

2024

Program Notes Choral Conducting Recital

Emily Farrell

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Program Notes
Choral Conducting Recital
Emily Farrell
May 1, 2024
Messiah University

Program

Music, Lead the Way - Laura Farnell (b. 1975)

Laudate Dominum - Dan Davison (b. 1956)

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A Million Dreams: from The Greatest Showman - arr. Mac Huff (birthdate unknown)

Blue Moon - arr. Roger Emerson (b.1950)

***Music, Lead the Way* – Laura Farnell**

Laura Farnell (b. 1975) is a contemporary American choral composer, clinician, accompanist, and adjudicator from Texas. She graduated from Baylor University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Music Education in Choral Music. Following her commencement, she taught elementary music for two years in Mansfield, Texas before moving on to secondary choral education at Boles Junior High in Arlington. She taught music at the Junior High for eight years, during which time the choir program earned several University Interscholastic League (UIL) sweepstakes awards. She was honored at both schools with Teacher of the Year Awards in the years 2000 and 2003. In 2004, she received an Excellence in Education Award as the Arlington Independent School District's outstanding junior high teacher of the year. She currently serves as an invited clinician for district, regional, and state honor choirs across the United States, while also presenting workshops and reading sessions for choir directors at district and state levels.¹

Farnell enjoys composing for middle school students and developing choirs and is represented by several music publishing companies², including Alliance Music Publications, BriLee Music, Hal Leonard Corporation, Heritage Music, Kjos Music Press, and Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc. She has more than one hundred published choral compositions in addition to a co-authored beginning sight-singing method book.³ Her piece *High Flight*, which was released in July 2023, is currently listed as a best seller and Editors' Choice on J.W. Pepper.⁴

¹ "Laura Farnell," Neil A Kjos Music Company, accessed January 27, 2024, <https://kjos.com/person/view?id=870>.

² "Laura Farnell," Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., accessed 2024, <https://sbmp.com/ComposerPage.php?ComposerNum=136>).

³ "Laura Farnell," Neil A Kjos Music Company.

⁴ "Search Laura+Farnell: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 15, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=laura%20farnell&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

Another one of her well-known octavos is *Music, Lead the Way*, a gospel-style composition that was commissioned by Region 27 of the Texas Music Educators' Association for the Combined All-Region Honor Choirs; it was published in 2013. Farnell drew inspiration for this work from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others like him who “worked to break down the barriers of racial and social discrimination.”⁵ Based on the poem “Storm-Music” by Henry Van Dyke, L.F. and drawing inspiration from Song of Solomon 2:11-12⁶, the text of *Music, Lead the Way* shares the message that music can change pain and hardship into something good and pure and that by choosing love and singing together in community, especially within ethnically diverse choirs, we are actively overcoming hate and strife, and realizing Dr. King’s dream.

The publication of this piece not only coincided with the beginning of President Barack Obama’s second term, but it also commemorated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington in 1963, at which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his celebrated “I Have a Dream” speech. In honor of this historic moment, thousands of citizens participated in a return pilgrimage to both the Lincoln Memorial and the new King Memorial. Participants were able to observe the magnitude of this milestone in history that called for a continuation of the remaining work needed to quell racial tensions and rectify African American history. *Music, Lead the Way* also seems to mimic the peaceful ideals of Nelson Mandela, whose leadership was marked by his reliance on forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity, and who passed away in the same year this piece was released.⁷

⁵ Laura Farnell, *Music, Lead the Way* (Carl Fischer, LLC, 2013), 2.

⁶ Laura Farnell, *Music, Lead the Way*, 2.

⁷ “Top 10 News Events of 2013 for African Americans,” Hudson Valley Press, January 1, 2014, <https://hudsonvalleypress.com/2014/01/01/top-10-news-events-of-2013-for-african-americans/>.

The two most significant compositional devices in this piece are repetition and modulation. Farnell opens this work with the lyrics:

Music, lead the way! / The stormy night has passed! / Let us greet the day and celebrate the things that last forever. / Peace and love will conquer hate and strife, / and we will sing together side by side.

In her program notes, Farnell indicates that the text of this piece evokes in her images of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s peace movement in the 1960s. She writes:

Music played an important role in the peace movement of this era. Today, any time I hear or work with choirs with singers from ethnically diverse backgrounds joining together in song, I smile to imagine Dr. King's dream realized... It is my hope that when individuals choose love and sing together in community, that "peace and love will conquer hate and strife."⁸

Thus, listeners can understand that the "hate and strife" that is mentioned within the first couple of bars of music refers to racial discrimination and differences. She repeats these lyrics and harmonic motion two more times throughout the piece to emphasize the message that music can help us overcome racial intolerance.

The third time this section of music is repeated, Farnell precedes it with a key change from C major up a half step to D-flat major. She also includes clapping or tambourine playing and an optional descant that sets the same text as that of the choir. This change could imply that the "hate and strife" have been successfully overcome; the singers are now celebrating the joyous union of all people, no matter their differences, as they "walk and sing side by side."

The clapping/tambourine playing that Farnell includes at the end of this piece is very much intuitive. The percussive rhythm of the melody, in addition to the frequent use of staccatos to further emphasize otherwise weak beats (such as beats 2 and 4), can be felt by all involved in this performance, helping the piece to be easily recognized as gospel style.

⁸ Laura Farnell, *Music, Lead the Way*, 2.

***Laudate Dominum* – Dan Davison**

Dan Davison (b. 1956) is a modern American educator, composer, adjudicator, clinician, and singer from California, although he has lived in the state of Washington for most of his life. He received his Bachelor's degree from Pacific Lutheran University, where he studied under choral conductor and music pedagogue, Maurice Skones. He later earned his Master's degree in Music from Western Washington University. In addition to being a choir director at Ballou Junior High in Puyallup, Washington for forty years, he has experience as a church choir director and sings professionally with the Male Ensemble Northwest. Davison has received many awards for his part in music education, including the 1996 State of Washington *Christa McAuliffe Educator of the Year* Award, the Communities in Schools' *Educator Citizen of the Year* Award in 2010, and the *Outstanding Choral Director* Award from the Washington chapter of American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in 2010. Also in 2010, his public school jazz choir had the privilege of performing at the ACDA Northwestern Convention in Seattle. Davison has also directed choirs at Western Washington and Pacific Lutheran Universities and conducted the Northwest ACDA Youth Choir (grades 7-9) for the 2014 ACDA Northwest Convention.⁹ In retirement, Davison continues to write music for adolescent voices and directs festival choirs such as the Idaho All-State Middle School Choir.

At present, Davison has over seventy compositions in print with Walton, BriLee, Hinshaw, Hal Leonard, and Anchor Music Publications. His top-selling piece is the two-part spiritual *Wade in the Water*, published in 2017, followed by the octavo *Laudate Dominum*.¹⁰

⁹ "Biography," Dan Davison Music, accessed February 17, 2024, <https://www.dandavisonmusic.com/biography.html>.

¹⁰ "Search Dan+Davison: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 15, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=dan%20davison&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

According to Davison, the writing of *Laudate Dominum* in 2009 was prompted by an unsuccessful trip to a music store. He had visited the store in the hopes of finding a two-part classical piece for his young adult male choir, ideally something by Mozart or Haydn, with an “appealing classical beat,” and realistic ranges for the changing male voices with whom he would work. When he did not find a piece of music with those characteristics, he decided to write the piece himself to bring the “sound of the classics” to young voices.¹¹

Davison states that adolescents are frequently drawn to music in a minor mode and with a quick tempo, so he wrote *Laudate Dominum* in the key of A minor with an *allegro* tempo marking and a percussive quality in the accompaniment,¹² in which the repetitive eighth notes in the left hand of the piano accompaniment mimic the sound of a cello in a classical string quartet. Davison also took care to compose vocal parts of equal importance, allowing each section to sing the melody.¹³ The text of this piece is taken from Psalm 117 and is sung in Latin. The lyrics translate to:

Praise the Lord, all nations / Praise Him, all people. / For He has bestowed / His mercy upon us, / And the truth of the Lord endures forever.

