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A Performance Study of Select Choral Literature for Two-Part Women's Chorus

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A PERFORMANCE STUDY OF SELECT CHORAL LITERATURE FOR TWO-PART
WOMEN'S CHORUS

by

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A.A., Lewis and Clark Community College, 2007

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A Research Document

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music degree.

Department of Music
in the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

A PERFORMANCE STUDY OF SELECT CHORAL LITERATURE FOR TWO-PART
WOMEN'S CHORUS

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Adrienne R. Stockley

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Choral Conducting

Approved by:

Dr. Susan G. Davenport, Chair

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Graduate School
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TITLE: A PERFORMANCE STUDY OF SELECT CHORAL LITERATURE FOR TWO-
PART WOMEN'S CHORUS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Susan Davenport

When searching for appropriate literature for any choral group, there are many considerations to take into account: the musical abilities of the singers, the type of accompaniment, the vocal ranges and tessitura in the parts, the language of the text, etc. One primary consideration would be the *divisi* or number of parts within a piece, which can sometimes be a good measure of the piece's difficulty. Put simply, more *divisi* generally means that the singers must be able to sing more complex chords with more independence. So it might seem that pieces with a great deal of *divisi* would be a poor choice for very small groups with limited musical abilities. However, more *divisi* in a piece does not automatically render it more harmonically complex, but often functions to thicken the sound through doubling of notes in other voices or the accompaniment. Conversely, a piece of choral music that comprises just *two* vocal parts might seem to be too simple for a group with strong musical ability. Actually, there is a wide variety of two-part music that can not only prove musically challenging to such a group, but also provides ample teaching opportunities in rehearsal as well as a satisfying musical experience for both ensemble and audience. I will discuss five such pieces for two-part women's chamber ensemble, all of varying levels of difficulty, and address them regarding several points: history, form and structure, conducting and performance considerations, and reviews on available recordings.

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Thanks to all my dear friends and fellow graduate students in the School of Music, especially the sisters of the Theta Tau chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota. This amazing group of women exemplifies what it means to serve and support both the School of Music and each other in every way. Huge and heartfelt thanks to my dearest friend and office-mate, Robert Graham, who has made coming to the office each day a true pleasure. I could not wish for a finer comrade to share work, laughter, and frustrations with. “If I have a friend who knows my heart, distance can’t keep us two apart.”

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CHAPTER 1

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach was born March 21, 1685 in Eisenach, Germany, the son of a trumpet player in the local court orchestra. As a boy, he received his first music lessons from his father, and after his father's death in 1695, from his older brother, Johann Christoph who was organist in Ohrdruf. He became a choirboy, violinist, and organist in the town of Lüneberg when he was fifteen, and rapidly gained fame as a virtuoso organist. Within the next few years, and in rapid succession, he became organist at Arnstadt in 1703, organist in Mühlhausen in 1707, court organist in Weimar in 1708, and *Kapellmeister* to the Duke of Cöthen in 1717.¹

While in Weimar, he served as a virtuoso organist of the Kapelle for the Duke for nine years, and according to Wolff, "Bach's double function as court organist and chamber musician reflects his versatility and expertise as a performer, but increasingly as a composer, too".² It was due to his duties in Weimar that many of his compositions from this period are for the organ. When the Kapellmeister died in 1716, he was succeeded by his son who was a fairly unknown musician at the time. Bach greatly resented being passed over for the position as he aspired to be the Kapellmeister himself; indeed, he was jailed for nearly a month over his display of anger at the Duke. When he was offered the kapellmeistership in Cöthen in 1717, he accepted.

The compositions during Bach's time in Cöthen are primarily instrumental, in accordance with the wishes of the Prince, and also since the capelle was made up of mostly instrumentalists. He composed his Brandenburg Concertos during this time, violin concertos, sonatas, suites, as well as some of his best clavier works, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* being one. From the few

1. Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 293.

2. Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 121.

vocal works that were written during this period, many have not survived. It was also during this period that Bach's wife, Maria Barbara, died in 1720 and so Bach married the following year to Anna Magdalena Wilken, the twenty-year-old daughter of one of the court musicians.³

Bach was appointed the *Kantor* of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in 1723—a position for which Telemann and other famous musicians also applied. This large responsibility included providing music for the four local Lutheran churches, and for any weddings, funerals or special events within the town.⁴ Bach would remain at the Thomaskirche for the next twenty-seven years as cantor and music director.⁵

It was during his time in Leipzig beginning in 1723 that Bach began the project of composing a cantata for each week of the church year for two reasons: one, in order to have a large body of suitable repertoire upon which he could draw each year, and two, to “explore the flexible cantata typology as widely as possible, to leave his own distinct mark ... and to push the genre beyond its current limits.”⁶ This would require him to produce at least sixty cantatas every year in order to build up enough repertoire that could be used for years to come, which was an extremely challenging task for the first few years.

Bach's total vocal compositional output was enormous. He composed over two hundred sacred cantatas, although around one hundred of them are lost, twenty-eight secular cantatas, five masses, five oratorios, seven motets, one Magnificat, and hundreds of chorale arrangements.⁷ His

3. Michael Kennedy, ed., *Oxford Music Online*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Bach, Johann Sebastian," accessed January 7, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e715>.

4. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 293.

5. Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, 237.

6. *Ibid.*, 269.

7. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 293.

early cantatas tended to be rather short and consisted of mostly choral movements, with few solos. The cantatas that were written later (such as those in Weimar or Leipzig) tend to be longer and contain extended movements, longer *da capo* arias, instrumental obbligatos, utilize biblical texts or religious poetry, and often begin and end with a chorale.⁸

8. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 294.

1.1

Analysis Of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Wenn Des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten"

From Cantata No. 99, for Soprano and Alto, with Flute and Oboe

Bach's Cantata No. 99, "Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan" ("What God does, that is done well"), was originally composed in 1724 for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, with the original performance date of September 17, 1724. However, it is actually one of three versions of the cantata that exist. Bach revised the work first in 1726 for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity (BWV 98), and again in 1732 for an unknown performance date (BWV 100).⁹

The work was originally scored for SATB chorus, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists, as well as a chamber orchestra consisting of two violins, a viola, coronet, traverse flute, oboe d'amore, which has a range in-between a modern oboe and an English horn, and continuo. The cantata opens with the full chorus, followed by a recitative by the bass soloist, and an aria by the tenor. The alto soloist sings a recitative to lead into the fifth movement, which is the lovely duet between the soprano and alto, with obbligato flute and oboe d'amore. The cantata concludes with another chorale from the SATB chorus.

"Wenn des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten" is the fifth movement in the cantata. The piece begins with an instrumental prelude and postlude, which are exactly the same, that bookend the piece. Within it, there are two verses for the voices, the second being longer than the first; essentially forming three sections: a short A section, a longer A (or A') section, and a B section. There are also very short instrumental interludes between each of the sections that vary in length. The duet for soprano and alto is actually one of two duets in the piece: the flute and oboe form the second pair of voices.

9. Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, 280-82.

The piece begins in B minor, and opens with the flute playing a theme which is then immediately imitated by the oboe. This opening passage sets the tone for the piece and encapsulates the spirit of the text, from Matthew 26:41 and refers to the struggle between human weakness and accepting the hardships which God has purposefully given to his people. Bach illustrates this musically in the first two measures in two ways: first, the “sighing” motif of the G to the F-sharp reflects the despair of those who cannot bear the heavy load that God has lain upon them, and second, the repeated eighth notes, echoed most noticeably in the continuo, which seem to represent those who carry their spiritual burden.¹⁰

There is some subtle word-painting in the piece. Bach carefully places the melismatic vocal passages to illustrate two of the most important and descriptive words within the text: “streiten” (struggle) and “götzet” (delight). The melisma then becomes the struggle between the two voices or two instruments, or conversely, a dance of delight.

The texture is predominantly thick due to the continuo and instrumental obbligato. While the voices do have staggered entrances, they are generally singing at the same time. The element of staggered imitation is obvious from the first A section, beginning in measure 5, and appropriately ends on a half-cadence since the voices have only sung half a phrase of text. After another four measures of instrumental interlude, the voices continue their text beginning in B minor again, and continue on a circle of fifths progression (B minor, E minor, A minor, D minor, etc.) until the end of the A' section, where all four voices cadence on a D major chord, the relative major of B minor.

The A' section is followed by another four measures of instrumental interlude, after which the voices begin the B section in the same key of D major. Once again, at measure 35, the

10. Julian Minchim, "BWV 99 Was Gott Tut, Das Ist Wohlgetan," *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach*, 2009, accessed January 07, 2012, <http://www.jsbachcantatas.com>.

voices repeat a circle of fifths progression. It is in measure 38 that the second progression begins, with some interesting rhythmic variation: the soprano and alto voices each sing short, four-note phrases that slightly overlap. This is another subtle example of word painting, as it creates a tug-of-war effect between the two voice parts.

One of the most interesting elements in this piece is the German text, which the voices repeat in certain parts, particularly in the B section. New phrases of text are introduced with the opening sixteenth-note motif, so that it has the effect of cutting through the thick texture and immediately being recognizable to the ear. Bach punctuates the melismatic runs in the end of the B section the same way as in the end of A' section, with a tied quarter note shared by both soprano and alto parts. The final melismatic run ends in measure 44, on a half-cadence, and a phrase extension is immediately begun in the alto voice, which is then echoed by the soprano. This final run is essentially a descending scale in each voice, with some chromatic passing tones added, and ends on a perfect authentic cadence. However, the instruments close the movement with four final measures of postlude that are identical to measures 1—4.

