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PRAY • ER: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE CONDUCTING
RECITAL OF NYGHÉL J. BYRD

by

Nyghél J. Byrd

B.A., Berea College, 2015

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music

Department of Music
In the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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In the field of Music

Approved by:

Dr. Susan Davenport, Chair

Dr. David Dillard

Dr. Jessica Butler

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University
November 15, 2019

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

NYGHÉL J. BYRD, for the Master of Music degree in CHORAL CONDUCTING, presented on November 15, 2019, at Southern Illinois University.

TITLE: PRAY • ER: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES ON THE GRADUATE CONDUCTING RECITAL OF NYGHÉL J. BYRD

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Susan Davenport

This document presents extended program notes on the graduate choral conducting recital of Nyghel J. Byrd entitled Prayer. This document consists of six chapters, which discuss historical and programmatic details of the pieces presented. This document includes the rehearsal process, programming difficulties as well as possible solutions. The selections include the following choral works and pieces: *Baba Yetu* by Christopher Tin, *Abide with Me* arranged by Moses Hogan, “*Amen Chorus*” from *Messiah* by George Fredrick Handel, *Myél’s Mass* by Myél Byrd, “*Prayer Fixes Things*” and “*Campfire Prayer*” from *A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses* by Jason Max Ferdinand, and *MLK* arranged by Bob Chilcott.

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PREFACE

This recital is a musical approach to the definition of ‘prayer’. Prayer, as defined by the Oxford Living Dictionaries, is (1) “a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship,” (2) “a religious service, especially a regular one, at which people gather in order to pray together,” and/or (3) “an earnest hope or wish.”¹

The program, therefore, is divided up to reflect these definitions. *Baba Yetu* by Christopher Tin, a Swahili setting of the Lord’s Prayer and *Abide with Me* arr. Moses Hogan, a spiritual setting of a hymn, represent the first definition. The second section includes “*Campfire Prayer*” from *A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses* by Jason Max Ferdinand, the “*Amen Chorus*” from George Fredrick Handel’s *Messiah*, and *Myél’s Mass*, a jazz setting of the Ordinary of the Mass composed by Myél Byrd, this author’s brother. The “*Amen Chorus*” finishes the first half of the program (*Baba Yetu*, *Abide with Me*, and “*Campfire Prayer*”), just as ‘amen’ ends many religious prayers. The third definition is represented by *MLK* arranged by Bob Chilcott. *MLK* is a song of dedication to Martin Luther King with the hope that the dream that Dr. King had would be realized.

The program is bookended by “*Prayer Fixes Things*” also from *A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses* by Jason Max Ferdinand. This piece sums up the purpose of prayer.

*“Prayer fixes things. When you are down and out; in your distress, he sure can
bless. My God will make it right. Prayer surely fixes things.”*

– Jason Max Ferdinand

1. *Oxford Living Dictionaries*, s.v. “prayer,” accessed January 6, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/prayer>.

I. A SOLEMN REQUEST

CHAPTER 1

BABA YETU by CHRISTOPHER TIN

Christopher Tin is a two-time Grammy award winning American composer of concert and media music, born in California to immigrants from Hong Kong. Tin grew up with a foundation of classical music while also being fully immersed in the jazz, music theatre, and the 90s rave scene of San Francisco. He received his B.A. in Music and English from Stanford University and his M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities from Oxford University in Oxford, England. He also received his M.M. with distinction from the Royal College of Music in London. Tin writes in a variety of different styles “ranging from lush symphonic works, to world-music infused choral anthems, to electro-acoustic hybrid film and video game scores.”² Among his world-music infused choral anthems, is *Baba Yetu*, a Swahili setting of the Lord’s Prayer.

Baba Yetu is an a cappella work written for SSATTB with tenor and optional alto solo. The Lord’s Prayer is one of the most universally recognized prayers in the Christian faith. In the Bible before the crucifixion of Christ a disciple asks Jesus to teach them how to pray and Jesus teaches them this prayer.³ Because of this, the Lord’s Prayer is probably the most solemn of requests and most important of prayers. Tin’s setting combines this solemnity with the vibrancy and excitement of the African tradition. *Baba Yetu* is featured in the Guinness Book of World records as the first piece of written music for a video game to win a Grammy, winning a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocals.

2. “About,” Christopher Tin - About, <https://christophertin.com/about.html>.

3. Luke 11: 1

There are many arrangements for Tin’s *Baba Yetu*, including arrangements by other composers. *Baba Yetu* was originally written for the video game *Civilizations IV* for SATB choir and orchestra, with Swahili text adapted by Chris Kiagiri. Due to *Baba Yetu*’s initial success, Tin rearranged this for many voice groupings and ensembles. In 2010, Tin arranged a version for choir orchestra and male duet for the concert CD *Video Games Live – Level 2*. Tin arranged *Baba Yetu* for SSATTB choir with percussion accompaniment, in 2011. Tin also created a choral octavo, which featured the piece and songs from many cultures and languages called *Calling All Dawns*. Arrangements by other composers include, an adaptation by Derek Machan for TTBB chorus with orchestra for the Brigham Young University (BYU) Men’s Chorus, an arrangement by Peter Hollens for a cappella voices, an a cappella arrangement by Julie Gaulke for SSAATTBB and solo, and several instrumental arrangements for piano, solo instrument, marching band, and wind ensemble.

Baba Yetu is a large ABA where each A section has a call and response. Each chorus (response) has a similar melody but is voiced differently each time. The verse (call) uses solo voices with the choir accompanying them with an “Oo.” Each smaller section is in 8-bar phrases creating a smaller aba section (chorus, verse, chorus). The B section (bridge), starting in m. 27, begins with an 8-bar section where the chorus imitates the instruments. This section is followed by another 8-bar section where the choir sings the final section of the Lord’s Prayer, *Ufalme wako ufike utakalo. lifanyike duniani kama mbinguni. Amina* (Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Amen), while the soloist ad-libs above them. While the final A section is set differently than the first A section, it still has the same structure (aba).

Table 1.1 *Baba Yetu* structure graph.

	A			B			A'			
	a	b	a	Bridge			a	b'	a'	
Intro	Chorus	Verse	Chorus	Transition	Verse'	Transition	Chorus	Verse	Chorus	Outro
mm. 1-2	3-10	11-18	19-26	27-34	35-42	43-50	51-58	59-66	67-74	75

Figure 1.2 *Baba Yetu* by Christopher Tin mm. 3-4.

TENOR SOLO
ff powerfully
 3
 Ba - ba ye - tu ye - tu'u - li - ye mbi - ngu - ni ye - tu ye - tu a - mi - na.

To ululate means to “utter a loud, usually protracted, high-pitched, rhythmical sound especially as an expression of sorrow, joy, celebration, or reverence.”⁴ Tin shows examples of this by adding in the alto soloist who interjects during the tenor’s verses. (see Figure 1.3.)

Figure 1.3 *Baba Yetu* by Christopher Tin mm. 13-14.

13 ALTO SOLO
ff *fall*
 He - le - le!
 TENOR SOLO
ff
 ma - ko - sa ye - tu, hey!... Ka - ma na - si tu - na - vyo - wa - sa - me - he wa - li -

Tin also imitates ululation in the choir by having them sing “Oo” lines under the solos and as transitional material. Tin’s use of call and response can be seen best in the structure of the piece. The response, *Baba yetu uliye mbinguni, yetu, amina! Jina lako litukuzwe* (Our father who art in heaven, Amen. Hallowed be thy name), is presented first by the soloist, and is then sung by the choir. Then after the soloist sings the other parts of the Lord’s Prayer (Give us this day...) the choir sings this response.

