

R. Douglas Helvering Doctoral Composition Recital Program Notes

Ubi Caritas

Performed by the University of Kansas Chamber Choir and the William Baker Festival Singers, conducted by Dr. William O. Baker, published by Hal Leonard.

Commissioned by the Indiana State University Concert Choir, Dr. Scott Buchanan, conductor.

Premiered at the Indiana State MENC convention in 2005.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.	Where charity and love are, God is there.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.	Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Exultemus, et in ipso iucundemur.	Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.	Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.	And may we love each other with a sincere heart.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.	Where charity and love are, God is there.
Saecula per infinita saeculorum, Amen.	Unto the ages through infinite ages, Amen.

“Ubi Caritas”, in itself, is an ancient prayer of thanksgiving and of the power of the human spirit. The Latin text dates from the fifth century, and sources place the association of the text with its chant (as we know it today) dating from between the sixth and tenth century. “Ubi Caritas” is taken from the antiphons sung during the ceremony of the Washing of the Feet at the Mass of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. As in the entire Mass of the Last Supper, this hymn is intimately connected with the Eucharist and thus is often used during the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. This text is the embodiment of humility within the Christian church. Recent tradition has the first line as “Ubi caritas et amor” (where charity and love are), but certain very early manuscripts show “Ubi caritas est vera” (where charity is true). This arrangement makes use of the chant melody in its original form as well as in a rhythmically altered form. This piece also makes use of part of the English translation to further convey the loving and giving nature of the text.

Te Deum

Performed by the University of Kansas Chamber Choir, conducted by Dr. John Paul Johnson, with Nick Bideler (organ), Jedidiah P. Kruger (tenor), Kate Naramore (soprano), published by Amber Waves Music.

Commissioned by the William Baker Choral Foundation.

1ST MOVEMENT – CHORUS

We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee and the Father everlasting. To Thee all Angels cry aloud: the heavens and all the Powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim: cry with a voice unceasing Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Hosts.

2ND MOVEMENT - TENOR SOLO

The heavens and the earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory. The glorious choir of the Apostles praise thee. The company of the Prophets praise thee. The noble army of Martyrs praise thee. The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee.

3RD MOVEMENT - CHORUS

The Father of infinite Majesty; Thine honorable, true, and only Son, Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter. Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. Thou having taken upon Thee to deliver man didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. Thou having overcome the sting of death didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

4TH MOVEMENT – TENOR / SOPRANO DUET

We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge. We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants: whom Thou has redeemed with Thy precious Blood. Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting. Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Govern them and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify Thee and we praise Thy name, ever world without end.

5TH MOVEMENT – CHORUS (WITH SOPRANO SOLO)

Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin. Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on us. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as our trust is in Thee. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

The “Te Deum” is traditionally ascribed to Saints Ambrose and Augustine, on the occasion of the latter's baptism by the former in AD 387. Contemporary scholars doubt this attribution, many assigning it to Nicetas, bishop of Remesianai in the late 4th to early 5th centuries. The hymn is the merger of two (or more) earlier hymns: one to God the Father and another to God the Son. The hymn follows the outline of the Apostles' Creed, mixing a poetic vision of the heavenly liturgy with its declaration of faith. Naming God immediately, the hymn proceeds to name all those who praise and venerate God, from the hierarchy of heavenly creatures to those Christian faithful already in heaven to the Church spread throughout the world. The hymn then returns to its credal formula, naming Christ and recalling His birth, suffering, and glorification. At this point the hymn turns to the subjects declaiming the praise, both the Church in general and the singer in particular, asking for mercy on past sins, protection from future sin, and the hoped-for reunification with the Creator. This piece was commissioned by the William Baker Choral Foundation for performance by the Summer Singers of Kansas City and Atlanta. The ensembles for which it was written are non-auditioned, and the musical content is meant to give deep but immediate meaning by staying relatively conservative in harmonic and virtuosic implications.

Sonata for Horn #1

*Performed by Megan Helvering (horn) and Dr. O. Wayne Smith (piano),
world premiere performance; unpublished manuscript.*

This piece was written in the fall of 2005 as a gift to hornist Megan Helvering, the composer's wife. This piece represents Mr. Helvering's first large scale chamber work for an instrumentalist. Written in a typical Sonata form, this piece has three movements in a moderate/slow/fast arrangement. The first movement is written in a Sonata Allegro form. The second movement is a song form, and the third movement is written in a ternary form. The musical language is highly modal, calling on both the hornist and pianist to bring out the nuances of the modal counterpoint. The tonal centers of “Horn Sonata #1” outline a diminished triad. The first movement is based on F# and is marked with high levels of imitation between the piano and horn as well as usage of the tri-tone as dominant. The second movement is written a tri-tone away on C and utilizes a modified 8-tone scale for its main theme. The third movement completes the middle of the diminished chord with Eb as its base, and the main theme makes use of the whole tone scale (with slight alteration).

