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A GRADUATE RECITAL IN CONDUCTING

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Master of Music

Alexander Chesney

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

April, 2021

A GRADUATE RECITAL IN CONDUCTING

Alexander Chesney

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I would first like to thank my wife, Whitley, and my whole family for supporting me throughout this process and for giving me support and helping in the final performance.

I would also like to thank Dr. Susan Marchant for her help and guidance through it all. With performance venue changes, to recordings, and most importantly never giving up, I cannot thank her enough.

Finally, I would like to thank any and everyone who was involved in this process. I wouldn't have gotten to where I am without your help and dedication to this project.

## A GRADUATE RECITAL IN CONDUCTING

An Abstract of the Thesis by  
Alexander Chesney

This graduate thesis consists of a choral conducting recital and the accompanying program notes. The recital includes selections by Terry Schlenker, Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, Johann Michael Haydn, Ēriks Ešenvalds, David Dickau, Antonio Soler, Gustav Holst, Ethan McGrath, Antonín Dvořák, and Stephen Paulus. The program notes for each selection will include biographical information, musical analysis, and historical traditions, as well as other pertinent information.

Pittsburg State University  
Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

*Graduate Recital*

*Alexander Chesney, conductor*

Sunday, April 18, 2021  
Bicknell Family Center for the Arts  
7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

**I. Texts from the Maundy Thursday Responsories**

In Monte Oliveti.....Terry Schlenker (b.1957)  
Tristis est anima mea..... Marc' Antonio Ingegneri (1535-1592)  
Ecce vidimus eum.....Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806)

**II. Poems of Sara Teasdale**

Only in Sleep.....Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)  
I am not yours.....David Dickau (b.1953)

**III. Texts from Choral Evensong**

Magnificat.....Antonio Soler (1729-1783)  
Nunc Dimittis.....Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

**IV. Imagery of Nature**

Over the Land is April.....Ethan McGrath (b. 1990)  
*V Přírode* (In Nature's Realm), Op. 63.....Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)  
    I. *Napadly Písně* (Songs fell into my soul)  
    IV. *Vyběhla bříza běličká* (The white birch ran out)  
The Road Home.....Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

*This recital partially fulfills performance requirements for the  
Master of Music degree program for Mr. Chesney.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER I. Texts from the Maundy Thursday Responsories

INTRODUCTION .....	1
TERRY SCHLENKER .....	2
IN MONTE OLIVETI .....	2
MARC'ANTONIO INGEGNERI .....	4
TRISTIS EST ANIMA MEA .....	5
JOHANN MICHAEL HAYDN .....	7
ECCE VIDIMUS EUM .....	8

### CHAPTER II. Poems of Sara Teasdale

INTRODUCTION .....	10
ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS .....	10
ONLY IN SLEEP .....	11
DAVID DICKAU .....	13
I AM NOT YOURS .....	14

### CHAPTER III. Texts from Choral Evensong

INTRODUCTION .....	15
ANTONIO SOLER .....	16
MAGNIFICAT .....	16
GUSTAV HOLST .....	18
NUNC DIMITTIS .....	18

### CHAPTER IV. Imagery of Nature

INTRODUCTION .....	20
ETHAN MCGRATH .....	20
OVER THE LAND IS APRIL .....	21
ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK .....	23
V PŘÍRODE .....	24
STEPHEN PAULUS .....	27
THE ROAD HOME .....	28

Bibliography .....	30
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## CHAPTER I

### Texts from the Maundy Thursday Responsories

The opening set of music focuses on the Tenebrae responsories of the first nocturn of Maundy Thursday in the Roman Catholic tradition. In the liturgy, these responsories (*In Monte Oliveti*, *Tristis est anima mea*, and *Ecce, vidimus eum*) are each preceded by a reading from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The three texts that are used in the responsories address the Agony of Christ in Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives and Jesus talking to his disciples in the garden.

While the text of this set is linear in its approach, the musical time periods from which the pieces are drawn are not. The first responsory, *In Monte Oliveti*, is the work of 21<sup>st</sup>-century composer Terry Schlenker. Next is *Tristis est anima mea* set by the Late Renaissance composer Marc'Antonio Ingegneri. The set concludes with Johann Michael Haydn's setting of *Ecce, vidimus eum*.



