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Recommended Citation

Colpo, Elizabeth M., "Advanced Conducting Project" (2012). *Conducting Student Scholarship*. 59.
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ADVANCED CONDUCTING PROJECT:

“AT THE ROUND EARTH’S IMAGINED CORNERS”

**SUBMITTED IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC IN CHORAL CONDUCTING**

by

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Grantham, PA
December 2012**

At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners

Williametta Spencer

(b. 1932)

Text: John Donne – Holy Sonnets VII

SATB a cappella

Composer

American composer Williametta Spencer was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where, while still in high school, she studied piano and clarinet with professors at the University of Michigan. Spencer earned a B.A. in piano and composition at Whittier College, followed by masters and doctoral degrees in composition at the University of Southern California, where she studied with renowned composers Halsey Stevens (1908-1989) and Ingolf Dahl (1912-1970) (Strimple 229). Spencer also won a Fulbright Scholarship for study in Paris.

Nick Strimple cites Spencer as one of the most prominent composers in the genre of “educational” choral music at the end of the twentieth century. In addition to “At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners”, Spencer's works “Four Madrigals on Texts by James Joyce” (1970) and “Missa brevis” (1974) provided high school choral directors with excellent options for unaccompanied contemporary choral repertoire (Strimple 261).

Composition

“At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners” is a setting of a text by John Donne, from “Holy Sonnets VII”. Donne was an English poet and Protestant priest who lived from 1572 to 1631. He is considered the preeminent representative of metaphysical poets. (Andrew Marvell, whose text Lloyd Pfautch set in his “Musick's Empire”, was also a metaphysical poet.)

Spencer composed “At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners” in 1965, and it is widely regarded as a miniature masterpiece (Strimple 261).

Text

*At the round earth's imagined corners blow
Your trumpets, angells, and arise, arise
From death, you numberlease infinities
Of soules, and to your scattered bodies goe;
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
All whom warre, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slaine, and you, whose eyes
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleepe, Lord, and mee mourne a space;
For, if above all these my sinnes abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
When wee are there; Here on this lowly ground,
Teach mee how to repent, for that's as good
As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood*

Form and Structure

“At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners” is through-composed and primarily homophonic.

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-10	Lines 1-4 of text	Fanfare-like opening, concluding with a moment of part independence
Mm. 11-19	Lines 5-7 of text	Homophony: 3-part men (concluding with single measure of soprano)
Mm. 20-24	Line 8 of text	SATB Homophony begun by layering of parts at interval of a perfect 4 th .
Mm. 25-32	Lines 9-11 of text	Homophony: 2-to-3-part women

Mm. 33-40 Lines 12-14 of text SATB Homophony building from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*

Duration

Approximately 2 minutes, 30 seconds

Technical Considerations

Much like her teacher Halsey Stevens' work "In te, Domine, speravi" (1964), Spencer's "At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners" makes great use of changing meter (Strimple 229). At first glance one's singers may find the rhythms to be intimidating. However, conductors should note to their singers that the rhythms Spencer uses nearly always reflect the naturally spoken rhythms of the text, and are not quite as difficult as they appear.

Additionally, conductors would be wise to experiment with physical exercises in rehearsal – for instance, a clap with an arched rebound for any groupings of three eighth notes, and a simple 'pat' for any groupings of two. Singers should also be taught how to mark these eighth note groupings in their scores (perhaps using a triangle for groupings of three and a vertical line for groupings of two, though whatever method is most logical and effective for the singer may be used).

Spencer's work can cleanly be divided into sections based upon a number of shifts in tempo. Provided that the conductor has a clear grasp of these shifts, the choir should not take long to acclimate to them.

Stylistic Considerations

Dynamics are extreme, ranging from *fortissimo* in the fanfare-like opening, to *pianissimo*, and fine degrees of variation and phrasing. To produce the largest and richest *fortissimo* sound possible, it will be helpful to remind singers to maintain an open throat and balanced onset, by summoning breath energy via abdominal pulsation and avoiding any laryngeal tension or glottal attacks. Singers should be reminded to maintain

energized, quickly spinning breath support throughout the *pianissimo* sections, as well. It would be useful to include in rehearsal exercises incorporating contrasting dynamic levels.

Additionally, clearly articulated diction is imperative for the effective performance of this piece. The text by John Donne contains much of imagery, and this effect hinges on the choir's vivid delivery of the text. Specifically, the choir should emphasize and give life to initial consonants in key words such as "blow", "trumpets", "death", "scattered", "flood", and "fire", and internal consonants in words such as "infinities", as well as final consonants throughout. It would serve the conductor well to use the piece as a tool to teach the singers about the ability of well-executed consonants to capture the spirit of a piece.

Suggested Listening

The National Lutheran Choir – 2007 ACDA National Convention (YouTube)

References

Strimple, Nick. *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*. Milwaukee: Amadeus Press, 2002.