1.2

Rehearsal Considerations for Johann Sebastian Bach's "Wenn Des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten"

One of the most difficult decisions to make when rehearsing this cantata movement is regarding tempo since there is none marked on the original score. The sixteenth and thirty-second notes must have equal clarity to the quarter and eighth notes, so the tempo must not be so fast that rhythmic clarity becomes muddled and frantic. However, it is important to remember that all Baroque music is based on dance music, and slowing the piece down beyond quarter note equals 60 may create a dull and plodding mood. The melismas provide an interesting challenge regarding tempo: it would seem natural to want to slow the piece down to ensure that each voice is singing all the notes with accuracy, especially during the rehearsal process, but the reduction in speed also increases the singers' difficulty to sing through phrases with good breath support, thereby diminishing the flow of the piece and of the melismatic passages.

Regarding notes and rhythms, the melismas provide a serious challenge since once the rhythmic pattern seems fairly established, Bach then changes it slightly. One example is the soprano part in measure 20, beat 3, where the line does not continue downward in an expected fashion, and instead remains centered on the note A. Within the melismas, and indeed throughout the whole piece, the "sighing" motif should be brought out where it is most appropriate (namely on beats one and three), in both the voices and the flute and oboe.

The language must be considered separately from the notes and rhythms during rehearsal, since the German text may not be familiar. Using a neutral syllable to first learn notes and rhythms and then tackling the German on its own may prove more productive than trying to do both at once. By breaking the text up into smaller phrases, first speaking it and then having the

choir repeat it, it becomes much more manageable. Care must be taken to maintain a proper schwa vowel on the word “götzet” through the melismas, and not to distort or change the vowel shape. Also, promoting very crisp and pronounced consonants throughout the piece will further enhance its light and dance-like quality, rather than dragging it down through mushy and sluggish diction. If slight separation between repeated notes is encouraged and combined with good consonants, it may also help with tuning and intonation issues.

All voice parts are equally important, so one should not be emphasize over another. However, entrances should be clearly heard, and other parts should be more sensitive to another part’s entrance. Since the piece is a duet based on imitation (or perhaps better described as a double duet including the obbligato instruments), there is much of it that can be taught at the same time because it will likely be repeated either by another voice or an instrument at some point in the piece. The entering pitches for the voices should be carefully rehearsed first with and then without the piano, since those notes are not always being echoed in the instruments and can be somewhat difficult to find.

Finally, considering the time period in which the piece was written, the vocal ideal for the Baroque period is a slender, light, and flexible voice. While the voices should be encouraged to eliminate too much vibrato and attempt to streamline their sound, a completely straight-tone should not be encouraged.

1.3

Review of Selected Available Recordings of “Wenn Des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten”

This cantata is fairly popular, and this aria is the most well-known movement. There are nearly a dozen easily-accessible recordings to be found. What distinguishes the better ones from the others are a few simple things such as the sound quality of the recording, the tempo of the piece, and the choice of voice type. Though the aria was originally written for soprano and alto, many recordings have utilized numerous different combinations of singers including boy soprano with male alto, perhaps a more common combination in Bach’s time, a female soprano combined with a male countertenor, and even the same female soprano who has recorded both parts that were then mixed into one recording. Since there are so many different versions to choose from, the two that have been selected for review are the ones most different in tempo.

One of these is from the album “Cantatas: BWV 97-99” and was recorded by the Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart and Stuttgart Bach Collegium in 1983, conducted by Helmuth Rilling. The overall sound quality of the recording is clean and sounds very professional (there are a few recordings that have not been mentioned here for the simple reason of their poor sound quality). The recording does not utilize period instruments, which would create a different tone color and would also be slightly lower in pitch.

The voice parts are sung by two females, however, both have voices with fair amounts of vibrato and sound slightly too large for such a delicate work, and seem better suited to a different genre of song, such as German *lieder*. The two voices, particularly the alto, seems to have some difficulty navigating the quick tempo, and some of the beauty in the melismatic passages is lost, along with much of the German consonants. Indeed, at this tempo of quarter note equals 83, the

piece seems much less like a serious Baroque dance and more a like a frantic race to each cadential point. The “sighing” motif is neither clearly nor adequately nuanced, nor can any distinguishable dynamic or phrase-shaping attempts be heard.

However, the smart use of harpsichord (rather than organ) for the continuo part adds a lightness to the piece and keeps it from becoming muddy and overly-legato at the chosen tempo. The ornamented cadences seem to sparkle with the harpsichord’s crispness. Most impressively, the lovely balance, blend, and tone quality of the flute and oboe is ideal for the piece, even if some of the dynamic shape is lost overall.

The second selected recording is the antithesis of the first, as it is exactly the opposite in nearly every aspect. The recording is from the 2006 album “J.S. Bach Cantatas, Vol. 12” by the Amsterdam Baroque Choir, using period instruments, under the direction of Ton Koopman. The most obvious difference is the drastic difference in tempo, which in this case the quarter note equals 43. This slow tempo changes everything about the music, and like the extremely quick tempo, diminishes some of the beauty that Bach wrote into it. There is most definitely emphasis placed on shaping each phrase, but as the phrases lack forward motion, the effectiveness of the shaping is lost.

The vocalists are a boy soprano and male alto which both have the more streamlined and agile vocal quality that is well-suited to Baroque music, and sound very good together. However, the tempo forces them to breathe often and in awkward places which greatly reduces the beauty of each phrase. The German text is clearly understandable, and both singers have crisp and clear diction.

The continuo is played on an organ, which at the slower tempo, only adds a feeling of lethargy to the piece. Instead of dancing through the wonderful melismas, the instruments and

singers seem to plod through them with fatigue. The obbligato instruments are played well with good blend and dynamic contrasts, but the sixteenth and thirty-second notes are slowed to such a pace that the instruments then find it necessary to decorate cadential points even further.

Ultimately, the tempo is painfully slow and inappropriate for Baroque, and renders an otherwise lovely performance difficult to enjoy.

CHAPTER 2

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Johannes Brahms was born in 1833 in Hamburg, Germany where his father played string bass in the local symphony. Brahms received his first music lessons from his own father. He began studying piano and composition at the age of eight, and gave his first public performance at age ten. From the age of thirteen, he earned a living by playing for dances, theatres, and taverns.¹¹

When he was twenty, Brahms traveled to Hanover and met Robert Schumann—a friend and mentor with whom he would remain close for many years. In 1853, Schumann wrote an article in a popular music journal in which he commented that Brahms would be “the new hope of the future of music”¹², which heightened Brahms’s reputation within the highest musical circles. When Schumann had a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized in 1854, Brahms essentially became the head of the Schumann household, assisting Robert’s wife, Clara, with the care and organization of her household, family, and her husband’s affairs. He and Clara, who was fourteen years his senior, shared a very close friendship and wrote to each other often after Robert Schumann’s death.¹³

As a conductor, Brahms worked with several choral ensembles including the Detmold court choir, the Hamburg women’s chorus, and the Vienna Singakademie. Since Brahms was also a virtuoso pianist, he premiered many of his own works and collaborated with other fine

11. George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," Grove Music Online, accessed January 2, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51879>.

12. Leon Botstein, *The Compleat Brahms: A Guide to the Musical Works of Johannes Brahms* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 23.

13. Bozarth and Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," Grove Music Online.

artists of the time, including Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim.¹⁴ From 1865—1869 financial problems forced him to resume touring as a concert pianist throughout Europe, performing his own works in addition to those of Schumann, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert. He would tour again in 1874, and several times through the 1880s, which would provide him with enough income to sustain a comfortable life. Therefore, he turned down offers to be the head of the Cologne Conservatory in 1884 and the music director in Düsseldorf in 1876.¹⁵

Brahms's output of songs was prolific. He composed over 190 solo lieder, 5 songs for 1-2 voices, 20 duets, and 60 vocal quartets, all with piano accompaniment. While many of his songs are based on German folksong traditions, they are highly polished and sophisticated pieces of romantic music. The *Liebeslieder* were written at a time when large performance halls only existed for the sake of theatre, so the salons were the most popular place for amateur musicians to play or sing. This made the collection of waltzes ideal for a small group of soloists to perform at a domestic gathering.¹⁶ In 1871, two years after writing the enormously popular *Liebeslieder*, Brahms also composed another set of songs called *Lieder und Gesänge* Op. 57, with texts from the same poet. At the same time he was also writing large-scale works for choir and orchestra, like *Schicksalslied* (1871) and *Alto Rhapsody* (1869), he was composing smaller works for more intimate settings. His choral pieces were modeled on great works of the past, including those of the Baroque and the Renaissance, where he combined his fondness for historical music with a more modern harmonic language.¹⁷

14. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 474.

15. George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," Grove Music Online, accessed January 2, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51879>.

16. Botstein, *The Compleat Brahms: A Guide to the Musical Works of Johannes Brahms*, 316.

17. Bozarth and Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," Grove Music Online.

2.1

Analysis of Johannes Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzer Selections: "Wie Des Abends Schöne Röte," "Vögelein Durchrauscht Die Luft," Op.52, and "Nein, Geliebter, Setze Dich" Op.65

Both collections of *Liebeslieder* waltzes are settings of mostly light-hearted poetry by a relatively minor poet of the time, Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875). The first collection of *Liebeslieder Waltzer* was written between 1868 and 1869, and features a total of eighteen pieces, with one tenor solo, two soprano and alto duets, two tenor and bass duets, and the rest for remaining SATB quartet. As the title implies, all of the pieces are written in 3/4 time, and with four-hand piano accompaniment, which adds interest and rhythmic variety to the waltzes.¹⁸

Both numbers 4 and number 13 of Op.52 have the same basic binary form: an A section repeated, either with the same or different text, followed by a B section also repeated. The texture in all three selections is generally dense since the voices sing at the same time, with the addition of two piano parts.

The A section of number 4, "Wie des Abends Schöne Röte", begins in F major where both piano parts play a rising eighth note motif an octave apart, upon which the two voices enter. The first piano doubles the voices while the second piano plays a scale-like passage as the soprano and alto opening lines move in contrary, stepwise motion to one another. This is mirrored for measures 1-5 in the first piano and then in measures 6-8 by the second piano, all ending on an A minor chord. When the A section repeats, the last measure for the first ending is changed in the accompaniment so that the harmony can shift back to F major.