Delphian Variations

*Performed by Alex Shum (violin) and Lawrence Figg ('cello),
world premiere performance; unpublished manuscript.*

Written in the winter of 2005-2006, this piece seeks to highlight the potentially wonderful relationship between a solo violin and violoncello. The work explores the formal considerations of a “theme and variations” and of an “arch” form. There are 10 short sections to this work that function in an arch. The first section is the statement of the theme by the 'cello unaccompanied. Variations involving rhythmic and harmonic devices follow in variations 1,2,3, and 4. The fifth variation is the original theme presented in both instruments, all a perfect fifth apart. Following is the sixth variation, which swaps parts between the two instruments (with little alteration) of the 4th variation. Similarly, the 7th variation is an inversion of the 3rd, the 8th an inversion of the 2nd, and the 9th an inversion of the 1st. Finishing the piece is the statement of the original theme in the violin (instead of the 'cello). To add a sense of finality, the theme is accompanied by a descending line in the 'cello.

Serenade To Music

*Performed by the women of the William Baker Festival Singers, Dr. Richard Anderson (oboe),
and Dr. O. Wayne Smith (piano), conducted by Dr. William O. Baker, published by Amber Waves Music.
Commissioned by the Milwaukee Choral Artists, Dr. Sharon Hansen, conductor and artistic director*

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night become the touches of sweet harmony. Look, how the floor of heav'n is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold: there's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st, but in his motion like an angel sings still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins; such harmony is in immortal souls. But whilst this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. Come ho! And wake Diana with a hymn: with sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear, and draw her home with music.

This text, from the opening scene of the fifth act of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" has oft been set for voice or chorus. Perhaps most famous is the piece by the same title by Vaughan Williams. This work was commissioned by the Milwaukee Choral Artists, a professional chamber ensemble of treble voices. Dr. Sharon Hansen, their music director, selected the text specifically for their concert entitled "Sweet Harmony". The work was written in a pastoral style in an attempt to bring the higher meaning of this text to light. My interpretation of the text was that it was describing the spheres (or cosmic motion as tangible music). After a cadenza-like opening by the oboe, the piano lays an ethereal backdrop based on a Db major seventh chord. The oboe then enters playing a D natural, using notes largely from the key of C. To combat the thickness of Shakespeare's poetry, there are more expansive spaces than normal for a piece of this length between choral phrases. Written in a ternary form, the piece concludes with a coda that starts with a unison vocal line. It expands to octaves, then to harmony to drive to the conclusion. The ending is a string of major seventh chords, tying into the enigmatic opening in the piano. The piece was written without a title, and I decided to use the title that Vaughan Williams used because, in my opinion, it best describes the intent of this passage of text. Here, music itself is lauded, and we serenade the higher powers possessed by music.

In Quiet Layers of Night

*Performed by the University of Kansas Chamber Choir and the William Baker Festival Singers,
conducted by Dr. John Paul Johnson, published by Amber Waves Music.*

Co-commissioned by the University of Kansas and the William Baker Choral Foundation.

Original text by Pam Winn

In quiet layers of night the soul stills to listen, and the world breathes peace. In deep facets of starlight the earth rests, rejuvenates, and the heart sighs. Away from the rush, the crush of the day, fraught with demands of time and treasure, the soul cries in its turmoil: Where is the peace? Where is truth? Is there strength for one more day? In this tranquil hour all Creation is hushed to hear its own rhythm, to remember its own beauty. Here, will and spirit unite, to turn the page, to rebirth hope, to face the dawn anew.

This work for unaccompanied double chorus with soloists was co-commissioned by the performing ensembles specifically for this concert. It was written in the spring of 2006. This piece was an extremely rewarding process, as I was involved in the creation of the text of this piece. Pam Winn, our poet, is from Independence, MO. Her words inspired what in my mind is my most emotionally demanding and profound work. The original title of the poem was "hush." I kept this word and used it to set the mood of the piece at the beginning. When whispered by many voices, "hush" creates a soundscape reminiscent of nature. Out of this texture comes a main theme that is homophonic in nature. It contains many added note chords, attempting to create a lush sound. The second section musically reflects the change in mood of the poetry. The serene beginning gives way to a raucous and unrelenting section of music that concludes with the questions "Where is the peace?" and "Where is truth?" The use of clashing chords and clusters in the end resolves to a unison A flat, and we return again to the A theme. Both choirs symbolically unite on the appropriate text "here, will and spirit unite", and we modulate to B major for coda material that incorporates motives of the A section. This piece is spiritual without being overtly religious, and it encourages both the performer and listener to "face the dawn anew."