Credo in unum deum
from “Great” Mass in C minor [Grosse Messe in C-moll]

W. A. Mozart

(1756-1791)

SATB and piano reduction (this edition)

Composer

The youngest of Leopold Mozart’s seven children, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756. At the age of five, he began performing his own harpsichord compositions publically. For the next ten years, he traveled with his father, playing in the major courts of Europe. Mozart composed his first symphony at the age of eight, and his first mass, motet, and opera when he was twelve (Shrock 375).

From ages sixteen to twenty-one, Wolfgang served as concertmaster of the Salzburg court, before leaving and, not long after, returning as organist. While employed in Salzburg, Mozart composed almost twenty Masses (Berger 225). In his relatively short lifetime, Mozart also composed four Litanies, two Vespers settings, an oratorio, seven cantatas, and numerous symphonic, chamber, and operatic works – many of which are now recognized as being among the greatest works in their respective genres (Shrock 375).

Composition and Historical Perspective

Mozart composed the Great Mass in C minor (*Missa* K427 [417a]) in 1782-83, as a “thanks offering” for his marriage to Constanze Weber. Musicologist Karl Geiringer wrote, “The C Minor Mass marks a peak of artistic achievement which Mozart was to exceed only in his very last work [the *Requiem*]” (Berger 226). The mass’ nickname “The Great” is a result of its “intense writing and impressive dimensions”, “powerful impact and strong theatricality” (Berger 226). Berger notes that the solo sections possess a spirit more closely related to opera than to liturgical music of the time period. Indeed,

Mozart once expressed his feeling that “true church music lies in attics, almost eaten by worms” (Berger 226).

Performing forces for K427 include: SSTB solos (for the Benedictus), SSAATTBB chorus (double-choir is employed in the “Qui tollis” section of the Gloria, and the Sanctus), flute (for the “Et incarnatus est”), two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings (including two viola parts), and organ.

Mozart composed K427 in the Baroque “cantata mass” style, utilizing many Baroque textures and structures including much fugal writing and imitative counterpoint, and dividing six portions of the mass into separate movements (Shrock 376). Shrock attributes this to a desire to please his patron, Baron Gottfried van Swieten; Berger attributes it to Mozart having recently become acquainted with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, in van Swieten’s home.

Mozart passed away before completing the Great Mass; he completed only the Kyrie and Gloria, and sketched two portions of the Credo (“Credo in unum Deum” and “Et incarnatus est”), as well as the Sanctus and Benedictus. Although his sketches of these sections were orchestrated after his death, the remaining missing movements were left undone.

Duration of K. 427 ranges from fifty-five minutes (Shrock 379) to one hour (Berger 225).

Text

The text is a portion of the Nicene Creed.

*Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibílium ómnium et invisibílium.*

*Et in unum Dóminum Iesum Christum,
Christ,*

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things, seen and unseen
and in one Lord, Jesus*

*Filium Dei unigénitum,
et ex Patre natum, ante ómnia sæcula.
father,*

*Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmine,
Light*

*Deum verum de Deo vero,
génitum, non factum,
consubstantiálem Patri:
per quem ómnia facta sunt.
made,*

*Qui propter nos hominess
et propter nostram salútem
descéndit de cælis.*

*God's only son,
eternally begotten of the*

God from God, Light from

*true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.*

*Through Him all things were
who for us
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.*

Form and Structure

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-13	Piano	Introduction
Mm. 14-31	Lines 1-4 of text	Homophonic and declamatory music befitting the text. Repeated use of rhythm: 1-&a 2-&- 3--- 1. Imitative entrances for text "et invisibilium."
Mm. 32-35	Piano	Interlude
Mm. 36 -51	Lines 5-7 of text	Similar structure to Mm. 14-31, now in the dominant key. Repeated use of rhythm: 1-&- 2-&- 3—a 1. Polyphony for text "ante omnia saecula."
Mm. 52-58	Piano	Interlude

Mm. 59-70	Lines 8-10 of text	B section. Use of a minor. Antiphonal effect (though slightly overlapping) between the men and women.
Mm. 71-81	Lines 11-12 of text	Imitative section in c minor
Mm. 82-86	Piano	Interlude
Mm. 87-110	Lines 13-14 of text	Return to C Major. Begins similarly to Mm. 14-31. Imitative entrances for text “descendit de coelis.”
Mm. 111-112	Piano	Interlude
Mm. 113-116	Line 15 of text	“descendit de coelis” Homophonic ending, punctuated by conclusive piano exclamation

Duration

Approximately 3 minutes, 15 seconds

Technical Considerations

The Credo of Mozart’s “Great Mass” will surely provide rhythmic challenges for singers not fluent at sight singing. Isolating the rhythmic and melodic aspects of the piece will be critical to the choir’s successful acquisition of the material. Count-singing is highly recommended as a learning technique for the Credo.

Use of solfège is also a highly recommended technique. Use of solfège will not only help the choir navigate the melody (particularly the melismatic passages), but will also create in the singers awareness of their roles in the harmonic structure.