The B section begins with a staggered entrance in the alto and two measures of unison in both voices. This is mirrored again by the first piano; however, the piano parts alternate their

18. Bozarth and Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," Grove Music Online.

echo of the voice parts by switching every other measure, and by adding in rapid descending scales in the opposite measures. The phrase in the vocal parts climaxes on the word “Gefallen” (“to please”), drops back down, and then moves in upward, stepwise motion to the cadence. The entire section repeats again, with another three note upbeat as in the A sections.

In number 13 “Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft,” the A section begins in A-flat minor, the voice parts singing in thirds and fourths apart in a hemiola rhythm and then shift back to singing on the beat at measure 5. The text of this waltz is a metaphor comparing the speaker’s heart to a bird flying through the air looking for a place to rest, and this is illustrated through the hemiola rhythm by providing an unsettled feeling against the piano parts. The first piano plays rapid sixteenth-note motifs that are reminiscent of a bird’s fluttering wings, while the second piano plays rhythms that mirror the voices and generally doubles their pitches. The A section then repeats and ends in a half-cadence.

The B sections continue in regular rhythm, and the first piano’s rapid notes from the beginning are passed to the second piano and become lengthened and connected into a flowing, legato line. The first piano then echoes the hemiola rhythm from the A sections. The soprano and alto sing melodic lines that rise through measures 10-11, adding a C-flat and G-flat which hint at the key of C-flat major, and then descend to end on a perfect authentic cadence. In the repeat of B, the voice parts remain the same while the pianos adjust notes slightly to make the last two measures into a final cadence in A-flat major.

Six years after writing the original set of *Liebeslieder*, Brahms wrote a second set which were scored for the same voices and piano four hands, also with texts by Daumer. These fourteen pieces are divided into two groups of seven, and each set opens and closes with a piece for the quartet, and contains more solo pieces than in the first set of *Liebeslieder*.

In number 14, “Nein, Geliebter setze dich,” the piano parts play a pedal tone of low E and then add G-sharp in measure 2 which establishes the key of E major. The voices enter in the A section singing in major thirds, and sing a line that mimics a wave. The first piano plays in the upper register, on each strong beat, while the second piano plays a pedal tone of E in the left hand and an arpeggiated line in the right hand. The A section ends in a half-cadence, and then repeats without the two-measure piano introduction.

In the B section, there is a noticeable change in phrase length. The first ten measures are one phrase, and the last eight measures are the second phrase. However, the first A section actually mirrors each half of the B section exactly with the addition of the two-measure introduction, the eight measure phrase becomes ten measures. The second phrase, which does not include the introduction, is reduced to only eight measures. Both A and B sections are initially composed of a 10+8 measure phrase structure.

The second piano begins the B section by playing a chromatic descending line for measures 12-13, but then trades ideas with the first piano which continues playing a fast-moving line until the end of the first phrase in measure 21. The second piano plays quarter notes on each strong beat until the second phrase in measure 22, where the parts again switch: second piano playing a flowing line, with primo piano playing quarter notes. The first phrase of the B section has more harmonic movement, and begins in C-sharp and then to D-sharp major.

The voices’ melodic lines in the first phrase are mostly minor thirds apart from each other, and move in parallel motion which builds tension as the line rises and builds to a climax on the word “dämpfe” (“fumes”) . At this point, the speaker of the text is asking his secret beloved to suppress her desires or “cool your fumes,” so the climax is actually a subtle example of word painting. The voices descend from the climax over four measures in stepwise motion,

with the soprano suspending the half-cadence through an appoggiatura, moving from G-sharp to F. The key returns to E major for the second phrase; the voices echo the melody from the A section, with the second piano once again playing the pedal tone of E and the flowing line in the right hand, ending in a perfect authentic cadence.

2.2

Rehearsal Considerations for Three of Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzer*

One of the most difficult decisions when rehearsing these three waltzes is choosing what tempo to use. In the first set of *Liebeslieder* waltzes, No. 1 is marked “Im Ländler-Tempo,” or at the tempo of a traditional German *Ländler* folk waltz, which is slow and must be felt in three beats, not one. Otherwise, the rest of the pieces are unmarked in terms of tempo. The *Neue Liebeslieder* have a few more tempo markings than the first set, but they only advise either “lively, not too fast” or “calmly.” Since Brahms has written in so much rhythmic variety in both piano parts and the voices, it might be feasible to set a single moderate tempo for all selections without the pieces becoming monotonous. Number 13, “Nein, Geliebter,” is one of the waltzes that actually contains tempo instructions, “lebhaft”, which means “calmly” in this case.

As with much Romantic music, it is appropriate to include a bit of rubato within each waltz, however it is best used sparingly, as too-frequent slowing down might cause the piece to drag and lose energy. The best place to relax the tempo in “Wie des Abends,” is the transition between the A and B sections; it is appropriate there because of the contrast in mood and dynamics. In “Vögelein,” the tempo could also be relaxed between the A and B sections, as the B section begins *piano* and crescendo through the phrase, so picking the original tempo back up through those measures would reinforce the dynamic markings.

Phrase shapes within each of the waltzes are already written into the music through use of vocal ranges and note values. For example, climactic points within a phrase tend to be on higher notes with extended note value. However it is important to not only observe Brahms's dynamic markings, but to also create variety between repeated sections. For example, in the A section of “Vögelein,” the repeat might be taken at a softer dynamic to contrast with the first which is

marked *forte*. The A section in “Nein, Geliebter” might be taken at only *piano* so that the repeat could then be sung at the marked *pianissimo*.

The text is obviously the focal point in these little waltzes, and though there are very few spots where diction problems might arise, care must be taken that the German is clearly enunciated with good consonants. This is especially important if the pieces are being performed with a choir instead of soloists, as much of the text will be lost if good diction is not highly emphasized. In measure 2 of “Vögelein,” the word “durchrauscht” is challenging to speak clearly let alone sing, as well as the final consonant on the word “sucht” in measure 5. It might be helpful to speak the German text in rhythm to identify areas where consonants are being compromised or unclear.

These waltzes were originally written for individual singers, so when performing them with a group it is important not to let one voice part take precedence over the other, which can be especially tricky in some places where the soprano sings above the staff, for example, measures 10-11 of “Vögelein” There should also be a good balance not only between the two voices but also between the two piano parts, as both are equally important. The ensemble should be encouraged to create a warm, expressive, and slightly soloistic quality in the voice. It is more important to evoke a rich and robust sound than to have a pure and perfect blend.

2.3

Reviews of Available Recordings of Brahms' *Liebeslieder* and *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzer*

As Brahms's *Liebeslieder* and *Neue Liebeslieder* are extremely popular works, there are dozens of available recordings of performances from both choral ensembles and soloists. It seems that each recording varies from the others in small ways, or more noticeable ones, depending on tempo and stylistic interpretations. The two recordings that will be reviewed were chosen because they utilize a women's chorus, and also because of the drastic differences in tempo and interpretation.

Two strikingly different recordings of "Wie des Abends" are from the album "Johannes Brahms: Liebeslieder-Waltzer Op. 52 & Op. 65" by the Gächinger Chorale, conducted by Helmut Rilling, and from the album "Brahms: Choral Music" by the Monteverdi Choir, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. Both are easily available and have excellent professional sound quality, although the Rilling version does contain a bit of white noise at higher volume levels.

In Rilling's version, the tempo moves at an extremely quick pace—the quarter note equals approximately 190. There is a small amount of rubato between the A and B sections and some at the very end, but overall it is used very sparingly. With the fast tempo and lack of rubato, it seems as if the choir is racing toward the ending of the piece. Aside from the rapid movement through the piece, the most striking thing about this recording are the stylistic choices that the choir employs. The voices have a very light, bright quality, which would be ideal for singing Mozart, but they seem a bit too effervescent for Brahms, which requires a bit more robust warmth in the voices. Also, the choir sings the notes with very separated and almost

accented articulation, especially in the A section, so the piece loses some of its waltz-like quality. However, there are good dynamic variations between repeated sections, and the German diction is clear and well articulated.

In Gardner's recording, the tempo is a much more moderate quarter note equals 162, and there is also a greater use of rubato. Not only does the tempo relax at the end of sections, but quite a lot of time is taken in the middle of the B section, which is an interesting interpretation, but feels a bit awkward in the middle of a phrase. The legato articulation seems very appropriate and the slight dynamic shape given to each phrase is very musical and lovely. The voices of the Monteverdi Choir women are much warmer and rounder in tone and seem better suited to singing the waltzes.

Two very different versions of "Vögelien durchrauscht die Luft" are available from the same two albums mentioned above. The Rilling version has a tempo of approximately quarter note equals 140, which seems a bit slow for the text describing one's heart as a fluttering bird with no place to rest. There is quite a lot of rubato used between each repeat and also between major sections. However, the tempo does not immediately pick back up, instead it slowly returns to the original tempo. Combined with the very legato phrasing of the voices, the piece seems to drag on a bit instead of portraying a bird in flight. Again, the women have excellent diction and provide dynamic contrast between repeated phrases, but the lack of movement within the piece gives it a heavy and almost cumbersome quality.

Gardiner's version moves at approximately quarter note equals 162, and although there is also a good deal of rubato, it serves a more active purpose of providing contrast between the sections. The faster tempo allows the first piano to flutter along the opening sixteenth notes and makes this waltz actually feel like a dance. The women also sing with more initial energy than in

the Rilling version, and although they do sing it with the same amount of legato, it does not take on a lethargic quality. Interestingly, in both versions of the piece, there is a lack of strong final consonants in the text, especially on the problematic spots in measures 2 and 5.