## **Terry Schlenker**

Terry Schlenker is an American composer and embryologist based in Colorado. Schlenker studied music composition at the University of North Dakota as well as at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music, from which he received his Master of Arts Degree in Composition. With a body of works including orchestral, piano, and chamber pieces, his recent focus has been toward a cappella choral music. Although an embryologist by profession, Schlenker partially retired (continuing to work part-time) in order to focus more on his compositions.<sup>1</sup>

## **In Monte Oliveti**

With the main theme of this text being grief and acceptance, Schlenker's approach is one that balances long sustained lines with faster, more angular rhythmic motives. He sets the piece primarily in G Aeolian mode (G natural minor) with heavy touches of highly chromatic writing. With the sense of stress and release, he chooses to set high tension moments in the text with the addition of polychords. An example of this can be found in measures 66-73. During this section the text (*fiat voluntas tua* or Thy will be done) repeats four times, and with each iteration of the text the final chord grows more and more dissonant, ending with an Eb/Db polychord that gives way to an open 5<sup>th</sup> sonority on G.

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<sup>1</sup> "Terry Schlenker: Bio & Choral Music | Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc." n.d. Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://sbmp.com/ComposerPage.php?ComposerNum=0245>



m.66-73 *In Monte Oliveti*

### ***In Monte Oliveti***

*In monte Oliveti oravit ad Patrem:*

*Pater si fieri potest,  
transeat a me calix iste.*

*Spiritus quidem promptus est,  
caro autem inferma:  
fiat voluntas tua.*

On the Mount of Olives he prayed to the  
Father:

“Father, if it be possible,  
let this cup pass from me.  
The spirit indeed is willing,  
but the flesh is weak:  
Thy will be done.”

## Marc'Antonio Ingegneri

Marc'Antonio Ingegneri (1536-1592) was an Italian composer and instrumentalist. He is known for being a madrigalist and composer of sacred music in the north Italian tradition. He is also known for being Claudio Monteverdi's teacher. One can hear his influence in Monteverdi's earlier works with the use of text-painting and chromatic progressions.

Ingegneri began his music career by becoming a choirboy at Verona Cathedral and was most likely taught by Jacquet de Berchem and Giovanni Brevio. It is also possible that he studied with Vincenzo Ruffo, who was appointed *maestro di cappella* in 1551. There is no clear documentation of his life in the early 1560s, but there is some evidence that Ingegneri received instruction from Cipriano de Rore in Parma, this evidence coming from the fact that three of his madrigals were misattributed to Rore and were included in *Le vive fiamme*, a collection of Rore's music produced three months after his death. Throughout the rest of his life Ingegneri maintained his career via commissions from patrons in Vienna, Milan, Parma, and Verona. His works appeared in anthologies in Verona, Venice, Milan, Brescia, Ferrara, and Rome.

Ingegneri's compositional output consists of two books of masses, six books of motets, one set of Lamentations, and nine books of madrigals. His earlier works generally exhibit the techniques of cantus firmus, paraphrasing of Gregorian chants, and canon.

Later his writing develops into a more freely composed style, with syllabic text setting and homophonic textures.<sup>2</sup>

Ingegneri's success is hard to quantify with information that is available. His books of four-voice madrigals were reprinted at least once, and he was well regarded by the cultural élite. However, his five-voice madrigals were never reprinted, and only a few of his works appear in contemporary anthologies. One thing that helped popularize his works was simply misattributions to both Rore and Palestrina. His true lasting impact is that of being Monteverdi's teacher, with Monteverdi's early style parodying that of Ingegneri.

### **Tristis est anima mea**

Largely homophonic in nature, and following the form of ABCB, Ingegneri's treatment of the text is straightforward, but also includes effective text painting in the treatment of a sentence that appears twice within the form. With an opening A section that is solemn and introspective, the text is delivered in a homophonic setting. With the arrival of the B section the text then turns to, "Ye shall run away" which the music reflects with more florid writing and faster rhythmic patterns. With the continuation of the B section, Ingegneri follows the faster rhythms with a more contrapuntal section to finish this section of the text. The C section is scored for SSA and follows a similar formula that has appeared in both the A and B sections, starting with a gentle whole note

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<sup>2</sup> Shrock, Dennis. *Choral Repertoire*. Oxford University Press, 2009. 70

figure that becomes more contrapuntal in nature as the section evolves. The piece then ends with a repetition of the faster B section.