Once they are navigated with solfège, the melismatic sections may also provide a challenge to the singers’ vocal agility. The director might consider inserting a ‘d’ sound before the vowel on each note, in order to create clarity in rehearsal, or perhaps even the performance. The ‘d’ sounds will very likely be undetected by the audience, while generating the effect of cleanly-sung melismatic passages.

Tessitura is likely to generate fatigue in younger or less-experience singers. Fortunately, the interludes throughout the piece provide helpful rest periods for the choir. It is important to reinforce the principles of low breath support, a relaxed, open throat, a 'yawned' soft palate, and abdominal support, in the performance of this piece.

Stylistic Considerations

The "Great Mass" is composed in the late seventeenth-century Baroque style, which calls for effervescent, light, semi-detached articulation, a crisp, buoyant quality, and rhythmic verve.

Suggested Listening

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

References

Berger, Melvin. *Guide to Choral Masterpieces: A Listener's Guide*. New York: Anchor Books, 1993.

Shrock, Dennis. *Choral Repertoire*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace

Traditional Spiritual,

arr. Moses Hogan

(1957-2003)

SATB a cappella

Composer

Moses George Hogan was an internationally renowned arranger, composer, conductor, and pianist. He studied at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and The Juilliard School, and Louisiana State University. Hogan was and is revered for his modern arrangements of African-American Spirituals, which take a fresh, energized approach to the traditional spiritual (Moses George Hogan: The Conductor).

Hogan's arrangements combine his classical training and his upbringing in the Baptist Church. Hogan also composed original works. Thomas notes that, "more than any other of the Modern Arrangers, [Moses Hogan] is heralded as the composer/arranger who revitalized the performance of spirituals" (Thomas 72).

As a composer and arranger, Hogan had over 70 works published (exclusively for Hal Leonard Music Corporation and Alliance Music Publishers). Most of these were for mixed voices, *a cappella*. Hogan also served as editor of the new Oxford Book of Spirituals.

Hogan created vibrant recordings of his works with his groups "The New World Ensemble" (1980), "The Moses Hogan Chorale" (1994), and "The Moses Hogan Singers" (1999) (Thomas 72).

In 2003, Hogan died an untimely death from a brain tumor, at the age of 45 (Moses George Hogan: The Conductor).

Composition and Historical Perspective

“We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace” is Hogan’s arrangement of a traditional African-American spiritual. Jester Hairston has grouped slave songs into five categories: religious spirituals, which teach people spiritual beliefs; freedom spirituals, which talk about deliverance; escape spirituals, also known as “coded” or “telegraph” spirituals; shout and hollers, which serve as instruction; and work songs, which slaves sung while working in the fields. “We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace” is a freedom spiritual.

Text

The text is derived from the original African-American Spiritual, known by the same title.

*We shall walk through the valley in peace
For Jesus Himself shall be our leader
We shall walk through the valley in peace*

*We will meet our loved ones there
For Jesus Himself shall be our leader
We shall walk through the valley in peace*

*There will be no trials there
For Jesus Himself shall be our leader
We shall walk through the valley in peace*

Form and Structure

Strophic

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-5	Hum	Intro
Mm. 6-20	Stanza 1	Homophony

Mm. 21-25	Hum	Repetition of introduction
Mm. 26-40	Stanza 2	Homophony – repeated material
Mm. 41-48	Stanza 3	New material – forte, accented, victorious
Mm. 49-55	Stanza 3 continued	Homophony – repeated material
Mm. 56-59	Hum	Repetition of introduction, with conclusive variation

Duration

Approximately 4 minutes, 20 seconds

Technical Considerations

Effective presentation of this piece will require the choir to develop a rich, dark tone quality. Exercises utilizing the vowels [o] and [a] will assist with the arching or ‘yawning’ of the soft palate. It is important that the [i] and [E] vowels are executed with the cheeks (and lips) ‘puckered’ more than usual.

The B section at measure 41 provides a great exercise for vigorous forte singing. To produce the largest and richest sound possible at this dynamic, it will be helpful to remind singers to maintain an open throat and balanced onset, by summoning breath energy via abdominal pulsation and avoiding any laryngeal tension or glottal attacks.

Much ebb and flow in phrasing is present in Hogan’s arrangement. The ability to sustain and gradually taper a phrase is integral to the effective portrayal of this piece. The choir will need to develop its legato singing and breath control, in order to spin the long, sustained phrases typical of the piece. In addition to having the choir practice a low, released breath (with dropped pelvic floor and released intercostals), the conductor might remind the choir to maintain a “floating” or rising sternum, to counteract any collapsing of the sternum and assist with phrase suspension.

Stylistic Considerations

With regard to tempo, Anton Armstrong notes in his article “Practical Performance Practice in the American Slave Song”, that he finds conductors frequently take spirituals too fast. It is important for the conductor to consider the inner rhythms of the spiritual when choosing a tempo (Abrahams 31).