This sacred text, with accented syllables on strong beats, paired with Classical harmonic conventions such as Neapolitan chords and imitations of string accompaniment, suggests Davison’s attempt to emulate a sacred concerto similar to one that would have been composed in the late 18th century.

The text is painted by Davison’s use of syllabic stress and the repetition of motives. For example, the opening has the line “Laudate Dominum” repeated four times. Each time it is sung, there is accented stress on “Do-” of “Dominum,” meaning God. This encourages the listeners to

¹¹ Dan Davison, *Laudate Dominum* (USA: GIA Publications, Inc., 2009), 2.

¹² Dan Davison, *Laudate Dominum*, 2.

¹³ Dan Davison, *Laudate Dominum*, 2.

recognize the importance of God in the lyric's message. The next phrase that is sung is "omnes gentes," meaning "all nations," and Davison has the singers accenting the "ge-" of "gentes." So in a lyrical analysis, one could understand that *God* should be present in all *nations*. Similarly, the next set of words that Davison has the singers emphasize are "eum," meaning "Him," and "populi," meaning "people," thus the message remains the same: *He* should be praised by all *people*.

Just as syllabic stress is meant to emphasize the important text in a piece, the use of motives is meant to help the listener better remember or cling to the important phrases in a piece. The first use of a motif in *Laudate Dominum* is found in the alto line in measures 29-30 on the line "quoniam confirmata," meaning "He has bestowed." This melodic motif returns in the alto line in measures 38-39 and 40-41 on the text "et veritas Domini manet in aeternum," translating to "and the truth of the Lord endures forever." It returns a third time in mm. 68-69 on the text "Dominum, alleluia" ("Lord, alleluia"), and a fourth time in augmentation in mm. 72-74 on the same text. Repetition of melodic motives can be found in the soprano line as well, originating in measures 21-24 and repeating at mm. 46-49, both times with the text "laudate eum" ("Praise Him"). Thus, listeners and singers can understand this piece as praising the Lord because He has bestowed on us truths that will persist forever.

In the Bible, Psalm 117 is quoted in Romans 15:11 and invites the Gentiles to praise God to earn the fulfillment of His promise of mercy.¹⁴ In Catholic masses, the psalm is sung as part of the closing of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

¹⁴ *Holy Bible: The New Catholic Bible*, St. Joseph Family Edition (Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2020).

***Jubilate Omnis Terra* –Douglas E. Wagner**

Douglas E. Wagner (b. 1952) is an internationally recognized composer and arranger hailing from Chicago, Illinois. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in music from Butler University and has thirty years of experience as a high school music educator and administrator on the performing arts faculty of North Central School in Indianapolis, Indiana.¹⁵ He is a past member of the board of directors of the Choristers Guild and handbell editor for the Lorenz Publishing Company. At present, Wagner devotes his time to writing, editing, and its allied activities. He is an ASCAP award-winning composer, an editor for Hope Publishing Company, and has served several denominations as a church musician.¹⁶ His music has been performed in concert settings, on television, on radio broadcasts in the United States, and in concert programs in more than twenty-four foreign countries.

Since 1973, Wagner has published more than 3,000 music works for choir (sacred and secular), concert band, orchestra, handbell ensemble, organ, piano, instrumental solo, and voice with Alfred Music Publishing, Heritage Music Press, Choristers Guild, Hope Publishing Company, Lorenz Corporation, and others. Over sixteen million copies of his music have been sold.¹⁷ Currently, one of his top-selling pieces is the two-part octavo *Wind on the Hill*.¹⁸

Published in 2023, *Jubilate Omnis Terra* is a piece set in Latin that translates to: Rejoice all the earth / Sing, be glad, and make music / Forever and ever, Amen. The text of this piece is demonstrated well through Wagner's use of key change and monophonic texture. The piece

¹⁵ "Douglas E Wagner," The Lorenz Corp., accessed February 18, 2024, <https://lorenz.com/composers-and-authors/meet-our-composers/douglas-e-wagner>.

¹⁶ "Douglas E. Wagner Composer / Arranger," HeBu Musikverlag GmbH, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://www.hebu-music.com/en/musician/douglas-e-wagner.1533/?page=18>.

¹⁷ "About Doug," Douglas E Wagner, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://douglasswagner.com/>.

¹⁸ "Search Douglas+E+Wagner: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=DOUGLAS%2BE%2BWAGNER&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

begins with all voices singing “jubilate, jubilate, jubilate omnis terra” (“rejoice, rejoice, rejoice all the earth”) in unison in the key of F major. This wonderfully demonstrates Wagner’s goal of having “all the earth” singing as one. At measure 38, there is a key change that shifts the piece into the key of G-flat major and Wagner repeats mm. 5-12 and mm. 22-37 in this new key, again having all of the singers sing “jubilate, jubilate, jubilate omnis terra” in unison. This key change could be illustrating the singers’ progress in recruiting people to sing along with them in celebrating the goodness and joy of the world through music-making. At m. 62, there is a third key change into the key of G major. This time, the tenors and altos sing “jubilate, jubilate, jubilate omnis terra” in unison while the sopranos sing a descant part. The descant part might symbolize the singers’ true success in gaining “all the earth” to “sing, be glad, and make music.” It might even be displaying the participation of the angels in the joyous song.

Wagner pieced together several psalms and Biblical references to create a rather secular text that has little to no focus on God. The first line “Jubilate omnis terra” is derived from Psalm 100 which states “Jubilate Deo, omnis terra,” translating to “rejoice in God, all the earth.” In the 1971 revision of the Liturgy of the Hours, Psalm 100 became one of the four invitatory psalms that can be chosen by a Catholic priest to introduce daily office hours.¹⁹

The next line “cantare laetare et psallite” is not derived from a singular psalm, yet all words have roots in Biblical meanings. “Laetare,” taken from the Fourth Sunday in Lent (Laetare Sunday), means “rejoice.” The name Laetare Sunday is derived from the day’s introit which begins with “laetare Jerusalem” (“Rejoice, O Jerusalem”) and introduces the day’s theme of hope and encouragement as Christians look towards Easter with anticipation and joy.²⁰ “Cantare” and

¹⁹ Felix Just, “The Ordinary of the Liturgy of the Hours,” Catholic Resources for Bible, Liturgy, Art, and Theology, April 26, 2022, <https://catholic-resources.org/LoH/Hours-Ordinary.html>.

²⁰ “Laetare Sunday - Fourth Sunday of Lent,” Diocese of Lansing Michigan, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://dioceseoflansing.org/general/laetare-sunday-fourth-sunday-lent>.

“psallite” both come from the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*’s Psalm 32:3 which reads “cantata ei canticum novum; bene psallite ei in vociferatione” (“sing to him a new canticle; sing well unto him with loud noise”). Thus, the second line of *Jubilate Omnis Terra* illustrates several Biblical ways of writing the word “sing.”

