

“Must Have” Sacred Repertoire published since 2000:

A Song of Praise, Gwyneth Walker (SATB, organ, ECS 6286, 2003)

Text adapted from the Watts hymn "I Sing the Mighty Power of God." In the words of the composer, "An energetic hymn with many Amens: staccato, loud and joyous."

At This Table, Allen Pote (SATB, kbd., opt. flute: Hope Publishing, C 5429, 2006)

Setting an appropriate attitude of worship for Communion, "At This Table" addresses our areas of participation – singing, silence, partaking of the elements – imploring Christ to be the "wine of grace" and the "bread of peace". The flute is a simple but effective obbligato to the voices, which move in unisons and simple chordal harmonies.

Behold, I Tell You a Mystery, Paul Carey (SATB, unaccompanied: Oxford University Press 0-19-386866-0, 2005)

An accessible challenge for most church choirs with dissonant text-painting one would expect for I Corinthians 15:51-55.

Be Thou My Vision, Bob Chilcott (SATB, piano: Oxford University Press BC43, 2001)

Bob Chilcott has provided church choirs with many excellent anthems and this original setting of the popular hymn text is certainly one of his best. The memorable melody is set in the first verse for soprano solo, in stanzas two and three for choir, and with soloist and choir combining for the final verse. The vocal writing is accessible to a choir of moderate ability, and the piano scoring is expressive and creative. Also available for SATB and orchestra.

Come Dwell in Solomon's Walls, Z. Randall Stroope (SATB, piano: MorningStar, MSM-50-7068, 2006)

Stroope's accompaniments are extraordinary, complementing the vocal lines in his choral works. In this text, which relates God's blessings on Solomon's newly-constructed temple, the voices give narration in unison and the recurring invitation to "Come Dwell..." in strong melodic lines and full harmonies. As the piece builds in intensity to the end, the vocal ranges move upward, giving a bit of a stretch to the sopranos, in particular. Medium difficulty.

Esto Les Digo, Kinley Lange (SATB, a cappella: Alliance AMP - 0402, 2001)

This lush anthem sets the text of Matthew 18:19-20 (Where two or three are gathered in My name, there will I be also) in Spanish. The work is accessible to a choir of moderate ability, and its ranges are easily accessible. The work is predominantly homophonic and includes a soprano solo which soars over the top of the melody during the last seven bars.

For All That Is, Taylor Davis (SATB, piano & violin: Choristers Guild, CGA 1037, 2005)

"We give you thanks O God" is the theme of this anthem that can be used anytime of the year. The key of D flat and rolling sixteenths provide a warm flowing accompaniment. The violin part is printed in the back of the music for easy reading. This is an octavo any choir will love.

For the Beauty of the Earth, Philip Stopford (SATB, a cappella: Hal Leonard Publishing #08745639, 2003)

This a cappella piece flows with a steady constant pulse and moves naturally from beginning to end. The melody moves from unison women in the beginning to the tenors and ends with a full rich seven-part texture that flows all the way to the end of the piece. The text is suitable for anytime of the church year.

Give Thanks to the Lord, Mark Patterson (SATB, kbd., opt. flute: GladSong, 0-8006-23284-3. 2006)

Patterson has styled this piece as a Baroque dance, with the flute adding to the festive atmosphere. Accessible for all sizes of church choirs, the piece has contrasts in texture, dynamics and voicings.

Great Joy A-Comin'!, David Angerman/Joseph Graham (SATB, a cappella: GlorySound/Shawnee, A8562, 2006)

This new "Christmas spiritual" begins with a slow, expressive solo over low homophonic harmonies in the chorus. After the introduction section, the basses lead into rhythmic and joyful statements of "great joy a-comin'!" This is a great anthem for any church ensemble, from youth through adult.

God's Right Hand and Holy Arm, K. Lee Scott (SATB and Organ with Optional Brass Quartet, Timpani, Handbells and congregation: MorningStar MSM-50-4026A, 2001)

A great festive choice for an Easter hymn or anthem, this original hymn with text and tune by K. Lee Scott bears similarities in form to "Lift High the Cross." A reproducible page for congregation is included if used as a hymn, in which the congregation is invited to join on repeats of the refrain as well as the final verse.