Armstrong advocates the use of dialect in the performance of spirituals. Diphthongs should be eliminated completely, and the schwa (neutral unstressed syllable) is used more prevalently than in other choral works. Additionally, phonetic decay should be applied to words quite frequently - for example, eliminating the final ‘g’ of ‘-ing’ words (Abrahams 30).

Suggested Listening

Choral Series 2002. Moses Hogan Chorale. Moses Hogan, conductor. (DJ Records 6706C). Two CDs.

References

Abrahams et al. *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir: Volume 1*. Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2005.

Hogan, Moses, ed. *The Oxford Book of Spirituals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

“Moses George Hogan: The Conductor.”

http://www.moseshogan.com/about_moses_hogan.htm

(accessed November 2, 2012).

Thomas, André J. *Way Over in Beulah Lan’: Understanding and Performing the Negro Spiritual*. Dayton: Heritage Music Press, 2007.

Ascribe to the Lord

Rosephanye Powell

(b. 1962)

Text: based on Psalm 29:1-4

SSAA and piano

Composer

Dr. Rosephanye Dunn Powell is an associate professor of voice at Auburn University, and a popular composer and arranger in the Negro spiritual style. Powell earned her Bachelor's degree in Music Education at Alabama State University, a Master of Music (with distinction) in voice performance and pedagogy at Westminster Choir College, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance at Florida State University, where she was a University Fellow. She previously taught at Philander Smith College (Arkansas) and Georgia Southern University (Thomas 75).

Powell is recognized as one of America's foremost female choral composers, and her sacred and secular works for mixed, men's, women's, and children's choirs have been published by Hal Leonard, Oxford University Press, Alliance Music Publications, the Fred Bock Music Company/Gentry Publications, and Shawnee Press. Powell receives frequent commissions, and her works have been conducted and premiered by conductors such as Rodney Eichenberger, André Thomas, Anton Armstrong, Philip Brunelle, Tim Seelig, Bob Chilcott, and Judith Willoughby (Rosephanye Powell: Singer/ Composer).

Powell has composed more original songs in the style of the spiritual, than she has arranged. Some of her popular titles include "Still I Rise", for four-part women and soloists, and "The Word Was God", for mixed voices.

Powell was listed in the first edition of Who's Who in Choral Music and has also been included in Who's Who Among America's Teachers. Powell also received a "Living Legend Award" from the California State University African Diaspora Sacred Music Festival in 2009 (Rosephanye Powell: Singer/ Composer).

Composition

“Ascribe to the Lord” is based on Psalm 29, verses 1 through 4. Powell notes on her website: “The A section is the exhortation to worship. The B section is the act of worship. Then, the brief return to A is the closing exhortation to depart in worship” (rosephanyepowell.com). “Ascribe to the Lord” was premiered by the Plymouth Music Ensemble and Orchestra, under the direction of Philip Brunelle.

Text

Psalm 29:1-4 (on which “Ascribe to the Lord” is based)

1 Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

Form and Structure

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-2	Intro	Piano
Mm. 3-10	Verses 1-2	Unison sopranos
Mm. 11-19	Verses 1-2	2-part harmonization of main theme
Mm. 20-23	Verse 2	Restatement of theme begins polyphonically with alto imitation at the lower octave, and ends in 4-part homophony
Mm. 24-27	Verse 2	Repeat of measures 20-23
Mm. 28-38	Verse 3	B section. V. 3 text on an accented eighth & sixteenth note motive. Voices are added on each repeat, from S1 through A2. Dramatic use of vi ⁷ and ii ^o chords.

Mm. 39-42	Verse 4	New material. S and A twice begin in octaves and move to 4-part harmony.
Mm. 44-47	Verse 2	Restatement of theme begins polyphonically with alto imitation at the lower octave, and ends in 4-part homophony
Mm. 48-51	Verse 2	Restatement of theme begins polyphonically with alto imitation at the lower octave, and ends in 4-part homophony
Mm. 52-53	“Worship Him!”	2 repeated exclamations of measure 51
M. 54	“Worship Him!”	Both words again in 4-part harmony, punctuated and separated by a half-rest.

Duration

Approximately 2 minutes, 15 seconds

Technical Considerations

Effective presentation of this piece will require the choir to develop a rich, dark tone quality. Exercises utilizing the vowels [o] and [a] will assist with the arching or ‘yawning’ of the soft palate. It is important that ‘lip’ vowels such as [i] are executed with the cheeks (and lips) ‘puckered’ more than usual.

The B section at measure 41 provides a great exercise for vigorous forte singing. Powell notes on her website the importance of emphasizing the words “powerful” and “majestic”. To produce the largest and richest sound possible at this dynamic, it will be helpful to remind singers to maintain an open throat and balanced onset, by summoning breath energy via abdominal pulsation and avoiding any laryngeal tension or glottal attacks. Specifically, the repeated, accented eighth-note chords at the end of the piece (which are in a high range for sopranos 1 and 2) provide great teaching moment for the ladies to employ vigorous lower abdominal support to produce these notes.

