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A Study of Selected Choral Works of Randall Thompson

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A STUDY OF SELECTED CHORAL WORKS

OF RANDALL THOMPSON

(TITLE)

BY

A. DENNIS SPARGER

2

THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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The musical examples for the works of Randall Thompson are taken from the scores published by E. G. Schirmer Music Company, Boston, Massachusetts.

INTRODUCTION

Randall Thompson is probably the best known living American composer of choral music. Although he has composed instrumental music, piano solos, and vocal solos, choral music has brought him the greatest fame. It is generally conceded that he is nationalistic in his choice of texts, and basically traditional in musical vocabulary. The present writer does not intend to trace the origins of his style; rather, the purpose of this paper is to describe the outstanding characteristics of his choral music.

Randall Thompson's choral output to the present time (1965) includes nineteen separate compositions, including the Passion According to St. Luke, his most recent work, which is not yet published.¹ These nineteen works include works for men's chorus, women's chorus, mixed chorus, and double chorus. Eleven of the nineteen are extended works of three or more separate choruses or movements. Of these eleven larger compositions, four are a cappella, and a fifth is a cappella except for the first movement. Of the eight smaller compositions, only two have orchestral or piano accompaniment.

¹A list of these works is included as an appendix to this paper. See page 73.

The works for mixed voices were chosen for analysis in this paper because they are in the most typical choral grouping, they provide the richest choral color, and they are chronologically representative of Thompson's style.

Although the other works are not analyzed in this paper, they were studied as a part of the preparation for it. The most noticeable element that is missing from the mixed choral works, but which is found in at least one outstanding example elsewhere, is that of humor (Americana, a work for mixed chorus and women's chorus). With this particular exception, the present writer believes, however, that the comments made in Part III are appropriate to these other works as well.

After a brief biographical sketch in Part I, the compositions written for mixed voices available to date are analyzed in chronological order in Part II. Part III is a discussion of general style characteristics.

PART I: BIOGRAPHY

Randall Thompson was born in New York City on April 21, 1899. The bulk of his formal musical education was obtained at Harvard University where he studied under Walter R. Spalding, Edward B. Hill, and Archibald T. Davison. He received the degree Bachelor of Arts in 1920, and the Degree Master of Arts (summos honores) in 1922. From 1920 until 1921, he studied with Ernest Bloch in New York.

In 1922 he was awarded a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, where he remained until 1925. During 1925 and 1926, Thompson lived in Greenwich Village and worked as a composer. By the end of his first year there he received \$1600 from fulfilling commissions for songs set to a patron's text, writing songs and incidental music for such productions as the Grand Street Follies, and rehearsing the music for them.

From 1927 until the present (1965), Thompson has been a teacher. From 1927 to 1929, he was assistant professor of musical theory, organist, and choral director at Wellesley College. In 1929, he lectured at Harvard, and won the Guggenheim Fellowship in that year and again in 1930. He was conductor of the Dessoff Choirs in New York and the Madrigal Choir and Supervisor's Chorus at

Julliard in 1931-32. Thompson was then appointed director of the College Music Study for the Association on American Colleges, under the terms of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation and from 1932 to 1935 worked on a report concerning this topic.²

In 1936, he returned to Wellesley for one year. From 1937 to 1939, he was professor of music at the University of California. From 1939 to 1941, he was director of the Curtis Institute of Music, and in 1941, was appointed head of the music division of the School of Fine Arts of the University of Virginia, a post he held for five years. From 1946 to 1948, he was professor of music at Princeton University. In 1948, he was appointed Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music at Harvard University, a position he still holds.

Thompson has received several honors as a composer. The University of Rochester made him Doctor of Music (honoris causa) in 1933, and the Italian government named him "Cavaliere ufficiale al merito della Repubblica Italiana" in 1959. He is a member of The National Institute of Arts and Letters and of The American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

²College Music, An Investigation for the Association of American Colleges, the Macmillan Company, New York, 1935.

