Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

SATB, keyboard, opt. handbells
arr. Donald McCullough
Hinshaw Music
HMC 2068, $1.70
<www.hinshawmusic.com>

This Advent anthem, arranged by Donald McCullough, is a successful fusion of the hymn tune "Restoration" from *Southern Harmony* with the traditional Advent text "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" by Charles Wesley. McCullough, conductor of the Master Chorale of Washington, has created a compelling work based structurally on an additive texture, beginning with unison and increasing gradually to SATB. The emphasis on open fourths, fifths, and octaves in the keyboard and hand bell parts contributes to the overall mood of expectancy that is so effectively evoked by this piece.
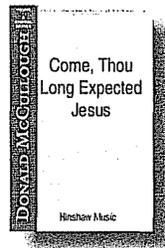
McCullough capitalizes on the persistent quality in the rhythmic and melodic motion of this hymn tune by creating a continuous thread of perpetual motion throughout the piece: once the voices enter in m. 5, the rhythmic activity does not diminish until the final page. Even when the voices are not singing, the keyboard becomes more rhythmically active to compensate (see keyboard interludes starting in mm. 14, 25, and 37). McCullough expands to an SA duet in mm. 17–25, and finally to three- and four-voice harmony beginning in m. 44. High and low voices are paired (ST and AB) for the final phrase of the piece, in mm. 48–53, followed by a slow, fading statement of the last three words, "your glorious throne," presented as an echo in the soprano and bringing the work to a close.

With an indicated duration of ca. 3 minutes, McCullough's arrangement of *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* will prove manageable for church choirs of varying abilities and numbers of singers. Ranges are fairly limited: the high note for sopranos is f^2 and for tenors f^1; the altos have one sustained f; and the bass part remains largely on the staff with occasional high notes doubled by tenors. Only four handbells are required: c^1, c^2, f^1, and f^2. The accessibility also includes excellent expressive qualities. McCullough's creative combination of an Advent text with a hymn tune about "restoration" appears to have been inspired by the symbolism of Advent as a time when Christians await the coming of Christ to restore peace and goodness to the earth. Both conductors and singers might have benefited from a composer's note in the score to shed light on his choices. Nevertheless, Hinshaw has presented McCullough's arrangement in a clean, attractive, and easy-to-read format. *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* would make a great addition to virtually any ensemble's Advent repertoire.

D. Jason Bishop
Norman, Oklahoma