Since there are many arrangements of the piece, there are many recordings, but there are a few recordings worth referencing. For stylistic integrity, the recording by the BYU Men’s Chorus featuring Alex Boyé, and/or the recording by the Soweto Gospel Choir are recommended. The BYU Men’s Chorus have been working with *Baba Yetu* for a while, bringing

4. “Ululate,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ululate. Accessed 20 Jan. 2019.”

it to Africa and working with an African tribe to make recordings and workshop the piece. They have recorded this piece in Africa with a small group from BYU and later recorded another version with the BYU Orchestra and Alex Boyé.⁵ Alex Boyé is an English singer of Nigerian decent, who is known for his “Africanized” versions of popular songs.⁶ While the BYU recording of this piece is musically and stylistically beautiful, Boyé is able to bring forth more African spirit and use the piece to tell a story.⁷ Because of the piece’s simplistic structure, it can easily be as boring as it is exciting and beautiful. Boyé gives a great example of style and ad lib for the solo lines.

The Grammy Award winning Soweto Gospel Choir recorded the official version of the song and would best demonstrate the African stylistic elements and vocal technique as well as the intentions of the composer, since he conducted for the recording. They, along with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, debuted the piece for Carnegie hall on October 19, 2009.⁸

While both the BYU Men’s Choir and the Soweto Gospel Choir recordings are beautiful, they are both accompanied versions of the piece. They are mentioned here as a point of reference for singing the a cappella arrangement. There are a few of a cappella recordings, though none

5. BYU Men’s Chorus, “Baba Yetu' in Africa (The Lord's Prayer in Swahili) | BYU Men's Chorus | Music by Christopher Tin,” composed by Christopher Tin, March 22, 2016, music video, 3:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuWr4gYJ6nM>.

6. Riley Oliphant, “Men’s Chorus and Alex Boyé Find Their Perfect Fit with “Baba Yetu”,” March 24, 2016, <https://music.byu.edu/byu-philharmonic/mens-chorus-and-alex-boye-find-their-perfect-fit-with-baba-yetu/>; “Home,” Alex Boyé, accessed March 2018, <https://www.alexboye.com>.

7. BYU Men’s Chorus, “Baba Yetu (By Christopher Tin) Lord's Prayer in Swahili - Alex Boyé, BYU Men's Chorus/ Philharmonic,” composed by Christopher Tin, March 22, 2016, featuring Alex Boyé, music video, 4:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsINANZ6Riw>.

8. Soweto Gospel Choir with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, “Christopher Tin - Baba Yetu (Official Music Video),” composed by Christopher Tin, October 29, 2009, music video, 3:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJiHDmyhE1A>.

done by the composer. This author focused on two a cappella recordings. The first is a recording by the Lancaster Bible College Chorale. The recording was taken on the last day of classes as part of their “Annual Last Day of Class One-Take Video Fest.”⁹ The recording is sung with the same jubilation of the Soweto Gospel Choir and Alex Boyé from the previous recordings. It does not sacrifice the quality of the necessary choral sound, clarity of text and vocal line, while combining the relaxed vowels from the African tradition. The soloist sings freely, although some strain can be heard in places. Additionally, the ending melody line, sung by the women, sounds unsupported and child-like.

The second recording is by the Cape Town Youth Choir. This version is more reserved while still showing the uplifting nature of the piece. The choir does an amazing job bringing out the orchestral imitated sections, while keeping a beautiful balance between the parts. The conductor also strategically splits up the parts so that each part is heard. More women were added to the main melodic line, and a soloist was used for the above melody in the soprano. There are many sections where this attention to detail makes the biggest difference. The only weakness with this recording is that the soloist, while musically precise, misses some of the African nuance heard in other recordings.

Baba Yetu, though simple and repetitive, is deceptively difficult to learn. This piece was presented early in the rehearsal process so that the choirs had something easy but enjoyable to sing during the rehearsal process. The syncopated rhythms, sheet music layout, and text made it difficult for the singers to read and resulted in a slow learning process. Because of this the chorus

9. The Lancaster Bible College Chorale, “Baba Yetu - a cappella version (Christopher Tin). The Lancaster Bible College Chorale,” composed by Christopher Tin, May 5, 2012, video, 4:09, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eTjO0nCx78>.

and text were taught by rote and in sectional rehearsals, while the other chorus sections could be read together.

There are two main difficulties within this piece: the text and stylistic interpretation. The text is not difficult to say alone but can be hard to put to rhythm. The text should be taught by rote in rhythm and is easiest to teach before notes are learned. There are many references that can help with stylistic interpretation, but the biggest thing is that that the choir has fun throughout the piece. If it is to be done well unaccompanied, it should be done memorized so that the audience can connect with the performance. Stylistic interpretation and must also be considered when choosing a soloist as well. The soloist sings the bulk of the text and ad-libs above the choir in the B section; much of the text that comes rapidly and will take a bit of study and practice to sing rhythmically accurate. This author was lucky to have a soloist who was excited to put in this work. Because of this eagerness, the solo was given to them. I had confidence that the soloist would bring the needed jubilation to the solo, though they did not sing with the necessary African nuance. The singer was also a bass-baritone, so some of the higher notes were non-existent. To compensate for these deficiencies, a tenor soloist was added in place of the optional alto solos to sing the sections of the solo that were too high, and to sing the ad-libs. This soloist was more aware of the style and helped round out the solo line.

CHAPTER 2

ABIDE WITH ME arranged by MOSES HOGAN

Moses Hogan was a pianist, conductor, composer and arranger born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Hogan studied at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, The Juilliard School of Music in New York and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Hogan was an accomplished concert pianist including winning first place in the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Competition. Hogan started studying choral music in 1980 with the New World Ensemble.¹⁰ Hogan created and directed the Moses Hogan Chorale, who toured from 1994-1999.¹¹ He then became the Artistic Director for the nationally auditioned Moses Hogan Singers, who debuted in New York in 1980 and continue to tour today. The bulk of Hogan's compositional catalog has been working with the African American Spiritual. He served as the editor for the Oxford Book of Spiritual. Due to Hogan's background as a gospel pianist, his arrangements tend have thick textures, and have large dynamic contrasts. His arrangements tend to be rhythmic and lively like *The Battle of Jericho* and *Ezekiel Saw de Wheel*, or quiet and hymn-like, like *We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace* and *Lily of the Valley*. Though *Abide with Me* is not a spiritual, it can be cataloged alongside his hymn-like arrangements.

Abide with Me is a hymn of comfort by William Henry Monk with text by Henry Francis Lyte arranged for SATB divisi a cappella choir. The text of the hymn "*Abide with Me*," was written by Henry Francis Lyte (see Appendix). Lyte was born in 1793 in Ednam, Scotland and

10. "Moses George Hogan," The Conductor, MosesHogan.com, 2004, http://www.moseshogan.com/about_moses_hogan.htm.