PART II: THE WORKS FOR MIXED VOICES

The Peaceable Kingdom

The Peaceable Kingdom was written in 1936 upon commission of the League of Composers. It is dedicated to G. Wallace Woodworth and the Harvard Glee Club and the Radcliff Choral Society. The eight choruses are a cappella, with two mixed double choruses, and one double chorus which consists of a chorus of men's voices and a chorus of women's voices.

Thompson's inspiration for writing this sequence of eight short psalms came from the hundred or more paintings that the early nineteenth century Quaker, Edward Hicks, made of the "peaceable kingdom" predicted by the Prophet Isaiah. The text consists of selected verses from the Prophecy of Isaiah which have been woven together to form the following plan:

The first chorus contrasts the reward of the righteous and the wicked. . . . The next four choruses elaborate the lot of the wicked. . . . The last three choruses form a similar increase in intensity concerning the lot of the righteous.

The remarkable quality about this piece is its simplicity and consequent clarity. The choral writing is conceived contrapuntally, although frequently chordal in texture. It is noteworthy that the harmony made by these lines tends toward the modal

when concerned with the wicked and towards the major when concerned with the righteous. Thompson reserves the kind of dissonance that would upset these tonal centers for one chorus, the third, which becomes increasingly dissonant as it describes the destruction wrought by the Lord --- the kind of fury only to be found in the Old Testament.³

Each chorus is published separately as well as a part of a bound volume.

The first chorus, "Say ye to the righteous", describes the rewards of the righteous and wicked; the text comes from Isaiah III: 10, 11; and LXV: 14. The chorus begins in D major with the lower voices singing an eight measure theme which deals with the reward of the righteous, pianissimo. The full chorus repeats the theme in four-part style. At measure 17 the lower voices state a seven measure theme which concerns the rewards of the wicked, fortissimo. This theme is also repeated by the full chorus.

The middle section of this chorus, which begins at measure 31 (Page 4), uses a double theme for both the singing of the righteous and the howling of the wicked (see Examples 1 and 2). However, the righteous are always in a major key and the wicked in its relative minor (see Examples 1 and 2).

After three settings of the "singing" and "howling" themes, the chorus concludes in F# minor after a restatement of each of the first two themes.

³Elliott Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson", The Musical Quarterly, XXXV, No. 1 (1949, 1-25).

Example 1, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus I, "Say ye to the righteous", page 4, measures 31 to 37.

Andante con moto

A *sfz* *mf*
Be - hold my servants shall sing for joy of heart,

T *p*
Be - hold my

B *fp subito*
Be - hold — my ser - vants shall sing for joy of

Example 2, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus I, "Say ye to the righteous", page 5, measures 37 to 39.

S *p* *cresc.*
but ye shall cry for sorrows of heart and shall

A *pp* *cresc.*
but ye shall

T *pp* *cresc.*
but ye shall cry for sor - row of heart and

B *pp* *cresc.*
but ye shall cry and

The text of the second chorus, "Woe unto them", is taken from Isaiah V: 8, 11, 12, 18, 20-22; and XVII: 12. It begins as a recitative in which sectional solos are accompanied by interjections of "Woe" in fifths

and octaves in the remaining voices. This section begins to climax at measure 17 (page 19), where the punctuations of "Woe" become closer together (see Example 3).

Example 3, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus II, "Woe unto them", page 19, measures 17 to 21.

Musical score for Example 3, showing vocal and instrumental parts. The vocal part is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It features five measures of "Woe!" with dynamic markings like "ff" and "rall.". The instrumental part is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings like "ff" and "rall.". The text "The viol, the tab-ret, the pipe and wine are in their feasts," is written below the instrumental staff.

After the climax, a slower contrasting chordal section, ten measures in length, is introduced at measure 23. The chorus is concluded by a chordal recitative section at measure 32 (page 21) in which the melodic line gradually rises diatonically a tenth. One final, extended melismatic "Woe" gradually descends along this same pattern (Measures 36 to 38).

The third chorus, "The noise of a multitude", is taken from Isaiah XIII: 4, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18. It is in the ophonic style and achieves the feeling of mounting doom through sharp dissonances of quartal harmonies (see Example 4).