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

*Performed by the University of Kansas Chamber Choir and the William Baker Festival Singers,
conducted by R. Douglas Helvering, published by Amber Waves Music.*

*The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you.
The Lord lift his countenance upon you, and be gracious unto you, and give you peace. Amen.*

This work was written specifically for a choir of young voices. It was commissioned by the William Baker Choral Foundation for performance by their Youth Festival Singers ensembles in Kansas City and Atlanta. The harmonic language is basic, and the emphasis is put solely on the task of communicating this wonderful benediction. Since its inception, this work has become the Youth Festival Singers' traditional encore work. I am honored to conduct this performance, which concludes our evening of music by seeking to uplift the human spirit through music.

Tonight's Featured Performers are:

Dr. John Paul Johnson, Director of Choral Activities at the University of Kansas

Dr. William O. Baker, Conductor of the William Baker Festival Singers

R. Douglas Helvering, composer, conductor

Dr. O. Wayne Smith, piano

Megan Helvering, horn

Alex Shum, violin

Lawrence Figg, violoncello

Nick Bideler, organ

Dr. Richard Anderson, oboe

The University of Kansas Chamber Choir

Andrew Ashley	Michael Austin	Ben Barthell	Ashley Benes	Olivia Betzen
Emily Bogard	Ryan Bogner	Christopher Bohling	Brandon Bowman	Amy Cahill
Lucy Conklin	Katy Cortese	Rebecca Craft	Nathan Dame	Tod Fish
Andy Foerschler	Amanda Frederick	Andrew Fuchs	Courtney Gelvin	Katie George
Jordan Gouge	Lauren Henderson	R. Douglas Helvering	Anna Hoard	Amanda Howard
Lane W. Johnson	Laura Johnson	Jedidiah P. Kruger	Abby Musgrove	Joseph Nadeau
Kate Naramore	Jennifer Niemann	Christopher Orlando	Heather Roberson	Callie Schlegel
Tyler Simpson	Henry Smith	Harry Swartz	Christopher Trepinski	
Lieke van de Liefvoort	Andrew Trites	Beth Wagstrom		

The William Baker Festival Singers of Kansas City

Kenna Babcock	Laura René Baker	Brenda Bennett-Pike	Jocelyn Botkin	Jerry Carpenter
Kirk Carson	Michael Carter	Deborah Casolari	Laura Coon	Dee Dee Diemer
Laura Dickinson	Kent Dickinson	Jennifer Engelhardt	Megan Gearheart	Natalie Hackler
Fletcher Hammond	Kate Harrison	R. Douglas Helvering	Megan Helvering	Jalia Henderson
Marcia Higginson	Alison Huber	James Jandt	Gary Jarrett	Kristina Kriss
Kelly Kunst	Amy Laemml	Barbara Leyden	Wesley Loewen	Mary Ann Mansfield
Misty McNally	John Mikelson	Jamie Myers	Melissa Overton	Brad Piroutek
Nadia Piotrowsky	Kathy Pittman-Gaspard	Jamea Sale	Shad Sanders	Jim Schrock
Melissa Ann Shallberg	Sheila Shepard	Pratima Singh	Christine Smith	Kaleb Stoppel
Georann Whitman	John Williams	Philip Williams	Pam Winn	

A note from the composer

I am deeply humbled by the overwhelming support of my family, friends, fellow musicians, and community. This night is the product of many grueling hours of work and preparation, and it is with utmost pride and sense of accomplishment that I present this music to you. My goal as a writer is to stir emotions. If you simply sit through the performance without being engaged on an emotional level, I have not accomplished my goal. I am indebted to my wife, Megan, for her support and discerning ear. I would also like to thank my teacher at KU, James Barnes, for continuously pushing me to improve and refine my technique. I am blessed to have wonderful colleagues at KU, Dan Forrest and Brian Bondari, who together provide support from a graduate student's perspective. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Baker. Both sacrificed great amounts of rehearsal time and resources on behalf of their ensembles to make tonight a success. Lastly, I need to thank those friends and family members who provided financial support to make tonight possible. You all know who you are. Please accept my deepest gratitude. With your help, I was able to employ the best musicians in our region, giving this music the best possible performance. Thank you all for coming tonight. You have affirmed and inspired me greatly.

Tonight's performance is given in partial fulfillment of the doctor of musical arts degree at the University of Kansas.