11. "The Moses Hogan Singers," The Singers, MosesHogan.com, 2004, http://www.moseshogan.com/moses_hogan_singers.htm.

was educated at Portora, the Royal School of Enniskillen, and Trinity College in Dublin.¹² Lyte began to study medicine and instead pursued Theology. Lyte wrote the text to “*Abide with Me*” in the last few weeks of his life. After finishing his final sermon in the late summer of 1847, Lyte:

“walked in the valley garden in front of the home, then down to the rocks, where he sat and composed. It was a lovely sunny day and the sun was setting over distant Dartmoor in a blaze of glory. On the left lay Brixham harbor like a pool of molten gold, with its picturesque trawling vessels lying peacefully at anchor. After the sun had set, Lyte returned to his study. His family thought he was resting, but he was putting the finishing touches to his immortal hymn.”¹³

The hymn became a song of comfort to the dying and their loved ones. William Henry Monk, an English organist, church musician, and music editor, wrote the tune *Eventide* to accompany the text in 1861. Monk was attending a hymnal committee for the newest edition of *Hymns Ancient and New*. They realized that Lyte’s text did not have a tune, so he wrote one in ten minutes.¹⁴

Due to the hymn’s popularity, Hogan arranges the hymn by re-voicing the parts without changing the harmonic structure, and the strophic nature of the hymn. Instead, Hogan emphasizes the hymn’s message of comfort by highlighting specific text. Hogan uses verses one and three of Lyte’s text and then borrows the last stanza from verse two and five at the repeated sections in m. 31 and m. 37. He omits verse four entirely. Besides just the setting of the text, Hogan uses musical devices to create space. Verse one is set with long phrases, in order for the audience to understand the original melody. Verse two, on the other hand, is set with more pauses in the melody so that the performer can take advantage of the fermatas.

12. “Abide with me: fast falls the eventide,” Hymnary.org, [https://hymnary.org/text/abide with me fast falls the eventide](https://hymnary.org/text/abide%20with%20me%20fast%20falls%20the%20eventide)

13. Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in the Hymns*, 171.

14. “EVENTIDE (Monk),” Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/tune/eventide_monk

Figure 2.1 – *Abide with Me* arranged by Moses Hogan, comparison between mm. 5-8 and mm. 21-24.

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Abide with Me" by Moses Hogan. It is divided into two main sections: measures 5-8 and measures 21-24. Each section features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment consisting of a right-hand and left-hand part. The tempo and dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics for the first section are: "The dark-ness deep-ens, Lord, with me a-bide;". The lyrics for the second section are: "What but Thy grace can foil the tempt-er's pow'r?". The score illustrates how Hogan uses a *Luftpause* (breath pause) after beat 3 of measure 22 to shorten the phrases compared to the previous verse. This is achieved by adding suspensions in the vocal lines and piano accompaniment, creating a sense of tension.

In Figure 2.1 one can see how Hogan adds a *Luftpause* after beat 3 of m. 22 to make the phrases shorter than in the previous verse. Hogan creates tension by adding suspensions where there

should be resolution. For example, in m. 32, and m. 36 Hogan uses a deceptive cadence, ending on vi instead of I. At m. 33, instead of setting another verse, he uses the ending phrases of two verses, both set similarly with a suspension into a deceptive cadence.

Figure 2.2 – *Abide with Me* arranged by Moses Hogan mm. 29-32 and mm. 33-36.

The image shows two systems of piano accompaniment for the song 'Abide with Me'. The first system covers measures 29-32, and the second system covers measures 33-36. The music is in a minor key (one flat) and 4/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with chords, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Measure 33 is marked with a box containing the number 33.

After changing the rhythmic structure and sense of motion, Hogan then augments the harmonic movement and melody. In mm. 37- 40, the text is “In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.” Hogan adding a fermata on beat two to emphasize ‘life’ slowing the forward motion. Finally, Hogan writes a chromatic descent to ‘death’ followed by a chromatic ascension through m. 38 and m. 39 in perfect authentic V to I cadence in m. 40.

Figure 2.3 *Abide with Me* arranged by Moses Hogan mm. 37-40.

The image shows the vocal and piano accompaniment for measures 37-40 of 'Abide with Me'. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "In life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me. A -". The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *sfp*, *p*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like *poco accel.* and *Slower*. A fermata is placed over the first note of the vocal line in measure 37. The piano part features a chromatic descent in measure 38 and a chromatic ascension in measure 39, leading to a perfect authentic cadence in measure 40. Measure 37 is marked with a box containing the number 37, and measure 40 is marked with a box containing the number 40 and the word "Slower".

There are many excellent recordings of Hogan's *Abide with Me*, but there are a few recordings that need mentioning. The first is a recording by Moses Hogan's Moses Hogan Chorale conducted by Moses Hogan. There is one available recording, recorded a year before Hogan's death in 2003 on the Double CD set "Moses Hogan Choral Series 2002." This recording has the best intentions of the composer, as it is conducted by Hogan himself and sung by the choir he put together and arranged many of his spirituals for. Hogan's recording does not deviate much from what he wrote. There are very few differences between his recording and that of most professional choirs singing his arrangement. Hogan interprets some of his markings differently. For example, the fermata on "life" in m. 37 is taken significantly shorter than most recordings, but Hogan allows more silence afterward (see Figure 2.3). While most performances cut the note before the luftpause short, Hogan uses the full value of the beat and allows a lift before continuing. On the other hand, Hogan seems to ignore the fermata and luftpauses from mm. 40 to the end. The second is the Naxos recording by the Messiah College Concert Choir on this Album "Worthy to be Praised." This recording is clean, in this author's opinion too clean. The recording does not play in the space that Hogan leaves, but instead sings exactly what is written. This recording, like many other great recordings, speeds up the second verse most likely because it is exactly like the first verse (See Figure 2.1). Unlike these recordings, University of Memphis Chamber Choir accomplishes this task without increasing the tempo through those sections. This author prefers this recording because the performers were able to accomplish many of the nuances Hogan intended while playing in the space he wrote into the piece. This recording also gets high acknowledgement from members of the Moses Hogan Chorale and Singers. Mr. Louis Davis Jr., a former member of the chorale under Moses Hogan, says that UofM Chamber Choir's recording was "by far the closest interpretation [to] "our sound" that [he's] heard."

This piece was introduced early in the rehearsal process, because of the popularity of the hymn and of Moses Hogan. It was assumed that many choir members would be familiar with the hymn tune and the piece and would be able to read most of this piece well. Hogan's *Abide with Me* though repetitive is deceptively difficult and requires. Measure 38 to the end is the most difficult section, particularly the chromatic ascent in mm. 38-39. Taking time and tuning each individual chord amongst the parts will ensure that they stay in tune and balanced throughout. This type of attention should also be applied to the fermatas at the end of each verse in m. 8 and m. 24 (See Figure 2.1). Furthermore, the choir seemed to have difficulties closing to the "n" as Hogan notates in the score in mm. 40 to the end. In order to make this uniform, singers were to change to the "n" on the "and" of the note.

CHAPTER 3

“AMEN CHORUS” from *MESSIAH* by G.F. HANDEL

When George Fredric Handel began writing *Messiah* on Saturday, August 22, 1741, he was 53 years old and already a well-established German/British conductor, composer and organist.¹⁵ Though his father disapproved, Handel studied music for three years under Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau. Though Handel has composed many different genres of music, operas became his passion. Handel had a hard time producing operas during the Lenten season so he began to write oratorios. Handel began writing oratorios in the early 1700s with *Il trionfo del tempo* and *La resurrezione*, but *Messiah* has become his most iconic.¹⁶

Messiah is an oratorio written for SATB choir, orchestra with organ and SATB soloists. Handel originally conducted *Messiah* with 24 singers and a large orchestra. It was first performed in Dublin in 1742 after approximately 24 days of composition. Some scholars and philosophers of the time believe that he was divinely inspired and feverishly wrote *Messiah*. Though Handel re-used some arias he had already written, most of the score was written during this time.¹⁷ *Messiah* is an oratorio split into three parts, I. Prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, II. Sufferings and death of Christ, and III. The Resurrection. The Amen Chorus is the finale of Part III: Thanksgiving for the Defeat of Death. The Amen Chorus is not a separate movement from *Messiah*; it is the ending to “*Worthy is the Lamb.*” The “*Amen Chorus*” has its own motivic structure that helps it stand-alone from “*Worthy is the Lamb.*”

15. Peter Jacobi, *The Messiah Book: The Life and Times of G.F. Handel's Greatest Hit* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 29.