The final line of this octavo, “per saecula saeculorum, amen” is derived from The Glory Be prayer:

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. / Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. / Amen.

which translates to:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. / As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. / Amen

This prayer is recited frequently during liturgical offices, is part of devotions such as the Rosary, and is associated with the Our Father and Hail Mary prayers.²¹

So although Wagner’s translation of the text focuses solely on singing and being glad through music-making, a deeper analysis of the text demonstrates a deep reverence of God through unceasing rejoicing of His name.

Can You Hear Me? – Bob Chilcott

Bob Chilcott (b.1955) is a widely performed British choral composer and arranger, singer, and highly acclaimed choral conductor based in Oxfordshire, England. He sang in the choir of King’s College as a young boy and again as a university student; he also sang with The King’s Singers. In 1997, Chilcott became a full-time conductor and composer. He is currently the Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers, conducts the Birmingham University Singers,

²¹ “The Glory Be in Latin - Gloria Patri,” Hozana, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://hozana.org/en/prayer/glory-be/in-latin>.

and is the President of the Southend Boys' Choir, a group that performs frequently at venues in London. He has guest-conducted in over thirty countries. In 2003, he became the first non-American conductor to conduct a National Honor Choir for ACDA.²²

As a composer, Chilcott's output reflects his extensive preferences for several musical styles and genres, especially folksongs, Gregorian chant, hymns, spirituals, jazz, gospel, and African music.²³ He is well-known for his compositions for children's choirs, including the six pieces he wrote for the New Orleans Children's Chorus and several octavos.²⁴ His works are accessible and expressive, with John Steane from *Gramophone Magazine* stating "Children don't like the music they have to perform to be hard (hard to learn, hard to get right, hard to enjoy). But neither do they want soft, soppy, kids' stuff, so easy there's no sense of achievement. Bob Chilcott has got it wonderfully right."²⁵

Chilcott's music is widely recorded by leading choirs and groups, including The King's Singers, the BBC Singers, Voces8, and several others. His most frequently performed pieces include *A Little Jazz Mass*, *Requiem*, the *St. John Passion*, and *Can you hear me?*²⁶ In 2021, Chilcott composed *Songs My Heart Has Taught Me* for ACDA's Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission National Conference. He was the first UK resident composer to receive this commission.²⁷

²² "Bob Chilcott," ChoraLine: The Art of Choral Learning, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.choraline.com/chilcott#:~:text=He%20is%20also%20associated%20with,%22Be%20Simple%20Little%20Children%22>.

²³ "Bob Chilcott Sheet Music," Musicroom.com, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.musicroom.com/bob-chilcott-sheet-music/>.

²⁴ "Bob Chilcott," ChoraLine: The Art of Choral Learning.

²⁵ John Steane, "Spells - The Music of Bob Chilcott," *Gramophone*, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/spells-the-music-of-bob-chilcott>.

²⁶ "Biography," Bob Chilcott, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://bobchilcott.com/bio.html>.

²⁷ "Bob Chilcott," Oxford University Press, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://global.oup.com/academic/category/arts-and-humanities/sheet-music/composers/chilcottb/?cc=ca&lang=en&>.

Can you hear me? was published in 1998, and has been conducted by Chilcott in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Estonia, Latvia, Germany, and the Czech Republic. The 2001 Canadian performance in Vancouver at BC Place Stadium included 2,000 singers,²⁸ and his performance at the Estonian Song Festival in 2004 included 7,000 young voices.²⁹ The piece describes the world through the eyes of a deaf child and has indications to incorporate either British or American sign language into the performance. It was commissioned by the Keynote Arts Associates for the Children in Harmony Choral Festival in Orlando, Florida. Chilcott states the composition of this piece was a genuine response to an experience he had working with deaf children:

What was so beautiful about these children was how aware they were. And as someone who watched them working together, the signing was something that was very emotional for all of us watching because the signing is very enabling and it's a show of strength... I tried to incorporate that kind of feeling into this song. So the song... is an expression of strength and about positivity.³⁰

Each time the chorus is sung, musicians ask a question: “can you see it / can you feel it / can you hear me?” while signing the question to the audience. This is a symbol of strength and positivity in deaf children as they use their communication skills to inquire about their world.

The composition of this piece was published about a year after the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which placed new emphasis on education results and quality of special education. The revisions were especially concerned with the integration of students with disabilities into non-disabled schools and classrooms.³¹ The message

²⁸ James Manheim, “About Bob Chilcott,” Apple Music - Web Player, accessed February 21, 2024, <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/bob-chilcott/25340107>.

²⁹ “Choral Music the #EstonianWay with Composer and Singer Bob Chilcott,” Visitestonia.com, November 18, 2021, <https://www.visitestonia.com/en/estonianway/bobchilcott>.

³⁰ Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press), “Bob Chilcott: Can You Hear Me?,” May 9, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPC0kg3qWfc>.

³¹ “Making a Good IDEA Better: The Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,” U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 12, 2002,

of *Can you hear me?* could be seen as an integration tool to enable and cultivate the sensitivity of non-deaf peers towards their deaf counterparts.

The composition *Can you hear me?* has three distinct sections, each expressing a new sentiment from the perspective of the deaf child. The first section opens with all singers singing in unison and expressing “I look around me as I grow, I’d like to tell you all I know.” This encourages the idea that deaf children have similarities with non-deaf children: they are all just children who observe and want to communicate what they have seen and learned. Quickly thereafter, there is a key change from C major to f minor that creates a sense of conflict and discomfort. The piano accompaniment that introduces this minor mode is full of dissonance and unsteady, syncopated rhythms. This is where the narrative of the deaf children begins as they describe all that they are seeing. The unison of voices returns only for a moment to sing “I sometimes sit and wait a while, I see the sun, it makes me smile,” again emphasizing the fact that all children can feel the sun. There is a sense of hope portrayed as the choir sings through a time signature – a waltz-like 3/2 – change, and asks “can you see it?” that communicates all children’s freedom and sense of wonder.

The dissonant chords return at measure 29 to signal the frustration of the deaf children as they describe all that they can feel, leading to another unison section that communicates “I sometimes sit and feel the sun, it’s warmth is there for everyone.” Again, singers and listeners feel hopeful as the musicians enter into the 3/2 section, rhythmically dancing and celebrating their togetherness as they sing “can you feel it?” about the sun. This is perhaps the deaf child’s way of validating their sameness, in that they are wondering if a non-deaf child has the same physical and emotional feelings as them.

The third section is also in unison and describes the singer's silent world and their desire to hear their peers sing. The unison melody again represents the unified struggle of all children, deaf or not. Non-deaf peers with deaf friends also experience the struggle of wishing to hear their friend's voice, just as deaf peers wish they could audibly experience the surroundings of their world. The song proceeds to the third 3/2 section and the final iteration of the chorus, but this time the rhythmic extension of the melody seems to illustrate the deaf children reaching for love and acceptance as they ask "can you hear me?" Their peers join them in singing the opening line, confirming their fond welcoming of their disabled peers. Thus, this piece is a journey of expression, hope, and embracing integration.

***J'ai vu le loup* – Emily Crocker**

Emily Crocker (b.1949) is recognized as a leading expert in children's choirs throughout the United States.³² Born and raised in Texas, she earned her Bachelor of Music Education from the University of North Texas and a Master of Arts in Music Theory from Texas Woman's University. Crocker continued her post-graduate studies in choral conducting, choral literature, rehearsal techniques, and German from the University of North Texas. From 1980-85, she studied linguistics, and English and American literature as a secondary teaching field.³³ In 2009, she received the title of Honored Alumna by the University of North Texas College of Music.

