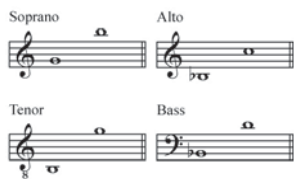


Sacred Music

Choral Reviews

Shout for Joy

André Thomas (b. 1952: 2017)
 Text: Traditional Spiritual SATB
 with div, optional Tambourine part
 (free download) (2:45)
 Heritage Music 15/3469H
www.lorenz.com
 Performance demonstration:
[youtube.com/
 watch?v=eE5mJ09hGdI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE5mJ09hGdI)
 Also available:
 Performance/Accompaniment CD
 (99/3792H)



Andre Thomas's "Shout for Joy" was written for the 2016 St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and as is typical of an Anton Armstrong commission, this spiritual arrangement of the traditional "Mary Had a Baby" is highly accessible for a good church choir. The arrangement begins and ends with a festive gospel fanfare featuring a juxtaposition between high-tessitura acclamations and earthy, bluesy unison utterances in the lower voices. These sections of the piece also feature an energetic piano accompaniment and an active tambourine part that floods the

piece with character.

The verses are primarily led by the bass voices with a quiet but rhythmic urgency while the other sections provide support. Each verse is punctuated by proclamations of prophecy from Isaiah (Mighty Counselor, Prince of Peace). The choral writing is intuitive and rich harmonically with limited *divisi* (mostly for the sopranos). For a choir that does not regularly sing gospel or spiritual music, one will find that this arrangement encourages the appropriate style very naturally and comfortably.

When Memory Fades

Jayne Southwick Cool
 (b. 1947: 2002)
 Arr. Eric Nelson (b. 1959: 2016)
 Text: Mary Louise Bringle
 SATB, piano (4:53)
 Morning Star MSM-50-8914
www.morningstarmusic.com
 Performance demonstration:
[youtube.com/watch?v=V_
 djkVTjdX8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_djkVTjdX8)



In an age where modern hymnody seeks to provide solace and comfort to all, Jayne Southwick Cool's *When Memory Fades* serves victims of a specific hardship: sufferers of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The beautiful text is coupled with an equally tender melody that allows its message to be illumined without clutter or complexity.

In this wonderful choral setting, Eric Nelson stays true to the intention of the original hymn, offering the melody either in unison or in a declamatory four-part setting. The piano part is subtle but supportive and allows the choral parts to predominate. The SATB writing is particularly artful, presenting just enough musical interest to engage the listener while remaining subservient to the text and its message. One of the most meaningful moments of the setting occurs near its conclusion as the basses and tenors recall the first moments of the piece only to be interrupted by a brief silence, suggesting the very interruption of memory that makes this hymn necessary and worshipful. The vocal ranges are limited and highly accessible to most choirs but especially to singers of advanced-age for whom the message of the text might hold an even deeper meaning.