Although much of the chorus is in the Dorian mode, the tonality is generally indeterminate. There are many metric changes (ϕ , $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$), but these changes are not used to accent the text. Rather, accents are placed on weak beats to emphasize certain syllables. Parallelism, crossing voices, and a few cross relations are used in

this chorus. The climax is reached on a diminished chord with a diminished octave in measures 79 through 81 (page 32). This through-composed chorus is also characterized by the lack of a melody, the dissonant harmony being the predominating factor.

Example 4, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus III, "The noise of a multitude", page 23, measures 47 to 51.

Their chil-dren al-—so shall be dash'd to pie-ces be-fore their eyes

The fourth chorus, "Howl ye", is a double chorus. The text is taken from Isaiah XIII: 6; and XIV: 31. Intensity is created in this chorus through the rhythmic drive, which is propelled from the beginning by the antiphonal statements of the two choruses. The antiphonal effect is contrasted by the four-to-eight-part counterpoint which begins at measure 17 (page 38). The principal (first) phrase is characterized by the leap of an octave (see Example 5). The contrapuntal section ends at measure 31 (page 42) where the antiphonal singing resumes.

A slower, more sustained setting is used for "Thou art dissolv'd", which begins at measure 35 (page 43). Up to this point, the melodic curve moves generally upward, but now it moves downward. The principal melodic material used in "Thou art dissolv'd" is anticipated at measure 21

(see Example 5). "Howl ye" is again set antiphonally from measure 44. At measure 57 (page 47) the motion is speeded by use of only the first three notes (in $\frac{3}{8}$) of the material Example 5, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus IV, "Howl ye", page 40, measures 21 to 26.

Allegro assai

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with the lyrics "(Howl) Howl ye, Howl". The second staff is the piano accompaniment, marked *mf* and *ff dim.*, with the lyrics "Howl," and "Howl". The third staff is the vocal line, with the lyrics "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand." The fourth staff is the piano accompaniment, marked *ff*, with the lyrics "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand. Howl". The fifth staff is the vocal line, with the lyrics "hand. Howl ye; Howl-ye". The sixth staff is the piano accompaniment, marked *mf* and *ff dim.*, with the lyrics "day of the Lord is at hand. Howl". The seventh staff is the vocal line, with the lyrics "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand. Howl ye." The eighth staff is the piano accompaniment, with the lyrics "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand. Howl ye."

previously used for "Howl ye". The tempo retards and fades on "Thou art dissolv'd" from measures 64 to 75. A final "Howl" is sung in all voices by a crescendo diminuendo (pp <f >pp) on the last A minor chord. Almost the whole chorus is centered around "Howl ye".

The fifth chorus, "the paper reeds by the brooks", is taken from Isaiah XIX: 7. Its quietness is enhanced by its position between two loud double choruses. The chorus is in E minor. It consists of two statements of a verse with a coda. The twelve measure theme is first heard in four parts with the melody in the tenor voice, which is scored higher than the alto. The melodic line of "and be no more" is related to "Thou art dissolv'd", from the fourth chorus. Both melodic lines descend a fourth by step in even note values.

The second statement of the verse begins at measure 14 (page 52) in the lower three voices with the melody in the alto voice. The melody is imitated an octave higher by the soprano at the distance of one measure. The coda, which begins at measure 26, restates the latter portion of the text in a gradual diminuendo and ends in fifths built on E. Modality is quite prominent in this chorus, especially through the use of the subtonic triad and the Dorian mode.

The sixth chorus, "But these are they that forsake the Lord: for ye shall go out with joy", is written for double chorus. The text is taken from Isaiah LXV: 11; and LV: 12. The male voices begin in recitative style, fortissimo, with the text strongly accented. As the first chorus enters

at measure 8 (page 56), the tonality shifts surprisingly from a pentatonic scale in G minor (G, Bb, C, D, F) used in the recitative, to G major. The dynamic level begins pianississimo, but gradually increases on the word "joy", which is repeated three times. To add to the increasing volume, the second chorus doubles the same pitches on the final "joy" at measure 13 (page 57). The tempo quickens as the words "clap their hands" is set antiphonally. The nineteen measure (measures 36 to 55) section of "clap their hands" is centered completely around a G major chord. As both choruses chant in quarter notes, a soprano and tenor soloist sing imitatively in long sustained tones. The chorus ends after a ritardando on a G major chord.