16. Herbert F. Peyser, *George Frederic Handel* (New York: The Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, 1951), Gutenberg Ebook, released June 17, 2015.; Percy M. Young, *The Oratorios of Handel* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1949).

17. Jacobi, 31.

The “*Amen Chorus*” is fugue-like. It has an exposition where the subject and answer are introduced, first in the basses and tenors then with the sopranos and altos. Handel also uses a simple counter-subject that accompanies the subject in the other voices, repeating until they cadence. The subject and answer are repeated again in the orchestra accompaniment with ornamentation in the counter subject.

Figure 3.1 – “*Amen Chorus*” from *Messiah* by GF Handel mm. 72-81, the presentation of the subject, answer and counter-subject.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the "Amen Chorus" from Messiah. The first system, starting at measure 72, is marked "F Allegro moderato". It features a vocal line (bass clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). A red bracket labeled "SUBJECT" spans the vocal line from measure 72 to 81. The lyrics "A - men, A - men, A - men, A -" are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes a pedal point in the left hand. The second system, starting at measure 77, continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. A red bracket labeled "ANSWER" spans the vocal line from measure 77 to 81, and a red bracket labeled "COUNTER-SUBJECT" spans the piano accompaniment from measure 77 to 81. The lyrics "A - men, A - men, A - men, A - men," are written below the vocal line.

In m. 102, Handel writes a polyphonic chorale using the subject in the bass and counter subject material in the other three voices. It feels as if Handel is condensing the fugue structure by layering the subject and counter-subject. This idea of truncation happens again as the instrumental interlude between section is only includes the ending section of the counter-subject (see Figure 3.1). The beginning of the development section begins with this polyphonic chorale

in m. 109, but continues into a *stretto* section in which new motivic material is presented. The new motives presented from here to the end are fragments of the subject. Throughout the development Handel continues his diminution, by layering entrances. In m. 113, the ascending motive begins first in the soprano and then in the tenor one beat apart. Starting in m. 122, Handel starts expanding the piece again by having the tenors enter with the ascending motive two beats from the motives last entrance. Handel presents a descending theme with the basses in m. 126; it is an inverse of first motive. He layers the ascending motive with the descending motive in sporadic entrances. Starting in m. 151, Handel composes a *ritenuto* by increasing the note values. The piece ends with an *Adagio* chorale with a plagal cadence. The *Adagio* is taken slower than the *Allegro moderato* section.¹⁸

Figure 3.2 - “Amen Chorus” from Messiah by GF Handel mm. 151-end.

Due to the difficulty of this piece, the “Amen Chorus” was worked on early and often.

The piece is hard to work together as an ensemble if the chorus is still learning parts. This author worked mainly in sectionals to learn parts. Also, because of the simplicity of text, it was read on words.

18. Leonard Van Camp, *George Fredric Handel: Messiah* (Dayton: Roger Dean Publishing Company, 1993), 246.; Don V. Moses, Robert W. Demaree Jr. and Allen F. Ohmes, *Face to Face with an Orchestra: A Handbook for Choral Conductors Performing Handel's Messiah, Bach's Magnificat, Vivaldi's Gloria, and Other Works* (Princeton: Prestige Publications, 1987), iv.

The most difficult element of singing this work is deciding a proper tempo and getting the singers to sing in a proper Baroque style. Singers tend to sing this piece with too much weight. *Messiah* is already tiring to sing, but this weight will cause quick fatigue and make it all the more difficult to rehearse and perform. This heaviness also causes the piece to lose pitch and tempo. Usually, singing in a softer dynamic, as well as having the choir sing staccato will fix this heaviness and allow the piece to dance. The piece must also be sung at a tempo that is comfortable for the singers, but also expresses the musical ideas intended by the composer and the text is conveyed clearly so that the audience can understand every word. This is essential in a piece, like the Amen Chorus, where the polyphonic texture can make it unclear where one part begins and end. There are many theories on what tempo Handel intended. During the Baroque period, tempo markings were used to indicate the character of the music rather than the specific speed in which the piece should be performed. Donald Neuen suggests 104-108 beats per minute (bpm), while Don V. Moses suggests 136-144 bpm.¹⁹ The organist Dr. Crotch suggests 77 bpm, Rimbault and Prout 84 bpm, John Clarke, Coopersmith and Elvey Surman 92 bpm, and Chrysander Performing 112 bpm.²⁰ Neuen's suggestion seems to be the most reasonable for most choirs, though the piece seems to want to move at the Chrysander Performing tempo. Don V. Moses's tempo may be too fast to understand the clarity of the lines, especially when considering the acoustics of the performance space.

Handel's *Messiah* has been recorded many times over many years. It is a staple in choral music and like most staples there are many interpretations. A recording by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir in 2012 uses a tempo of 88 bpm. Tafelmusik is a Canadian

19. Van Camp, Chapter 7.

20. John Tobin, *Handel's Messiah* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969).

organization that specializes in Baroque music on Baroque instruments.²¹ The recording is a bit on the slow side and makes the piece heavy or dirge-like but has the clarity and grandeur the work deserves. The Brandenburg Consort and The Choir of King's College Cambridge sing it at 112 and is a great recording to listen to in terms of clarity and tempo.²² The Brandenburg Consort is another ensemble that plays on period instruments and specializes in Bach and his contemporaries. While this author referenced this recording, the Brandenburg Consort and The Choir of King's College Cambridge, broaden m. 151 to the *Adagio*, which is not written in the music, and then take the *Adagio* at an even slower tempo. This author chose not to broaden mm. 151-155. Though many great conductors and choirs choose to do so, this author felt that it took away from the grandeur of the final *Adagio*.

21. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, “*Handel Messiah, Chorus: Amen*,” conducted by Ivars Taurins, August 29, 2012, audio-video, 4:40, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIp_sWpytUg.

22. The Brandenburg Consort and The Choir of King's College Cambridge, “53. *Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb & Amen*,” conducted by Stephen Cleobury, December 7, 2011, video, 6:46, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew8ig612NQc>.

II. A RELIGIOUS SERVICE

CHAPTER 4

MYÉL'S MASS by MYÉL BYRD

Myél Byrd was born April 27, 1994 to a very musical family. Byrd's musical training started at a young age. His father, a Minister of Music and a choir vocal coach, taught him to sing and play piano. Byrd quickly became interested in song writing and composition. He attended the Northwest School of the Arts and graduated from Berea College with a Bachelor of Arts in Music. Under the tutelage of Dr. Javier Clavere, Byrd honed his compositional technique and completed *Myél's Mass*. His mass was first performed on April 3, 2016 and served as his Senior Music Capstone project.²³ This performance featured the Berea College Concert Choir and Chamber Singers, under the direction of Dr. Stephen Bolster, and was accompanied by The Byrdsnest, a gospel band consisting of Byrd's father, J. Richard Byrd (keyboard), 2 of his brothers, Nyghél Byrd (bass and djembe) and Tavél Byrd (drum set), and the composer (piano). The Myél Byrd and Courtney Byrd conducted this performance. On August 16 and 17, 2016, the mass in its original version was performed again with just piano, omitting the Benedictus, again with the BC Concert Choir and Chamber Singers but accompanied by the composer on piano only.²⁴ Before its performance on this program, *Myél's Mass* was heavily revised and edited by this author and the composer with instrumentation arranged by Joseph Walczyk.

23. "Concert Choir to perform Myel Byrd Mass," Berea College Master Calendar, Sunday April 3, 2016, <http://community.berea.edu/calendar/main.php?calendarid=default&view=event&eventid=1458847480653&timebegin=2016-04-03+00%3A00%3A00>.