***Tristis est anima mea***

*Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem:  
sustinete hic, et vigilate mecum:  
nunc videbitis turbam, quae circumdabit  
me.*

*Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam  
immolari pro vobis.*

*Ecce appropinquat hora, et Filius  
hominis tradetur in manus peccatorum.*

*Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam  
immolari pro vobis.*

My soul is sorrowful even unto death;  
stay here, and watch with me.

Now ye shall see a multitude, that will  
surround me.

Ye shall run away, and I will go to be  
sacrificed for you.

Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son  
of Man shall be betrayed into the hands  
of sinners.

Ye shall run away, and I will go to be  
sacrificed for you.

## **Johann Michael Haydn**

Johann Michael Haydn was a prolific composer who was particularly admired for his sacred works. The younger brother of Franz Joseph Haydn, Michael was born in Rohrau, Austria in 1737. When he was eight he went to Vienna and entered the choir school at *Stephansdom* (St. Stephen's Cathedral) and by age twelve, was earning money as a substitute organist at the cathedral. He continued singing at the cathedral until around 1753 when his voice broke and was dismissed from the school.

In 1760, Haydn was appointed as *Kapellmeister* in *Großwardein* and then in 1762 was appointed as *Konzertmeister* in Salzburg. His duties as *Konzertmeister* included playing organ as well as the violin. His colleagues at this time included the likes of A.C. Adlgasser, Leopold Mozart and eventually Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

By 1777, Haydn's status was such that he was a candidate for *Kapellmeister*. Then, due to the sudden death of Adlgasser, Haydn was appointed to the position of organist at the *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* (Church of the Holy Trinity). Following this appointment, once colleague Leopold Mozart began describing Haydn as lazy and a drunk. Leopold had taken this stance simply because his son wasn't appointed to the position instead of Haydn. In 1782, he assumed the position of court organist, shortly after it was abandoned by W.A. Mozart. Soon after this appointment the Prince-Archbishop, Count Colloredo, published the first in a series of proclamations aiming to simplify the church service. Haydn's response during the period 1783-1791 was to set around 100 Mass Propers in simple homophonic style.

During the 1790s, Haydn's influence as a teacher of composition began to grow. He taught many, including Carl Maria von Weber, the fundamentals of harmony and counterpoint. In 1801, Haydn was invited to serve as *Kapellmeister* to Prince Nicolaus Esterházy, a position that he accepted but never filled. Having received a salary increase from Archduke Ferdinand in 1803, he decided to stay in Salzburg. Haydn would remain in Salzburg until he died on August 10, 1806. (oxford)

### **Ecce vidimus eum**

This setting of the Lenten text is the third in the set of nine responsories for Holy Week (9 *Responsoria in Coena Domini*, MH 276). Along with the other eight responsories and a majority of his works for Advent and Lent, *Ecce vidimus eum* shows Haydn's approach to counterpoint and simplicity of homophonic writing. The music is not lavish and is straightforward in its writing, following an ABA form. Keeping things simple, Haydn sets the text *Cujus livore sanati sumus* (And with his stripes we are healed) the same way in two of the three times it appears, writing in C minor, the relative minor of the tonic key of Eb major. Another feature of these C minor passages is that they frame the B section in which Haydn employs the relative minor. The final time he addresses the text, he sets it in the tonic key of Eb major, turning the sorrowful text into a statement of faith that "with his stripes we are healed."

***Ecce vidimus eum***

*Ecce vidimus eum non habentem  
speciem, neque decorum:*

*Aspectus ejus in eo non est:*

*Hic peccata nostra portavit, et pro nobis  
dolet:*

*Ipsa autem vulneratus est, propter  
iniquitates nostras:*

*Cujus livore sanati sumus.*

*Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et  
dolores nostros ipse portavit,  
Cujus livore sanati sumus.*

Behold we shall see him having neither  
form nor comeliness:

There is no beauty in him.

This is he who has borne our sins and  
suffered for us.

He was bruised for our iniquities,

and with his stripes we are healed

Truly he has borne our griefs and carried  
our sorrows,

and with his stripes we are healed.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **Poems of Sara Teasdale**

This set presents a pairing of two poems of Sara Teasdale (1884-1933), set by two 21<sup>st</sup>-century composers. Her words are lyrical and her style is such that it is very natural when set to music. With simplicity and clarity, Teasdale's words come to life evoking two different emotions, one of remembrance and nostalgia and the other of passion and love.

