

III - Large Works choral/orchestral works Texts, Composer Notes and Score inclusion information

~ THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD Oratorio for SATB choir, soloists and orchestra (duration ca. 52 minutes)

Introduction -- Prologue: This is the day -- All glory be to this day -- Haste thee, O Carmel -- The supplication of Carmel -- The voice of God in answer -- Fanfare and The City of God -- Sanctified be the Lord of all mankind -- Finale : Call out to Zion.

TEXTS: Baha'u'llah from the Tablet of Carmel

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

The score was composed over some years in anticipation of the dedication of the "Arc" gardens and structures in the Bahai World Centre Gardens on Mount Carmel in Haifa Israel. Unfortunately, it was not selected in whole or part for the performances celebrating this event.

The work is 9 movements and uses the Tablet of Carmel for most of its texts.

In addition to the full orchestral and choral/soloists score, a piano reduction is also available for rehearsals. Parts have also been prepared in pdf.

SCORE INCLUSIONS: PDF and Finale Files (movements 2 and 4 are missing)

~THE TURNING POINT - Cantata for choirs/soloists (Multicultural/professional choirs) 1996(?)

TEXTS:

Wilfred Owen's "*What Passing Bells for These Who Die Like Cattle*" and
Walt Whitman's Look "*Down Fair Moon*"

Other Texts by the composer in II. *The Turning Point* and III. *Song and Dance*

Baha'u'llah Various quotations in IV. *The Promise of Peace*

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

This is a multilayered work in regards to the ability of singers. Ideally, a professional choir with strong multicultural diversity and varied cultural music skill sets would be required for the best performances.

The compositions use boxed notations for improvised singing and there is a lot of divisi in the SATB scores. There are also areas of chordal complexity and pan-diatonicism in parts. Singers in these sections may want to use tuning forks for their pitches placed against near the ear.

SCORE INCLUSIONS: PDF and PERSONAL COMPOSER Files. (NO CURRENT APP AVAILABLE TO OPEN THESE)

~CANTILLATIONS for SATB choir and ensemble 2010

TEXTS: Ali, Baha'u'llah and Rumi

Dost Thou Imagine Thyself A Puny Form, when within thee the universe is enfolded? (Ali) Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, Mighty, Powerful and Self-Subsisting. (Baha'u'llah)

What Worlds Mysterious surge within the vast all-encompassing ocean of God's Mind! Cup-like there-on our forms are floating fast only to fill and sink and leave behind no spray of bubbles form the sea upcast. The Spirit thou canst not view it comes so nigh. Drink of this Prescence. Be not a jar laden with water and its lip stone dry. (Rumi translated by R.A Nicholson)

Like This. (Paraphrase of translation by Jonathon Star)
Should someone ask "What does true beauty look like?" Show him your face and say "Like this!"

Should someone ask "What does a full moon look like?" Climb to the roof and sing "Like this!"

Should someone ask, "What does an angel's wing look like?" If he asks about the fragrance divine, hold him close, his face in your hair, like this.

Should someone ask "How did Jesus bring the dead back to life?" Don't say a word, close your eyes, just kiss him softly on the cheek, like this.

When a lover cries out he is telling our tale, like this. Only the gentle breeze knows the secret of reunion, and it whispers a song to every heart, like this.

I remembered Joseph's perfume borne by the wind from land to land, it was your scent blowing from God's beautiful world.

I remembered how Joseph's perfume gave sight to the blind, it was your scent clearing the darkness from my eyes. Like this.

Should someone ask, "How can a servant attain the Glory of God?" Become a brilliant candle that every eye can see. Like this.

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

~**Cantillations** is a work for SATB choir and ensemble commissioned by Graeme Morton and Saint Peter's Lutheran College in Brisbane in 2010. It consists of three individual pieces, linked by a textual and philosophical theme. Each piece is composed using synthesis of style or genre elements, ideas and mannerisms. Its title reflects its association with religious or spiritual chant or song.

The mystical writings of the world's revealed religions all hold an essential sameness relating the believer's desire to attain the presence of the Creator. In the erotic mystic poetry and prose of Islam, like all excellent art, the metaphorical multiples of meaning contained in the words allows many levels of understanding, all of which signal the lover's search for the Beloved.