The seventh chorus, "Have ye not known?", is the shortest of the set, being only fifteen measures in length. This chorus, like the fifth, is in E minor and uses the Dorian mode. The text, from Isaiah XL: 21, is set in the style of a recitative which is reminiscent of the opening of the sixth chorus. Both choruses begin on a single, accented tone which is used for the first four syllables. It is marked maestoso and fortissimo throughout. Of particular interest is the modal quality of the final cadence which uses a minor dominant seventh to a major tonic (See Example 6).

The eighth chorus, "Ye shall have a song", is a long (163 measures) double chorus with the female voices pitted against the male voices. The text is taken from Isaiah XXX: 29.

The form can be described as ABAB Coda. The following table illustrates the antiphonal overlapping of statements.

A	B	A	B	Coda
1-67	66-85	84-117	116-153	155-163

Example 6, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus VII, "Have ye not known?", page 69, measures 12 to 15.

Maestoso

S (Foun-) da - - - tions of the earth?

A (Foun-) da - - tions of the earth?

T (Foun-) da - - - tions of the earth?

The chorus begins Lento, pianissimo, and antiphonally in C major. As the words, "and gladness of heart" are set, the choruses overlap antiphonally sixteen times, build to a fortissimo, and diminish back to piano. The B section begins and ends in G major both times, but is very modulatory. It begins at measure 66 (page 78), and is marked by staccato notes (see Example 7). After short section of "as when one goeth with a pipe", the style of the A section is returned with "and gladness of heart" at measure 84 (page 81). After similar treatment, an eight-part imitative section begins on "when one goeth. . ." which lasts thirty-nine measures.

The coda begins at measure 155 (page 93), fortissimo. The ending is slowed to maestoso and is retarded further and increased in volume for a very sonorous close.

Although some sections of The Peaceable Kingdom are not vocally difficult, an above-average choir is needed to perform the whole work. The major problems are range (high A's in the soprano and tenor), pitch accuracy in the dissonant sections, and rhythm in the syncopated passages.

Alleluia

The Alleluia was written in 1940 at the request of Dr. Serge Koussevitzky for the opening exercises of the Berkshire Music Center. It was first performed there on July 8, 1940, by the student body under the direction of Professor G. Wallace Woodworth. The text of this seventy-eight measure composition is built on the word alleluia.

This a cappella work is sufficiently well-known to require little description. The publisher advertises that over a million copies are in print. It is curved dynamically with the fortissimo climax near the end; it begins and ends very quietly. A few metric changes are employed to extend phrases. The work is often chant-like--there is much repetition of tones in a recitative manner with steps to neighboring tones (see Example 8). The harmony is a mixture of traditional major-minor and modal usages. The most consistent harmonic characteristic is the use of parallel first and second inversion chords

Example 7, The Peaceable Kingdom, Chorus VIII, "Ye shall have a song", page 88, measures 130 to 136.

Lento

as when one go-eth with a pipe, as when one go-
 eth with a pipe, as when one go-eth with a pipe,
 pipe, as when one go-eth with a pipe, as w
 when one go-eth with a pipe, as when one go-eth with a p
 pipe, as when one go-eth with a pipe, as
 pipe, when one go-eth with a pipe,
 go-eth with a pipe, when one go-eth with a pipe, when one
 when one go-eth with a pipe, when one go-eth with a

Example 8, Alleluia, Measures 1 to 3.

Lento

Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia

against a pedal point. It is interesting to note that at least one voice overlaps at each point of cadence, which results in a web of continuous sound. The melodic movement is basically stepwise, excepting some octave skips. There are many harmonic sequences. Voices are frequently paired in parallel sixths and thirds. Contrapuntal interplay is particularly noticeable from measure 30 to 32. The lines are very smooth and singable.