### **Ēriks Ešenvalds**

Ēriks Ešenvalds is one of the most sought-after composers working today.<sup>3</sup> Born in Latvia in 1977, he first studied at the Latvian Baptist Theological Seminary (1995-97) before receiving his Master's degree in composition from the Latvian Academy of Music in 2004. In 2011 Ešenvalds was awarded the position of Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. He currently teaches composition at the Latvian Academy of Music.

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<sup>3</sup> "Biography — Ēriks Ešenvalds." n.d. Accessed March 5, 2021.  
<https://www.eriksesenvalds.com/about/biography>

Ešenvalds' works have earned him worldwide acclaim, with his works being premiered by ensembles the world over. In his home country, he is a three-time recipient of the Latvian Grand Music Award. His work has led to invitations to be a speaker at many prestigious choral events all around the world.

### **Only In Sleep**

Utilizing the themes of nostalgia, Ešenvalds sets the piece in a dream-like state. With a soprano soloist reinforced by the choir humming, he opens up this thought that slowly manifests into the whole of the choir singing. The music at its core is simple, consisting of four measure phrases in a smooth  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, while his treatment of harmony adds another layer to the piece. Rich chord voicings in the key of Gb major give the work a sense of warmth. The piece ends the way it began, with the return of the soloist. This time, the text turns more towards wonder and longing with the text, “do they, too, dream of me, I wonder”, reminiscing on times gone by. The music then starts to fade away as the choir rocks back and forth between two chords, all the while the soloist sings floating, florid lines until it winds down to nothing.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ešenvalds, Ēriks. n.d. “Only in Sleep.” Ēriks Ešenvalds. Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://www.eriksesenvalds.com/works/only-in-sleep>

### **Only in Sleep**

Only in sleep I see their faces,  
Children I played with when I was a child,  
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,  
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.

Only in sleep Time is forgotten ---  
What may have come to them, who can know?  
Yet we played last night as long ago,  
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair.

The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,  
I met their eyes and found them mild ---  
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,  
And for them am I too a child?

-Sara Teasdale

## **David Dickau**

Dr. David Dickau is a choral conductor and composer based in Boise, Idaho. Before his retirement in 2019, Dickau was the Director of Choral Activities at Minnesota State University, Mankato, a post he held from 1991. Across his career he has composed over eighty commissions for choral festivals, churches, and schools.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Dickau holds advanced degrees in choral music from Northwestern University and the University of Southern California. During his career he has taught choral music at both the high school and collegiate levels and has conducted community and church choirs. He also served for thirteen years as the music director of Magnum Chorum, a Twin Cities-based chamber choir.

Dr. Dickau has been an active member of the American Choral Director's Association, having served as a national Repertoire and Standards Chair from 1987 to 1991. He also has served a term as President of ACDA of Minnesota and has appeared as a clinician at a number of national and regional conferences.

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<sup>5</sup> "About." n.d. David-C-Dickau. Accessed March 5, 2021. <https://www.daviddickau.com/about>.

## **I Am Not Yours**

In this setting of *I Am Not Yours*, Dickau's writing fully reflects the passion and emotions of the poem. This piece opens with a gentle ostinato figure in the piano accompaniment, in the tonic key of D major. In the initial choral writing, he builds a G/D polychord, layering each voice from the bottom to the top of the choir. The next chord cascades from the upper voices to the lower, building an A/G polychord which passes through A major then to G<sup>M7</sup> in first inversion. When the choir arrives at the first line of Teasdale's poem, the choral lines also confirm the tonic key with a melody that is built upon an ascending D major scale. The opening material reappears as an interlude between the first two verses of the poem. Dickau builds to the climax of the piece through the words, "Lost as a light is lost in light," repeating this phrase until the fortissimo exclamation of "Oh plunge me deep in love." As he states, "this is a passionate poem and my goal was to capture that passion in the musical setting."<sup>6</sup>

### **I Am Not Yours**

I am not yours, not lost in you,  
Not lost, although I long to be  
Lost as a candle lit at noon,  
Lost as a snowflake in the sea.

You love me, and I find you still  
A spirit beautiful and bright,  
Yet I am I, who long to be  
Lost as a light is lost in light.