The first piece, *Dost Thou Imagine Thyself A Puny Form?*, explores the idea that human beings are made in the image of God, not in body but in spirit. Being a handiwork of the Creator our reflection on our mental and creative powers is rewarded with a glimpse of the hand of God within ourselves. The text is a paraphrase of a saying of Ali as quoted by Baha'u'llah in His mystical work *The Seven Valleys* and is combined with a quote from *Baha'ullah's Hidden Words*. It is composed using the Persian *dastgah* of *Chahargah*, a mode that features two tetrachords of parallel intervals of a minor second (actually a quarter tone flat major second), followed by a minor third and a minor second. In C it would be C Db (actually Dp) E and F; the 2nd tetra chord being G Ab (actually Ap) B and C. The work opens with a choral unison *fff* expanding into harmony and into the rhythmical character of the piece. The major contrasting section communicates through a modern compositional approach with the *Chahargah* mode returning at the end through both choir and ensemble.

What Worlds Mysterious is the second piece that furthers the above with the concept of our lives floating in the ocean of the universal mind. Its text is a paraphrase from Rumi's mystical poetry. The musical approach is modernist/

quasi minimalist, and contains elements of contemporary pop or rock music combined with an ethereal treatment of harmony and melody. The text's translation is by Reynold A. Nicholson published in *Rumi Poet and Mystic* by One World (1995).

The final work in the song-cycle *Like This*, focuses more on the rapture of the lover contemplating the Loved One. The imagery always refers to an inner condition of holy attraction that gives the words an illumined foreground and for me, accomplishes what ciascuro does in painting. The erotic or material interpretation approximates the dark contrasted by the brightness of true inner meaning. Joseph's beautiful characteristics in the Bible and the Quran are highlighted here as symbols of the beauty of God and its efficacy in giving new spiritual life to the spiritually dead. I composed this as both an a capella piece and a work with ensemble. The text was translated by Jonathon Star in *Rumi – In the Arms of the Beloverd* published by Tarcher Cornerstone Editions (2008)

Like This begins with a chant of a tonic and its major neighbor-tones, common to many peoples I believe, though I have heard it as a Mauri chant from New Zealand in a workshop that I attended in 1998, and I have also heard it in Qawwali music. This chant forms the rhythmical basis of the piece. The various melodies vary between the Mixolydian and the dominant Lydian scales which I have heard often in both Indian Raga and Sufi Qawwali. The glissandi and portamento treatment of melodic lines imitates the vocal slides of the singers in these musics. Sections of this piece feature different styles of writing, including varied, but somewhat typical Western choral approaches and orchestral accompaniments. My love of pan-diatonic harmony is exposed by the massed chords in both the choir and ensemble as well as the approximated sitarish use of the strings brushed inside the piano after weighting the keys of the appropriate scale. Before the piece can move forward to the ending, a fortissimo chant is re-introduced harking back to the first movement's opening.

Underlying each of the works is the feeling that this music combines not only styles but distinct genre messages. This is accomplished through not only the inclusion of style and genre elements from Persian, Arabic, and Hindu vocal and classical music and through the use of recognizable Western Classical choral and orchestral treatments, but also through the use of a rhythm section that sometimes sounds like a pop band, or a jazz trio or an orchestral percussion section.

SUGGESTED MINIMUM INSTRUMENTATION

- 4 voice + per part
- String orchestra (5.5.3.2.1)

- Piano (prepared for 3rd movement with key weights)
- Double Bass (pizz and arco)
- Drum kit (written part is indicative but does not confine drummer's creative input) and percussion (including orchestral gong)

drum kit with sizzle and Chinese cymbals tuned tom-toms x 2
finger cymbal
wind chimes

gong

Conga or Tabla player (movt. 3) The performer has much leeway to alter the written parts but not to add to areas where nothing is written.

SCORE INCLUSIONS: PDF AND FINALE FILES

~Sar Galu- for SATB choir and Soprano Soloist

TEXTS: BAHĀ'U'LLĀH

The text used for this work comes from two extracts from the published writings of Baha'u'llah, the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith. Baha'u'llah left Baghdad (where he had been sent in banishment from His native land of Persia by order of the Shah) on a self-imposed exile to the mountains of Kurdistan near Sulamaniyyeh. In these writings Baha'u'llah describes the anguish of his tortured soul in language that is prosaic and heart-rending. In his words we find a modern-day "voice in the wilderness", the voice of the Prophet who must come to grips with the mission with which he had been entrusted. Sar-Galu (top of the neck) was the name of the mountain where Baha'u'llah took refuge in a cave.

