

BECAUSE HE LIVES

A Musical for **EASTER**

REHEARSAL GUIDE

by Dennis Allen

“ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA”

with “He Lives”

Combining the wonderful, familiar melody of Beethoven with new lyrics by Nan Allen makes this a fresh Easter expression. The tempo allows the choir to sing the four-measure phrases without difficulty. Encourage them to take full breaths and fill these phrases with energetic singing. Add extra punch to the “Christ is risen” statements in meas. 27-34. “He Lives” has always been a favorite of mine, and this 4/4 setting gives a fresh feel to the hymn. The harmonies are just like those in the hymnal, so it should be easy for the choir to learn this new version, and the congregation can also sing along.

“BECAUSE HE LIVES (AMEN)”

This song is a wonderful affirmation of the things we believe as Christians. The power of the resurrection is not just a historical fact; it is a personal assurance to you and me. Work carefully on the rhythms, making a distinction between the simple eighth note melodic passages (like in meas. 5) and the syncopated dotted eighth note passages (like in meas. 7). These contemporary rhythms are not difficult. Listen to the demo and match what you hear. Let the bridge, beginning in meas. 41, be the peak of your volume. Save your fullest singing for this spot. Then quickly get soft again in meas. 48, building to the triumphant ending.

“WORTHY IS THE LAMB”

This classic Darlene Zschech worship song is a tender expression of thankfulness for God’s sacrifice of His only Son on the cross. Hopefully it is familiar to your congregation and they can sing along. Work to sing the rhythms in meas. 10-12 smoothly and correctly. When you reach the key change in meas. 47, let your voices soar in praise! We will be singing this song in heaven, so we might as well practice singing it now with all our hearts! Learn this chorus so well that you can sing it *a cappella*, without holding the music. It would be a wonderful way to close each rehearsal as you are practicing this musical. I think your choir will experience true worship during rehearsals, and it will be even more powerful when you present it to your church.

“BLESSED ASSURANCE (MY KING IS COMING)”

Fanny Crosby wrote thousands of hymns, and this is one of her best. Pete Kipley and Matthew West added an energetic chorus to the hymn, which punctuates the glorious anticipation we all have for the second coming of Jesus. They also slightly altered the original Crosby hymn melody, so listen to the demo to catch those changes. The “My King Is Coming” chorus has a rhythmic feature that needs rehearsal. The “2 against 3” feel is consistent throughout, and once you get it, you won’t have any trouble. Again, listen to the demo because the singers wonderfully demonstrate this rhythm. Seeing the rhythm is tricky, but hearing it will make it easier to learn.

“OH, THE WONDER”

The lyrics clearly state what happens to us when we understand Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. It produces peace, joy, grace, rest, comfort, healing, hope, and much more. This slow gospel feel is filled with emotion, so sing it with passion, bringing energy to the key words in each phrase. The harmonies are quite beautiful, so take time to tune your singing carefully. Particularly focus on meas. 24, 42-43, 50, 61, and 71. Rehearse *a cappella* to ensure the choral parts are in tune and correct.

“BECAUSE HE LIVES”

This is one of Bill and Gloria Gaither’s best-loved songs. The harmonies are straight from the hymnal, so it should be easy to rehearse. Add extra volume and energy to the “Yes, He lives!” statements, meas. 44-49, and at the ending. This song also offers a great opportunity for the congregation to sing along.