Crocker worked at a public school in Texas for fifteen years, teaching all levels of music. In 1989, she joined Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation, becoming Vice President of Choral Publications in 2000. As a composer, she has received ASCAP awards for concert music, is well-

³² "Emily Crocker," Hal Leonard Publishing Company, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.halleonard.com/biography/105/emily-crocker>.

³³ Lynn Swanson, "Interview with Emily Crocker, Renowned Composer and Choral Consultant," ChoralNet, January 8, 2019, <https://choralnet.org/archives/585392>.

known for her work in creating choral instructional materials, and is an author and senior editor of a choral textbook series for grades 6-12 known as *Voices in Concert*. In 2017, she received the Outstanding Service Award from the Texas Choral Directors Association. She is also well known for founding the Milwaukee Children’s Choir, which she directed for fifteen years. While under her leadership, the choir grew to over 400 singers and received praise for their performances with several other ensembles in the Milwaukee area, ACDA, and at international festivals throughout the world. The year she retired from this position, she was awarded the *Distinguished Citizen Award- Professional in the Arts* by the Civic Music Association of Milwaukee. In 2019, she was named Music Director Emeritus of the ensemble.³⁴

Her arrangement of the French Canadian folk song *J’entends le Moulin*, published in 2007, remains a top-seller on J.W. Pepper.³⁵ In 2023, Crocker published the two-part arrangement of a French folk song, *J’ai vu le loup*. The song dates back to the medieval era, and, like the many other versions that exist of this piece, it features animals imitating humans by dancing, laughing, and singing.³⁶ Sung in French and English, the text translates to:

I saw the wolf, the fox, and the hare / I saw the wolf, the fox dancing / It was I who spied them. / I saw the wolf and the fox whirling ‘round / They were dancing with the hare on a moonlit night. / Singing and laughing, stamping and clapping / Underneath the stars so clear and bright.

Crocker’s use of the minor mode alongside this playful text is intriguing. The song begins at an *andante moderato* tempo with a rhythmically challenging and lively unison melody that

³⁴ “Emily Holt Crocker,” Emily Crocker Music, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://www.emilycrockermusic.com/emily-bio>.

³⁵ “Search Emily+Crocker: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper,” J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?departmentDescriptions=&keywords=emily%2Bcrocker&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

³⁶ “J’ai vu Le Loup (I Saw the Wolf) - Discovery Level 2,” Hal Leonard, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://www.halleonard.com/product-family/PC26847/jai-vu-le-loup-i-saw-the-wolf>.

clings to the minor modality despite beginning the fun story of seeing a wolf, fox, and hare dancing. After the first phrase, a second begins with the altos repeating the same melody and the sopranos singing an unindicated descant line that translates to “I saw the wolf.” The soprano line almost seems a bit desperate when compared to the alto part, since it sustains a shrill, single pitch (D5) over the alto’s mostly conjunct melody.

The sopranos and altos then repeat the first verse of music with the English text rather than French. Listeners are again struck by the timid, but persistent sopranos saying “I saw the wolf” in their higher, differing motif. This leads the audience to wonder why seeing the wolf is so important. At measure 37, the two voices enter into a call-and-response texture of “I saw the wolf,” each time sustaining an ominous minor third chord. The verse repeats a third time, but this time with clapping to mimic the dancing and clapping that is being performed by the animals in the story. A descant soli group begins at m. 51 which further emphasizes the minor key of this piece. The new melody utilizes the solfege “te” to create a minor line that sounds piercing and urgent with its pitches floating above the chorus. The final sonority of this piece is a g-minor chord with a fermata. Perhaps the minor mode and closing chord imply that the wolf and fox were not merely dancing with the hare, but rather hunting it. Another interpretation could be that the wolf, fox, and hare represent the King, Lord, and the Church during the Medieval times. In those days, these authorities collected taxes and left nothing for the peasants, which could also explain the dancing of the animals yet the minor undercurrent of the g-minor key (representing the unhappy and exploited peasants).³⁷

During the year of this piece’s publishing, France experienced quite a bit of turmoil. The year marked the country’s largest protest movement in the century as a result of Macron, the

³⁷ “J’ai vu Le Loup, Le Renard, Le Lièvre,” Mama Lisa’s World of Children and International Culture, accessed February 21, 2024, <https://www.mamalisa.com/?t=es&p=2171>.

French president, pushing to overhaul the pension system. Strikes and protests against the issue were months long. One might seek to draw relevance between this issue and *J'ai vu le loup* by relating the wolf, fox, and hare to the French president and his political team, and the minor modality of the piece to those affected by the overhauling of the pension system.

France also experienced the worst bout of riots in two decades after the death of Nahel Merzouk, a teenager with North African origins, at the hands of French police officers. While there were consecutive nights of rioting, the United Nations human rights office urged France to address their issues of racism and prejudice in law enforcement.³⁸ It is also possible to relate this event to Crocker's arrangement by recognizing the political symbolism behind the dancing animals. In this case, the wolf, fox, and hare might represent the French political system in their efforts to brush off or ignore systemic racism while the minor tonalities expose the racism that exists despite efforts to quite literally "dance" around it.

***Wild Mountain Thyme* – Jacob Narverud**

Jacob Narverud (b.1986) is an American composer, arranger, lyricist, conductor, and pianist from Kansas known for his eclectic choral catalog. He is known internationally for his original compositions, arrangements of Broadway and Popular music, and performance editions of choral works from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical eras. His musical training includes an undergraduate degree in Voice Performance from Emporia State University, and he later earned Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in conducting from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He composed his first choral piece, *Harvest*, in 2009 for the Madrigal Singers at Emporia State, which led him to create the

³⁸ Benjamin Dodman, "Riots, Protests and Climate Uprisings: 2023 Was a Tumultuous Year in France," France 24, December 28, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20231228-riots-protests-and-climate-uprisings-2023-was-a-tumultuous-year-in-france>.

Tallgrass Chamber Choir, a professional ensemble of musicians from across the Great Plains. From 2012 to 2016, Narverud was the Founding Music Director for the *Allegro con Spirito* Tenor-Bass ensemble and *Allegro Brillante* mixed ensemble. During those years, he was also the Composer-in-Residence with the *Allegro* Choirs of Kansas City, taught choir at Lawrence Free State High School, and served as the Interim Director of Choral Activities at Emporia State University. After completing his doctorate, he sang with the Manhattan Chorale in New York City and taught music history, orchestration, and conducting at Molloy University on Long Island, New York. In 2019, he became a full-time composer, continuing his positions as Editor of Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc. and Signature Artist at Musicnotes, Inc. He is also a recurrent guest lecturer at universities and conferences.

Narverud is a highly sought-after composer and has been commissioned to compose for over 60 choral organizations nationwide, in addition to ensembles in Australia and Japan. He has a long list of best sellers, including *The Wellerman*, *Ad Astra*, *Sunflower*, *Lakeside Lullaby*, *Wild Mountain Thyme*, and several others.³⁹ Currently, his top-selling piece on J.W. Pepper is *Ad Astra (To the Stars...)*.⁴⁰

Wild Mountain Thyme is a traditional Scottish folk song that is also known as *Purple Heather* or *Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go?* Narverud's arrangement was published in 2022 and details the story of a young man who is searching for a lover around the blooming of summer. He promises to build her a tower to place alongside her crystal fountain piled high with the colors of the mountain, claiming that if she were to leave, he would never find another like her.

³⁹ "Jacob Narverud Full Bio," Jacob Narverud, January 29, 2024, <https://www.jnarverud.com/>.