The Gachinger Chorale's album also contains "Nein, Geliebter setze dich" from the *Neue Liebeslieder*, and the second recording used for comparison is "Complete Choral Works: Part 1" by the Chamber Choir of Europe conducted by Nicol Matt. Since most of choral versions of this particular waltz progress at a slower tempo, there is no great difference between these two in that aspect: Rilling goes at quarter note equals 68, and Matt prefers quarter note equals 78.

The Chamber Choir of Europe seems to be comprised of women who have a near-straight tone voices which seem totally unsuitable for singing German Romantic music. The tempo seems appropriate and allows for effective shaping of phrases, however there is little noticeable dynamic contrast in the voices. Since the extremely controlled voices have no vibrato to get in the way, the German text is perfectly clear. Overall, the recording seems rather too austere and crystalline and has none of the warmth and expressiveness that the *Liebeslieder* require.

In Rilling's version, there is comparatively more freedom within the individual voices although there is also a noticeable and unpleasant wobble in one of the sopranos' upper range. The use of rubato in this version seems to drag in the first half, but the B section makes up for it by moving quicker after the climax leading into the last phrase. There is a strange mix of precise and inaudible consonants within this piece. These consonants are particularly obvious in cadences where the rubato slows the piece down to a speed that leaves no excuse for the choir not placing a final "p" or "t." Although this version is more stylistically appropriate than Matt's recording, it fails to satisfy through lack of expressiveness and attention to musical detail.

CHAPTER 3

JOSEF RHEINBERGER

Josef Gabriel Rheinberger was born in 1839, began studying the organ at age five, and by age seven was the organist of the local church in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. In 1848, he began studying piano, organ, and theory with the choir director in Feldkirch. It was around this time that he began giving public piano performances as well as composing works, including a mass for three voices with organ. Three years later in 1851, he moved to Munich to complete his music studies at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik, and by age twenty five he had been appointed to at least three organist and music director positions in the region.¹⁹ In 1877, King Ludwig II of Bavaria appointed Rheinberger as the Kappellmeister of the royal court. That year Rheinberger also became the professor of music at the Staatliche Hochschule, the same school he had previously attended.²⁰ He later became known for his work as a choral conductor, leading the Munich Oratorienverein for over 13 years, and working as a coach for the court opera.

Rheinberger did not conform to the new Wagnerian ideas of composition, instead, his pieces reflect a fondness for Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and other composers of the past. While he criticized the limitations imposed by the Caecilian movement, his music was conservative and modeled on past-era composers. His compositions often have strong polyphonic tendencies and tended to lean away from the current musical trends of the mid-19th century, such as frequent dissonances, varied chromaticism, and focus on thematic melodic material in expanded forms. Although he greatly admired and studied the work of Bach and wrote on the importance of

19. Siegfried Gmeinweiser and Anton Würz, "Rheinberger, Joseph," Oxford Music Online, accessed January 19, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23317>.

20. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 484.

Baroque counterpoint as a valuable study tool, he did not utilize complex counterpoint, and much of his music remained primarily homophonic.²¹

After 1877 and for the remainder of his life, Rheinberger “concentrated on composing accessible music both for the church and amateur choral societies.”²² According to Gmeinweiser and Würz, while his most popular choral work is “Abendlied” from Op. 69, No. 3, many of his choral pieces are rarely performed, and aside from his masterful pieces for organ, “his work remains valued chiefly by organists and Catholic choirmasters.”²³ His large and widely varied repertoire includes twenty-two masses, two Stabat Maters, four Requiems, five oratorios, two vespers, eighty-one motets in both German and Latin, and fifty secular songs; all of which vary in length and complexity. All of Rheinberger’s motets and hymns are composed in “neo-Renaissance style, with passages of imitative polyphony alternating with passages of homophony.”²⁴

21. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 485.

22. Ibid., 485.

23. Gmeinweiser and Würz, "Rheinberger, Joseph," Oxford Music Online.

24. Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, 485-6.

3.1

Analysis of Rheinberger's "Ave Maria", WoO. 7, No. 1

This setting of "Ave Maria" was written in 1886 and is the first movement in a set of three pieces entitled *Drei Hymnen* which is written for solo soprano and alto with organ accompaniment. Throughout the piece, the organ doubles the voices and adds very simple harmonies or passing tones, but functions only to provide light, simple structure to the piece. With the doubling of parts in the organ and the staggered phrases in the soprano and alto voices, the texture of the piece remains quite streamlined. In fact, it is so important that the voices remain the focus of the piece, that the organ does not play any full measures without the voices except the first two. The organ's dynamic markings are also always one dynamic level below the voices which gives the piece a sense of being unaccompanied, and could possibly be performed without accompaniment.

The piece is written in B-flat major, but opens with a short two-measure organ introduction in the dominant key of F major. The soprano and alto enter in B-flat major and sing repeated, descending, stepwise melodic lines that are major thirds apart. Beginning in measure 9, the alto and the organ both sing E-naturals which briefly puts the music back in F major. In measure 13, A-flats are played in the organ and then are sung by the alto, suggesting the key of E-flat major. The soprano sings a descending scale line twice that is repeated by the alto voice, all in a very soft dynamic. A chromatic ascending line in each of the voices crescendos into a cadence at measure 26 which ends the A section of the piece. It is important to note that the binary form divides the piece in half exactly: both sections are 26 measures long.

Measure 26 elides the A section with the B section, and both the voices begin a phrase that closely imitates their opening melodic line of the A section in measure 3. However, the voices ascend from the B-flat chord and tension builds through the line with the addition of F-sharp in the alto and organ. Again, the alto begins to echo short, two-measure phrases sung by the soprano, until both voices sing repeated notes together leading into a crescendo and accented notes on the words “benedictus fructus”. The piece ends with a repeat of the words “Ave Maria” on ascending arpeggios in both parts, and with a suspension in the soprano leading into a perfect authentic cadence.

Rheinberger’s technique of composing hymns and motets in neo-Renaissance style is very evident in the structure of his “Ave Maria”; it is strikingly simple and direct. The lyrical melodic lines in the voices are comprised of very simple rhythms and stepwise rising and falling motion, are generally either a third or sixth apart. The voices also alternate between staggered entrances, with the soprano introducing a melodic idea and the alto echoing it, and homorhythmic sections in each phrase. The dynamic structure alternates back and forth between soft and loud dynamic markings, which seem to reinforce the idea that each line must be given an arched shape and then soften at the end.

3.2

Rehearsal Considerations for Rheinberger's "Ave Maria" WoO.7, No.1

"Ave Maria" is written in common time and marked *andante molto*, which is about quarter note equals 79. Considering the long, arching phrases, conducting in a two-pattern may provide a more accurate reflection of the Renaissance feel and structure of the piece. Since the piece is modeled on this early style, combined with the lack of rhythmic passages, there is no need to add rubato or subdivide beats within phrases which would cause the piece to lag. The exception to this is the last two measures which may be taken out of time to emphasize the final cadence.

It is extremely important that the given dynamic and articulation markings are adhered to so that the phrases have both interest and shape. Each phrase should be treated much like those in a Renaissance motet, with noticeable growth into sustained notes and tapering into each cadential point. With this in mind, the staggered entrances in the alto part must be heard, so the sopranos must be sensitive to their entrance. The loudest dynamic marking is *forte*, and this should be strictly observed as this is a sacred piece, not a part-song or lieder, and should retain a sense of formality and containment. In order to create enough dynamic contrast without becoming too loud, the soft dynamic markings can be dramatically soft to emphasize the sense of hushed reverence. It is important in these places, however, that good diction is encouraged in order that the text is not lost.

The Latin text of the "Ave Maria" is a familiar one, and should not prove problematic from a diction standpoint anywhere in the piece. It is worth noting that since the text is so widely known, and is the most important feature within the piece, the Latin diction should be extremely

clear and vowels should be pure and open. Proper syllabic stress on certain words should be emphasized, for example, “Ma-RI-a” and “PLE-na”; observing these details will also help the singers to add shape within the phrases.

Both soprano and alto parts are written with the amateur singer in mind and thus are quite accessible regarding range. The range for the soprano is D4 to G5, and B-flat3 to C5 for the alto. If the piece is being performed by a choir, it is feasible that most voices would be able to sing either part. This can be especially helpful in achieving a good balance when working with an ensemble that has a greater number or stronger singers in one voice part. Singers should be encouraged to sing with a pure, blended sound and with slightly less vibrato than is usual for Romantic music, since this particular piece is more Renaissance in nature.

3.3

Review of Available Recordings of Rheinberger's "Ave Maria" WoO.7, No.1

There is only one widely available recording of the "Ave Maria" by soprano Lydia Teuscher, mezzo-soprano Christine Müller, and organist Kay Johannsen from 2010.

The organ remains quiet and muted throughout the piece and nearly disappears behind the two voices, making them the focus. The voices both seem to be ideally suited for this piece: the soprano voice is full and sweet without being either piercing or strident on high notes, while the alto voice is round and warm while still retaining a streamlined quality. The single drawback of the two voices is the lack of consistent dynamic balance between them. The soprano occasionally drowns out the alto voice, especially on higher notes, like measure 42. In these cases, a louder dynamic is needed from the alto voice to create a better balance.

The phrase shaping is lovely and musical, with each phrase growing and then tapering off at the cadence. Dissonances are emphasized quite well by the voices leaning into them, and any sustained notes are given shape and growth. The Latin is very clear and understandable, and both singers have consistent and pure vowels.

The articulation is the only other detail that seems to have been overlooked, for instance, in measures 43-44. There are very clear accent markings that either have been ignored by the singers, or were not executed clearly enough to be noticed. It is possible that the singers opted to disregard the accent markings in order to achieve a more legato line, however, observing the accent markings would have added interest to the long, fluid lines and would have highlighted certain words or syllables within the text.

