

REVIEWS

CHORAL MUSIC

LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS, Dan Locklair. SATB a cappella. Subito 91480560, \$1.85. I'm including this now, so you will have time to order copies and start rehearsing it. This is just about the most beautiful Christmas motet I've found in many years, and it is a perfect interpretation of Christina Rossetti's moving text. "Warm and gently moving" is the tempo indication, and it applies to the emotional content as well. Locklair prefers that it be sung a cappella but includes an optional keyboard accompaniment. If you have an Echo or Antiphonal division, play it as an organ solo.

ROLLIN SMITH

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

APRIL 2011

CHORAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Alan Lewis

NEW CHORAL MUSIC

Dan Locklair. *The Spacious Firmament*, SSAATTBB, unacc. (Subito Music, #91480580, 2009), 6 pp., \$2.00.

Joseph Addison's three-stanza hymnic paraphrase of the opening verses of Psalm 19 provides the text for this exciting piece, dedicated to the music program at St. Paul's, Indianapolis. The two halves of the divided choir sing back and forth to one another in quick echoes, often beginning in choral unisons, and resolving themselves into a shared SATB texture. At the beginning of the middle stanza ("Soon as the evening shades...") Locklair's paired-note setting of the strong syllables produces (it seems to me) the feel of harmonized plainchant, the two semi-choirs again echoing one another. The opening of the final stanza ("What though in solemn silence") is hushed and slower, and sets the stage for a jubilant closing paragraph, in which the cooperative independence of the two choirs is at its most pronounced.

The Journal of the Association of Anglican Musicians (March 2011)