

### Notes

The core of each hymn is that which can be sung by one human throat: the melody and text. Begin by finding a characteristic sound for the tune: tone of voice, tempo, articulation—all the things that make it memorable. Then study the text: think about what the words are saying, and how this can be reflected in the way you speak or sing them. Make sure that everyone can sing the melody and text expressively before you attempt the published setting.

Study the setting for its form: how many verses, their differing messages or moods, who sings the melody in each one. Be aware of the way they flow one from another: these “bridges” should be subtly different from the verse itself. Look at the tempo/mood marking, and note any changes that occur in the body of the piece. Please make a *ritardando* only where marked: keep the song moving throughout. Chart the dynamic markings and find the moments of greatest and lightest sonority.

The music is not the page: it is what results from interpreting the marks on the page. And the closer you can get to the composer’s intention before you start to sing, the easier the learning process will be, and the more effective the performance.

*Through every age, eternal God* is an immensely strong apostrophe to the living Lord. The sturdy, modal tune exudes confidence, with the two initial phrases echoed by not one but two fuguing refrains. Notice the changes in the imitative melodies as they progress from two, to three, to four voices. Let each successive entrance be heard clearly, and be aware of the increasing density of texture as the hymn unfolds.

## THROUGH EVERY AGE, ETERNAL GOD

Psalm 90, Isaac Watts  
1674–1748

STRATFIELD  
Arr. Alice Parker

Sturdy, well-accented  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$

The musical score is written for voice and piano in 2/2 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a *T* (Tenor) part and a *B* (Bass) part, both marked *f* (forte) and *>* (accent). The lyrics are: "1. Through ev - 'ry age, e - ter - nal God, You". The second system (measures 5-8) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "are our rest, our safe a - bode. High". The piano accompaniment in this system is marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *marcato*. The third system (measures 9-12) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "was thy throne ere heav'n was made, Or earth thy hum-ble". The piano accompaniment in this system is also marked *marcato*. The score concludes with a final note on the piano line.

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foot - stool laid; High was thy throne ere  
 stool laid; High was thy throne ere heav'n was

17

*S* *f* 2. Long  
*T* *f* 2. Long  
*B*  
 heav'n was made, Or earth thy hum-ble foot - stool laid. — 2. Long  
 made, Or earth thy hum-ble foot - stool laid. —

21

*S* *f*  
*A* *f*  
*T*  
*B* *f*  
 hadst thou reigned ere time be - gan, —  
 Or dust was fash-ioned  
 hadst thou reigned ere time be - gan, —  
 Or dust was fash-ioned  
*f* for rehearsal only