24. "Concert Choir and Chamber Singers Spring Concert," Berea College Master Calendar, Saturday, April 16, 2016, <http://community.berea.edu/calendar/main.php?calendarid=default&view=event&eventid=1459222754293&timebegin=2016-04-16+00%3A00%3A00>.

Myél's Mass is written for SATB choir, and Jazz Band with piano solo. The orchestration is written in charts and chord sheets for jazz band and can be performed with varying numbers of players, though the piano and drum set are the only essential instruments. The original concert used piano, keyboard (playing piano, brass, or bass depending on what needed to be covered), electric bass guitar, and djembe. The version used for this concert is scored for piano, trumpet, alto sax, bass clarinet, electric bass guitar, percussion (chimes, conga, and cowbell), and drum set. It includes the five parts of the Mass Ordinary: the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus (here split into the Sanctus and Benedictus), and the Agnus Dei, each with its own style.

It incorporates stylistic qualities from jazz world including gospel, and blues. Each section of *Myél's Mass*, excluding the "*Benedictus*" and "*Agnus Dei*," is written in AABA form, a popular form used American pop music and musical theater. This form can be seen in the songs of the Tin Pan Alley, as well as the Beatles' *Hey, Jude*. This form is also a common form in jazz also called the 32-bar form. Each section also resembles a different style within jazz. The "*Gloria*" is written in the big band style of jazz; the "*Credo*" is smooth jazz piano, using elements from Thelonious Monk's *Round Midnight*; the "*Sanctus*" and "*Benedictus*" are modern jazz, modeled after the works of the jazz and funk collective Snarky Puppy; and the "*Agnus Dei*" is written in an old gospel style. Additionally, characteristics of classical western music are present in some sections. The "*Kyrie*" is written as a homophonic chorale, with influences from Morton Lauridson's *O Magnum Mysterium* and the compositions of Jake Runstead. There are also small chorale moments in the B sections of the "*Credo*," "*Sanctus*," and "*Agnus Dei*." The "*Gloria*" is a compositional study on the pedal point. The "*Credo*" influences like Rachmaninoff's use of largely spaced chords, Debussy's use of whole tone chords and chords built in 4ths in pieces like *Le Petite Suite*, and Kurt Weill's use of running

tetra-chords and planing 7ths in “*Lonely House*” from the musical *Street Scene*. The composer admits that his personal playlist consisted of many of the pieces mentioned above while he composed his mass.

This work was started at various points in the rehearsal process because each movement has its own difficulties within them. Byrd wrote his Mass so that each movement could stand-alone, and did not originally intend for the movements to cohesively run from one movement to next; if there is cohesion it is coincidental. Because of this, the style of choir changes dramatically from piece to piece. The “*Kyrie*” for example is a chorale sung with pure vowels, while the “*Agnus Dei*” is written for a gospel choir, with relaxed vowels and a belted quality sound. Also, Byrd wrote large chunks of the work while he was still learning composition techniques. After much of the work was written, Byrd attended a conference where Jake Runestead taught a workshop on the art of “tension and release” and having a story within your work. After this workshop, Byrd composed many of the B sections. Due to this composition delay, the B sections help create some cohesion between the movements. For these reasons the work was introduced in this order: “*Kyrie*,” “*Sanctus*,” “*Gloria*,” “*Benedictus*,” “*Credo*,” and last “*Agnus Dei*,” and not in the order of the tradition Mass Ordinary.

The “*Kyrie*” was introduced first because it has the most familiar structure and style, it also sets the tone for the entire mass. It is a cappella and solemn, like a prayer. The choir sings in Latin, *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy), followed by a soprano soloist taking the melody line above low hums in the choir. In the B section, after singing *Kyrie eleison* in 4|4, the choir sings *Christe eleison* (Christ, have mercy) in 3|3. The *Christe eleison* builds, and is led by the altos until m.20 where the sopranos drive this *accelerando*. These *accelerandos* are difficult because the choir is singing homophonically with large note values with one voice line driving the tempo.

Figure 4.1 – *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 11-8.

The musical score for Figure 4.1 shows the vocal parts for measures 11-8. The Soloist part (S) begins at measure 11 with the lyrics "le - - i - - son." and "Chri - - - - ste,". The Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts enter at measure 15 with the lyrics "Chri - - - - ste,". The Soloist part continues with "Chri - ste e - lei - son." and "e - le - - i -". The choir parts continue with "Chri - ste." and "Chri - - - - ste.".

The soloist again joins the choir in m. 24 as the choir reaches the peak of the *accelerando* and *crescendo* into a *rallentando* in m. 28. The chorale finishes with the return of the return of the A section begins in m. 32. The “*Kyrie*” leads into the “*Gloria*” because they are written in the same key and has been performed by the composer as an *attacca* to one another.

The “*Gloria*,” or as the composer refers to the movement, “that happy ass Gloria I wrote,” is lively and repetitive.²⁵ The Gloria was written as a study in common tones. The

25. Myél Byrd, “Myél’s Mass Interview #1: Start to Credo,” interviewed by author, September 20, 2018.

composer purposely places a Db in every chord throughout the movement, excluding the pedal point Db seen in mm. 46-9.

Figure 4.2 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 46-9.

The “*Gloria*” was introduced third because of its repetitiveness, and it is also the first instance where the choir is really singing in a different style. The Gloria is in the jazz big band style, with the choir singing on the off beats in large chords as if they are the brass section of the band (see Figure 4.2.). The B section is in unison, with everyone singing large leaps.

Figure 4.3 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd. mm. 125-28.

The biggest difficulty of this movement is that the choir will instinctively accent the syncopated rhythm, which goes against the natural accents of the words. For example, the Gloria in m. 141 has an accent “*glo*” on beat 3 and “*a*” on the end of beat 4.

Figure 4.4 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 141-44.

20
141

S
f
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - - o, ___

A
f
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - - o, ___

T
f
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - - o, ___

B
f
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - - o, ___

Singers will want to sing an accent on all of those beats, but the natural inflection puts a weak stress on “a”. The same goes for the penultimate and last beats of all the words, like Ex-cel-sis De-o. They will have the same issue in the B section because the unaccented syllable is on an accented beat and is the highest note of the phrase (see Figure 4.3). Advise singers to put emphasis on the stressed syllable and decrescendo the last syllable.

The “*Credo*” is a piano solo, with the choir only joining in the B section. It was written for Prof. Lindsay Clavere, the composer’s piano teacher and collaborative pianist and is saturated with memories of his time at Berea. It uses the running 7ths of “*Lonely House*” from *Street Scene* by Kurt Weill, her favorite song to play while he sang and the tetrachord crescendos from Debussy’s *Le Petite Suite*, the piece he and I played while at Berea College. The “*Credo*” “ends as it begins.” Unlike the other movements, Byrd composes an introduction section that does not return until the end of the piece, giving the illusion that the movement is beginning again.

Figure 4.5 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 231-37.

The musical score for Figure 4.5 shows measures 231-37 of *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd. It is a piano solo in three staves (Treble, Middle, Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings, including 'ppp' at the end.

This movement was introduced and rehearsed late in the rehearsal process because the choir only sings in the B section. The choir begins speaking the Latin text and the English translation individually at different paces. These aleatoric whispers occur on top of the piano solo, but should not cover the soloist. This author had the bass and soprano speak the English text and the tenor and alto speak the Latin text, and then directed when certain sections should begin saying their text. The text should be spoken right up until the choir needs to sing in m. 208. If members of the chorus finish their text, they should repeat small phrases. In m. 208, the choir accompanies the soloist singing with no expression other than what is written. The entire movement is a piano solo and should be conducted as such, allowing the pianist to take time where they like, while the choir accompanies them.