⁴⁰ "Search Jacob+Narverud: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 18, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=jacob%2Bnarverud&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

Narverud sets the scene of this piece by incorporating the Scotch snap, also known as the Lombard rhythm, into the first phrase of music. This is a syncopated musical rhythm with a short accented note followed by a longer one (see Fig. 1) and is an identifiable rhythm heard primarily in Scottish strathspeys.⁴¹



Figure 1 An example of the Scotch snap rhythm. “Scottish Music,” BBC News, January 27, 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9h92nb/revision/8>.

Although this piece is written in 4/4 time for descriptive and explanatory moments of text, Narverud switches to 3/4 time for his “Will ya go, lassie?” choruses. The transition creates a waltz-like musical state where listeners can picture the young boy twirling a girl around in the hopes of winning her heart.

The biggest news story associated with Scotland in 2022 was regarding its census, which indicated that Scotland’s population had grown to 5.4 million people - 2.7% - since its last census in 2011, marking the largest population ever recorded in Scotland.⁴² Narverud’s interest in the Scottish folk song might have been prompted by the major increase in American visitors to Scotland during this year. According to Private Tours Scotland, the increase in American travelers between 2022 and 2023 was 71%.⁴³ American tourism in the British country accounted for 21% of all overseas trips to Scotland and totaled 693,000 trips by Americans to Scotland in 2022.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tom Daniel, “Scotch Snaps and Southern Music,” Abbeville Institute Press, March 22, 2019, <https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org/scotch-snaps-and-southern-music/>.

⁴² Jon Wroth-Smith, “Scotland’s Census 2022 - Rounded Population Estimates,” Scotland’s Census, September 14, 2023, <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-rounded-population-estimates/>.

⁴³ United Press, “The Rise of American Tourists Flocking to Scotland: Exploring the Allure and Impact,” Wisconsin State Journal, December 5, 2023, https://madison.com/brandavestudios/the-rise-of-american-tourists-flocking-to-scotland-exploring-the-allure-and-impact/article_def3d19e-755f-5993-ba34-74acbcf76d83.html.

⁴⁴ United Press, “The Rise of American Tourists Flocking to Scotland.”

***Elijah Rock!* – arr. Roger Emerson**

Roger Emerson (b.1950) is one of the most widely performed choral composers/arrangers in the world.⁴⁵ Born into a musical family in California, Emerson’s first musical training was guitar lessons at the age of ten. In 1965, he joined a rock band known as “The Nervous System” as an electric bass player. Recognizing himself as a “songwriting, singer-guitarist,” Emerson enrolled in a small community college in Northern California as a music major:

[I was] NOT your typical music major. The fact is, I probably would have washed out of a large program such as the ones offered by area schools, UCLA, USC, and Long Beach State. I ended up with two very talented and supportive teachers: George Mattos and, the then unpublished, Kirby Shaw. It was... a match made in heaven.⁴⁶

He received his degree in Music Education from Southern Oregon University and worked in the Mt. Shasta Public School system for twelve years as a music specialist. He later worked at the College of Siskiyou, where he eventually retired from his teaching career. He is presently devoted to composing, arranging, and consulting, and is in high demand as a lecturer on popular choral music. He has presented to major music education groups including the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), the California Music Educators Association (CMEA), the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), the Iowa Choral Directors Association (ICDA), the Ohio Music Educators Association (OMEA) and the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA).

Emerson has arranged some of the most successful Broadway and commercial titles, including Disney’s *Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Seasons of Love*. He has been awarded the ASCAP Standard Award, and has performed his works at the Kennedy Center, The

⁴⁵ “Artist Bio,” The Music of Roger Emerson, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.rogeremerson.com/artist-bio>.

⁴⁶ “Artist Bio,” The Music of Roger Emerson.

White House, and Carnegie Hall.⁴⁷ Some of Emerson's best sellers include *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*, *Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)*, and *When I Grow Up* (from *Matilda the Musical*).⁴⁸

His spiritual arrangement of *Elijah Rock!* was published in 2005 and is included on J.W. Pepper's Editors' Choice and Basic Library lists.⁴⁹ It is based on the spiritual by the same name written by African-American composer Hall Johnson in 1933, which became popular during the Civil Rights Movement.⁵⁰ Spirituals are the earliest form of black sacred music and were first sung by Africans brought to America as slaves.⁵¹

The African population in the American colonies was first introduced to Christianity in the 17th century. While adoption of the religion was slow, the slaves eventually became intrigued by the Biblical stories and recognized parallels between the stories and their own lives. As African Christianity took root in the slave population, spirituals served as a way to express their new faith. This was an acceptable form of singing in the eyes of white slave owners, rather than the African-infused songs of worship that they considered "idoltrous and wild."⁵² Spirituals highlighted the importance of storytelling and focused on Afro-Christian religious traditions, which is why spirituals are interpreted from a Biblical perspective.⁵³

⁴⁷ "Roger Emerson," Hal Leonard, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.halleonard.com/biography/108/roger-emerson#:~:text=With%20over%20500%20titles%20in,Shasta%20Public%20School%20system>.

⁴⁸ "Search Roger+Emerson: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=roger%20emerson&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

⁴⁹ "Search Roger+Emerson: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son.

⁵⁰ Warren Barrett, "The Meaning Behind the Song: Elijah Rock by Mahalia Jackson," Old Time Music, September 14, 2023, <https://oldtimemusic.com/the-meaning-behind-the-song-elijah-rock-by-mahalia-jackson/>.

⁵¹ Bob Abernethy and Arthur Jones, "African-American Spirituals," Religion & Ethics News Weekly, August 26, 2005, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2005/08/26/august-26-2005-african-american-spirituals/10900/>.

⁵² "African American Spirituals," The Library of Congress, accessed February 23, 2024, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197495/#:~:text=As%20Africanized%20Christianity%20took%20hold,as%20its%20sorrows%20and%20hopes>.

⁵³ Abernethy and Jones, "African-American Spirituals."

The song *Elijah Rock!* proposes that Elijah was a prophet and miracle worker who defended the worship of God over the local deity, Baal. The lyrics “Elijah Rock! Shout! Shout!” have two possible symbolic meanings. The first is that it refers to Mount Carmel, the place where Elijah proved that the Lord was God rather than Baal. The other possibility is that the rock is a reference to God and the singers shout with joy at the idea of “comin’ up” to Heaven. The lyrics “comin’ up, Lord” likely refer to Elijah ascending into Heaven in a fiery chariot. Next, the text “Satan’s a liar and a conjur too / If you don’t watch out, he’ll conjur you” derive from the Gospel of John 8:44 which verifies that Satan is the father of lies. Lastly, “If I could, I surely would stand on the rock where Moses stood” is fitting since Moses was associated with several rocks. Two such rocks gushed water for the Israelites and another, Mount Nebo, is where Moses climbed to look over Canaan, which is often a reference to freedom on earth and/or a reference to Heaven.⁵⁴ In short, the piece is a celebration of Elijah, a man who defended God against false gods and the devil and was thereby rewarded by God with the gift of Heaven.

In this piece, Emerson includes many of the musical qualities that are characteristic of spirituals, including intense emotion, call-and-response, syncopation, and the repetition of rhythmic figures.⁵⁵ He begins the song with a call-and-response on the word “Elijah.” This call-and-response includes eight iterations of the name and leaves room for the conductor to request vocal slides from their choir. Once the ensemble arrives at the “driving rock” section, the rhythms in the piano and voices become very syncopated and the piece itself becomes very emotionally charged. One such syncopated rhythm that occurs quite often can be found in Figure

⁵⁴ Debisimons, “What’s the ‘Rock’ in ‘Elijah Rock’?,” *Behind the Music*, March 25, 2022, <https://www.debisimons.com/whats-the-rock-in-elijah-rock/>.

