

Favorite Anthems of Great Conductors

Featured Conductor: William F. Kuhn

as a trombonist, I love having brass and timpani, choir, congregation, and organ for festival services. There is nothing better than the sound of brass to enhance the joy of Christ's resurrection, the celebration of All Saints, and the proclamation of Christ the King. For me, though, the Advent and Christmas seasons require somewhat different forces as we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation. It is then that I like to employ the depth, the richness, and the shimmering sound of stringed instruments.

Strings can easily be used to accompany a congregational hymn or chorale. At most, the music director may need to rewrite the tenor part from the hymnal into alto clef. A quartet of strings adds richness to the organ or piano and can also be used alone to accompany a congregation on selected verses or an entire hymn. This would be a great opportunity to use students in your congregation who play in a school orchestra.

There are many other ways to incorporate strings in your congregational worship. Strings can be used singly to add to a choir anthem or to add a descant to a hymn. They can be used to accompany your choir or, as an ensemble, to offer a prelude, a voluntary, or special music throughout the service.

For the Advent and Christmas seasons ... I like to employ the depth, the richness, and the shimmering sound of stringed instruments.

Below are some suggested pieces that use stringed instruments for your Advent worship.

Strings and Choir (with an occasional added instrument)

O Dayspring. Karen Marroli; SATB, violin or other C instrument, piano; easy.

A haunting piece that uses melodic and text phrases from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" combined with new text by the composer to invoke our Dayspring to "inflame the darkness ... to make our spirits whole."

Prepare the Way, O Zion. Kenneth Dake; SATB, violin, organ; medium.

Using the tune BEREDEN VÅG FÖR HERRAN, this piece begins with a folk-like "fiddle tune" introduction that continues throughout the piece, with wonderful obligatos above the choir and organ. The piece includes a bonus text so that it can also be used for general occasions.

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus. Hal Hopson; SATB, flute, piano, with optional soloist, string quartet; medium easy.

Hopson uses the first half of stanza 1 and the second half of stanza 2 of Charles Wesley's iconic Advent text in this anthem. The piece offers a flowing accompaniment and a creative flute obbligato to add interest.

Great Creator. Karen Marroli; SATB, piano, with optional string quartet; medium easy.

The text by the composer echoes themes from Isaiah 65:17–25. With its focus on waiting, re-birth, and the wolf and the lamb, it is appropriate for Advent. The string quartet, tacet until measure 21, adds richness, depth, and shimmer to the choral sound. Choral parts occasionally divide but also include unison passages.

Candle Carol. K. Lee Scott; SATB, organ or piano, with optional string quartet or larger ensemble; medium easy.

A lovely anthem in Scott's inimitable style. The text speaks of light and warmth, symbols that are associated with candles during the Advent and Christmas seasons. There is a complimentary download available for the congregation so the first part of the piece can be used during the lighting of the congregation's Advent wreath.



The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns. Alistair Coleman; SATB, organ or piano, with string ensemble; medium advanced.

The undulating choral parts and accompaniment combined with the text by John Brownlie make this a compelling piece for the Advent season. Interestingly, the text used in this newly composed version excludes several of Brownlie's typically used stanzas and includes two stanzas that are generally omitted. This piece—due to its length, divisi soprano part, and soprano descant for a soloist or small ensemble—requires a mature, secure ensemble to perform.

Strings or strings and organ (with an occasional added instrument)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming. Ralph C. Schultz; string quartet (or treble instrument), organ; easy, medium.

This piece was first published by Concordia in 1962 and was picked up by MorningStar in 1989. (I have a copy of the original publication, so I was glad to see that it is still available, thanks to MorningStar.) This is a lovely piece that helps set the mood for an evening service as a prelude and is also a good voluntary or quiet postlude. The organ part—the chorale tune—can be played effectively by a treble instrument. I have used

Christmas Eve, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Portland, OR

a flute, but an oboe or clarinet would work just as well.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence. Kevin Uppercue; string quintet or ensemble; medium easy.

Uppercue gives us a fantasia on PICARDY which, in some respects, is reminiscent of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Greensleeves*. Perfect for an Advent Lessons and Carols service.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Wayne Fritchie; string ensemble or quartet, or flute trio and piano; medium.

美国康考迪亚大学管乐团访华音乐会



Concordia University, Nebraska, Wind Ensemble, Forbidden City Concert Hall, Beijing, China

This set of theme and variations on VENI, EMMANUEL is straightforward but with enough twists and turns to make it interesting. This easily could be used as a prelude or voluntary or as a special musical offering, perhaps during communion.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.
Rich Heffler; string quartet or quintet or orchestra; medium.

This creative, neo-classical arrangement based on the tune HYFRYDOL offers a lively set of variations that pass around the cantus firmus to each instrument at various times in assorted keys.

PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR



William F. Kuhn has been involved with conducting choirs and bands since his sophomore year in high school. During his professional career spanning 45 years, he has taught, conducted, and sung in a variety of groups in Illinois (Chicago) and Hong Kong and at Concordia University, Nebraska (Seward) and, most recently, Concordia University-Portland (OR). Kuhn received his bachelor's degree in music education from Concordia Teachers College (River Forest, IL; now Concordia University Chicago), where he studied with notable Lutheran musicians Paul Bunjes, Thomas Gieschen, Herbert Gotsch, Richard Hillert, and Carl Schalk. His MMus is from Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and his EdD in music education is from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

He and his ensembles have given concerts in over 25 states and they embarked on a three-week concert tour to China in 2007 at the request of the Chinese government. Kuhn became parish cantor at St. Michael's Lutheran in Portland in August 2009. He was recently named Artistic Director of the Portland Nordic Chorus. He is past president of ALCM Region 4 and has published several hymn settings. Bill and his wife, Kristine, have two children—Michael and Elizabeth—and a new grandson, Martin.