The “*Sanctus*” was introduced second because it is difficult to read, it most resembles the “*Kyrie*,” and requires the least variation from a classical choral sound. Byrd considers this his “jazz fugue.” Byrd wanted a piece that would get away from the homophonic textures that he previously wrote in the *Kyrie* and *Gloria*. At the time this movement was written, he was listening to pop fugues such as the *Lady Gaga Fugue* by Giovanni Dettori, a fugue based on the melody of *Bad Romance* by Lady Gaga. Though not a fugue, the “*Sanctus*” uses the fugal idea of passing the melody line from one voice to the next. At each entrance of the melody, Byrd changes the key, using chromatic mediant to cycle through keys.

Figure 4.6 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 250-58.

The musical score for Figure 4.6 consists of two systems. The first system includes a Bass (B) vocal line and a Piano (Pno.) accompaniment. The B line starts at measure 250 with a *mf* dynamic and lyrics: "Sanc - tus, sanc-tus do-mi-nus, De-us sa-bba-oth, Sanc -". The Pno. part features a *mf* dynamic in the right hand and a *f* dynamic in the left hand, with a 15-measure rest in the right hand. The second system includes Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Pno. parts. The A line starts at measure 254 with a *mf* dynamic and lyrics: "Sanc - tus, sanc-tus do-mi-nus, De-us sa-bba-oth, Sanc - tus." The T line has lyrics: "Sanc - tus,". The Pno. part continues with a *mf* dynamic in the right hand and a *f* dynamic in the left hand, with a *mf* dynamic in the right hand at the end.

Byrd would have done this process to circle back to the original key, but he felt that it would have been too many iterations of the text. Instead he borrowed a chord progression from Barry Harris, a noted American jazz pianist, bandleader, composer, arranger and educator, to return to the original key.

Figure 4.7 – *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 242-245. Mm. 244-45 shows Harris's ii – V turnaround using chromatic mediants to return to the original key.

The musical score for Figure 4.7 shows the piano accompaniment (Pno.) for measures 242-245. It features a *mp* dynamic in the right hand and a *fp* dynamic in the left hand. A *mf* dynamic is present in the right hand at the end of the passage. The score illustrates a ii-V turnaround using chromatic mediants to return to the original key.

Because this movement modulates so frequently, it is written with no key signature and instead uses accidentals. This might look difficult to the choir singing it, but once the choir understands the melody, it is easy to follow. Byrd writes the common chord modulation into the vocal line, so the best rehearsal technique would be to have the entire choir sing all of the parts from mm. 246 to 261 together; noting that the tenor rhythm is slightly different than the others. The B section is an a cappella chorale and mimics the “*Kyrie.*” The *Hosanna in excelsis deo* was modeled after a section of Jake Runestad’s *Alleluia*, where “surreal harmonies” descant over a pedal chord.²⁶ The *Hosanna in excelsis deo* comes out of nowhere and is a happy interruption to the rhythmic *Sanctus, sanctus dominus.*

The “*Benedictus*” is not in the AABA form presented in the other movements. Instead, it is in a repeated AAB form, to allow for space for improved solos from the piano, and percussion. Though like other movements, the last part of the *Benedictus* is shortened; AB instead of AAB. The “*Benedictus*” is another example of the choir imitating the brass section of the jazz band, which is why it was introduced after the “*Gloria.*” In this movement the altos are featured while the rest of the choir becomes its own band, singing “hits” typically played by a trumpet section.

26. Myél Byrd, “Myél’s Mass Interview #2: Sanctus to Agnus Dei” interviewed by author, October 6, 2018.

Figure 4.8 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 394-402.

394 *p* *mp*
 S Be-ne dic-tus, be-ne dic-tus,
 A dic-tus, *mp* qui ve-ni, *mf* in
 T *p* Be-ne dic-tus, *mp* be-ne dic-tus,
 B *p* Be-ne dic-tus, *mp* be-ne dic-tus,
 pno. 394

398 *mf* *f*
 S be-ne dic-tus, *f* be-ne dic-tus ba-da-da-da-da
 A no-mi-ne, *mf* Do-mi-ni *f* ba-da-da-da-da
 T *mf* be-ne dic-tus, *f* be-ne dic-tus ba-da-da-da-da
 B *mf* be-ne dic-tus, *f* be-ne dic-tus ba-da-da-da-da
 pno. 398

This section was worked on often because the movement is easy to get into, but the hits occur on different beats each time the choir sings them. Though they are easy to count, the choir can get easily lost in the rhythm and lose track of when each hit happens, especially the hits leading into the B section (see figure 4.8). The B section is in unison and is sung by both the Jazz Band and the choir. Though in unison, the composer changes one note each phrase and can be easily overlooked. This note is important because the voices here are responsible for changing the chord.

Figure 4.9 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 347-50.

The musical score for measures 347-50 of *Myél's Mass* is presented in a five-staff format. The top four staves are for the vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). Each vocal line begins with a melodic phrase followed by a rhythmic pattern of 'ba da da da da'. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is shown in the bottom staff, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor) and the time signature is 4/4.

Unlike the previous movements, Byrd wanted to insert Jazz improvisation. Once he settled on the idea of the “*Benedictus*” being a samba, he knew that he wanted these improvisatory sections to feature the drum set and percussion, mainly for his brother Taviél Byrd to “let loose.”²⁷ Because of this focus on percussion, this movement is usually omitted when performing the work with just piano.

The “*Agnus Dei*” was introduced last because the style is much different from that of the “*Kyrie*,” but due to the intricacies of the movement, significant time was spent rehearsing it. The sopranos take the melody while the choir accompanies them in the style of the Hammond B3 organ.

27. Byrd, interview #2, October 6, 2018.

Figure 4.10 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 414-17.

The musical score for measures 414-17 of *Myél's Mass* is presented in five staves. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the piano accompaniment (Pno.) are shown. The lyrics are: "pe - cca - ta - mun - di - - - Ag - nus de - i, - qu - i to - llis, -" for Soprano; "pe - - cca - ta - mun - di, Ag - nus de - i," for Alto; "pe - - cca - ta - mun - di, Ag - nus de - i," for Tenor; and "pe - - cca - ta - mun - di, Ag - nus de i," for Bass. The piano accompaniment features a pulsating bass line and a moving tenor line.

The second A section is another improvisatory section. This section features the piano, and for this performance the bass clarinet. The B section, like the B section of the “*Sanctus*,” is an a cappella section where the accompaniment drops out completely. Byrd composes a crescendo from mm. 438-445 by layering the voices on top of a pulsating bass and tenor line. The Band joins the choir again in m. 445. In place of a final A section, Byrd composes a bridge into a key change in m. 452, and finally ending with a vamp. This vamp should be the apex of the entire mass and has the loudest dynamic markings. In the gospel style, the vowels would be more relaxed and the choir would sing with more chest voice than head voice. The tenors in mm. 457-58 should not sing in a classical head voice, but in a full chest voice in order to bring out the moving line.

Figure 4.11 - *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd mm. 457-60.

The musical score for measures 457-60 of *Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd is presented in a standard score format. It includes four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "pa - cem, pa - cem, pa - cem, pa - cem!". The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The score is marked with a forte (*fff*) dynamic and includes a fermata over the final measure.

The choir, specifically the altos and tenors and the sopranos in mm. 412-419, should not be afraid to sing with a fuller, belted sound than they are accustomed to.