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID

The Last Words of David is written with orchestral or piano accompaniment. It was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1949 for Serge Koussevitzky, in honor of the 25th anniversary of his directorship. The first performance was on August 12 of that year, at Lenox, Massachusetts, by the Berkshire Music Center Chorus and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The text is taken from the Second Book of Samuel XXIII: 3 and 4:

He that ruleth over men must be just,
ruling in the fear of God. And he shall
be as the light of the morning, when the
sun riseth, even a morning without clouds;
as the tender grass springing out of the
earth by clear shining after rain.

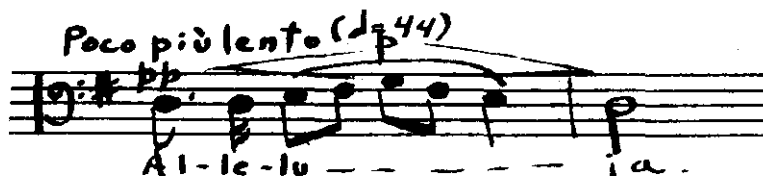
The composition ends with an extended Alleluia and Amen.

The composition begins in D major and ends in G major. The following table describes the form:

A	B	C
1-12	13-30	31-48

It begins very dramatically, with the major portion of dissonance in the first section. The second section is slower and quieter and exploits a fugato subject which is first introduced in the accompaniment. This subject is later used in imitation for the third section (see Example 9). The Alleluia and Amen are quite soft and expressive.

Example 9, The Last Words of David, measures 31 to 32.



The piano accompaniment is not difficult, the most demanding passages being the rapid scales of G and D major and E and B natural minor in the opening section.

Consonant and diatonic harmonies are the norm, however, there are some quite dissonant sections. An example can be found in the opening measures, where the sopranos hold a pedal point while the lower voices descent in parallel triads (see Example 10).

Example 10, The Last Words of David, measures 1 to 3.

Maestoso (♩ = 60)

He that ru-letb o-ver men, - - - - - must be just,

The harmony becomes modal and modulatory when the words, "And he shall be as the light. . ." are set. Text painting is obvious in the rising line used for "light", "sun riseth", and "grass springeth". A chromatic sequence begins at measure 21 (see Example 11).

After the text has been completely set, a fugato begins with "Alleluia" (Example 9). Nine measures later

the voices sing "Amen" four times, while the tenors chant "Alleluia".

Example 11, The Last Words of David, measures 21 to 24.

Largo (♩ = 48)

af-ter rain, af-ter rain, af-ter rain,

MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Mass of the Holy Spirit was written in 1955 and 1956. The work was requested by Nicholas Brown of Providence, Rhode Island. This Anglican Mass, although designed for use at Whitsuntide, is appropriate for any season of the church year. The first performance was given on Whitsunday, May 20, 1956, at Memorial Church, Stanford University by the Stanford University Choir under the direction of Harold C. Schmidt.⁴

The text of this unaccompanied work is the five sections of the Ordinary of the Mass which are usually set.⁵

⁴The Benedictus had not been written at that time.

⁵Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus et Benedictus, and Agnus Dei.

but ends in C major with a cadence from the subtonic, which is typical of the strongly modal character of the harmony.

The middle section, "Christe eleison", is scored for soprano, alto, and tenor soloists or semi-chorus. The twenty-three measure section is a strict canon at the fourth and seventh below, at the distance of one measure. It is in the key of F major and is generally diatonic. The third section is a varied repetition of the first. However, this section begins in D minor, and closes in A major.

The "Gloria" is in ternary form, the first section of which has a stately theme in the soprano accompanied by parallel harmonies constantly rising and falling in eighth note patterns in the lower voices, resulting in "undulating waves of sound".⁶ (see Example 13). This section begins Andante giusto in D major, and ends in F# major.

After a fermata, the middle section, which is a double chorus, begins at measure 31 (page 20). It is a somewhat slower and much softer setting of "Thou that tak'st away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. . . ." The section is modulatory and cadences in A major. The opening figure returns in D major at measure 55 (page 25) after another pause. This section, in the

⁶Charles Brookhart, The Choral Works of Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, and Randall Thompson, unpublished dissertation, Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, 1960.

style of the opening section of the movement, cadences at measure 70 (page 29). After a pause, the coda, a homophonic setting of "art most high in the glory of God the Father" precedes a three measure "Amen" section, which resembles the opening (The three upper voices "undulate" in eighth notes over a pedal D in the bass).