Performing the piano accompaniment at Powell's intended tempo may prove to be a challenge for some pianists. The accompaniment features the frequent repetition of a single pitch (middle c), often on sixteenth notes, with chords interspersed. Powell has made a suggestion in the score that the pianist alternate fingers to produce this rhythm at the intended tempo and create the rhythmic energy and drive essential to the piece. She notes that "the piano accompaniment in the B section should set up the sense of awe and stirring waters by means of tension created in the quick repetition of middle c" (rosephanyepowell.com). The piece was premiered by the Plymouth Music Ensemble and Orchestra, under the direction of Philip Brunelle; as may be expected, the effect is not quite the same with piano.

Stylistic Considerations

Powell includes many accents in the B section. The conductor should include exercises including accents in the warm-up, and should remind the singers to maintain an open throat during the accents, producing them with abdominal impulses (rather than a glottal attack).

Additionally, although they are not notated in the score, crescendo-carry-throughs should be employed throughout all repetitions of the A material. This will add to the excitement and sense of forward drive in the piece. Singers should be advised to stagger-breathe early, in order to execute these carry-throughs seamlessly.

Suggested Listening

2004 ACDA National Women's Honor Choir

2011 ACDA-VA Women's Honor Choir

References

Thomas, André J. *Way Over in Beulah Lan': Understanding and Performing the Negro Spiritual*. Dayton: Heritage Music Press, 2007.

"Rosephanye Powell: Singer/ Composer." <http://rosephanyepowell.com/biography-2/> (accessed November 2, 2012).

The Tiger

Lauren Bernofsky

(b. 1967)

Text: William Blake

SSA and piano

Composer

American composer Lauren Bernofsky was born in 1967 in Rochester, Minnesota. Bernofsky earned a B.M. *summa cum laude*, in violin and composition, at the Hartt School of Music, in Hartford, Connecticut, an M.M. in composition from New England Conservatory, and a DMA in Composition from Boston University. Bernofsky studied composition with Bert Braud, Robert Carl, and Lukas Foss (Lauren Bernofsky, Composer).

Bernofsky current serves on the composition faculty of Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland. She has composed over ninety works, ranging from solo, chamber, and choral music, to orchestral works, film music, ballet, musical theatre, and opera. Bernofsky has accepted numerous commissions and won many grants, including one from the National Foundation of the Advancement of the Arts. Bernofsky believes that all music should be “a joy both to play and to hear”, and her works have been praised as brilliant, evocative, and witty (Lauren Bernofsky, Composer).

Bernofsky’s works have been published by Hal Leonard, Alfred Music Publishing, Boosey & Hawkes, and various other publishers, and has been recorded on labels including Albany and Polarfonia. Her works have been performed throughout Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States.

Composition

“The Tiger” is a setting of William Blake’s poem from his “Songs of Experience.” The conductor may consider programming “The Tiger” in a set with Bernofsky’s setting of “The Lamb” (a poem also in Blake’s “Songs of Experience”).

Bernofsky has dedicated this piece to Amy Feldman Bernon and the Alamanda Women's Choir.

Text

*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

*In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?*

*And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?*

*What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!*

*When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?*

Tyger Tyger burning bright,

*In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?*

Form and Structure

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-2	Intro	Piano
Mm. 3-12	Stanza 1	A material, ending with an e minor seven chord.
Mm. 13-22	Stanza 2	A material repeats, this time ending with an E Major seven chord.
Mm. 23-32	Stanza 1	B material introduced as Stanza 1 text is repeated.
Mm. 33-42	Stanza 3	A material, ending with an e minor seven chord.
Mm. 43-52	Stanza 4	A material repeats, this time ending with an E Major seven chord.
Mm. 53-62	Stanza 5	B material
Mm. 63-72	Stanza 6 (same as 1)	A material, ending with an e minor seven chord.
Mm. 73-81	“Tiger!”	Coda-like ending, with staggered, and then homophonic, restatements of the word “tiger”, followed by a unison exclamation.

Duration

Approximately 1 minute, 30 seconds

Technical Considerations

The most distinctive feature of Bernofsky’s setting of “The Tiger” is the composer’s use of 5/8 meter to create a feeling of unevenness and agitation. This asymmetricality will, no doubt, challenge some singers. In order to help singers

internalize this asymmetric pulse, the conductor might direct the singers' attention to the constant eighth note pulse the Bernofsky has written in the piano accompaniment, and encourage them to maintain awareness of how the accompaniment integrates with their own part. This can be particularly useful during the one-measure interludes between sections - for example, measures 12, 22, 32, 42, 52, 62, 72, 79, and 80.

Additionally, conductors would be wise to experiment with physical exercises in rehearsal – for instance, a clap with an arched rebound for any groupings of three eighth notes, and a simple 'pat' for any groupings of two. Singers should also be taught how to mark these eighth note groupings in their scores (perhaps using a triangle for groupings of three and a vertical line for groupings of two, though whatever method is most logical and effective for the singer may be used).

