

February, 2005

## *Good music collections for smaller church choirs*

*by Benjamin Brody, R&S Chair for Music in Worship*

*If you have ever conducted a small to medium sized church choir, you have most likely found yourself in a situation where you arrive at choir rehearsal to discover fewer people than you expected, and fewer than can pull off the four-part anthem that you had planned for Sunday.*

*When such an event occurs, it is always good to have a collection of two-part anthems that can be learned quickly for use in service. However, unison and two-part collections can be useful for more than just emergencies. Because less time is necessary to learn the notes, unison works allow you to spend more time working with your choir on phrasing and choral tone.*

*You could choose to separate men and women one week to prepare T/B and S/A anthems, allowing for you to spend more focused time with women's and men's voices. Additionally, much of the music recommended below can be used with children's choir as well as adult choirs. Enjoy exploring these resources!*

*Songs for the Journey (Sets I-IV), Edwin T. Childs, arr. (Alliance Music Publications, Inc., 1994-1995, cat. #AMP 5003, AMP 5004, AMP 5005, AMP 5006)*

*Each volume in this series contains four familiar hymns in creative settings by Edwin T. Childs, a former student of Samuel Adler at Eastman Conservatory, and current professor at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Childs' setting of "This is My Father's World" in Set I is especially nice.*

*The Morning Star Choir Book, Paul Thomas, ed. (Concordia, 1957, cat. #97-6287)*

*A Second Morning Star Choir Book, Paul Thomas, ed. (Concordia, 1965, cat. #97-4702)*

*A Third Morning Star Choir Book, Paul Thomas, ed. (Concordia, 1970, cat. #97-4972)*

These three collections contain excellent pieces for unison and two-part choirs by a variety of composers, including Bach, Pachelbel, Mozart, Vaughan Williams, Willan, and Distler. Many of these are adaptations of solos or duets from sacred works, which work quite well as choral pieces. Several are scored for 1-2 obbligato instruments as well as keyboard. An excellent and affordable series for both children's and adult choirs.

*Sing This Holy Day: 10 Anthems for Two-part Mixed Voices*, Hal Hopson (Harold Flammer, Inc., 1986, cat. #GE-5027)

In this collection, Hal Hopson has arranged five choral movements by Handel, as well as several familiar hymn tunes. Two of the selections can be used either as S/A or SA/TB works, while the remaining are specifically intended for two-part mixed voices.

*Sing a New Song to the Lord: Nine Anthems for Any Combination of Voices in Two Parts*, Dale Wood, ed. (The Sacred Music Press, 1990, cat. #CS 898)

Walter Ehret, Jeffrey Rickard, Dale Wood, and Eugene Butler are among the eight composers represented in this collection. In addition to keyboard accompaniment, one anthem is scored for trumpet and one for an obbligato instrument, and parts for both are included in the collection. Familiar hymn tune arrangements as well as original compositions are included in this compilation.