From the Land of Ta', after countless afflictions, We reached Iraq... God knoweth what befell Me thereafter! At length I gave up My home and all therein, and renounced life and all that appertaineth unto it, and alone and friendless, chose to go into retirement.

I roamed the wilderness of resignation, travelling in such wise that in My exile every eye wept sore over Me, and all created things shed tears of blood because of My anguish. The birds of the air were My companions and the beasts of the field My associates...

By the righteousness of God! I have borne what neither the oceans, nor the waves, nor the fruits, nor any created thing, whether of the past or of the future, hath borne or will be capable of bearing.

We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain...

We betook Ourselves to the wilderness, and there, separated and alone, led for two years a life of complete solitude. From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonising pain. Many a night We had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest.

By Him Who hath My being between His hands! Notwithstanding these showers of afflictions and unceasing calamities, Our soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and Our whole being evinced an ineffable gladness. For in Our solitude We were unaware of the harm or benefit, the health or ailment, of any soul. Alone, We communed with Our spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein.

Compiled by Geoffrey W. Marks. *Call to Remembrance*.

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

The text is primarily a lament, and this inspired the original section which is best described as a 8-part choral lament, each part having its own 3-4 note cells sung in a chant-like fashion and functioning as a backdrop for the narrative which is sung by the tenor soloist. The two SATB choirs are situated on the left and on the right, and this placement is used for stereo effects in sections of the composition. The tenor soloist is placed in the centre. The soloist sings the text in the first person, and so is the narrator throughout. The choir sings words and phrases from the main text, which emphasizes the sufferings of the narrator. "All created things shed tears of blood..." & "...every eye wept sore over Me..." "...alone and friendless" ... and so on.

The form is through composed with four major sections. The first is a lament progressing through the layering of each of the choral parts so that the texture creates an increasing dynamic in density, harmony and volume. Beginning in an almost pensive mood, the single, unremarkable line underpins the further overlaying of voices. With each entry the harmonic implications metamorphose so that in spite of the fact that each part is repeating a nine-bar pattern, the added new voice creates a fresh harmonic reality. By the eighth entry, the words chanted by the choral parts are for all purposes un-intelligible, the mayhem corresponding to the dismay in the narrator's soul..

At bar 55 the tempo and rhythmic energy increases. Though still a lament, the energy and the broad minor chords of this bridging section prepare the listener for the second section at bar 80 which uses the words "We sought shelter upon the summit..." Repeated three times in sequence, and using a pan-diatonic chord in the higher voices against open fourths and fifths in the lower voices, this section presents new material which is briefly hinted at later in the work.

At bar 94 the work echoes the mood of the opening section basses, though now in the sopranos. This is a reminder that acts as a bridge to bar 102 which marks the third section.

This consists of several mini sections that further relate the sufferings of the narrator. The narrative is punctuated with the use of a variety of choral treatments.

Section four begins at bar 141 and is marked by a transition from the lament mood to one of quiet acquiescence. This section, unlike the opening, is no longer a mournful, chant-like song (though in bars 149-159, the beginning lament is passionately echoed), but rather a song of resignation and inner-peace. It is almost improvisatory in nature, and in a mirroring of the opening, it fades to nothing, adding a few repetitions of "Alone, We communed with Our spirit...". The piece ends after a tranquil consideration of these words in the key of A major (the opening being in "E").

Conductor's Notes

Considering the texture of this piece, especially in the first section, the performance venue would need to be one with a brief acoustical delay which would still provide the ambience such an atmospheric piece requires. The size of the choirs must be numerically sufficient due to the dividing of parts. The basses in particular divide into three in some areas.

The opening section represents eight distinct lines of nine bars, each which should be learned individually at the outset as the texture becomes quite thick towards the end of the section. Familiarity with the part would assist intonation, and the balancing of the harmony. Rhythmic grouping of notes within each bar might be noted with a slash or a two eighth-note beat grouping, a triangle for a three eighth-note beat grouping, and a square for a four eighth-note beat grouping. This might facilitate learning the parts. At bar 55, the left-hand choir sings in irregular groupings of 2+3+4 –2+4+3, and so on. The right-hand choir follows this pattern six beats behind but is easily read in groups of three until bar 63. Breath marks are inserted as a guide in this section.

Areas in which the stereo effect is predominantly used include the bridge referred to above; from bar 102 with the crescendo/decrescendo patterns on each side; and the chordal echoes from bar 111.

Bars 122-3 are colla-parte and are without a distinct metric pulse.

SCORE INCLUSIONS: PDF score and Finale files
