17 - 1. Andante, quasi allegretto*

*Trois Romances sans paroles, Op. 17 - 3. Andante moderato*

### **W. A. Mozart**

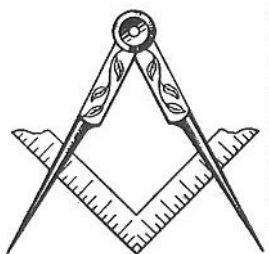
*O heiliges Band der Freundschaft*



MASONIC  
SONGS  
FOR  
LODGE  
AND  
FESTIVE BOARD

*AS DERIVED FROM NEARLY 300 YEARS  
OF MASONIC PRACTICE*

*Compiled by W. Bro.: Andrew Hammer*



## GOD BLESS FREEMASONRY

[Tune: God Save the Queen]

God bless Freemasonry!  
Long live Freemasonry!  
God save our Craft!  
With compasses and square,  
Let us find Beauty there,  
Wisdom and Strength to share:  
God save the Craft!

Great Architect arise,  
Bring Light unto our eyes,  
Raise up our souls:  
Truth and fidelity,  
Love and sincerity,  
Join us in harmony,  
From pole to pole.

God save our gentle Craft!  
Long live our noble Craft!  
God save our Craft!  
Make us victorious,  
with minds industrious,  
and hearts illustrious,  
God save the Craft!

[Text: Andrew Hammer]

## OPENING ODE

[Tune: St. Bees]

Hail Eternal! by whose aid  
All created things were made;  
Heav'n and earth, Thy vast design;  
Hear us, Architect Divine!

May our work, begun in Thee,  
Ever blest with order be,  
And may we, when labours cease,  
Part in harmony and peace.

By thy glorious Majesty  
By the trust we place in Thee  
By the badge and mystic sign  
Hear us, Architect Divine!

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## CLOSING ODE

[Tune: St. Oswald]

Now the evening shadows closing,  
Warn from toil to peaceful rest,  
Mystic arts and rites reposing,  
Sacred in each faithful breast.

God of Light! whose love unceasing,  
Doth to all Thy works extend,  
Crown our Order with Thy blessing,  
Build; sustain us to the end.

Humbly now we bow before Thee  
Grateful for Thy aid Divine;  
Everlasting power and glory,  
Mighty Architect! be Thine.





## THE MASON'S ADIEU

[Tune: Bonnie Doon]

Adieu, a heart's warm, fond adieu,  
Ye brothers of the mystic tie;  
Ye favor'd and enlightened few,  
Companions of my social joy;

Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,  
Pursuing fortune's slippery ball;  
With melting heart and brimful eye,  
I'll mind you still, when far away.

And you farewell, whose merits claim  
Just'ly that highest badge to wear,  
May Heaven bless your noble name,  
To Masonry and Friendship dear;

My last request, permit me then;  
When yearly you're assembled all,  
One round, I ask it with a tear  
To him, your friend, that's far away.

[Text: Robert Burns]

# THE MASTER'S SONG

[*Verses sung Solo*]

This world is so hard and so stony,  
That if a man is to get through,  
He need have the courage of Nelson,  
And plenty of Job's patience too.  
But a man who is kind to another  
And cheerfully helps him along,  
We'll claim as a man and a brother,  
And here's to his health in a song.

CHORUS [SUNG BY ALL BRETHREN]:

*And here's to his health, here's to his health  
And here's to his health in a song.*

This life is as cheerless as winter  
To those who are cold in the heart,  
but a man who is warm in his nature  
Bids winter for ever depart  
The ground that he treads on will blossom,  
Till beauty around him shall throng;  
God Bless such a man and a brother,  
And here's to his health in a song.

CHORUS

As clouds that in sunshine are open,  
And silver'd by light passing through,  
So men who are generous in spirit,  
Are bless'd by the good deeds they do;  
There's nothing like helping another  
For getting one's own self along;  
Who does this is truly a brother.  
And here's to his health in a song.

CHORUS

# THE ENTER'D 'PRENTICE'S SONG

*From Anderson's Constitutions, 1723*

## I.

Come, let us prepare,  
We Brothers that are  
Assembled on merry occasion ;  
Let's drink, laugh, and sing ;  
Our Wine has a Spring :  
Here's a health to an Accepted Mason.

## II.

The World is in pain  
Our Secrets to gain,  
And still let them wonder and gaze on ;  
They ne'er can divine  
The Word or the Sign  
Of a Free and an Accepted Mason.

## III.

'Tis This, and 'tis That,  
They cannot tell What,  
Why so many great men of the Nation  
Should Aprons put on,  
To make themselves one,  
With a Free and Accepted Mason.

## IV.

Great Kings, Dukes and Lords  
Have laid by their Swords,  
Our Myst'ry to put a good Grace on,  
And ne'er been ashamed  
To hear themselves nam'd  
With a Free and an Accepted Mason.

V.  
Antiquity's Pride,  
We have on our side,  
And it maketh men just in their Station :  
There's nought but what's good  
To be understood  
By a Free and an Accepted Mason.

VI.  
Then join Hand in Hand,  
T'each other firm stand,  
Let's be merry, and put a bright Face on :  
What Mortal can boast  
So Noble a Toast,  
As a Free and an Accepted Mason?



# WITHIN OUR TEMPLE, MET AGAIN

[Tune: St. Anne]

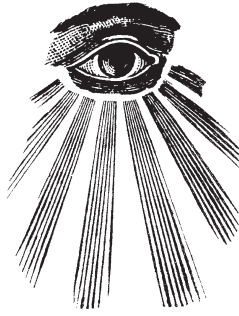
Within our temple, met again,  
With hearts and purpose strong,  
We'll raise our notes of grateful praise,  
With union in our song.

Around our altar's sacred shrine,  
May love's pure incense rise,  
Bearing upon its mystic flame  
Our music to the skies.

Come, Masters of the Art, unite,  
And may this meeting prove,  
To all assembled sons of light,  
a strengthened bond of love.

May Friendship and Morality,  
With true fraternal love,  
Be found in every Mason's heart,  
And all his actions move.





## GENIUS OF MASONRY, DESCEND

[Tune: Morning Hymn by Boyce]

Genius of Masonry, descend!  
In mystic numbers, while we sing;  
Enlarge our souls, the Craft defend,  
And hither all Thy influence bring.

Hail Masonry, thou Craft divine!  
Glory of Earth, from Heav'n revealed;  
Which doth with jewels precious shine,  
From all but Masons' eyes concealed.

Ye happy few, who here extend,  
In peaceful lines from east to west,  
With fervent zeal the Lodge defend,  
And lock its secrets in your breast.

O may our voice to Friendship move,  
Be Virtue ours in all its parts;  
Let Justice, Harmony and Love,  
Come and possess our faithful hearts.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord;  
Eternal truth attends thy Word;  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
'Til suns shall rise and set no more.



## THIS SACRED BAND

[Tune: Scots Wha Hae]

From Eden's garden we began,  
To learn and live the holy plan,  
And seek the harmony of man,  
In Hiram's noble ways.

So rise ye brethren, heed the call,  
As one we'll stand and never fall,  
Freemasonry unites us all  
Into this sacred band.

Let each one seek the right to know,  
The truth of his immortal soul,  
And find the light with which to go  
Ever towards the East;

Where Wisdom's kingdom doth reside,  
In Strength, with Beauty by her side,  
To bring these virtues unified  
Into this sacred band.

So rise ye brethren, heed the call,  
As one we'll stand and never fall,  
Freemasonry unites us all  
into this sacred band.

[Text: Andrew Hammer]