⁵⁵ Matthew Sabatella, “Spirituals: About the Genre,” *Ballad of America*, November 19, 2023, <https://balladofamerica.org/spirituals/>.

2. It is first performed in measure 17 on the word “Elijah,” and is used several times more throughout the chorus and verses.



Figure 2 This syncopated rhythm is found frequently in *Elijah Rock!* pg19081968, “5 Exercises to Develop Reading Syncopated Rhythms: Guitar Lesson,” Ultimate Guitars.com, April 16, 2020, https://www.ultimate-guitar.com/lessons/for_beginners/5_exercises_to_de

***Blessing* –Katie Moran Bart**

Not much is known about American composer, Katie Moran Bart. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Music Education from St. Olaf College and later earned a Master of Music degree in Music Education from UW-Milwaukee. She taught elementary music at Burleigh Elementary in the Elmbrook School District in Wisconsin but has since retired from that position. She also has experience teaching undergraduate music courses as an adjunct professor at UW-Milwaukee, K-8 music at Swallow Elementary in the Hartland/Arrowhead District for sixteen years, and four years at Richland Center. Up until recently, she was also the Music Director at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Delafield, Wisconsin.⁵⁶ She is currently listed as a qualified, professional piano accompanist/ performer with the Waukesha County Conservatory of Music / Hartland Music.⁵⁷ *Blessing*, which was printed by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company, is her only published piece of music.

Blessing is an SSA octavo dedicated to Alice Larsen and the Manitou Singers at St. Olaf College, published in 1984. In 1986, Bart published an SAB version, and later in 2000, she published SATB and Unison versions as well. The traditional Irish blessing encapsulates the idea

⁵⁶ “Katie Moran Bart,” Neil A Kjos Music Company, accessed 2024, <https://kjos.com/person/view?id=831>.

⁵⁷ “Piano Accompanist/ Musician Listing,” Waukesha County Conservatory of Music, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.waukeshaconservatory.com/musician-listing.html>.

of wishing someone good fortune on their journey through life using symbolic natural elements such as the wind, sun, and rain. Since this text was originally a prayer, it is fitting to analyze those elements through a religious lens. In the line “May the wind be always at your back,” the wind is thought to be a reference to the Holy Spirit, who arrived as a “mighty wind” during Pentecost. The next line is “May the sun shine warm upon your face.” According to Luke 1:78, the sun suggests God’s mercy. The last natural element is utilized in the line “and the rains fall soft upon your fields.” Rain is frequently thought of as a symbol of God’s provision since nothing can grow without rain.⁵⁸ Thus, the lyrics of this piece are wishing someone well in their future through their faith in God’s eternal presence, mercy, and delivery. The connection between religion and this song is appropriate since, at the time of its publication in 1984, 90% of Irish Catholics attended Mass every week.⁵⁹

Bart appropriately utilizes the 6/8 time signature to create the rhythmic lilt present in most Irish songs. She also composes this piece so that the performance of *ritardandos* is implied in several spots to evoke emotion and feeling through small tempo changes. Lastly, the piano accompaniment is written to mimic the arpeggios of a harp, which is commonly used to accompany traditional Irish music.

***Inscription of Hope* – Z. Randall Stroope**

Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953) is an active American composer and conductor, holding a Bachelor of Music Education degree in Voice and Piano, a Master of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Colorado (Boulder), and a Doctor of Musical Arts in

⁵⁸ James Wilson, “‘May the Road Rise up to Meet You’ - The Story Behind the Traditional Irish Blessing,” IrishCentral., September 19, 2023, <https://www.irishcentral.com/culture/may-the-road-rise-meet-you-irish-blessing-meaning#:~:text=%22May%20the%20road%20rise%20to,people%20all%20over%20the%20world>.

⁵⁹ “Everything You Need to Know about Ireland’s Disaffected Catholics,” The Week, January 8, 2015, <https://theweek.com/articles/445823/everything-need-know-about-irelands-disaffected-catholics>.

Conducting from Arizona State University. He did post-graduate work with Margaret Hillis, the Chorus Master of the Chicago Symphony. His composition mentors were Normand Lockwood and Cecil Effinger, both students of Nadia Boulanger. He has conducted concerts in 26 countries and published over 200 musical pieces. In the United States, he has conducted 56 performances at Carnegie Hall and Chicago Orchestra Hall, 48 all-state choirs, and has served several other conducting workshops, clinics, and performances at universities and festivals. He is also the Artistic Director of two international summer music festivals and is the founder/ conductor of *The New American Voices*, a professional recording and performing ensemble that will be touring parts of Europe in the summer of 2024. His works are published by seven companies, and he has sold over four million copies of music. *Song to the Moon*, *In Paradisum*, and *Dies Irae* are among his best-sellers.⁶⁰ In addition to composing and conducting, Stroope was a music professor at Oklahoma State University, Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and currently holds a position at the University of New Mexico.

Although Stroope states he had been composing since he was ten years old, it was not until he wrote *Inscription of Hope* for the Nebraska Choral Arts Society and Children's Chorus in 1993 that he began to gain recognition. The elements of this piece come from diverse sources, one being fragmentations of a Russian folk song melody and the other a Jewish text found inscribed on a cellar wall during the rise of Nazi Germany. The lyrics tell a story of survival, resilience, and faith, spreading the message that hope and firm belief will eventually reign over the greatest of odds.⁶¹

⁶⁰ "Biography," Z. Randall Stroope, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.zrstroope.com/biography>.

⁶¹ "Inscription of Hope," The Lorenz Corp., accessed February 20, 2024, <https://lorenz.com/shop/school-and-community-choral/octavos/inscription-of-hope-8>.

Inscription of Hope begins very ethereally, with the altos and tenors singing on a neutral “oo” and the sopranos, also on “oo,” soaring above the others on a light and delicate melody that is supported by the two lower harmonies. The soprano line is rather disjunct, but still euphonious, repetitive in rhythm, and airy in tone. This immediately gives the impression that the angels in heaven are somehow involved in the performance of this piece. About midway through the piece, the choir begins to sing intensely about the fear and hopelessness that they feel amidst their suffering. They claim “but a voice rises within me saying hold on my child, I’ll give you strength, I’ll give you hope, just stay a little while,” and immediately following those lyrics, the ethereal “oos” begin again. This is beautiful symbolism of the guardian angels that appear to us throughout our trials. A key change follows the conclusion of the “oo”s, and Stroope marks that the singers now have a renewed strength. That this strength follows the second arrival of the heavenly “oo”s is not coincidental, but a sign that the singers (narrators) feel a new sense of hope with the knowledge that the angels are there to protect and guide them.

The final line of the piece is “May there someday be love. Maybe there someday be peace.” The call for peace arrived that same year as the first World Trade Center bombing in New York City. On February 26, 1993, the epicenter of the parking garage underneath the Trade Center had a tremendous eruption that killed six people instantly. The mastermind of the attack was Ramzi Yousef, and the FBI soon discovered he was planning more attacks, including simultaneous bombings of several US international flights; he had also intended for his World Trade Center bomb to topple one tower, and knock the other down with the debris, a plan his uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, would successfully carry out in 2001. Yousef was eventually found and captured in 1995.⁶²

⁶² “World Trade Center Bombing 1993,” FBI, accessed February 23, 2024, <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/world-trade-center-bombing-1993>.