Stylistic Considerations

Bernofsky includes constantly varying dynamic levels, and prolonged crescendi throughout the piece. It will be useful to build crescendo exercises into the choir's warm-up, being certain to emphasize that crescendi are generated through accelerating air and a taller mouth aperture, rather than laryngeal tension.

With its lengthy and vibrant text, "The Tiger" will necessitate impeccable diction, for the delivery of an evocative performance. Specifically, singers should be directed to aspirate all initial and final "t"s, with a fervor befitting the mood of the text. The composer suggests shortening the phrase-ending words "bright" and "night", and even intra-phrase words such as "what" and "burnt", from quarter notes to eighth notes followed by eighth rests.

Suggested Listening

2011 ACDA-PA Intergenerational Women's Honor Choir

References

"Lauren Bernofsky, Composer." <http://www.laurenbernofsky.com/bio.php>

(accessed November 5, 2012).

Laudate Dominum

Dan Davison

(b. 1956)

Text: Psalm 117

SSA(T)B with piano and optional string quartet

Composer

Contemporary choral composer Dan Davison was born in Sacramento, California, in 1956. Having moved to the Seattle area in 1965, Davison earned his Bachelor's degree at Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma, Washington), where he studied composition with Maurice Skones. Davison earned an MM in Composition at Western Washington University, where he studied with Bruce Pullan (Dan Davison Music).

Davison has served as director of choirs at Ballou Junior High School in Puyallup, Washington, for thirty-three years. At Ballou, Davison conducts four choirs. Davison has also directed the Puget Sound Youth Vocal Ensemble, church choirs, and choirs at Pacific Lutheran and Western Washington Universities. Additionally, Davison sings professionally with the vocal group Male Ensemble Northwest (Dan Davison Music).

Davison's choirs at Ballou JHS include an SA choir of approximately forty-five, a TB choir of approximately 27, and a Concert Choir of forty-five voices, as well as a Jazz Choir of sixteen voices, which was selected to perform at the ACDA Northwestern Division Convention in 2010. Davison composes and arranges nearly all the music performed by this ensemble - his works are published by Sound Music Publications.

Davison's over three decades of experience teaching junior high singers have developed a sound knowledge base from which to compose for young voices. He specializes in composing for SA(T)B voicing, as well as beginner vocal jazz works. His works for SA(T)B voicing include separate tenor and bass parts, to suit the male changing voice; however, these parts are always doubled or supported by another voice part.

Davison met Gunilla Luboff at the ACDA National Convention in San Antonio in 2001, and since then, Walton Music has published 21 of his pieces in various voicings (Dan Davison Music). One of Davison's most popular compositions is the rhythmically infectious "Ritmo", published by Walton for SATB, SA(T)B, and TTBB (or SSAA) voicings.

Davison was named the 1996 State of Washington Christa McAuliffe Educator Of The Year, as well as the 2010 "Educator Citizen of the Year" in Puyallup, Washington. In 2010, he received Washington ACDA's "Outstanding Choral Director" award.

Composition

"Laudate Dominum" is a setting of Psalm 117. It is available in the SSA(T)B voicing, or in a TB voicing, both accompanied by piano. An optional string quartet accompaniment is available, as well.

Text

Psalm 117

1 Praise the Lord, all you nations;

extol him, all you peoples.

2 For great is his love toward us,

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Praise the Lord.

Form and Structure

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-9	Introduction	Driving, pulsing 8 th -note bass line and minor chords
Mm. 10-18	Psalm 117 :1a	Soprano/tenor and alto/bass present A theme in 'call and response' format concluding with 4 measures of SATB homophony
Mm. 19-20	Interlude	Pulsing 8 th -note bass line and minor chords

Mm. 21-27	Psalm 117 :1b	Soprano/tenor and alto/bass present B theme in ‘call and response’ format concluding with 4 measures of SATB homophony
Mm. 27-28	Interlude	Pulsing 8 th -note bass line and minor chords
Mm. 29-35	Psalm 117 : 2	C theme is introduced in 3-part women’s harmony, concluding with 3 measures of SATB homophony
Mm. 36-37	Interlude	Pulsing 8 th -note bass line and minor chords
Mm. 38-44	Psalm 117 : 2	C theme returns in 3-part women’s harmony, concluding with 3 measures of SATB homophony
Mm. 44-45	Interlude	Pulsing 8 th -note bass line and minor chords
Mm. 45-53	Psalm 117 : 1	A theme returns in soprano/tenor, with B theme appearing in alto/bass as countersubject
Mm. 54-66	Psalm 117 : 1	SATB homophony
Mm. 67-74	Psalm 117 : 1, 2	Men take up a declamatory theme that functions as a pedal tone to the women’s reiteration of the C theme.
Mm. 75-79	Psalm 117 : 2b	The piece concludes with an “alleluia” section in SATB homophony.