Oh plunge me deep in love---put out  
My senses, leave me deaf and blind,  
Swept by the tempest of your love,  
A taper in a rushing wind.

-Sara Teasdale

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<sup>6</sup> Dickau, David. 'Graduate Choral Conducting Student Seeking Advice.' Email, 2021

## **Chapter III**

### **Texts from Choral Evensong**

This part of the program explores the tradition of the choral evensong. Drawing on the practice of the Anglican church, this set presents the traditional pairing of the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis. These two canticles along with the reading of scripture and singing of psalms are at the core of each evensong. While an established liturgy in the Anglican church, this is not the case in the Roman Catholic tradition, where the texts are associated with two different Offices: the Magnificat in Vespers (evening), and the Nunc Dimittis in Compline (late evening).

With regard to the composers in this set, both treat the text in a similar fashion despite being separated by over a hundred years. Both Soler and Holst approach their settings with a style of writing that honors various traditions of church music. In their respective pieces, both show the use of antiphonal singing with the full chorus, moments of call and response, and the polychoral tradition with eight part writing.

## Antonio Soler

Antonio Soler was born and educated in Catalonia. At age six he entered the music school Escolanía in the monastery of Montserrat in 1736. From around 1752 to his death on December 20, 1783 he was a member of the community of Jeronymite monks at the monastery of El Escorial. While there he held the position of *maestro de capilla* from 1757 onward. Soler was also a music theorist whose ideas of modulation were daring and not always well received by others. In his treatise, *Llave de la modulación y antigüedades de la música* (Madrid, 1762), he illustrates how to modulate from a major or minor key to any of the other 24 keys in the fewest number of bars.<sup>7</sup>

## Magnificat

The Magnificat or “The canticle of the virgin” is the title given to the words Mary spoke in response to the visitation of the Angel Gabriel. The Magnificat has been a part of the Office of Vespers since early times in the church. (credo). Soler’s setting of the text divides the ensemble into two choirs. The music assigned to choir one (SSAT) is more elaborate than the predominantly homophonic writing assigned to choir two (SATB). Throughout this piece Soler demonstrates his understanding of the tradition of church music and employs the plainchant of the *Magnificat 2<sup>o</sup> tono* by directly quoting the chant formula throughout the choral writing.

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<sup>7</sup> “Soler (Ramos), Antonio.” n.d. Grove Music Online. Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.library.pittstate.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000026133>.



Ex. *Magnificat 2<sup>o</sup> tono*

### ***Magnificat***

*Magnificat, anima mea, Dominum  
et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo,  
salutary meo.*

*Quia respexit humilitatem ancilae suae:*

*ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent  
omnes generationes.*

*Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est,  
et sanctum nomen eius,  
et Misericordia eius a progenie in  
progenies timentibus eum.*

*Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,  
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*

*Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit  
humiles;*

*esurientes implevit bonis et divites  
dimisit inanes.*

*Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus  
misericordiae suae,  
sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,  
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.*

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:*

*Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et  
semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my  
Saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his  
handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth all  
generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me,  
and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him  
throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud in the  
imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their  
seat, and hath exalted the humble and  
meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good  
things, and the rich he hath sent empty  
away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen  
his servant Israel; as he promised to our  
forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for  
ever

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and  
ever shall be; world without end. Amen.

-Book of Common Prayer, 1662



## **Gustav Holst**

On September 21, 1874 Gustavus Theodore von Holst was born in Cheltenham, England. A grandson and great-grandson of pianist and harp teacher, and son of a pianist and organist, Gustav was surrounded by music from an early age. His father taught him piano from an early age but due to neuritis in his right arm, it was clear he was not going to have a career as a pianist. After trying violin, he learned to play the trombone, as a cure for asthma. In his teenage years, he had his first attempts at composition. He was unsuccessful in his application to Trinity College, but in 1893 he was accepted to the Royal College of Music to study composition. It was here in 1895 where he met his closest friend Ralph Vaughan Williams. Holst went on to study trombone at the RCM, offering him the chance to play under Richard Strauss in the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Holst was surrounded by teaching and composition throughout his life, writing continuously until he passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1934.

