

The Hymn Society

in the United States and Canada

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Wellspring: More Hymns and Spiritual Songs by Thomas Pavlechko

Pittsburgh, PA: Selah Publishing Co., Inc., 2005.
56 pp. No ISBN (Catalog no. 125-040). U.S. \$12.00.

This second collection of hymns and spiritual songs by Thomas Pavlechko contains 29 settings of texts by 14 different authors (including 2 of his own texts). There are 26 different tunes included. Most are easily singable and quite beautiful. I found myself playing many of them through over and over again, reveling in the lovely lines.

The collection has many helpful features, including a Foreword by Russell Schulz, an Introduction by the composer, background on the texts and tunes, performance notes, a Topical Index, a Metrical Index of Tunes, Tune Names, Index of First Lines, Authors, and even an outline of A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols that incorporates the hymns, carols, and anthems of Thomas Pavlechko. I found the performance notes and background on texts and tunes especially helpful.

The layout and typesetting of the collection are generally quite good, although there are obvious misprints and a few places where the words are not given enough space and consecutive words run together. In the printing of the tune ARKAY (which appears twice on facing pages) the bass line of the fourth system is missing. Fortunately the tune is also printed with a different text on the facing page and there the parts are printed clearly.

This collection contains many gems, too many, in fact, to name them all. Let me just comment on the tune WELLSPRING that gives the collection its name. The tune, written first in 1994, was revised by Pavlechko in 2003. It has the strong feeling of a gospel tune, and I can imagine a congregation singing with full voice and spirit.

Through the centuries, great texts have inspired great tunes. The list of authors in this collection includes many names familiar to readers of THE HYMN

and Pavlechko has chosen some great texts from these writers. This collection could well be used as a devotional guide as well as a collection of congregational song.

Pavlechko is Organist-Choirmaster at Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee. He has worked with congregations in Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia and his experience shows in this collection. Evident here is also his interest in jazz, blues, gospel, and his work with the disciplines of spirituality, notably centering prayer and the labyrinth. This most recent collection is a strong addition to the hymnody of the twenty-first century. I encourage you to add *Wellspring* to your library of contemporary hymnody.

DAVID EICHER

David Eicher is President-Elect of The Hymn Society.