

YOUR GRACE STILL AMAZES ME

A Musical for Easter

REHEARSAL GUIDE

by Dennis Allen

“HALLELUJAH TO THE KING”

This brand-new song by Shelly E. Johnson is very easy to sing. It has a long sequence of quarter note rhythms, so it should be easy for the choir to learn. However, the vocal sound needs a lot of driving energy. When the text contains exclamations of praise such as “hallelujah,” then the singing needs to match. Hold out each phrase to the very end.

“GLORIOUS DAY (LIVING HE LOVED ME)”

This new tune by Mark Hall, of Casting Crowns, is one of the best settings of a classic hymn text with a new melody. There are several spots where the volume and energy needs to build. One of my favorite sections to let “explode” is the bridge, beginning in meas. 73. If the choir can’t get excited here, you’ve got work to do! Then everything comes down again for the first part of the next chorus, only to erupt again in meas. 85. This piece could be the highlight of your presentation.

“CHRIST AROSE”

The accompaniment is quite exciting and cinematic in style. However, the vocals are basically right out of the hymnal, so this arrangement should be easy to prepare. The biggest need is for vocal energy in both the soft and loud sections. Even when singing at lower volumes, the energy should be up. The timing of the melody is cut in half in the Coda, only to build back to the exciting ending.

“GRACE”

with “GRACE GREATER THAN OUR SIN”

A “soulful” attitude in the soloist’s vocals will make or break this arrangement. The choir functions in more of a background role, but should still match the soulful style and sound. When the “Grace Greater than Our Sin” hymn is introduced toward the end, you can invite the congregation to join in singing this familiar hymn.

“YOUR GRACE STILL AMAZES ME”

Sometimes even easy contemporary rhythms can be a challenge for a choir. This beautiful song is filled with them, but you don’t have to struggle. Have the choir “say” the rhythms of each phrase several times before adding the melody notes. Until the rhythm is mastered, it is not necessary to add another element. At the bridge (meas. 34), bring the volume down to a “hush” before building back to the final chorus.

“MY HEART IS FILLED WITH THANKFULNESS”

The familiar AABA form of many of the Getty/Townend hymns makes learning these new hymns quite easy. The harmonies are also in a familiar hymn style. The key element of this selection is the text, so spend plenty of time making sure the phrases are carried fully to the end. Enunciation of the words is critical to communicate this great message to your congregation.

“AMAZING GRACE (MY CHAINS ARE GONE)”

There are few hymns that will last longer than “Amazing Grace.” This new chorus will also last in the life of the church, so you can ask the congregation to sing along. Nothing is difficult in the vocal arrangement, but the choir needs to sing with passion in their vocal sound so that the powerful message hits the heart of the listener.

“HALLELUJAH TO THE KING”

with “CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY”

Refer to the Rehearsal Guide notes for “Hallelujah to the King.”