While there are many tricky parts throughout the work, the work as a whole is simple to sing. The difficulty with this work is that the piano score requires two different skills sets, requiring a pianist who can both improvise over chords and read very complicated lines. The

written piano part is the skeleton of what the composer would play when accompanying the work. A jazz pianist would be able to take this skeleton and modify what is played based on the instrumentation. The "*Gloria*" and "*Benedictus*" have a written piano line that leaves room for the pianist to improvise above within the score. The "*Credo*," on the other hand, is a classical work that requires a bit of study and introspection to play. The "*Credo*" is a statement of faith, and the composer leaves it wide open for interpretation so that the soloists can define and state their own fate no matter what that is. The composer intended the solo to be personal to the soloist. The composer purposely omits a lot of dynamics and stylistic markings, so that the pianist can interpret the piece for themselves. This movement takes some study to perform as the composer intended. The "*Benedictus*" has a jazz piano improve solo and the "*Agnus Dei*" has a blues/gospel improve solo. The "*Sanctus*" should be played as written. Unlike the other movements, where the piano is playing an accompaniment role, the piano here plays in duet with the choir.

I have a very special attachment to this work, and not just because the composer is my brother. I remember sitting in a practice room during Myél's sophomore year at Berea College with Myél as he showed me the melodies that were running through his head. I played the B section of the "*Credo*" before he had it completely finished. He sang through the other melodic materials and showed me the sketches of his ideas. But the final product far surpassed what I could have imagined.

CHAPTER 5

“PRAYER FIXES THINGS” and “CAMPFIRE PRAYER” from *A Choral Triptych*

by JASON MAX FERDINAND

Jason Max Ferdinand is a composer and conductor from Trinidad & Tobago. Ferdinand’s musical career flourished very early in his career. He did pre-college programs at the University of Southern Caribbean (formerly the Caribbean Union College), where he later attended. In 1997, Ferdinand transferred to Oakwood University and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in piano performance. While at Oakwood, Ferdinand served as the assistant conductor, student pianist and arranger for the world famous Oakwood University Aeolians. In 2001, Ferdinand graduated from Morgan State University with a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting with high honors and obtained his DMA in Choral Conducting with a minor in Orchestra Conducting from the University of Maryland. He is currently an Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities at Oakwood University.²⁸ Ferdinand highlights his diverse background in his compositions, which can be seen in *A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses*.

A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses, is an a cappella work for divisi choir. This triptych²⁹ contains “*Prayer Fixes Things*,” a simple homophonic piece, “*Campfire Prayer*,” which highlights the moaning and tarrying of a prayer service or ritual around the campfire, and “*I Need You*,” a choral piece with tight barbershop harmonies and a tenor solo.

28. Dan Shultz. “Jason Max Ferdinand.” 2018.
http://www.iamaonline.com/Bio/Jason_Max_Ferdinand.htm

29. Catherine Périer-D’Ieteren, “Contributions to the study of the Triptych with the miracles of Christ: The marriage of Cana,” *Art Journal* 31, June 14, 2018.
<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/contributions-to-the-study-of-the-triptych-with-the-miracles-of-christ-the-marriage-of-cana/>. A triptych is an artwork that features three separate parts that are meant to be experienced together. This was a standard format for altar paintings starting in the middle ages.

“*Prayer Fixes Things*” is simple chorale that is through-composed. The soprano and alto parts are descant-like with eighth note runs, while the tenor and bass parts sing long, solid lines underneath. It was introduced first but not rehearsed too often; this author rehearsed this piece more than necessary so that the choir had a chance to memorize the piece and its large and sudden dynamic changes.

“*Campfire Prayer*” is more complex even though it is homophonic. Ferdinand composes a key change at the beginning that does not seem to have a purpose then to show a contrast between the “weight of the world” and the “light from this fire.” While mm. 1-4 and m. 5 to the end are easy enough to read, the transition between the m. 4 and m. 5 is difficult to navigate.

Figure 5.1 – “*Prayer Fixes Things*” by Jason Max Ferdinand mm. 1-4.

Slowly, with passion $\text{♩} = 72$

S mp

The weight of this life brings mis - ery and strife. There

A p

The hmm, hmm, mis - ery and strife. There

T p

The hmm, hmm, mis - ery and strife.

B p

The hmm, hmm, mis - ery and strife.

This author ended up adding organ to softly aid in the transition. Starting in m. 31, there are ad lib moans from each section. If the soloists have a background in gospel singing, this type of ad lib is easy to improvise, but if not recordings can be consulted.

Figure 5.2 – “*Prayer Fixes Things*” by Jason Max Ferdinand mm. 31-5.

*Ad lib moans / groans from each section to the end.

There are very few recordings of “*Prayer Fixes Things*” and even fewer recordings of “*Campfire Prayer*.” The best recording to review is that of the Oakwood University Aeolians. Ferdinand sang, arranged for and now conducts the choir, so this recording would showcase the intentions of the composer. The Aeolians sing with a pure crisp tone and specialize in singing thick tight harmonies. The Aeolians’ recording of “*Prayer Fixes Things*” can be found on their album *Aeolianology: a cappella vol. 2*.³⁰ “*Campfire Prayer*” is not on any album and could only be found on YouTube. “*Campfire Prayer*” appears in two recordings. The first was uploaded to YouTube with permission from the composer. This recording features the entire triptych and seems to be sung by the Aeolians; at least the recording of “*Prayer Fixes Things*” matches the

30. Jason Max Ferdinand, “Prayer Fixes Things,” with the Oakwood University Aeolians, *Aeolianology: a cappella vol. 2*, conducted by Jason Max Ferdinand, Aeolians of Oakwood University, released August 8, 2015, CD, 1:18, <https://youtu.be/tV82z99lkb4>.

recording from Aeolianology and the recording of “*Campfire Prayer*” has the same vocal quality.³¹ The other recording is sung by the University of South Florida Chamber Singers under the direction of Jason Andrew Dungee.³² The recording by the USF Chamber Singers is well sung and shows the possibility of taking the triptych and performing them in a different order, but in terms of clarity of melody, use of dynamics, and the soloists’ use of space, the recording uploaded with permission from the composer has no equal. This recording presumably shows the intentions of the composer and showcases the voices that he composed it for. Unfortunately, the user who uploaded the music did not specify who the performer was on the recording, just that it was uploaded with permission from the composer.

31. SingerMJh, “A Choral Triptych,” published April 11, 2016, audio-video, 5:43, <https://youtu.be/INRRNTAM8YY>.

32. University of Florida Chamber Singers, “A Choral Triptych: Mvt. II: Campfire Prayer, Mvt. I: Prayer Fixes Things,” composed by Jason Max Ferdinand, conducted by Jason Andrew Dungee, published February 27, 2017, audio video, 4:17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xMhDVg-eoM>.

III. AN EARNEST HOPE

CHAPTER 6

MLK arranged by BOB CHILCOTT

Bob Chilcott is a British composer, conductor, and singer born in Plymouth, England. Chilcott studied and sang with the King's College choir. He later sang with the famous a cappella singing group The King's Singers (1985-1997), until he became a composer full-time. He is the principal guest conductor for the BBC Singers, and has conducted many other choirs, including the Orphei Drangar from Sweden, Jauna Musika from Lithuania, the Taipei Chamber Singers, and the Tower New Zealand Youth Choir.

MLK was written in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr., along with the song "Pride (*In the Name of Love*)," by the Irish rock band U2 with lyrics by Bono (Paul David Hewson).³³ It is the last song on their 1984 album *The Unforgettable Fire*. After becoming more familiar with Martin Luther King Jr. on a US Tour, the band incorporated his message of peaceful protest into their music. Bono described the music as:

"sort of a lullaby for an idea that was dying in our country: the idea of non-violence... All inspired by a black reverend from Atlanta who refused to hate because he thought love would do a better job."³⁴

Chilcott arranged the song for the King's Singers, an English a cappella sextet comprised of two counter tenors, a tenor, two baritones and a bass.³⁵ Chilcott released *MLK* for a cappella SATTB choir and solo in 1996. This arrangement, just like the original song, is simple and

33. Jack Doyle, "U2's MLK Songs: 1984," PopHistoryDig.com, August 16, 2013, <https://www.u2.com/news/article/537/>.

34. Michelle Watson, "In the Name of Love: King's Legacy Lives On," The Daily Journal, January 24, 2004, <https://www.atu2.com/news/in-the-name-of-love-kings-legacy-lives-on.html>.