Example 13, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Gloria", page 13, measures 3 to 4.

Andante gioioso
quasi trombe

ff

Glo-ry be to God on high. — be to God on

be to God on high. — be to God on high. —

The "Crede", a very lengthy section, is in ternary form. The first and last parts are in a homophonic texture. The major second is the primary melodic unit of construction (see Example 14). The movement is quite sectional in construction because of the sectional structure of the text. The modal progressions at the beginning return throughout the movement.

Strong cadences are frequently followed by pauses, a device that contributes to the sectionalization. The

tempo slows to a Lento at measure 55 (page 37), where the modal progressions from the beginning of the movement are used for "And was incarnate by the Holly Ghost of the Virgin Mary". "And was made man", is set with a B pedal point in the two upper voices while the lower voices, divisi, progress stepwise in major triads from B to E, where the section is cadenced.

Example 14, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Credo", page 31, measures 1 to 4.

Allegro (♩=92)

I be-lieve in one God - the Fa-ther Al-might

The next section, "And was crucified also for us. . .", is imitative in the upper voices, with the bass voice on pedal points. It is characterized melodically by descending steps (see Example 15).

At measure 102 (page 41) the A section returns and is used for "And sitteth on the right hand. . . ." The key, harmony, and melodic outline are the same as the first statement. Only the note values have been changed to fit the text. This section leads to measure 140 (page 47), where an extended "Amen" passage brings the movement to a final climax.

Example 15, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Credo", page 38,
measures 71 to 75.

Grave ($\text{♩} = 60$) (in 4)

And was cru - ci - fied al - so for us , un - der

And was cru - ci - fied al - so for us , and was cru - ci -

And was cru - ci - fied, and was cru - ci - fied al - so for

And was cru - ci - fied al - so for

The fourth movement, "Sanctus", is divided into two parts which Thompson labels "Prelude and Fugue". The twenty-seven measure prelude is for seven-part (SAA-TTBB) double chorus which at first is antiphonal, but soon changes to seven-part homophonic style. The harmonies are modal and modulatory. The prelude begins in A major and leads directly to the fugue in $F\#$ minor.

The fugue is built on the following subject, which is stated first by the altos: (see Example 16).

The remaining 192 measures are fugal and are based on "Glory be to Thee. . . ." Many harmonic sequences and pairings of voices in thirds are found. From measure 77 (page 60) to the end staggered breathing is frequently required since the lines are quite long and melismatic.

The movement ends in the tonic key.

Example 16, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Sanctus", page 51, measures 28 to 35.

Allegro con spirito (d.=92)(in 1)

Glo-ry be-to Thee, O Lord, Thee O Lord-most high. Glo-ry

The "Benedictus" (page 73), which was added to the Mass after its first public performance, is a highly contrapuntal movement. In $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, the movement is a canon at the fifth, ninth, and thirteenth below, with each entry at the distance of one measure. It is in A major and is modulatory through the middle portion of the movement. The text is "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord". For the most part, the canon is strict throughout, and leads directly to the next movement.

The "Hosanna" (page 81) uses the fugue subject from the "Sanctus" (see Example 16). The subject, in the soprano voice, is accompanied by the other voices which

are sometimes imitative of the soprano. It is very short (26 measures) and remains in A major.

The final movement, "Agnus Dei", is a canon at the octave between the tenor and soprano. The remaining voices imitate motives of the subject and fill in the harmony (see Example 17).

Example 17, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Agnus Dei", page 84, measures 1 to 5.

Largo ($d=60$)

O Lamb — of God, that tak'st

O Lamb — of God, — that tak'st — a —

O Lamb — of God, — that tak'st — a — way — the

O Lamb — of God, that tak'st — a —

The twenty-seven measure subject is repeated three times. The six measure coda uses the same music as the coda of the "Kyrie". The final movement is very soft, illustrating the plea for mercy and the granting of peace. It is Largo and although there are several modulations, the harmony is generally diatonic. The final cadence (see Example 18) is

(modal I, VII, I).

