

HYMNS & SONGS

Heartwarming Favorites

REHEARSAL GUIDE

by Dennis Allen

“REJOICE AND SING MEDLEY”

The goal of this entire collection is to treat familiar hymns with a fresh arrangement. So, this first medley is a good example of that—easy to sing, with familiar voicing, but a slightly more contemporary accompaniment. Spend time working through the transition section beginning in meas. 44, as the tempo slows and you segue into a new hymn. There is another transition in meas. 64 as you slow once again, leading into the final hymn in the medley.

“AT THE CROSS MEDLEY”

A modern worship feel is the undercurrent of this medley. I hope this brings new “life” to older hymns that need to reach this current generation. Beginning in meas. 26, practice the release of the first word of each phrase (“Oh”). This will focus extra attention on this great text. Once again, the vocals are basically from the hymnal, but the contemporary accompaniment will hopefully add fresh emotion. Beginning in meas. 80, there is a transition passage that punctuates “I’m happy all the day!” Sing this with joy! It repeats at the end, changing to “Sing glory to His name!”

“PRAISE AND GLORY MEDLEY”

I grew up singing Fanny Crosby hymns, so I have known every word of these hymns all my life. The familiarity, however, can be a negative. So, work hard to project energy in these phrases as you sing, so the words will come alive. Watch out for the tempo fluctuations between the hymns, making sure everyone stays together. As with most of these medleys, this would be a great selection for the congregation to sing along.

“IN CHRIST ALONE MEDLEY”

Who has contributed more to modern hymnody than Stuart Townend and the Gettys? The answer is NO ONE. These hymns are already classics, and the rich texts are filled with power. So, let your singing be filled with expression and heart. It is interesting how the mixed meter of “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” has become natural for congregations to sing. So don’t let it visually confuse you. The 2/4 sections are simply a place to take a breath. In the final selection (“Before the Throne of God Above”), the soprano part has some high harmony sections. Make sure that you rehearse this exciting conclusion to the medley.

“MY TRIBUTE MEDLEY”

Andraé Crouch had a huge impact on the beginnings of contemporary Christian music. The songs in this medley are some of these classics. They are testimonial in style, so sing them with strong feelings and heart. Phrases like “I’ve learned to trust in Jesus” and “How can I say thanks” should stir your heart. So, let this expressiveness come through in your singing.

“HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION MEDLEY”

The early days of hymn singing in America were filled with songs such as the ones in this medley. And, even better, they are quality hymns that we still sing today. The language of that day was different from today, so I encourage you to talk about the text during your rehearsal, and let everyone comment on its meaning. Though the vocals are basically from the hymnal, these are hymns of power, so sing them with conviction.

“IN REMEMBRANCE MEDLEY”

I encourage you to talk about these song lyrics before singing them. Such tender, yet powerful, concepts need a tremendous amount of emotion in your presentation. The tempo is a slower ballad, so sustain your phrases to give them life, especially on the whole notes that end each phrase. Meas. 31, 33, 35, 37, and so forth are examples of notes which need sustaining. “In Remembrance” has several locations where dynamic swells will enhance the text. Meas. 92-98 and meas. 110-119 are both examples.

“HYMNS OF INVITATION MEDLEY”

Probably no songs are more familiar and more loved than invitation songs. We have sung them over and over on Sundays. These are some of our favorites from dear B. B. McKinney. Let each phrase “ebb and flow” as you sing. This will add to the emotion. Again, the vocals are basically right out of the hymnal, so they will not be hard to rehearse. Just make sure that you add the “heart” needed to express each hymn.