Duration

Approximately 2 minutes, 35 seconds

Technical Considerations

Davison’s use of part doubling helps greatly in situations where the choir contains few capable male singers. While composing his SSA(T)B and SA(T)B works, Davison imagines a choir of forty girls and only eight boys (dandavisonmusic.com). Throughout “Laudate Dominum”, voices nearly always function in pairs, combining one women’s part with one men’s part (typically soprano with tenor, and alto with bass), separated by an octave. Occasionally, sopranos and basses are doubled at the octave interval, while

altos and tenors sing in unison. This compositional technique provides a welcomed support for ones male singers.

Additionally, Davison includes three-part women's harmony in some sections (measures 29-32, 37-44, and 68-79), providing a nice challenge to the women in the ensemble.

"Laudate Dominum" provides an excellent introduction to counterpoint. Once again, Davison's use of doubling between the upper and lower voice parts will assist young choirs in executing this material. The piece begins with a dramatic forte-piano g-minor chord, after which the piano (or 'cello if using string quartet) continues to pulse the chord root on staccato eighth notes. The choir enters at measure 10, with a 'call and response' structure between the sopranos/tenors and altos/basses. The section concludes with four measures of homophony. An interlude of the accompaniment follows, in the style of the introduction. At measures 21 through 27, the structure of measures 10 through 18 is repeated, with different text.

Measures 29 through 32 bring beautiful three-part harmony in the women's voices. The choir interjects four measures of SATB homophony, followed by a two-measure instrumental interlude. The women return in three parts at measures 38 through 41, again followed by SATB homophonic declamation. Measure 45 brings back the same vocal pairings (soprano/tenor, alto/bass) of the beginning of the piece. However, this time the altos and basses sing a melody independent of the sopranos and tenors, rather than answering back. This structure continues until measure 54, at which point SATB homophony returns through measure 66.

At measure 66, the vocal pairings finally shift to tenor/bass and soprano/alto, with the men singing an independent melody for the first time. Over this, the women layer their three-part theme from measures 29 and 38, for a triumphant effect. At measure 75, SATB homophony returns to round out the last five measures in a declamation of "Alleluia"s.

Stylistic Considerations

“Laudate Dominum” provides an excellent introduction to singing in ecclesiastical Latin. The vocabulary includes words the singers are likely to re-encounter in future choral experiences, and yet, at just two verses, the text is not so lengthy that it would overwhelm even those inexperienced at the language.

Davison was extremely specific in his markings of dynamics and articulation. If the conductor is sensitive to all of these markings, the piece will be an excellent vehicle for developing the choir’s expressive range. The dramatic style of “Laudate Dominum” will encourage singers to play up the dynamic and articulatory contrasts Davison. The piece features constant, driving eighth-notes in the left hand of the piano, throughout. The use of a minor key (g minor) adds to a sense of drama that will appeal to a junior high choir. Singers will learn to execute both staccato and legato, and accents. “Laudate Dominum” also includes moments of beautiful phrasing and *messa di voces*.

Suggested Listening

www.waltonmusic.com

References

“Dan Davison Music.” <http://www.dandavisonmusic.com/biography.html>

(accessed November 16, 2012)

Down to the River to Pray
Traditional, arr. Philip Lawson

(b. 1957)

Text: Traditional

SSATTBB a cappella

Composer

Philip Lawson was born on February 19, 1957, in Crawley, West Sussex. Although Lawson did not grow up in a musical family, his early experiences in the boys' choir of Worth Church nurtured his interest in the choral idiom, eventually leading him to study music at York University, where he studied with Wilfrid Mellers (Philip Lawson: Composer – Arranger, Choral Clinician, and Conductor).

Lawson began his adult vocal career singing counter-tenor in the York Minster choir, under the direction of Francis Jackson. At the age of twenty-one he made his first performances as a baritone, singing with a number of ensembles in London, including the BBC Singers, The Taverner Choir, the choir of Westminster Abbey, and the world-renowned group The Sixteen.

Lawson joined the King's Singers in 1993, replacing founding member Simon Carrington on the baritone two part. In 1996 he switched to baritone one. Lawson performed with the King's Singers until 2012. In addition, from 1997-2012, he served as the group's principal arranger. Lawson contributed a total of over fifty arrangements to the ensemble (Philip Lawson: Composer – Arranger, Choral Clinician, and Conductor).

The King's Singers' album "Simple Gifts", which features 10 of Lawson's arrangements, won the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Classical Crossover Album. Additionally with the King's Singers, Lawson won a 2012 Grammy Award for the group's recording of "The Stolen Child" on Eric Whitacre's "Light and Gold" CD.

Lawson's arrangements are primarily *a cappella* and sacred. He has had over fifty arrangements published by Hal Leonard, and has also been published by Walton Music,

Boosey and Hawkes, Morningstar Music, Alliance, Pavane Publishing, Lorenz, Banks Music, Encore Publications, Peters Edition and Schoolplay Productions.

