

SOUTHERN Gospel 2

REHEARSAL GUIDE

by Dennis Allen

“CALVARY COVERS IT ALL”

with “Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary”

The hymn-like vocal arranging should make these songs easy to rehearse and present. The text is familiar, but also powerful, so clearly enunciate words as you sing. Since this is a ballad tempo, some of the phrases are long, so take deep breaths and support your singing to keep the phrases alive.

“THE HAPPY JUBILEE”

with “Summertime in My Heart”

“The Happy Jubilee” is a rollicking gospel expression of the glorious arrival in heaven for all Christians. So let the joy erupt in your singing! As is often the case in this style of song, the sopranos have the main melody, and the other parts serve as accompaniment on portions of the phrases.

“HE TOUCHED ME”

with “Something Beautiful”

This arrangement contains two classic Gaither songs. Both are so familiar that it would be easy for choirs to forget the power in these songs. Read through the lyrics and let them resonate in your heart. As you sing, let the needed emotion come through.

“HOLY SPIRIT (MEDLEY)”

*includes “Surely the Presence (of the Lord Is in This Place)”
and “Sweet, Sweet Spirit”*

The vocal parts in this arrangement are almost directly from the hymnal, so there should be no rehearsal issues. The most important feature, which does need rehearsing, is “singing with heart.” Your main goal should be to add the needed expression to make these familiar songs come alive. This is especially true in the final statement beginning in meas. 82, which should be sung softly and expressively.

“JESUS IS COMING SOON”

with “The King Is Coming”

There is a bit of contrast between the musical styles of the two songs in this medley. “Jesus Is Coming Soon” is a toe-tapping gospel tune and should be sung with a lot of joy in your sound. Sopranos need to lead out, with the other parts providing support. Then the momentum shifts a bit with “The King Is Coming.” Sing the opening verse with the “anticipation” energy it deserves. When you reach the chorus, don’t be surprised if the congregation joins you in singing.

“JUST OVER IN THE GLORYLAND”

with “We’ll Understand It Better By and By”

With a collection of gospel favorites, there are not many unfamiliar, tricky new rhythms to conquer. The tendency when singing familiar songs is to take them for granted and neglect to add the energy and expression needed. So, I encourage you to think about the topic—heaven. As you sing each phrase, remember this wonderful promise of an eternal home for all believers.

“LEAD ME TO THAT ROCK (MEDLEY)”

*includes “Lead Me to That Rock,” “I Go to the Rock,”
and “Sheltered in the Arms of God”*

This fun-to-sing gospel song is definitely a “toe-tapper.” The sopranos “lead,” so the other parts should let this part be in front. In the middle section, beginning in meas. 26, a solo is suggested, but it could be all tenors. Then basses, step into your lead line in meas. 30. In the “I Go to the Rock” portion, there are lots of words in the verses, so articulate them clearly. Sing the whole arrangement with joy and thankfulness in your voice!

“THE LOVE OF GOD”

What an awesome song! Once again, the tempo makes some of the phrases longer, so get plenty of air to sustain them to the end. These phrases occur in meas. 28-31, 37-39, 44-47, and similar locations. This is a rather long song, so the tendency might be to build volume too early, so save some for the final key change at meas. 107 to the end. Any choir can sing loud, but the most effective choirs control their dynamics. Spend time rehearsing the ending, beginning in meas. 125, letting each voice part's entrance lead out.

“UNTIL THEN”

The arrangement is simple, but the ballad tempo will require you to work on singing with support through the long vocal phrases. This text relates to both the singer and hearer—we all face struggles in this life. I encourage you to read and pray through the lyrics. Then, hopefully, you can let the hope that is Jesus fill your hearts and let it show through your singing.

“WHAT A SAVIOR”

This is a great song of testimony, recalling God's eternal plan of salvation. With this tempo, the vocal phrases are longer; therefore, they need solid air support so they don't get weak toward the end. Also, I encourage you to keep the verse dynamics somewhat restrained, so your chorus can really feel the lift of added volume. Finally, tune the vocal chord changes in meas. 23-24, 31-32, 57-58, and 65-66.