

“Must Have” Sacred Repertoire dated 1999 and earlier:

Psalm 150, John Harper, 2-part mixed (ST/AB), Oxford University Press #E135.

A delightfully vigorous setting in easy ranges, musically interesting, and easy to sing well with a limited number of singers.

Slow Down, Edwin T. Childs, SATB with Keyboard, Ron Harris Music #RH0902.

Dedicated for those “on the Emmaus Road,” this thoughtful text (written by the composer) is valuable during the Easter season and for general use. A most intimate yet unsentimental text is set to a gentle quasi-slow-gospel accompaniment.

Hallelujah (from Mount of Olives), Beethoven, SATB with piano, orchestra or band, G. Schirmer #HL50293600.

Sometimes known as “the other Hallelujah chorus,” this barn-burner anthem pays off extremely well with choir and listeners. The right pianist or organist is essential to keep the energy going under the soaring choral lines.

Just as I am, Bob Chilcott, SATB with keyboard, Oxford University Press #E163.

Chilcott rescued a classic devotional poem (Charlotte Elliott) from its tragic association with a 19th century sawdust trail tune and in doing so, created a choral prayer that speaks across generational and denominational lines.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Gilbert M. Martin, SATB, Organ, Theodore Presser Co., 1970, #312-40785.

Gilbert Martin has based the anthem on the tune by Lowell Mason. This piece is applicable for the Lenten season, or can be used most anytime of the year. The piece begins very softly and ends with divisi in the vocal parts on a triple fff chord with full organ.

If Ye Love Me, Thomas Tallis, SATB, Choral Public Domain Library, www.cpdl.org.

There are eight editions (both TTBB & SATB) available on Choral Public Domain Library. The anthem is easily accessible for choirs of any size.

For the Beauty of the Earth, John Rutter, SATB, Piano, Hinshaw Music Inc. 1980, HMC550.

This anthem can be used most any time of the year. The florid accompaniment compliments the vocal lines. There is also a 2 pt arrangement available. The accompaniment has been scored for a small orchestra with full score and parts on rental from Hinshaw Music.

The Lord Is My Shepherd, Allen Pote, SAT, SAB or SATB, Piano, Choristers Guild, 1991, CGA551.

This lovely, expressive setting of Psalm 23 will appeal to youth and adult choirs alike. The flexibility of voicing (SAT, SAB or SATB) makes the piece versatile for use in a variety of situations. There is also a 2 pt arrangement available, and a handbell arrangement that can be used as a replacement accompaniment in lieu of piano.

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light, arr. Paul Manz, MorningStar Music Publishers MSM-60-9019 SATB and organ w/opt. congregation.

This hymn setting has an a cappella second verse with some divisi, but is wonderful for teaching line, especially for the tenors and basses. The final verse is unison choir and optional congregation, with a descant for soprano and tenor, if desired.

Praise His Holy Name, Keith Hampton, Earthsongs SATB piano

Keith Hampton's black gospel style anthem is popular with both adult and youth choirs alike. A good pianist is necessary. Use this piece to diversify your choir's repertoire in a very joyful way.

Mid-Winter, Bob Chilcott, Oxford University Press BC3 SATB and piano.

Although this piece is relatively recent, it's a beautiful addition to the Christmas repertoire. Some of harmonies will be challenging for the intermediate choir, but not unreachable.

Prayer of St. Francis, René Clausen, SATB, Mark Foster, MF 2087-U

Clausen is a master of melody, harmony and text-setting. The subject of each section of the Prayer is reflected in the harmonic vocabulary, the tension-resolution of dissonances and lush consonances. The piece ends with one of the loveliest "Amens" in choral literature.

There Is No Rose, Z. Randall Stroepe, SSA, AMP 0392

Set for SSA voices, with piano and oboe, the piece weaves a sacred aura, with a mystical melody in the oboe over the subtle countermelody in the piano accompaniment, so that from the first measures of the introduction, the listener is caught up in the moment. The final building of "Alleluias" to the end rivals in beauty that of Randall Thompson's classic work! The oboe part is included and requires a very sensitive musician, even though the part is not technically difficult.

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need, Mack Wilberg, Hinshaw, HMC1424, 1995 SATB, harp (keyboard), flute and oboe

A simple and moving arrangement of the early American folk hymn set to Isaac Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 23. Works well with piano accompaniment if harp is unavailable, and includes some six-part divisi, but also much unison men/unison women writing.

He Never Failed Me Yet, Robert Ray, Jenson No. 44708014, 1982, SATB, soloist, piano with optional instrumental accompaniment (brass and rhythm section).

Robert Ray's popular piece remains a hit with church choirs some 24 years after its appearance. Set in 4/4 but felt in 12/8, the work contains a 2-bar vamp near the end which allows the soloist space to improvise in gospel style. This piece works well with piano, but is even better with the addition of a rhythm section.

Tenebrae factae sunt, Michael Haydn, European American Music Corp. EA148, 1973 SATB a cappella.

A dramatic setting of the Good Friday text featuring frequent examples of text painting, including a haunting descending chromatic passage at the text "et inclinatio capite" (and bowed his head). Moderately difficult.

The Promise of Living, Aaron Copland, SATBB/piano (4 hands), Boosey & Hawkes 5020.

Copland's "Promise of Living" is a SUPER Thanksgiving piece. To prepare it more quickly, assign the opening section to 5 soloists, then have the whole choir join for the remainder.

Hymn of Promise, Natalie Sleeth, arr. John Ferguson, SATB, Hope Publishing A705

Natalie Sleeth's "Hymn of Promise" is a gorgeous text and tune, and John Ferguson has arranged it very sensitively. It is a good selection for a memorial service, a funeral, or any time when the topic is about death and resurrection or uncertainty about the future.

Let the People Praise Thee, O God, William Mathias, SATB & organ, Oxford University Press 1472182

Admittedly a more complex composition for the advanced church choir, this composition was composed for the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana in 1981. The excellent choral writing is balanced quite well by an exciting organ accompaniment.

With a Voice of Singing, Martin Shaw, G Schirmer. Various voicings and organ.

Still available in a variety of voicings (SATB, SAB, SSA, TTBB), this 1920's classic is quite appropriate for both worship and the concert hall. Regardless of the voicing selected, this composition is accessible to both youth and adult choirs alike.

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come, Paul Manz, MorningStar Music Publishers, SATB or SSAA a cappella.

A personal favorite of the National Choir of Music in Worship, Dr. Paul A. Aitken, this composition is an absolutely exquisite composition suitable for Advent, or for any time of year.