CHAPTER 4

VINCENT PERSICHETTI

Vincent Ludwig Persichetti was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1915 and began studying music at the age of five at the Combs Conservatory. As a child and teenager, he studied piano, organ, double bass, conducting, and composing. Persichetti became a church organist and choir conductor of the Arch Street Presbyterian Church at the age of sixteen, and had developed not only the ability to sight read almost anything, but also to improvise on the organ and memorize orchestral scores. He graduated with his bachelor's degree from the Combs Conservatory at the age of twenty-one, and was immediately invited to become the head of the theory and composition department. The following year, he began graduate studies in piano and composition at the Philadelphia Conservatory, and also studied conducting at the Curtis Institute.²⁵

In 1941, he married pianist Dorothea Flanagan, whom Persichetti described as “the person who’s had the greatest influence on all my music.”²⁶ That same year, he graduated from the Philadelphia Conservatory, and in 1942 was invited to be the chairman of their department of theory and composition as he simultaneously worked on his doctorate. From 1944 until 1954, he wrote music criticism for several noteworthy musical journals such as *Modern Music*, *Musical Quarterly*, and *MLA Notes*. Persichetti’s creativity was not confined to music; he loved sailing,

25. Walter Simmons, *The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Mennin: Voices of Stone and Steel* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 174.

26. *Ibid.*, 176.

attended art school, and became a skilled sculptor. He often joked, even in his later years, that at some point he would need to decide what “to do with [his] life.”²⁷

In 1961, Persichetti’s music theory textbook, *Twentieth Century Harmony*, was published by WW. Norton. His book examined and presented harmonic possibilities, as well as purely theoretical possibilities, for composers in the twentieth century in a straightforward manner, without criticism of any composer’s style. Many of the musical examples within the text were composed by Persichetti himself in order to illustrate specific points.²⁸

The newly appointed president of the Juilliard School, William Schuman, offered Persichetti a faculty position at the school in 1947, and he taught there until his death. In 1963 he became the chairman of the department of composition at Juilliard, and later the department of Literature and Materials.²⁹ He also continued to teach at the Philadelphia Conservatory, now the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, until 1962. Aside from his teaching career, Persichetti was awarded three Guggenheim Fellowships, two grants from the National Foundation of the Arts and Humanities, and commissions from many orchestras and foundations in the United States.³⁰

As a composer, much of Persichetti’s choral and instrumental works contain similar characteristics such as irregular rhythms, sparseness in texture, polytonal harmonies, and angular melodic lines. He produced works that varied widely in mood, style, and level of difficulty—making it difficult to concretely define his compositional style. As it was, that style did not fully evolve until the 1950s, but overall his pieces reflect the influence of composers such as Bartok,

27. Simmons, *The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Mennin: Voices of Stone and Steel*, 184.

28. Ibid., 185.

29. Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Liner notes from *Vincent Persichetti: Choral Works*, cond. Tamara Brooks, recorded April 16, 1995, New World Records, 1995, CD.

30. Terry Joe. Barham, *A Macroanalytic View of the Choral Music of Vincent Persichetti*, diss., University of Oklahoma, 1981 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1981), 1.

Copland, Hindemith, and Stravinsky.³¹ In fact, according to Simmons, “His overall compositional identity falls around the Neo-Classicists, his later works favoring pan-diatonic, quartal, and polytonal harmony, lucid contrapuntal texture, and lively, syncopated rhythms in duple meter”.³² Persichetti did not see his music as avant-garde or overly innovative, but he instead described his “musical vocabulary” as a synthesis of current and past composers: “What I am, I guess, is an amalgamator—I use everything that’s around me ... Bach, for instance, he was just a composer of great music ... he didn’t invent the cantata form, he was a refiner”.³³

Persichetti even tended to borrow thematic material from himself; for example, his opera *The Sibyl* utilized thematic material which Persichetti drew from his own *Little Piano Book*.³⁴

It was Persichetti’s opinion that choral music could be as great in public opinion as orchestral music—the key, according to him, was for communication and passion to be focus of the performer. He believed especially that conductors should learn orchestral and choral conducting at the same time to promote greater confidence in working with both kinds of groups. He also felt that through his music, he was giving the “best of himself” to the audience, even if it meant that the audience would have to put forth more effort to listen and appreciate it.³⁵

Persichetti published over 100 works, including solo piano pieces, and sixteen choral works that include *Te Deum*, *Stabat Mater*, *Mass*, *Magnificat*, and *The Creation*. Aside from

31. Walter Simmons, *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Persichetti, Vincent" accessed January 20, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21384>.

32. Simmons, *The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Mennin: Voices of Stone and Steel*, 194.

33. *Ibid.*, 6.

34. Simmons, *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Persichetti, Vincent".

35. Robert E. Page, "In Quest of Answers: An Interview with Vincent Persichetti," *Choral Journal* 15 (November 1973): 6.

these, the texts for his choral works utilize mostly secular texts, especially his pieces for women's voices, including "This is the Garden," "Hist Whist," *Spring Cantata*, *Winter Cantata*, and "Love." Most of his pieces for women are written either unaccompanied or with piano accompaniment, *Winter Cantata* being the only exception with a flute and marimba accompaniment.³⁶

36. James McCray, "Vincent Persichetti's Music for Women's Chorus," *Choral Journal* 21, no. 7 (March 1981): 9.

4.1

Analysis for Selected Movements from Vincent Persichetti's *Winter Cantata*

Winter Cantata is a twelve-movement work written for women's voices, flute, and marimba, and is Persichetti's longest work for women's chorus. The text is from "A Net of Fireflies" which is a set of Japanese haiku poems translated into English by Harold Stewart.³⁷ Each movement is very brief and sparse in texture (a reflection of the rigid haiku poetic structure), and creates a "snapshot" glimpse of a single wintery image. It is also interesting to note that the form of most of the movements contains three major sections, which mirrors the three-line form of the haiku poem. The movements cannot be analyzed via traditional tonal harmony, nor are they exactly atonal or post-tonal, but combine elements of both. Persichetti instead uses intervals (most notably sevenths and seconds) and repeated rhythmic patterns as the structure for each piece.

The first movement, "A Copper Pheasant", can be broken down into four sections: the introduction is measures 1-9, the A section is measures 10-17, the A' section is measures 18-26, and the coda is measures 27-30. These sectional divisions are closely related to the text and phrases sung by the choir, each of which is extremely similar rhythmically, yet change in pitch. For example, the choir begins on a unison D in the A section, and each part moves upward in a close cluster which echoes the E-flat, F, G, A that the marimba plays in the introduction. In the A' section, the choir begins again on the unison D, but the soprano 2 and alto 2 parts move in contrary motion to the upper parts, and ending on D-sharp, F-sharp, G-sharp. The final coda in the voices is simply a static repetition of the second half of text sung in the A' section, "cuts the

37. McCray, "Vincent Persichetti's Music for Women's Chorus," 9.

chilly sky,” and is a return to the same pitch cluster played by the marimba in the introduction: E-flat, F, G, A.

Overall, the tonal center of the movement is D, but there is some hinting at G# in the A' section. The first note played in the marimba is a D, and the choir enters on the same pitch in unison. In the A' section, the choir again enters on a unison D (with the marimba playing the same pitch underneath them), and as the voices sing the coda section, both the marimba and flute sustain a D, two octaves apart. However, it is the four-note cluster that seems to be the harmonic basis for the piece, as those four notes are the most utilized throughout the movement, and the grouping of different notes all with the half/whole/whole-step relationship appear in the introduction with the marimba. In measure 3, the note cluster must be reversed to see this relationship (so, it would be E-flat, D, C, B-flat) and also in measure 7 (D, E-flat, F, G).

Persichetti also hints at the next movement of “Winter Cantata” in measures 24-26, where the flute and marimba play the theme from “Winter’s First Drizzle” in unison, which is a subtle yet effective segue into the second movement.

This second movement begins lightly and staccato which creates contrast with the first movement, and also contains word painting with the staccato markings on the word “drizzle”. This creates an interesting effect when it is repeated later in the A' section, where the voices' staggered entrances of the word “drizzle” create an effect that mimics the sound of icy raindrops falling. It is divided into five sections: measures 1-9 are the introduction, measures 10-20 are the A section, 21-32 are the B section, 33-52 are the A' section, and 53-57 are the coda. The intro seems a bit ambiguous as far as key, except that the repeated A-flat in both flute and marimba create another tonal center. As accidentals are added, the tonal center seems to change in the A section; it moves quickly from D-flat to G to A. The choir continues the feeling of the key A

major with the sustained A's in the second soprano part, however as the instruments move through the B section, the key once again becomes ambiguous with the addition of so many mixed accidentals.

As the voices enter again at the A' section, it seems that the key has shifted into E-flat, with the voices entering on A-flat and E-flat with a continuation and extension of the theme that was presented in measure 10, except that all the voices sing it with staggered entrances. Much like the A section, there is an extension of the material in the 4/8 measures which is accompanied by a *molto ritardando* that signals the last few measures into the coda. This coda begins in the middle of the last phrase of text for the voices, in measure 53, and is signaled by a return to tempo I and also to the original theme played by the flute in the introduction as the voices sustain A-flat, C, E-flat, and G to the final fermata.

The first measure of "The Woodcutter" begins the same way as the first movement, with a sustained D in the marimba. The flute enters on the same pitch, and then plays an ascending arpeggio that outlines a minor ninth, which is then immediately echoed in unison by the choir. The choir's line is actually a transformation of the first soprano line in "A Copper Pheasant." It is important to note at this point, that Persichetti has masterfully joined all the movements together by creating the tonal centers appearing in *all* of the movements (namely, D, E-flat, F, G, A) from the initial first soprano line in "A Copper Pheasant".

This is another example of Persichetti's use of word painting: the word "startling" in measure 7 is sung on a G-sharp, which is a whole step higher than the previous F-sharp in measure 3, and extremely unexpected within the phrase. This phrase is then echoed by the flute an octave higher in the B section, which marks a change in both dynamics (*fortissimo*) and style (*pesante*).