## **Nunc Dimittis**

Holst's *Nunc dimittis* was first performed on Easter Sunday in 1915. After that performance the piece was all but forgotten, remaining in manuscript form until 1979 when it was revised by Gustav's daughter, Imogen Holst.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the piece Holst honors historical compositional technique. Like Soler in the *Magnificat*, Holst also relies on some of the same techniques of early church music through his use of antiphonal singing between various sections of the choir.

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<sup>8</sup> "Nunc Dimittis, H127 (Holst) – from CDH55170 – Hyperion Records – MP3 and Lossless Downloads." n.d. Accessed February 16, 2021. [https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W19\\_GBAJY8932917](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W19_GBAJY8932917).

***Nunc dimittis***

*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,  
secundum verbum tuum in pace:  
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum  
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium  
populorum:  
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et  
gloriam plebis tuae Israel.*

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:*

*Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et  
semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart  
in peace, according to thy word.  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face  
of all people;  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and  
to be the glory of thy people Israel.

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

-Book of Common Prayer, 1662

## **Chapter IV**

### **Imagery of Nature**

The fourth set in the program draws on the sights and feelings of nature. The pieces in this set evoke a call to nature, a call leading one out of the wilderness, and the imagery expressing one's love. The texts of these pieces follow an arc starting with a call into nature to one's love. Next the listener is brought into nature with the sights and sounds that draw on a feeling of wonder. The set then ends with voices leading the listener out of the dark wilderness.

### **Ethan McGrath**

From Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ethan McGrath is a composer with training in piano and organ. He studied composition and piano at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and received his training in organ at Southern Adventist University. Well attuned with the great composers of the past, McGrath's compositional style gains inspiration from the likes of J.S. Bach and Brahms, Vaughan Williams, and Barber.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "McGrath, Ethan – Colla Voce Music LLC." n.d. Accessed April 5, 2021.  
<https://www.collavoce.com/composers-arrangers/item/mcgrath-ethan>.

## Over the Land is April

*Over the Land is April* is one of Ethan McGrath's earlier a cappella works for SATB *divisi* voices. With the text of Robert Louis Stevenson, McGrath composition flows with a style that is reminiscent of the folk music settings of Vaughan Williams and Percy Grainger. As far as an inspiration for the piece, McGrath states that "Somewhat unromantically, I got to know the text by the way of the Roger Quilter setting for voice and piano, and I loved it, so I decided to have a go at writing a choral setting. As I recall, it was one of those fairly rare experiences where the musical ideas flowed very easily, despite having Quilter in my head, and I finished composing it almost in one setting."<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the piece the music reflects a great amount of text painting. For example with the text, "sound of singing goes" the altos hold onto their B-flat as it spills over into the tenor and bass entrance. Two other examples include the rising and falling in pitch in the soprano line for the word, "mountain," and the shift in harmonic color when the text refers to winter. In regarding the piece as a whole, McGrath is "still fond" of this piece but, as he states, "there are a few things that are not great – 'Hear my sonnets ring?' should really *ring*..., but my setting puts the word 'ring' on a first inversion minor chord at a very soft dynamic."<sup>11</sup> At the end of the piece, he sets the preparation for the climax using the text "I throw the flow'rs of spring" to great effect.

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<sup>10</sup> McGrath, Ethan. 'Information on Over the Land is April.' Email, 2021

<sup>11</sup> Mcgrath, Ethan. Email.

## **Over the Land is April**

Over the land is April,  
Over my heart a rose;  
Over the high, brown mountain  
The sound of singing goes.  
Say, love, do you hear me,  
Hear my sonnets ring?  
Over the high, brown mountain,  
Love, do you hear me sing?

By highway, love, and byway  
The snows succeed the rose.  
Over the high, brown mountain  
The wind of winter blows.  
Say, love, do you hear me,  
Hear my sonnets ring?  
Over the high, brown mountain,  
I sound the song of spring,  
I throw the flowers of spring.  
Do you hear the song of spring?  
Hear you the songs of spring?

-Robert Louis Stevenson

## **Antonín Dvořák**

Antonín Dvořák was born on September 8, 1841 near the town of Kralupy, Bohemia (present day Czech Republic). He received his first musical education upon entering the village school in 1847. His teacher at the school, Kantor Joseph Spitz, provided voice and violin lessons. Dvorak took to playing the violin and made such progress that he participated in church and with the village band. In 1853, Dvořák was sent to Zlonice to continue his music education. It was here where he studied violin, piano, organ and continuo playing, and music theory. In 1856 he was sent to the town of Česká Kamenice, where he studied organ and music theory at the German municipal school. A year later he began studying at the Prague Organ School, and he finished his studies in July 1859.