35. Kate Caro, "About Us," *The King's Singers*, <https://www.kingssingers.com/about-us/>.

ethereal. The song is in binary form and is unmetered. Chilcott uses luftpauses in place of bar lines to show melodic phrasing without showing a downbeat. The A section is an open G chord pedal in the bass and tenor under the solo while the sopranos and altos add to the dream-like texture above. Chilcott uses only open IV and I chords to end the phrase before starting the B section. The B section is almost exactly like the A except that the choir aids in the singing the melody. With the added voices of the choir the harmonic structure becomes richer, ending in a IV-V-I cadence.

This song was introduced early in the process of learning but was not worked on until late in the process. It was only introduced early so that the choir had a chance to memorize the song for the performance. There are two things that were focused on for the performance, continuity of the line and phrasing. Chilcott marks both luftpauses and asterisks. He uses the asterisks to notate acceptable place to breathe if the song is performed by a smaller group of singers where stagger-breathing would be difficult, otherwise all chords should be sung connected unless indicated by a rest (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 - *MLK* arr. Bob Chilcott.

The musical score for 'MLK' by Bob Chilcott is presented in three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with several phrases, each ending with a fermata. Two asterisks (*) are placed above the staff at the beginning of the first and third phrases. The middle staff contains the lyrics: 'Mm _____ So _ let it be. _____ Mm _____ So _ let it be. _____'. The bottom staff is an accompaniment line in bass clef, consisting of a continuous open G chord pedal (G2, B2, D3) with a fermata at the end. The score is written in a style that emphasizes phrasing and breathing points through the use of asterisks and luftpauses.

The luftpauses, also seen in Figure 6.1, on the other hand were used for phrasing. This piece is difficult to phrase because it is unmetered, spacious, and freely sung. The conductor has full control over the musical expression but getting the choir to do those things together is difficult.

This author referenced many recordings for *MLK*. The first was an original video of U2 singing in concert. Chilcott does such a great job imitating the original song that it becomes a great reference into the ethereal nature of the piece as well as a reference for the soloist.³⁶ The next two are recordings by The King's Singers. One was recorded on their 2017 album *GOLD* for their 50th Anniversary, the other on their 1993 album *Good Vibrations*.³⁷ While both are good recordings of *MLK*, showing a great example of the fluidity of the piece with a soloist on each part, the 1993 recording does a better job imitating U2's recording with its soloist as well as the continuity of the line. This author focused on the recording by the Missouri State University Chorale. This recording combines the fluidity of the U2 recording with the rich harmonies of the King's Singers.

36. U2, "U2 - MLK," Paula Soares, published January 16, 2012, music video, 1:59, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDH7oD_AQW8.

37. The King's Singers, "MLK," arranged by Bob Chilcott, *GOLD*, published January 15, 2018, music video, 4:18, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvh4KPQ0Z3U>; –, "MLK," arranged by Bob Chilcott, *Good Vibrations*, published November 19, 2017, audio-video, 2:08, <https://youtu.be/S6BUhbwk0I0>.

**APPENDIX
FULL TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

***Baba Yetu* by Christopher Tin (b. 1976)**

Baba yetu, yetu uliye
Mbinguni yetu, yetu, amina!
Baba yetu, yetu, uliye
Jina lako litukuzwe

Our Father, who art
In Heaven. Amen!
Our Father,
Hallowed be thy name.

Utupe leo chakula chetu
Tunachohitaji utusamehe
Makosa yetu, hey!
Kama nasi tunavyowasamehe

Give us this day our daily bread,
Forgive us of
Our trespasses
As we forgive others

Waliotukosea usitutie
Katika majaribu, lakini
Utuokoe, na yule Mwovu, milele!

Who trespass against us
Lead us not into temptation, but
Deliver us from the evil one forever.

Ufalme wako ufike utakalo
Lifanyike duniani kama mbinguni. (Amina)

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
On Earth as it is in Heaven. (Amen)

***Abide with Me* original text by Henry F. Lyte, 1847 arranged by Moses Hogan (1957-2003)**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me
abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.</p> | <p>Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide
with me.</p> |
| <p>2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass
away;
Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.</p> | <p>4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no
bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy
victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.</p> |
| <p>3. I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's
power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can
be?</p> | <p>5. Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing
eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to
the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.</p> |

***Myél's Mass* by Myél Byrd (b. 1994)**

I. "Kyrie"

Kyrie, eleison
Christe, eleison

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have me

II. “Gloria”

Gloria, in excelsis deo
Gloria, gloria
et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis

gratias agimus tibi propter
magnam gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens

Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,

Glory to God in the highest
Glory, glory
and peace on earth to men of
good will.

Thank you for
Thy great glory,
Lord God, heavenly king
Almighty Father

We praise you,
we thank you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,

III. “Credo” (*The Apostle’s Creed*)

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum.
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero.
Genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines,
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de
Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine:
ET HOMO FACTUS EST.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis;
sub Pontio Pilato passus,
et sepultus est.
Et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum Scripturas.
Et ascendit in coelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
judicare vivos et mortuos

I believe in one God, The Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ the
Only-begotten Son of God.
Born of the Father before all ages.

God of God, Light of Light,
true God of True God.
Begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father.
By whom all things were made.

Who for us men
and for our salvation came
down from heaven.
And became incarnate by the
Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary:
AND WAS MADE MAN.

He was also crucified for us,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
and was buried.
And on the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and
sits at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead and

cujus regni non erit finis.

His kingdom wil have no end.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre,
et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per Prophetas.

And in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who together with the Father
and the Son is adored and glorified,
and who spoke through the prophets.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et
apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum.
Et vitam venturi saeculi.

And one holy, Catholic and
Apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I await the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

Text and Translation from Mass of The Roman Rite [Latin/English] - 1962 Edition of the Tridentine Ordo³⁸

IV. “Sanctus”

Sanctus, Santus dominus
Deus Sabaoth

Holy, holy Lord
God of Hosts

Plenis sunt coeli
Coeli et terra
gloria tua

Full are Heaven
Heaven and earth of
Thy glory

Hosanna in excelsis Deo

The savior, God in the highest

V. “Benedictus”

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Blessed who comes in name of Lord.

VI. “Agnus Dei”

Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi

Lamb of God,
Who takes away the sins of the world

Miserere nobis
Dona nobis pacem

Have mercy on us
Grant us peace

38. “Credo,” Courtland Music, <http://choral.cortlandmusic.org/2007spring/credo.html>.

MLK arr. Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

Sleep, sleep tonight,
 and may your dreams be realized
 If the thundercloud passes rain
 So let it rain rain down on him
 So let it be, so let it be

Sleep, sleep tonight,
 and may your dreams be realized
 If the thundercloud passes rain
 So let it rain, let it rain
 Rain on him

A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses* by Jason Max Ferdinand (b. 1986)**I. "Prayer Fixes Things"***

Prayer fixes things
 When you are down and out
 In you distress

He sure can bless
 My God will make it right
 Prayer surely fixes things

II. "Campfire Prayer"

The weight of this life
 Brings misery and strife
 There has to be more
 To this earthly life

I hope to be free someday.
 The light from this fire
 Just spurs my desire
 To be set free with all liberty.

Was lost, now I'm found,
 I'm no longer bound.
 Light glistening low,
 I'm wounded no more

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