Persichetti again hints at themes in the next movement in measure 11, when the marimba plays a snippet of the theme from movement VII. It is immediately following this measure that the flute reprises the ascending arpeggio from measure 2, but with a *molto ritardando* leading into the voices' coda in the last two measures. The choir sings a line that mirrors their opening phrase, however this time, the line is condensed and becomes symmetrical (D, A, B-flat, A, D) ending on an unexpected E-flat.

The seventh movement, "Of Crimson Ice" begins with a three-measure introduction of two sixteenth notes followed by a sixteenth note triplet in the marimba; this rhythmic motif is the basis for the entire movement, as it is repeated in every interlude between choral sections and in both instruments (measures 16-22 and 30-32). This is important because much of this movement is tonally vague, although Persichetti does utilize major seconds and minor thirds throughout, especially within the voices. The soprano and alto begin in measure 3, a minor third apart and move inward in contrary motion to a major second in measure 5. These notes are repeated for the next phrase until the voices split into four parts, with the soprano 1 and alto 1 singing a whole step apart on E and F-sharp and the soprano 2 and alto 2 also singing a whole step apart on C-sharp and B. This idea is important to note because it happens again in the A' section in measure 23. Here, the voices begin a minor third apart and move downward stepwise until measure 28 where they again are paired up into two sets of notes, each a whole step apart (F-sharp, G-sharp, B, C-sharp).

The B section begins at measure 33, where the voices finish the phrase of text in staccato A-sharp and C-sharp while the flute and marimba hold those same notes sustained underneath. The last 5 measures, the marimba again plays the eighth note/triplet figure, this time reversed and adding an elongated triplet.

The tonal ambiguity continues into movement IX, “Fallen Leaves,” which is the fastest and most rhythmic movement (quarter note equals 168). This movement is the only one besides “The Woodcutter” that does not contain an introductory section; instead, the instruments alternate with the choir in four sections: A, B, A’, and B’. In the A and A’ sections (measures 1-8 and 37-45, respectively), the flute and marimba echo each other in staggered entrances that occur in rapid succession, much the same way the voices do in the B sections. There is also alternation of meter between 2/4 and 3/4, but the 3/4 measures do not occur at regular points within the each section. This creates a feeling of rhythmic instability in addition to the tonal ambiguity within the movement, although there are a few moments where it seems that D-flat could be the tonal center. This is another perfect example of Persichetti creating word painting, however, this time he utilizes not quick, rhythmic phrases, but also rapid, angular leaps in pitch to illustrate the text.

The last selected movement, “So Deep,” begins with a short two-measure introduction in the flute, which plays a condensed version of both the soprano and alto’s first measure. The A section begins there, and is clearly in the key of E-flat. In fact, it might be the most tonally stable section in the whole cantata. Essentially, the two voice parts alternate with one another, one having moving notes while the other sustains on a single pitch, creating a static feeling within the movement. This changes in the B section at measure 18, where the sopranos continue to sing lines of text as the altos repeat “so deep” underneath. At measure 22, there is yet another example of word painting in the soprano line: the words “sweep, sweep” are punctuated by rests and marked *pianissimo* so that they create the effect of a broom brushing briskly across the ground. The movement closes with four measures (in the key of B-flat) that are a repeat of the first three measures sung by the voices, except that the penultimate pitches have been elongated and a *diminuendo* added so that the music fades into nothingness.

4.2

Rehearsal Considerations for Selected Movements of *Winter Cantata*

The specific movements chosen from *Winter Cantata* were chosen based on the variety they provided; the alternation between slow/fast or slow/rhythmic provides interest and contrast for the audience, and a transitional challenge for both conductor and ensemble. Most sources state that the cantata should be performed as a whole, with the Epilogue as a summary at the end. If only certain movements are performed, movement X, “So Deep” provides the best closing.

The instrumental parts are moderately difficult, and the marimba has few more challenging areas than the flute (especially some fast passages in “Fallen Leaves” and “The Woodcutter”). Since the instruments function both rather separately from the voices, as well as frequently introducing the thematic material that the voices will later sing, it is important that those parts be introduced to the singers as soon as most pitches and rhythms are secure.

It is necessary for the singers to be divided so that they can sing well-balanced in both two and four parts, since all the parts are equally important. They face the challenge of being able to accurately sing the tone clusters and awkward leaps, often without much help from the accompaniment. Although one or both of the instruments often plays the voices’ starting pitches they generally go on to play something completely opposite of the singers, so it is important that the choir be fairly strong. These moments within the music should be rehearsed first with piano and then without, so the singers can gain a sense of independence from the instruments.

The greatest emphasis, after learning correct pitches and rhythms, should then be placed on the text. Much of what Persichetti has written into the music centers on the unique haiku text, and each movement should utilize both the sound and the text together to create an image within

the listener's mind of a single, stark, and wintry image. In particular, there are some places where diction must be paid special attention. For example, in "Winter's First Drizzle," the words "first drizzle" can become messy if the consonants are not properly separated. Likewise, in "Fallen Leaves," the word "gusts" is difficult to sing on a single pitch without sounding like the word "guts." This obviously brings a whole other meaning to the movement, and so care must be taken that this text is clearly understandable.

Lastly, there are precise dynamics, articulations, and instructions regarding the character of certain phrases given in each movement. Adding this final layer to a collection of already rather challenging music may prove to be the most frustrating, especially if the singers cannot make a clear distinction between soft and loud, accented and un-accented, or legato and staccato. Rehearsing these elements with the singers in a slightly overdone or exaggerated manner and then relaxing them slightly for the performance may bring about the desired result.

4.3

Review of Selected Available Recordings of *Winter Cantata*

The only current recording of *Winter Cantata* that is available on compact disc is the 1995 recording by the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, conducted by Tamara Brooks. One of the most noticeable features of the recording is the brilliant quality of the women's voices, however there also a lot of freedom within the voices, which includes a great deal of vibrato. In this particular piece, the vibrato sometimes obscures the close harmony or tone clusters, making them rather unclear and muddy instead of pure and crystalline.

Another interesting feature of the recording is that the tempo markings are taken very liberally. The first movement, "A Copper Pheasant," is marked as quarter note equals 60, but is actually sung at closer to quarter note equals 45. The second movement is fantastically accurate in terms of articulation, with the voices truly replicating the effect of wet snowflakes falling. Though again, the tempo is taken much slower than marked—exactly ten beats per minute slower.

In movement IV, the marimba's use of extremely hard mallets creates an almost woodpecker-like effect in the opening measures, which is quite striking. The tempo is again, about ten beats slower than Persichetti's tempo marking, and this time it does seem to drag and ultimately detract somewhat from the intensity and movement that this movement should have. The slow tempi continue with "Of Crimson Ice," yet the expressiveness of the flute and the dynamic control within the voices are quite impressive.

The only movement where the slower tempo seems to work quite well is "Fallen Leaves." Although it is still eighteen beats per minute slower than marked, it seems that if it

were taken any faster that it would become nearly frantic and the clarity of text and rhythm might be diminished. The dynamic control of the singers continues to shine in this movement, as the final crescendo in the last eight measures is thrilling to hear and truly highlights the text.

The last movement, “So Deep,” is taken ten beats slower than marked, and also adds a fair amount of rubato to the phrase that is not needed; the extended note values combined with an already slow tempo marking provide ample room for expressivity. The redeeming quality is that the expressiveness of the voices’ line does, in fact, come through strongly. It does seem, however, that the dynamic contrast that was so present in the other movements rather disappears here. The word painting on “sweep” is definitely not pianissimo, and although the loudest marking is mezzo piano, there is simply not enough contrast to the other dynamic levels to be noticed.

Despite a few issues with tempi, the recording is high-quality and definitely valuable both for recreational listening as well as for rehearsal purposes.

CHAPTER 5

ELEANOR DALEY

Canadian composer Eleanor Daley was born in Parry Sound, Ontario on April 21, 1955. She began taking piano lessons and participating in a rhythm band at age five. Throughout middle school, Daley played flute, and in high school began to play the organ at church, although she did not begin organ lessons until later. As an undergraduate, she studied organ performance at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and later went on to study piano and organ at both the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Trinity College in England. When she came to Toronto in 1981, she was hired as an accompanist for the National Tap Dance Company of Canada.³⁸ The following year, she became the director of music at Fairlawn Avenue United Church in Toronto— most of her music has been composed for the Fairlawn church choir— and has remained there for the past twenty years. Under Daley's direction, the Fairlawn Avenue United Church choir has recorded and released four compact discs of her works, the most recent in 2009.³⁹

Daley remains primarily a composer of sacred choral music. In fact, her composing career began out of a frustration with the limited amount of music available at the Fairlawn Church. Since funds for purchasing new music were very limited, she took it upon herself to write a few new pieces for the choir, which quickly grew to an ever-expanding repertoire of solo,

38. Hilary Apfelstadt, "An Interview with Composer Eleanor Daley," *Choral Journal* 51, no. 11 (June/July 2011): 18-19.

39. "Eleanor Daley," Fairlawn Avenue United Church Home Page, accessed January 10, 2012, http://www.fairlawnavenueunited.ca/eleanor_daley.htm.

gender-specific, and SATB pieces.⁴⁰ Daley's published work includes over 140 choral works, many of which have been performed worldwide, in addition to nearly the same number of unpublished works. She has received awards from the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, as well as commissions by such groups as the Toronto Children's Chorus, the Amadeus Choir, the Vancouver's Men's Chorus, the Cantabile Singers of Kingston, the St. Mary's Children's Choir, the Bach Children's Chorus, for which she has also been the accompanist since 1995, and other choirs in fifteen U.S. states. In addition to composing, she is also a gifted accompanist and choral clinician, traveling throughout both Canada and the United States and working with conductors such as Jean Ashworth Bartle, Lydia Adams, and Sir David Willcocks.⁴¹

Daley's creative approach to composing is to first choose and examine the text, and then set up a structural plan and melodic line. She says, "The text is the beginning point, and from there, the music must serve the text."⁴² As a composer who has had ample experience working with singers and choirs as both director and accompanist, she composes her pieces with the singer in mind, which results in comfortable vocal ranges, overall accessibility, and great expressiveness.⁴³

40. Apfelstadt, "An Interview with Composer Eleanor Daley," 19.

41. "Eleanor Daley," Fairlawn Avenue United Church Home Page.

