

R&S “High Fives”

—Karen Bruno, R&S State Chair



Ruth Knoll

COMMUNITY CHOIR REPERTOIRE

submitted by Ruth Knoll
R&S Chair, Hartford

1. *Shenandoah*, American folk song, arr. Linda Spevacek. SATB, accompanied (also in SAB) Jenson Publications 437-19074.

Are you looking for another version of *Shenandoah*?

Here's one that is lovely because of the uncluttered arrangement. Opening with an optional solo or unison SA, it breaks into SATB for verse two. A brief piano interlude introduces verse 3, which alternates between women's and men's voices and converges into a rich 5-part climax. A short coda-like section simply repeats the final phrase, "O Shenandoah—'cross the wide Missouri," with basses ending on a low D. Easily learned with a flowing piano accompaniment. Moderately easy.

2. *The Drinking Gourd*, traditional, arr. Andre J. Thomas. SATB, accompanied. Heritage Music Press 15/1303H.

This selection features a sparkling piano accompaniment with just a touch of gospel. The men state the original melody at the opening with 3-part women reiterating the "follow" phrase. Alternating men and women carry you on through the story which is based on various signs in nature which serves as a kind of "roadmap" to lead the slaves to freedom in the North. (ie: the Big Dipper is the Drinking Gourd.) The texture thickens for the last verse with some divisi. There are some lovely quiet unisons in a closing repetition of the refrain which rebuilds to a rousing final set of divisi chords repeating, "The Gourd." This is an effective setting of a historically interesting song. Go to the Internet for an actual "translation" of what all the signs in nature meant. Moderate.

3. *Thistle and Rose*, (with "Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon"), traditional, arr. Phyllis Wolfe-White. SAB, accompanied. Heritage Music Press 15/1611H (with optional snare drum and hand drum parts)

Even though this arrangement was perhaps intended for junior high voices (voice parts are marked as I, II, and III), I feel it is also effective for more mature voices because of its rhythmic interest. You may want to have the low basses drop out when the part stays up around middle C for any length of time, or have them sing an octave lower occasionally. New musical material is introduced which brings the chorus to an interesting rhythmical section which propels you "presto" to the final statement of the original "banks and braes" tune. It will take a minute to figure out the catchy rhythm, but once learned, it is very effective over the piano accompaniment. The accompanist will enjoy the rhythmic challenge in the Presto section. Ranges are very moderate; low basses may want to adjust their parts from time to time. A fascinating arrangement with a brief description of the historical significance of the song. Moderately easy.

4. *Loch Lomond*, traditional Scottish, arr. Jonathan Quick. SATB (with some divisi), a cappella. Cypress Publishing CP 1045.

This unique octavo opens with a solo of the original folk tune which leads to a 4-part mens' section and then 3-part women. The men soon begin a repetitive syllabic sequence imitating a Scottish brogue (dai-dai-dat-dai) in a kind of march-like mode while the women carry the melody above. Eventually everyone picks up the march-like theme as the piece crescendos and finally dies away as it returns to the original tune. This a cappella selection is very effective when all the technical effects are achieved. It will require secure singers in all voices to give it the rich sound which it needs. Moderately difficult (only because of the divisi).

*"Music is the shorthand
of emotion."*

—Leo Tolstoy



5. *An American Trilogy*, arr. Mark Hayes. SATB, accompanied (also in SAB and instrumental parts and performance CD). Shawnee Press A2198.

If you are looking for a fresh approach to standard patriotic warhorses, Mark Hayes does it in this medley of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "America, the Beautiful," and "This Is My Country." He gives it a gospel feel, not only in the voice parts, but also in the accompaniment. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," begins with an ad lib solo. Verse two is set in 4 parts and rises from a warm, gentle sound to a strong series of triplets featuring new material. A key change from F to C moves to "America, the

Beautiful," which is set with a one verse statement, again using triplets in the voices as well as in the accompaniment. It is this use of triplets instead of some of the traditionally known rhythms which gives the whole medley a gospel feel and which the singers must be willing to "relearn." Beginning in the key of D^b, "This Is My Country," starts out in predictable 4-part harmony. It develops the standard song again by changing keys to F and incorporates triplets and some divisi of women's voices at the climatic finale. Will require a good accompanist who enjoys the gospel style.

Moderate. ✧

"Indescribable beauty and exaltations are the rewards of those who draw aside the curtains and enter the realm of music."

Wesley LaViolette

Minister of Music and the Arts

Covenant Presbyterian Church of Madison seeks a full-time Minister of Music and the Arts to start 7/15/07.

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To receive position description and application materials, contact Mary Kieta at (608) 233-6297 or Mary.Kieta@Covenant.Madison.wi.us.

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or contact Terry Wolfraht,

Chairman of the Director Search Committee
at Twolfraht@aol.com or 920-759-1126.