***Arise and Greet the Day* – Victor C. Johnson**

Victor C. Johnson (b. 1978) is a prolific, award-winning American composer and arranger from Texas with over 400 choral works, vocal solo books, and keyboard collections in print. He studied music education with a concentration in organ at the University of Texas at Arlington. While there, he served as a student conductor of the university’s choral groups and as the opera workshop accompanist. From 2000-2018, Johnson worked as the choral director of two ensembles at the Ft. Worth Academy of Fine Arts, in addition to being the Artistic Director of the Singing Girls of Texas and Children’s Choir of Texas. He is in high demand as a guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician for music educators and students all around America. He has conducted numerous all-state and regional honors choirs throughout the United States and Canada, and his own choirs have performed at the TMEA Conventions and ACDA conferences. He presently serves as the Minister of Worship and Arts at Shiloh Baptist Church in Plano, Texas.⁶³ His current best seller on J.W. Pepper is *Bonse Aba*, a Zambian folk song.⁶⁴

Arise and Greet the Day is a recent publication, printed in 2023. It was commissioned by the Aubrey ISD elementary choirs in commemoration of the opening of the Aubrey High School auditorium on May 2, 2022. The text encourages listeners and singers to begin each day with a sense of joyful anticipation for the new beginnings presented to them. It assures them that they have the hope and courage needed to set and achieve new goals.

⁶³ “Victor C. Johnson,” The Music of Victor C. Johnson, accessed February 20, 2024, <http://www.victorjohnsonmusic.com/about-me/>.

⁶⁴ “Search Victor+Johnson: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper,” J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?departmentDescriptions=&keywords=victor%2Bjohnson&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

The idea of “arise and greet the day” may be paralleled with standing up for one’s values. America in 2023 experienced protests over several belief systems. One such American protest demanded access to safe abortions, while the other demonstration was a result of discontent with the progress made to combat the climate crisis. During this protest, American citizens called for greater government efforts to address climate change.⁶⁵ Americans also took a stand on the Palestine-Israel conflict as tens of thousands of protestors gathered at the US Capitol to reject President Biden’s refusal to call for a ceasefire and to show their support for Palestine by demanding an end to US military aid to Israel. This was the largest demonstration in favor of Palestine in American history.⁶⁶

The song’s bold sense of happiness and affirmative pride is realized through Johnson’s use of word painting on “arise!” utilizing the solfege syllables Sol-Do or Do-Sol, always ascending as if musically arising on quarter or eighth notes. At measure 41, he introduces a half-step ascending key change which only lasts for eight measures before the music climbs another half-step. During this time of music, the text expresses the seizing of new opportunities and setting of new goals. These eight bars seem to act as someone working towards their goals. The key changes for a second time on the word “achieve,” which is sung over a victorious V7 chord. This presents the idea that the singers’ goals were successfully attained. The opening section of music is then repeated with an optional descant above to add an extra element of joy and celebration. The final measures of music (mm. 75-80) are marked as “stately” as the singers perform the same “arise” motif that is found in mm. 3-7. While this allows the composition to

⁶⁵ Thomas Carothers and Brendan Hartnett, “Protests in 2023: Widespread Citizen Anger Continues, With Sources Multiplying,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 18, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/12/18/protests-in-2023-widespread-citizen-anger-continues-with-sources-multiplying-pub-91256>.

⁶⁶ Zoe Sottile and Abby Baghini, “Pro-Palestine Protests in DC and Across the US Call for a Ceasefire,” CNN, November 4, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/04/us/washington-dc-ceasefire-protests-palestine/index.html>.

come full circle, it also permits and encourages the story to continue as the singers now pass the advice onto the next group of people.

***Lakeside Lullaby* – Jacob Narverud**

Refer to *Wild Mountain Thyme* for details on Jacob Narverud. More information can be found on pages 18 and 19.

Lakeside Lullaby was published in 2022. Its lyrics, also written by Narverud, are quite ambiguous, leading to several possible interpretations and creative discussions among director and singers. From a secular perspective, this could be a song about lovers strolling along the beach at nightfall and reflecting on all of their surroundings. The lyrics “take me down to the water, spin me ‘round by the bay. Hold me tight all through the dark night, cradled close in the glow of the moonlight we’ll sing forever more...” might suggest these two people are making marriage vows to stand by each other through the “dark nights” in addition to the “glow of the moonlight” (for worse or for better), and might also explain why the cove is considered “sacred” in m. 117.

From a sacred perspective, the lyrics “take me down to the water, spin me ‘round by the bay...” might suggest a spiritual baptism or transformation. The “ah”s that are sung after each chorus might be the act of redemption taking place, which would also explain the “sacred cove” lyric. Either way, the lyrics in this piece are a beautiful reflection of a beach or port city at night and tell of the wondrous moments that can happen near the water and the importance of valuing water as a transcendent life force.

This emphasis on the significance of water arrives during the same year that nearly 230 million acres of crops in the United States were found to be undergoing drought conditions. At

Lake Mead, a reservoir that forty million Americans rely on for water, a Tier 1 Water Shortage has remained in effect since early 2022.⁶⁷

Narverud beautifully demonstrates water several times throughout this piece. One such recurring instance is his “ah” motif, which is referenced above as a potential spiritual transformation. The melody involves two phrases, both of which begin with four paired eighth notes repeating minor third leaps. The first phrase follows those eighth notes with an ascending and descending major second, while the second phrase concludes with a descending perfect fourth. This collection of pitches is remnant of shallow waves gently rocking the boats in the harbor.

Another example of word painting is in the text “hear the lapping waves collide.” Narverud successfully utilizes the sopranos and altos in an overlapping texture as they repetitively sing the words “lapping waves” to create the effect of rippling waves. These singers sing “lapping waves” a total of twelve times while the tenors continue by singing the melody and advancements in the lyrics, which furthers the illusion that life is moving on while the waves are in this continuous cycle of washing to shore.

***What a Wonderful World* – arr. Mark Brymer**

Mark Brymer (b. 1957) is an American, Texas-based composer, songwriter, and entrepreneur with a wide range of musical and live theatrical experience. He has musical training from Millikin University, University of North Texas, and UCLA-Los Angeles. In addition to composing/arranging hundreds of choral pieces, he is also the Senior Music Producer and

⁶⁷ Martina Igini, “Top 6 Environmental Issues the US Is Facing in 2024,” Earth.org, January 12, 2023, <https://earth.org/top-environmental-issues-us/#:~:text=In%20July%202022%2C%20nearly%2030,in%20nearby%20communities%20and%20cities.>

Arranger of over 400 recordings for the K-6 McGraw-Hill Music textbook series and the co-creator of the 50-book series “Sing & Read Math” (Pre-K) for Frog Street Press. Commercially, Brymer is the director of a full-service music production and live theatrical show production company, WOW! ENTERTAINMENT, INC. Their clients include Disney Film Studios, Six Flag Theme Parks, Music Theatre International (MTI), and several other major commercial companies.⁶⁸ His latest musical venture is the creation of “Jukebox Musicals,” a series of musicals designed for young performers (ages 12-25) featuring existing popular songs, and age-appropriate scripts.⁶⁹ Selling over 750,000 copies of choral music annually, Brymer’s top-selling pieces on J.W. Pepper currently include two Queen arrangements: *Don’t Stop Me Now* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*.⁷⁰

Brymer’s arrangement of *What a Wonderful World*, a Louis Armstrong ballad that was featured in the movie *Good Morning, Vietnam*, was published in 1967. Its lyrics invite audience members and singers alike to recognize and appreciate the beauty of their surroundings. One of the most beautiful musical qualities of this piece is Brymer’s use of rhythms that set three against two. In other words, the piano accompaniment is constantly playing triplets while most of the time, the singers are singing duplets. Symbolism exists within this difficult-to-perform choice, as the accompaniment can represent all of the noise and negativity that surrounds us each day, and that can distract us from recognizing the wonderful miracles in our everyday lives. Just as it

⁶⁸ “Mark Brymer,” Hal Leonard, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.halleonard.com/biography/102/mark-brymer>.