42. Apfelstadt, "An Interview with Composer Eleanor Daley," 20.

43. Ibid., 21.

5.1

Analysis for Eleanor Daley's "A Psalm of Praise"

"A Psalm of Praise" was commissioned by the Maryland Choral Educator's Association for the first Maryland All-State Senior Women's Chorus in 2001, and was published in 2003. The text is partially in English and partially in Hebrew, and is taken from the Bible, in Psalms 92, verses 1-4. The Hebrew text is simply a translation of the English, and can also be found in the Torah.

The piece can be broken down into three sections: the A section which both opens and closes the piece, and two B sections, each with a different phrase extension on the end. The first measure begins with the altos singing a unison D on an open syllable "ah," which the sopranos then join with a melodic line beginning on the same D, singing in Hebrew; the melody in measures 9-16 outlines a D major arpeggio with passing tones. In measure 17, the addition of C-natural and F-natural then shift the melody to the Dorian mode, which combined with the insistent drone underneath is reminiscent of a medieval chant. However, at measure 21, the sopranos sing a B-flat and C-natural which moves the melody into D harmonic minor, and ending on a unison D in the alto part.

The first B section begins again in measure 28 on the unison D and is a return to D major once again, where the voices split into four-part harmony. In measure 37, the second soprano sings an A-sharp which signals a brief return to the Dorian mode before a cadential point in measure 44, where the first alto suspension leads into a B major chord. It is the beginning of the next measure that the upper three parts all move to the top staff and sing entirely in root-position triads for the next eight-measure phrase. In this phrase, there is a slight shift in the upper three

parts, as the triads move from first inversion, to second inversion, and back to root position, which is an E minor chord.

The last phrase of the B section begins again on a G major triad in first inversion and ends with an A major triad in root position. It is repeated in the next four bars, with a brief move into Dorian mode by the A-sharp. The phrase is extended for another six measures by repeating the word “baleilot” (“night”), and having all four parts join on a unison F, ending the B section with a fermata.

The B’ section begins slightly differently than the B section did, instead of a unison D, the parts begin on a dissonant E against F-sharp and then continues to follow nearly the same harmonic structure as the B section, with the exception of some slight changes in rhythm to accommodate the different text. One of the most noticeable differences between the B and B’ sections is the change in the extension in measure 112, where instead of having the text repeat, the text continues on with the same, stepwise progression starting from the G major chord in measure 109-111. The B’ section ends with a perfect authentic cadence which moves directly into the second alto droning on a D, as in the opening of the piece. The A section repeats and the voices hold a dissonant E against D, until finally the sopranos resolve with the altos and fade to *niente*.

The piece seems to contain a theme of juxtaposing two opposite or different aspects of the music against one another. For instance, one of the most interesting parallels in this piece is the alternating English and Hebrew language which is mirrored by several alternating elements: the traditional versus modal harmony, the block chords in either first or second inversion versus root position, and unison versus two or four-part texture— an interesting connection that ties the harmonic language to the actual poetic text of “A Psalm of Praise.”

5.2

Rehearsal Considerations for “A Psalm of Praise”

As most singers know, one of the most difficult things to execute in a song or choral work is holding a unison pitch for a considerable amount of time, and keeping it in tune. Daley’s piece is no exception to this rule, and the second altos may encounter some difficulty in keeping the D from going flat over eight or more measures at a time. It is extremely important that this part remain in tune, as otherwise the top three voices will have great difficulty in not only keeping the fast-moving chords tuned, but also each time all four voices join in unison. Depending on the musical abilities of the group, an accompanist could occasionally play the D at the beginning of each section to keep the group in tune; or a solo instrument, such a violin or flute, might even be added to play the top line along with the voices.

Since the piece was originally written for a children’s choir, the ranges are limited and the tessituras should be quite comfortable for most treble choruses, either women or children. Singers should be distributed so that all four parts are equally balanced; except perhaps for the top soprano part, which may climb a bit high for a true alto, most singers could be placed on any of the other three parts and sing them with ease. The second alto part should be rehearsed separately, as some of the rhythms and syllabifications of the text are quite different from the rest of the voice parts.

The version published by Alliance Music Publications includes a brief pronunciation guide to the Hebrew, which is extremely concise and helpful if the choir is not familiar with the language. One of the most important features of the piece is the transition between the English and Hebrew text, so the singers must execute excellent diction appropriate to each language as it

is sung; the Hebrew should sound markedly different from the English text in order to provide both contrast and interest. It might be beneficial to have the choir sing the Hebrew passages on a neutral syllable while learning the notes, and then practice speaking the Hebrew text out of rhythm until it becomes more natural.

5.3

Review of Available Recordings for “A Psalm of Praise”

There is only one widely available recording of this piece which is performed by a group that Eleanor Daley has worked closely with, the Toronto Children’s Choir, under the direction of Jean Ashworth Bartle.

Daley has given a suggested tempo marking of dotted half note equals 44-52 beats, however, the recording’s tempo falls closer to 34 beats, and even that does not take into account the extra time being added in-between phrases for breaths. Although this does allow for the beauty of the triadic harmonies to fully resonate, the unison measures and especially the fermatas seem to drag on far too long at that speed.

The Hebrew text is obviously one of the special features of this piece, and the choir sings the language with lovely clarity and overall good diction, although the aspirated consonants are difficult to hear and could be brought out a bit more. The balance and blend between the four parts is excellent, and the second alto part is remarkably strong and accurate considering that it remains on a D for the majority of the piece. The last five measures are marked *poco rit. e dim.*, which the choir executes wonderfully, except that instead of fading into nothing as is indicated, there is a very deliberate and nearly over-pronounced “t” at the end.

As the only option currently available for this piece, the Toronto Children’s Choir delivers a truly lovely and joyful, if slow, version of “A Psalm of Praise.”

CHAPTER 6

WILLIAM DAWSON

William Levi Dawson was born in Anniston, Alabama in 1899 and attended the Tuskegee Institute at age thirteen, where he graduated with honors. He later attended and received a Bachelor of Music degree the Horner Institute for Fine Arts in Kansas City, Missouri where he studied composition and piano. In Chicago, he completed graduate studies in composition at the Chicago Musical College and the American Conservatory of Music, and as well as playing bass and trombone in both classical and jazz ensembles. It was while working as the music director of a Baptist church in Chicago that he began to publish his arrangements of African-American spirituals.⁴⁴

In 1930, Dawson won the Wanamaker Contest for his song “Jump Back, Honey, Jump Back” as well as his orchestral “Scherzo”. In 1931, he became director at the Tuskegee School of Music and was conductor of the *a cappella* choir which performed concerts in Carnegie Hall, the White House, Constitution Hall, Radio City Music Hall, and in national and international radio broadcasts. Under Dawson’s direction, the choir also toured internationally in 1934 and was highly praised by American critics.⁴⁵

Dawson’s best-known work is his *Negro Folk Symphony*, which was premiered in 1934 by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. He used idioms from traditional Negro spirituals to form the main thematic material in his symphony. He even revised it after a trip to study the

44. Willie Strong, "Dawson, William Levi," Oxford Music Online, accessed March 8, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07322>.

45. "William Dawson," Singers.com, accessed March 08, 2012, <http://www.singers.com/composers/William-Dawson>.

indigenous music in West Africa in 1952, adding African-inspired rhythms. However, this version of the symphony was never published.⁴⁶

As a conductor, Dawson worked with many groups, both choral and orchestral, including the Kansas City Philharmonic, the Nashville Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the Wayne State University Glee Club and also had conducted many honor and festival ensembles. Among the honors he received were the honorary doctorate and Alumni Merit Award from the Tuskegee Institute in 1983, and being named to the Alabama Arts Hall of Fame in 1975.⁴⁷

Along with William Grant Still and Florence Price, Dawson was one of the three most significant African-American composers of the early twentieth century.⁴⁸ Dawson was one of the integral composers in developing Negro spirituals into popular choral music. His choral arrangements are known for “successfully blurring the line between newly composed and pre-existing material” in regards to the unique character and rhythms.⁴⁹

46. John A. Johnson, "William Dawson, 'The New Negro,' and His Folk Idiom," *Black Music Research Journal* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 48, accessed March 1, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/779273>.

47. "William Dawson," Singers.com.

48. Strong, "Dawson, William Levi," Oxford Music Online.

49. Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 2002), 256.

6.1

Analysis of Dawson's "Soon-ah Will Be Done"

This a cappella spiritual, published in 1934, is characterized by dotted rhythms and stepwise, chromatic movement in the melodic line with very little harmonic variation throughout—the chord progressions are generally i-V-i within the key of B minor. However, this repeated alternation between tonic and dominant is reflective of the text and overall form of the piece. The form is essentially binary, each refrain is an A section, and each of the three verses being a B, with a bridge and a short five-measure coda at the end: ABAB-C-AD. Each refrain and each verse are repeated twice.

There are dramatic dynamic shifts between the refrain and each verse, moving from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. In addition to this, the verses also have accents on nearly every note making them choppy and separated; another stark contrast from the smooth and legato refrain. The differences between the refrain and verses directly reflect the text: the earthly “troubles ob de worl’” are characterized by quiet dynamics, small intervals, and with soft final consonants like “ob” and “worl’,” which calls to mind an individual that has been beaten down over the course of a long and weary life. The verses, which speak of “goin’ home t’ live wid God,” are much more fanfare-like, with accented notes, and harder final consonants like “wan’t,” all of which change the character of the music to express firm joy and hope in the heavenly reward. It is this kind of dramatic shift in all aspects of the music, from verse to refrain, that adds interest and variety to the piece.

