

Reviews of Hymn-Based Compositions
Gregory Schaefer
All prices are in U.S. dollars.

New Music

This Touch of Love

Michael Burkhardt. SATB and organ. MorningStar Music, MSM-50-8512, 2015. \$1.70.

In just a brief span of 47 measures, Michael Burkhardt has composed a highly effective Communion response that works extremely well in expressing the emotions and longing of Jaroslav J. Vajda's compelling text, "...this taste of peace, how can it last and still increase?" A refreshing combination of contrasting melodic lines with a brief section of homophony adds to the overall effectiveness of this reflective piece.

Jesus, on the Mountain Peak

Michael Burkhardt. SATB and organ, with opt. congregation. MorningStar Music, MSM-50-2541, 2015. \$1.70.

Burkhardt's music setting of Brian Wren's paraphrase of Jesus' transfiguration will be a welcome addition to any choir's Lenten season repertoire or general usage. There is a variety of musical textures throughout the piece, including unison melody and brief a cappella sections that are easily accessible by any intermediate-level choir, large or small.

Tell Me the Story

Joel Raney. SATB with opt. unison choir (or soloist). Hope Publishing, C 6006, 2016. \$2.25.

Raney's arrangement is actually a medley of three gospel hymns, "Tell me the story of Jesus," "I love to tell the story," and "Jesus loves me," with a recapitulation of the first hymn near the end. Since all three of the hymns represent female authors, this work might be an effective musical addition for a women's Sunday or, with a children's choir on the melody, could also be nice for Mother's Day. Raney utilizes a variety of vocal and accompaniment textures throughout the arrangement, which adds to its overall interest and effectiveness. There is frequent use of three-part treble and tenor/bass textures which also facilitates a rich and fuller choral sound.

Easy Anthems for Classic Worship Volume 6

Comp. Jane Holstein. SAB or two-part mixed choir. Hope Publishing C8694, 2016, \$8.25;
CD/performance accompaniment 8694C, \$59.95.

A worthy collection of eight outstanding easy- to medium-level difficulty choral arrangements, this collection represents the work of eight different composers/arrangers affiliated with Hope Publishing Company, including Marty Parks, Joseph Martin, Jay Althouse, Joel Raney, Ruth Elain Schram, Lee Dengler and Lloyd Larson. For both seasonal and general worship, this collection provides an exciting variety of choral repertoire, representing traditional hymn, folk and light contemporary settings of existing songs, as well as newly composed material. Marty Parks's arrangement of "Crown him lord of all!", is particularly intriguing, as it is set to the tune KINGSFOLD in a frolicking and uplifting Irish-reel style—complete with separate parts for Irish fiddle or penny whistle. A listening demo of this collection is available online at:

<http://www.hopepublishing.com/html/main.isx?sitesec=1.2.4.0&workid=3954>

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One of My “Old” Favorites

I Need Thee Every Hour

Mark Shepperd. SATB and piano. MorningStar Music, MSM-50-3426, 2015. \$1.95.

The highly-effective piano accompaniment of this work adds considerably to the overall effective choral treatment of this beloved hymn. Shepperd's use of cascading eighth-note patterns in the accompaniment contrasting with triplet patterns in subsequent sections, provides added emotion and energy to the text, which makes this arrangement immediately appealing to both the choir, accompanist, and congregation.

Gregory Schaefer has served in full-time church music for over forty years at eight different churches. He currently serves as Pastor of Worship and Music at Arizona Community Church in Tempe, Arizona. He is an active member of The Hymn Society and the National Association of Church Musicians. In addition to his regular church responsibilities, Gregory performs as a concert violinist with the Chandler Symphony Orchestra and the Tempe Symphony Orchestra. Other interests include antiquarian hymnal collecting, and antiquarian book restoration and rebinding.