⁶⁹ “Mark Brymer,” Music Theatre International, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://www.mtishows.com/people/mark-brymer>.

⁷⁰ “Search Mark+Brymer: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper,” J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=mark%2Bbrymer&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

takes effort to remain strict in singing duplets for the singers, it takes discipline to tune out the bad and focus on the good.

After two verses/ choruses, Brymer introduces a key change. Before this key change, the lyrics speak of moments and objects that are easy to recognize as beautiful. The choir sings of “trees of green, red roses too,” “skies of blue and clouds of white,” “the colors of the rainbow,” and friends that greet each other. All of these examples are evidence of goodness. After the key change, the lyrics shift to moments that people might not always recognize as good, such as babies crying or someone receiving a better education than them. The key change prompts the question to all involved: will they allow the distractions of the world to cloud their recognition of joy or will they dedicate themselves to appreciating all that they have amidst the challenges of everyday life? Just as the piano triplets never stop, the frenzy of life will never stop, but we can stay concentrated on the beauty of the world, just as the singers remain committed to their performance of duplets.

The publishing of this arrangement was during the same year as the “Summer of Love.” This summer brought all interested in the emerging hippie culture to gather in San Francisco where they shared their common interests.⁷¹ These interests included the desire to generate a new society that focused on spiritual grace, agape, and reverence.⁷² Their inclination towards agape, a kind of love between friends that is selfless, and one that seeks a quality of mind and heart that always looks for the highest good, could explain the popularity of *What a Wonderful World*.⁷³

⁷¹ “1967: A Year in the Collections,” Smithsonian Institution, accessed February 22, 2024, <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/1967#:~:text=The%20summer%20of%201967%20was,U.S.%20military%20involvement%20in%20Vietnam.>

⁷² Lily Rothman, “50 Years Ago This Week: When the Hippies Took America,” Time, July 3, 2017, [https://time.com/4835155/1967-hippies/.](https://time.com/4835155/1967-hippies/)

⁷³ “Love-Agape (Greek Word Study),” Precept Austin, July 26, 2023, <https://www.preceptaustin.org/love-agape#:~:text=Agape%20is%20that%20quality%20of,seek%20nothing%20but%20their%20good.>

A Million Dreams: from The Greatest Showman – arr. Mac Huff

Mac Huff (birth year unknown) is a leading American arranger and composer, in addition to being an accomplished pianist, musical director, performer, teacher, and clinician. Born in Indiana, but raised in Wisconsin, Huff grew up in a musical family where piano and vocal music were part of everyday life. He began arranging music in high school, and when he entered college, found himself writing entire shows for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's show group, the Wisconsin Singers. Despite arranging music for the "Singers," he earned his bachelor's in piano performance, studied for two summers at the Aspen Music Festival, and later earned a master's degree in piano performance from the University of Texas-Austin. In 1979, he began working on a doctoral piano performance degree at the University of Southern California. After winning the Ima Hogg Competition, an international piano competition, he decided to stop practicing piano and start composing and arranging for a living. Since then, he has written, musically directed, and conducted several industrial shows on ABC, NBC, Disney, and others, has written two shows for Six Flags, and for several years, wrote and arranged the opening for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. In 1989, he became an exclusive writer with Hal Leonard and has published over two hours of music per year. He has 3,000 items in print and has sold over 30 million copies worldwide. He has also been the exclusive arranger for multiple Broadway show publications, including *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Rent*, *Guys and Dolls*, and others. Huff also travels frequently as a guest conductor, lecturer, and workshop clinician for music educators and young singers across the United States.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ "About Mac," Mac Huff, accessed February 20, 2024, <https://machuff.com/about-2/>.

A Million Dreams, published in 2017, is currently one of Huff's top-selling pieces.⁷⁵ The lyrics express the strong ambition of a spirited dreamer who has a vision to change life to become bigger and more colorful than before. It illustrates that with a dream and some courage, anything is possible, and that dreamers should never be concerned with how others perceive their visions for the future.

The publication of this song came out right around the time when the #MeToo Movement exploded, even being named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year in 2017.⁷⁶ Although the movement began in 2006, the number of sexual assault and harassment accusations against Hollywood's Harvey Weinstein prompted many women to have the courage to come forward with their own stories of harassment and assault.⁷⁷ This aligns with the sentiment of *A Million Dreams*, in the need to have courage to achieve what you want from life, and in the case of the #MeToo Movement, these women wanted justice for their trauma.

One compositional technique that Huff included in this song that emboldens the message of the #MeToo Movement and the achievement of dreams is the number of solos that he includes throughout this piece. Symbolically, this allows the choir to demonstrate that so many of us have different dreams that we are all working towards, but only together (or in unison) can we hope to change the world.

⁷⁵ "Search Mac+Huff: Sheet Music at J.W. Pepper," J.W. Pepper and Son, accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=mac%2Bhuff&setStickyDepartment=true&suggested=&sort=totalUnits>.

⁷⁶ Tanya Ballard Brown, "Some Of 2017's Biggest National Stories, In Pictures," NPR, December 28, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/28/572110710/some-of-2017s-biggest-national-stories-in-pictures>.

⁷⁷ Tanya Ballard Brown, "Some Of 2017's Biggest National Stories, In Pictures."

***Blue Moon* – arr. Roger Emerson**

Refer to *Elijah Rock!* for details on Roger Emerson. More information can be found on pages 21 and 22.

Blue Moon is a jazz-inflected doo-wop song that was written in the 1930s, made popular by the Marceles in 1961, and was arranged by Emerson in 2016. The term “doo-wop” was not used until the year 1961, when *The Chicago Defender* coined the genre in a magazine article referencing *Blue Moon*. Doo-wop peaked the following year after having been popular since the 1950s, and then became dominated by rock-and-roll and the “British Invasion,” which included groups such as the Beatles and The Rolling Stones.⁷⁸

This octavo is a classic love song that explores the search for love. The song begins with the narrator feeling lonely as he stands without a dream or love, praying for someone to care for. Then suddenly his love arrives and he realizes he has found the person he has been searching for. As the moon turns to gold, the narrator understands this as a sign of good fortune and he reflects on the love that he now has in his life. The song ends with the narrator celebrating the joy and love that he was once searching for but now has.

Emerson does a nice job of capturing the shifts of emotion within his arrangement. During the first phase of loneliness, he utilizes a lot of minor thirds between the sopranos and altos and marks for the singers to perform *mezzo forte* to emphasize the narrator’s sadness. In the second phase of the song, Emerson introduces some chromaticism to create major thirds instead of minor thirds and has the singers all sing in unison. The unison demands listeners to pay attention to the lyrics and makes the choir sound as if they are singing louder. This also allows listeners to understand that the narrator has found his love, and now that they are together, they

⁷⁸ Brecht Stremes, “The Origin and Influence of Doo-Wop Music,” Bertolt Press, April 24, 2020, <https://bertoltpress.com/2020/04/24/doo-wop-music-history/>.

no longer need to sing separately. During the scatting section, Emerson layers voices and pitches in the melody to outline major chords and has the musicians sing *forte* to celebrate the narrator's happy destiny. This moment might also be seen as the two lovers dancing with each other and celebrating their newfound love.

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