Although much of the song is repeated material, there are slight variations in each verse and refrain that add interest and dimension to the piece. Verses 2 and 3 contain different endings

for the repeat, and the second verse actually leads directly into a bridge. This section is unique and seems to be the focal point of the song since it is the one section of the piece where the voices are not singing homorhythmically; instead, the voices have staggered entrances on “weepin’ an’ a-wailin’” which culminate in *forzando* repeats of this text. The sopranos continue to sing a melodic line while the lower three parts sing longer sustained notes. The basses then sing a short solo line on the words “no more weepin’” ending in a long fermata, with the refrain beginning again at *tempo primo*. The repeat of the last verse contains a soprano descant and a phrase extension in the tenor line. After a rest on a fermata, all four parts sing the last heavily accented phrase in unison and ending on a Picardy third, *fortississimo*.

Just as in the notes and form, there are also slight variations in texture in the last phrase of each refrain resulting from different combinations of voice parts: first the upper three parts, then just the tenor and bass, then the lower three parts, then the upper three parts again, with the coda finally including all four parts. In the refrain, there is some variation in the second two refrains which feature the men echoing “de worl’” to connect the two phrases together. The text is unique because it reflects the dialect of the originators of most spirituals: black slaves. These individuals were likely never taught to read or write, and would have been inherently illiterate, resulting in a unique type of speech that is often replicated within traditional spirituals through the phonetic spelling of certain words.

6.2

Rehearsal Considerations for Dawson's "Soon-ah Will Be Done"

While this particular spiritual is not terribly demanding regarding notes and rhythms and can likely be learned within only a few rehearsals, it provides many opportunities for the choral ensemble to practice flexibility in rapid changes in dynamics and articulations, as well as develop great expression and communication with the audience through the text. Maintaining the tempo is probably the biggest concern when rehearsing and performing this piece. Dawson has given a metronome marking of half note equals 72, *moderato*. It is important that this tempo remain constant, as there are several fermatas to consider, the dotted rhythm must be kept constant and aligned in all voice parts, and if the piece is taken too fast, it becomes frantic and the unique text will be lost. If desired, some time can be taken in the coda section where the choir sings in unison. Each chord can be separately cued, so that the final Picardy third is slightly delayed, giving the piece a thrilling ending.

The dynamics are dramatically different from verse to refrain, but there should also be contrast between each repeat of the refrain. The initial refrain could be done at *piano* so that the repeat can be *pianissimo*; conversely, the verses could be sung only *forte* the first time and then *fortissimo* in the repeat to add variety. In addition to sudden dynamic changes, the articulations are a large part of differentiating between verses and refrain. What Dawson has marked is likely what the singers would do naturally if they were asked to accent each note, but in this case it must be amplified.

As previously mentioned, the notes and rhythms in this piece will not provide any serious challenge for a good choral ensemble, but there are several places that might prove tricky and should receive special attention. For example, in measure 26, the lower three parts answer the

soprano melody with a staccato, accented “wailin’.” It is important that this is articulated properly in the alto, tenor, and bass, and is rhythmically precise to achieve the proper effect. The second ending of this same verse leads directly into the bridge section with staggered entrances. It is important that the choir remembers the sudden shift of material at this point and accents the repeated eighth notes on each entrance.

6.3

Review of Available Recordings of Dawson's "Soon-ah Will Be Done"

This spiritual is extremely popular and has been recorded by dozens of choral ensembles, from collegiate to professional, gender-specific to mixed. One of the biggest differences between most of the available recordings is, surprisingly, tempo. Although there is a tempo marking on publications of "Soon-ah Will Be Done," a few professional choirs have released recordings of this piece that seem to race along for no other reason than to prove it can be performed at lightning-speed.

One unique recording is from the album "The Spirituals of William Dawson" by the St. Olaf Choir, conducted by Anton Armstrong. What makes this recording different is the incredibly slow tempo in the refrain, which is approximately half note equals 42. Then there is a sudden and dramatic shift for each of the verses to a tempo that is almost twice as fast: half note equals 70. This does not seem to enhance any particular quality within the music, rather, it draws attention away from many of the excellent qualities of the ensemble and does not showcase any phrase shaping within the refrain. While the vocal quality, diction, and articulations are excellent for most of the piece, the soprano descant in the last verse is disappointingly wobbly instead of floating or piercing above the other parts. The coda is taken out of time and each chord is cued, which results in an effective and striking ending.

The second recording from the album "Frostiana" is by Exultate, directed by Thomas D. Rossin. This version seems to be one of the most accurate professional recordings compared to what Dawson actually wrote in the score, and is quite well executed in all aspects. The tempo is taken at half note equals 75, and there is consistent, musical shaping of each refrain. The diction

is quite clear, as well as the vocal quality, balance, and blend of the ensemble as a whole. The soprano descant in the last verse is light and floats over the rest of the voices without overpowering. Like the St. Olaf version, the bridge and coda are taken out of time, which seems to be a fairly consistent feature of most professional recordings. While both versions are precise and sound very professional, each presents the spiritual with different goals in mind: Exultate elegantly and accurately interprets exactly what is provided within the score, while St. Olaf Choir provides a much more unique and free interpretation of “Soon-ah Will Be Done.”

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Translations and Text

1. J.S. Bach's Cantata No. 99, Movement 5- Wenn des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten

A	Wenn des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten Mit des Fleisches Schwachheit streiten, Ist es dennoch wohlgetan.	When the bitterness of the cross Struggles with the weakness of the flesh, It is nevertheless of benefit.
B	Wer das Kreuz durch falschen Wahn Sich vor unerträglich schätzt, Wird auch künftig nicht ergötzt.	Whomever through ignorant delusion Considers the cross unbearable, Will also never share in future delight.

(Source: Translation by Adrienne Stockley, courtesy Google Translate.)

2. Brahms' Three Selections from the *Liebeslieder*, Op. 52 and *Neue Liebeslieder*, Op. 65

No. 4- Wie des Abends Schöne Röte

A	Wie des Abends schöne Röte möcht ich arme Dirne glühn,	Like the evening's lovely rosiness, I, a poor maiden, would like to glow
B	Einem, Einem zu gefallen, sonder Ende Wonne sprühn.	To please one, one boy And then to radiate bliss forever.

No. 13- Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft

A	Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft, sucht nach einem Aste;	The little bird rushes through the air, searching for a branch;
B	und das Herz, ein Herz begehrt's, wo es selig raste.	and my heart desires a heart, a heart on which it can blessedly rest.

No. 13- Nein, Geliebter, setze dich

A	Nein, Geliebter, setze dich mir so nahe nicht! Starre nicht so brünstiglich mir ins Angesicht!	No, my love, don't sit So near me! Do not stare so ardently At my face!
B	Wie es auch im Busen brennt, dämpfe deinen Trieb, daß es nicht die Welt erkennt, wie wir uns so lieb.	However much your heart may burn, Suppress your urges, So that the world will not see How much we love each other.

(Source: The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive. recmusic.org/lieder)

3. Josef Rheinberger- "Ave Maria" from *Drei Hymnen*, WoO.7

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu in mulieribus. Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, Ora pro nobis peccatoribus, Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.	Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with you, Blessed are you among women, And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners, Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
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(Source: Jeffers, Ron. *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire: Sacred Latin Texts*.

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5. Vincent Persichetti- *Winter Cantata*

I	A Copper Pheasant	A copper pheasant wakes with shrill-edged cry; the silver crescent cuts the chilly sky.
II	Winter's First Drizzle	Winter's first drizzle falls, the air is raw. That shivering monkey needs a cape of straw.
IV	The Woodcutter	Within the wintry grove, my axehead fell And bit the bark—how startling was its smell!
VII	Of Crimson Ice	The rime has frozen overnight to gems Of crimson ice along the buckwheat stems.
IX	Fallen Leaves	The winter's fitful gusts as they expire, Bring enough fallen leaves to build a fire.
X	So Deep	So deep, the heavy snow since yesterday, It's drifts remain. Sweep, sweep, as you may.

(Source: Persichetti, Vincent. *Winter Cantata*. Elkan-Vogel, 1965.)

5. Eleanor Daley- A Psalm of Praise

Mizmor shir l'yom hashabbat	How good it is to give thanks to you, Lord,
Tov l'hodot L'Adonai,	To sing praises unto thy name,
Ulzamer l'shimcha elyon;	O Lord most high;
L'hagid baboker chasdecha,	To declare thy loving kindness every morning,
Veemunat'cha baleilot,	And thy faithfulness by night,
Alei asor valei navel,	With the sound of the ten string lyre,
Alei higayon b'chinor.	With music of lute and harp.
Ki simachtani Adonai,	Thou hast made me glad through thy work,
	O Lord,
B'faalecha b'maasei yadecha aranein.	I will rejoice in the works of thy hands.

(Source: Daley, Eleanor. *A Psalm of Praise*. Houston: Alliance Music Publications, 2003.)

6. William Dawson- Soon Ah Will Be Done

Refrain	Soon ah will be don' a-wid de troubles ob de worl', goin' home t' live wid God.
Verse 1	I want' t' meet my mother, I goin t' live wid God.
Refrain	Soon ah will be don' a-wid de troubles ob de worl', goin' home t' live wid God.
Verse 2	No more weepin' an' a wailin'; I'm goin' t' live wid God.
Refrain	Soon ah will be don' a wid de troubles ob del worl', goin' home t' live wid God.
Verse 3	I wan' t' meet my Jesus, in the mornin' Lord! I'm goin' t' live with God.

(Source: Dawson, William Levi. *Soon Ah Will Be Done*. Tuskegee Institute, AL: Music Press, 1934.)

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