
CHORAL MUSIC REVIEWS

by Alan Lewis, Ph.D.

Locklair, Dan. *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*, SATB with solo treble or trumpet, unacc. (Subito, no. 91480480, 2008), 2 pp., \$1.50.

Locklair, Dan. *Lord Jesus, Think on Me*, SATB, organ (Subito, no. 91480446, 2006), 7 pp., \$2.25.

Since at least the time of Peter Lutkin, the Aaronic blessing has somehow been adopted into the choral literature as "ours," though I think there might well be a theological argument for leaving it in the sacerdotal realm. But Dan Locklair's direct and almost-easy setting, composed as a farewell for departing choir-members, would be a good counter-argument on the musical side. As the choir finishes each successive phrase of the text, holding the long last note, the treble soloist (or instrumentalist) answers, not quite in echo, not quite in variation; the result gently

enfolds the listener in a harmonic embrace that virtually embodies the blessing itself. Lovely.

The familiar words of *Lord Jesus, think on me* come beautifully to life in a setting that is almost mantra-like, as each brief stanza begins; an optional part for organ chimes helps evoke a meditative state. There is a lovely harmonic surprise at the beginning of the final phrase of each stanza, different each time; after the relative quiet of the first three stanzas, the fourth ("... that when the flood is passed...") opens up quite ecstatically for "and share thy joy..." before dissolving back into meditative peace.