

# Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition!!

1942 V



Words and Music  
by FRANK LOESSER

FAMOUS MUSIC CORP., • 1619 BROADWAY, New York City, N. Y.

Sheet music for "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!" (1942).

the verse, there is a single song-form chorus (a-a-b-a') to be sung at a "Martial" tempo (perhaps the 120 beats per minute expected in "What Do You Do in the Infantry?") Even though the first phrase of the text is heard three times, Loesser gives it a bit more interest by using a **Scotch snap**. A Scotch snap is a short-long pattern, with the short note occurring on a strong beat. Loesser uses the Scotch snap at the end of the first two lines ("nition")—but not in the third line, creating a subtle surprise for listeners.

Loesser's sheet music repeats the chorus, and most recordings of the day used the repetition as a chance to add various elaborations. The Kyser version, for instance, inserts an interlude for the big-band accompaniment, and then the singers include various effects in their second chorus (which consists of only the first a phrase, sung twice). Even in the first chorus, women's voices had created a countermelody, or **obbligato**, background to Loesser's melody. Later on (at 2:09), a soprano's voice is even more prominent within the obbligato texture.

In Kyser's setting, when the second chorus enters after the instrumental interlude, the women and men perform a series of short calls-and-responses to create a new texture. Also, perhaps in a tongue-in-cheek allusion to the sky pilot, Kyser's recording employs a **plagal cadence** at the end of both the interlude and the last chorus of the song. A plagal cadence moves from a subdominant chord to the tonic harmony (IV-I) rather than the more common dominant-tonic (V-I) cadence. Because the IV-I progression is used at the end of so many Protestant hymns, it is often nicknamed the "Amen" cadence—and an "Amen!" would certainly be a suitable response after all of the song's "Praise The Lord" exclamations!

boosted sales.<sup>218</sup>

Loesser's setting for the song is quite simple: after

## LISTENING GUIDE 7

### "PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION!" – 1942 FRANK LOESSER (1910–69)

Form	Melodic Phrases	Timeline	Text (as printed in the 1942 sheet music; Kyser's adjustments to Loesser's italicized text are shown in brackets)	Musical Features
Instrumental Introduction		0:00		<i>Slow, dissonant chords in the lowest instruments, almost resembling airplane engines, crescendoing as they approach</i>
		0:07		<i>Higher-pitched brass instruments join in, building to a fanfare</i>
		0:18		<i>Steady tempo begins ("Martial" in Loesser's sheet music)</i>