After his schooling, Dvořák began playing viola in a dance band which later became the basis for the orchestra at the Provisional Theatre, the first Czech theatre in Prague. He stayed there from 1862 to 1871. At the time his music was well received, but he was having some trouble finding publishers and supporting himself financially until Brahms wrote a letter to one of his publishers. This recommendation from Brahms led to a large influx of publication and performance opportunities for Dvořák. With this newfound fame, Dvořák's pieces became recognized the world over from Budapest to Baltimore. In 1890 he became a professor of composition and instrumentation at the Prague Conservatory.

Shortly thereafter, Dvořák was offered the position of artistic director and professor of composition at the National Conservatory of Music in New York. The decision was tough for Dvořák but, after his affairs were in order he signed his contract with the conservatory in December 1891. Then on October 1, 1892 he was officially welcomed to the National Conservatory. In April 1895, due to financial issues of the conservatory, Dvořák moved back to Bohemia and would not return to the United States. He returned to the Prague Conservatory in November of 1895 and continued composing and teaching up until his death on May 1, 1904.<sup>12</sup>

### ***V Přírode Op. 63, B. 126 (In Nature's Realm)***

#### **Nos. 1 and 4**

These two pieces come from a set of five part songs composed in 1882, all of which use selected poems from Vítězslav Hálek's (1835-1874) work of the same name. In this collection of his, Hálek wrote 172 poems that all evoke a sense of atmosphere within nature and between nature and people. (V přírode) The poems that Dvořák uses are not in the order in which they appear in Hálek's work, but rather are extracted to form a set of five songs. The pieces in the complete work are largely homophonic and make use of repeated sections.

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<sup>12</sup> "Dvořák, Antonín." n.d. Grove Music Online. Accessed March 18, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.library.pittstate.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051222>.

## ***Napadly písně v duši mou* (Songs fell into my soul)**

*Napadly písně v duši mou* follows an ABB form with the A section composed of two similar phrases.<sup>13</sup> The piece, in a moderate  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, has elements that bring the text to life. Dvořák employs an element of text painting with examples like the “flickering” of the word *perlami* and the crescendo to mimic the rising joy followed by a decrescendo to reflect that perhaps it is not joy but a cry of soul.

### ***Napadly písně v duši mou***

*Napadly písně v duši mou,  
Nezavolány, znenadání,  
Jako když rosy napadá  
Po stéblokadeřavé stráni.*

*Kol se to mihá perlami,  
i cítím dech tak mladý, zdravý,  
že nevím, zda jsou radost má,  
či plác mé duše usedavý.*

*Však rosu luna zrodila,  
A není písním v duši stání:  
Tekou co slast a slza má,  
A den se chystá ku svítání.*

Songs fell into my soul,  
unbidden, suddenly,  
as when dew appears  
on the side of the reedy hill.

It flickers with pearls,  
I feel my breath so young, healthy,  
that I don't know if it's my joy,  
or the crying of my hopeless soul.

But the moon brings forth the dew,  
and there is not a song in my soul:  
they flow with happiness and tears,  
and day is about to dawn.

-Vítězslav Hálek

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<sup>13</sup> Shrock. 490



## ***Vyběhla bříza běličká* (The white birch ran out)**

*Vyběhla bříza běličká* follows an ABA form with the first A section being comprised of four similar phrases.<sup>14</sup> The music combined with the text helps to evoke the imagery of a lovely spring scene. The sprightly character of the music of the A section reflects the action in the text in a dance-like manner, almost like running, to set the scene. The B section is more solemn, and richer in sound as the text turns more to the appearance and the beauty of the scene rather than the action.