Lawson is a frequent clinician with choirs in Europe and America, and also privately teaches aspiring composers and arrangers.

Composition and Historical Perspective

“Down to the River to Pray” is a setting of the traditional Appalachian song, which was also a slave song dating back to the 1860s. The song was recently featured in the 2000 Coen brothers’ comedy, “O Brother, Where Art Thou”. The film, based on Homer’s Odyssey, but set in the 1930s deep south, tells the tale of three escaped convicts searching for hidden treasure, all while fleeing the pursuit of a relentless investigator.

Text

(According to most sources, the original text included the word “valley” rather than “river”.)

As I went down in de valley to pray,

Studying about dat good old way,

When you shall wear de starry crown,

Good Lord, show me de way.

O mourner, let's go down, let's do down, let's go down,

O mourner, let's go down, Down in de valley to pray.

In Lawson’s musical setting, the text “O mourner” is replaced at various times by “O sisters”, “O brothers”, “O fathers”, “O mothers”, and “O sinners”. Due to the changing words, this analysis will consider this section the verse, and the earlier section the refrain.

Form and Structure

This arrangement is in strophic form, with each verse and even the refrains being altered musically in terms of harmonization and voicing.

MEASURE	SECTION	EVENT AND SCORING
Mm. 1-16	Refrain	Baritone unison statement of refrain
Mm. 17-32	Verse	2-part Baritone/Bass harmony, accompanied by open fifth drone in baritone/bass
Mm. 33-49	Refrain	Tenor 2 unison statement of refrain
Mm. 50-65	Verse	Sopranos and altos join the men on an 'oo', with the sopranos doubling the melody of the tenors, and the altos harmonizing at the third.
Mm. 66-82	Refrain	3-part harmony between the women and the tenors, featuring the sopranos on the melody, tenors on the third, and altos at the fifth.
Mm. 83-98	Verse	Remains in 3-part Soprano/Alto/Tenor harmony
Mm. 99-115	Refrain	Second tenors, baritones, and basses join, creating a six-voice texture. With a few small variances, the tenor 2s double the soprano melody, while the basses double the tenor 1s at the third, and baritones double the altos at the fifth.
Mm. 132-148	Refrain	Baritones emerge with the melody, accompanied by an 'oo' drone on an open fifth between the basses and tenor 2s (with tenor 1s doubling the tenor 2s at the octave) – a similar voicing to measures 33-49.
Mm. 149-166	Verse	The basses continue to sustain the root, with tenor 2s at the fifth, while the baritones continue the melody. This is harmonized by the sopranos

doubling, the altos down a third, and the tenor 1s down a fifth, on a slightly simpler variation on the text.

Mm. 167-183 Refrain

Soprano unison statement of refrain

Duration

Approximately 2 minutes, 35 seconds

Technical Considerations

The straightforward triadic harmonies and lack of dissonance make this piece an accessible piece for a middle school or early high school choir. However, it should be noted that throughout the piece, voices (at times up to six) trade positions within the structure of the harmony. While this tactic may confuse some less-experience singers, the experience singing various positions in the chords will be a very useful tool for increasing the aural awareness of one's singers.

This arrangement begins with the baritones singing the refrain in unison. At measure 17, the basses join, harmonizing at the third. At measure 33, the tenors take over the singing of the refrain, while the baritones and basses accompany with an 'oo' drone on an open fifth, which moves briefly to a fourth before returning. At measure 50, the sopranos and altos join the men on an 'oo', with the sopranos doubling the melody of the tenors, and the altos harmonizing at the third.

Measure 66 brings three-part harmony between the women and the tenors, featuring the sopranos on the melody, tenors on the third, and altos at the fifth. This voicing continues until measure 99, at which the second tenors, baritones, and basses join, creating a six-voice texture. With a few small variances, the tenor 2s double the soprano melody, while the basses double the tenor 1s at the third, and baritones double the altos at the fifth. This voicing continues until the baritones emerge with the melody in measure 132, accompanied by an 'oo' drone on an open fifth between the basses and

tenor 2s (with tenor 1s doubling the tenor 2s at the octave) – a similar voicing to measures 33-49.

At measure 149 (much like measure 50), the sopranos and altos join the men. The basses continue to sustain the root, with tenor 2s at the fifth, while the baritones continue the melody. This is harmonized by the sopranos doubling, the altos down a third, and the tenor 1s down a fifth, on a slightly simpler variation on the text. The arrangement concludes with the refrain sung once more in unison, this time by the sopranos.

Stylistic Considerations

Lawson was very thorough and specific in making dynamic specifications, to which the conductor should be sensitive. However, Lawson was not explicit in his manner of notating rhythm in this arrangement. Conductors should note that the historical origins of the tune would imply a dotted interpretation of all eighth notes.

Suggested Listening

The King's Singers, Alison Krauss

References

“Philip Lawson: Composer – Arranger, Choral Clinician, and Conductor.”

<http://www.philiplawson.net/cv.html> (accessed November 10, 2012).