Hush, My Babe, arr. Cynthia Gray Three-Part mixed with piano: (Heritage/Lorenz, 15/2040H, 2005)

Cynthia Gray sets Isaac Watts' hymn text to the Kentucky tune ("I Will Arise and Go to Jesus") for a most pleasing combination. In successive verses, each of the three parts contains melody, with the other parts providing simple counterpoint to the tune. The piece is accessible to most combinations of voices.

I Often Dance, Gary Hallquist (SATB, piano and optional flute: Carl Fischer CM8938, 2001)

The title of this piece is appropriately reflected in both the text and the mood of the music. JWPepper relates "This joyful, lilting original has a Celtic feel and an uplifting text that will inspire many choirs to incorporate dance in their performances." This is a piece your choir will love to sing.

I've Just Come from the Fountain, Daniel Kallman (SATB and piano: MorningStar Music Publishers MSM-50-6044, 2004)

The arrangement of this spiritual is set in a moderate up-tempo gospel style with accessible parts and an exciting piano accompaniment. The verses incorporate a call and response sequence with the option of including members of the congregation on the final response. This is sure to be a hit with both choir and congregation.

Jesus the Christ Says, David Chelat (SATB, percussion, Oxford University Press, 2006)

An Urdu modal melody accompanied by appropriate percussion instruments fits an anonymous text that also appears to come from a non-Western source. Some of the "I am" statements from the Gospel of John are simply presented, with unusual but simple harmonizations throughout. An excellent way to introduce world music into your choral worship repertoire.

Joy in My Heart, arr. Rollo Dilworth (Two-Part, piano: Hal Leonard, 0855189, 2006)

Dilworth takes the old Bible School song, "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart" and wraps it in pure gospel style, complete with a spirited piano accompaniment. Great fun for all voices, especially upper elementary and middle school church choirs!

The Joyful Bells Are Ringing, arr. Patrick M. Liebergen (SATB, keyboard: Carl Fischer, CM8956, 2006)

This Christmas anthem combines a French carol, the Ukrainian Bell Carol and an English Ballad to form an intriguing texture with characteristics of each coming through. Simple harmonies and homophonic voicing add to its accessibility for use in worship.

Loving Shepherd, Bob Chilcott (SSA, piano, Oxford BC36)

A paraphrase of Psalm 23, this piece has changing and asymmetrical meters throughout with delicate SSA voicing. This is a great composition for young voices but is equally effective for women's ensemble.

Ring Out, ye Crystal Spheres, K. Lee Scott (SATB, handbells, organ: Oxford University Press, 2002)

This festive work requires a full handbell choir, a hefty organ, and a vigorous choir! But the familiar text, from John Milton's "On the morning of Christ's Nativity," is electrically set – and a bit more accessible for the church choir than the Vaughan Williams. If you can muster the glockenspiel and tubular bells as well, your musicians or audience will alike be transported!

Thou Hidden Love of God, J. Aaron McDermid (SATB and piano: MorningStar Music Publishers MSM-50-6056, 2005)

Based on the tune VATER UNSER, this expressive and meditative piece is scored for SATB choir and piano. The text addresses our yearning to move from brokenness to reconciliation with God. The choral writing is accessible, with melody lines for all voices. The composer has created beautiful harmonic colorings that make the work exciting to sing.

True Light, Keith Hampton (SATB, soprano solo, and piano: Earthsongs, 2002)

While not quite as well-known as the composer's popular anthem, "Praise His Holy Name," this work contains much of the same rhythmic energy. The work opens setting the original spiritual, but quickly highlights original text and music. The work contains some divisi in all parts.

Were You There?, Raymond H. Haan (SATB, opt. Cello, and Organ, with optional Soprano or Tenor Solo: MorningStar MSM-50-3502, 2000)

Raymond Haan sets the text of the spiritual to an original and hauntingly beautiful tune. While the Cello solo is listed as optional, it adds much to this poignant setting which is accessible to choirs of moderate ability.