### ***Vyběhla bříza běličká***

*Vyběhla bříza běličká,  
jak ze stáda ta kozička,  
vyběhla z lesa na pokraj,  
že prý už táhne jara báj.*

*Vyběhla jako panenka,  
Tak habká a tak do tenka,  
že až to lesem projelo,  
a vše se touhou zachvělo.*

*A táhne šumem jara báj,  
vzduch jak na housle, na šalmaj,  
vzduch samá vůně, vzduch samý květ,  
a mladý úsměv celý svět.*

*Hned každý strom zelený šat,  
svátečně jme se oblíkat,  
a každá haluz, každá snět  
chce novou řečí rozprávět.*

*A jak by hodům zavolal,  
přilítli hosté z blíž i dál,  
a za den, za dva širý kraj,  
a celý svět byl jara báj.*

-Vítězslav Hálek

The white birch ran out,  
like a goat from the herd,  
the birch ran past the edge of the forest,  
thus is coming the Spring awakening.

The birch ran like a doll,  
so soft and thin,  
then she passed through the forest  
and everything trembled with desire.

The Spring awakening buzzes in,  
the air like a violin and on the schalmei,  
the air smells sweet, like flowers,  
and a young smile for the world.

Each green-clad tree  
is dressed for the occasion,  
and each branch, each bud  
wants to speak a new language.

As if to call for a feast,  
guests come from far and near,  
and in a day, or two, the wide region,  
the whole world was a Spring  
awakening.

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<sup>14</sup> Shrock 490

## Stephen Paulus

Stephen Paulus was a prolific American composer with works for chorus, opera, orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo voice, concert band, piano, and organ. He received his Ph.D. in composition from the University of Minnesota in 1978. After graduating he was commissioned by the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 1979 and later went on to write a total of four operas for the opera company.

Paulus has 55 orchestral works to his credit and served as a Composer in Residence with the orchestras of Atlanta, Minnesota, Tucson, and Annapolis. He has written over 400 works for chorus ranging from his Holocaust oratorio, *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, to the anthem, “Pilgrims’ Hymn,” sung at the funerals of Presidents Reagan and Ford.

In 1973 Paulus co-founded the American Composers Forum, the largest composer service in the United States. He served as the Symphony and Concert Representative on the board of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) from 1990 to 2014.

His music has been praised by many a critic, with *The New Yorker* stating that he is a “bright, lyrical inventor whose music pulsates with a driving, kinetic energy.”<sup>15</sup>. Among his many honors was a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical

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<sup>15</sup> “Biography – Stephen Paulus Music.” n.d. Accessed March 5, 2021.  
<https://stephenpaulus.com/pages/biography>

Composition in 2015. Stephen Paulus unfortunately passed away at the age of 65 in October, 2014 due to complications of a stroke, but his music endures and lives on. A critic from *The New York Times* describes his music as follows: “Mr. Paulus often finds melodic patterns that are fresh and familiar at the same time....His scoring is invariably expert and exceptionally imaginative in textures and use of instruments.”<sup>16</sup>

## **The Road Home**

*The Road Home* starts with the tune “Prospect” from *The Southern Harmony Songbook* of 1835. With a melody using the F pentatonic scale, it has a familiar quality to it. As Paulus states about pentatonic scales, “They are universal.” There is a simplicity to the work, yet the message is strong. As Paulus again says, “often the most powerful and beautiful message is often a simple one.”<sup>17</sup>

Not only was this thought of a beautiful message present with Paulus; it was also with librettist Michael Dennis Browne. According to Browne, the challenge of setting text to this song was finding the right words that were “in some way worthy of it.” Finding simplicity with a strong message was the goal, and that paired with an aching for solace of the soul. As Browne states, “I was also trying to suggest the consolation that can come to someone of faith, in times of great stress, as a result of prayer and an abiding belief in divine mercy.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “Biography – Stephen Paulus Music.”

<sup>17</sup> “WORK STORY: The Road Home – Stephen Paulus Music.” n.d. Accessed March 30, 2021. <https://stephenpaulus.com/blogs/news/17806884-work-story-the-road-home>.

<sup>18</sup> “WORK STORY: The Road Home – Stephen Paulus Music.”

### ***The Road Home***

Tell me, where is the road  
I can call my own,  
That I left, that I lost,  
So long ago?  
All these years I have wandered,  
Oh, when will I know  
There's a way, there's a road  
That will lead me home?

After wind, after rain,  
When the dark is done.  
As I wake from a dream  
In the gold of day,  
Through the air there's a calling  
From far away,  
There's a voice I can hear  
That will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me,  
Come away, is the call,  
With the love in your heart  
As the only song;  
There is no such beauty  
As where you belong:  
Rise up, follow me,  
I will lead you home.

-Michael Dennis Browne

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