The vocal ranges in the Mass are more extreme than any of Thompson's other works (see Example 19). The length of this work, compounded by its being a cappella, increases the vocal difficulties. It can be concluded that this work requires matured and well-trained voices for a satisfactory performance.

Example 18, Mass of the Holy Spirit, "Agnus Dei", page 92, measures 86 to 89.

Largo (♩ = 60)

Example 19, Mass of the Holy Spirit, vocal ranges.

Soprano alto tenor bass

ODE TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE

The Ode to the Virginian Voyage was written in 1957 with accompaniment for orchestra or piano. The work was commissioned by the Jamestown Festival, in honor of the 350th Anniversary of the first permanent English Settlement in the New World. The first performance was in Williamsburg, Virginia, on the opening day of the Jamestown Festival, April 1, 1957, by the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra, the Norfolk Civic Chorus, and the Choir of the College of William and Mary, Edgar Schenkman, Conductor.

The text was written in 1606 by Michael Drayton (1563-1631), as an exhortation to the settlers to "Go and subdue". Thompson divided the work into seven movements, using musical forms that were popular in the early seventeenth century, "moving from sarabande to hornpipe, from glee to ballad to madrigal. Of distinctive and memorable beauty is the portion of the poem extolling the wonders of Virginia. . . ."7 "The composer invokes the styles of Purcell and Handel and dance forms. . . to set off the Drayton poem, but there is also a pretty folk-like tribute to Virginia. . . ."8

⁷Charles Crowder, concert review, Musical America, July, 1957, vol. 77, p.5.

⁸Raymond Ericson, concert review, Musical America, July, 1960, vol. 80, p. 38.

Since Thompson chose to set the work in a style popular at the time of the founding of Jamestown, many antiquarian features are used throughout the composition.

The first movement, "Sinfonia", is a French Overture--sarabande and hornpipe. The sarabande, Largo maestoso, begins fortissimo with its principal subject (see Example 20).

Example 20, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, first movement, "Sinfonia", page 3, measures 1 to 4.



After two statements, the secondary subject is introduced, piano, and repeated. The sarabande is in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, and uses dotted rhythm predominantly.

The hornpipe, in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, is much faster, and is light and staccatissimo in character. It is a phrase by phrase play between the woodwinds and strings. The theme has a prevailing rhythmic pattern (see Example 21).

Example 21, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, first movement, "Sinfonia", page 6, measures 70 to 71.



It begins softly, builds volume, and moves directly into the second movement.

The second movement, "You brave heroic minds", opens Grave, fortissimo, with a strong dotted rhythm in the accompaniment. The form is: Introduction, AABA. The chord progressions become chromatic in the Introduction (see Example 22).

Example 22, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, second movement, "You brave heroic minds", page 8, measures 1 to 5.

Grave ($\text{♩} = 48$)

You brave heroic minds, - worthy your coun-try's name, 1901

At measure 10 (page 9), a series of seventh chord sequences in Eb major with suspensions (I₇, IV₇, III₇, VI₇, II₇, V₇, I₇, etc.) is introduced which brings the introduction to a close, pianissimo, on the dominant.

The Allegro con brio begins at measure 25 (page 12), fortissimo. The A section begins with the bass section singing "Go and subdue", which is answered antiphonally in the accompaniment. The tenors join in a third higher in the next phrase, and four measures later, the altos enter on the fifth, completing the tonic triad. The accompaniment doubles the melody as the altos enter. After the sopranos

enter, a short imitative section is heard on, "as the winds. . .", while the accompaniment marks the rhythm by accenting the strong beats. After a two measure interlude, the section is repeated. The harmony of the A section is diatonic, with only two brief cadences to the subdominant key.

The B section (measures 75 to 101), "Your course securely steer", is quite contrasting in that it is generally pianissimo, chromatic, and has considerable unisonal singing. The chromaticism and crescendo in this passage help illustrate the dangers of the voyage. The accompaniment doubles the melody and has a staccato bass line from measure 75 to 79 (page 17), and a legato bass line from measure 80 to 91. At measure 92, a pedal point is held for the remainder of the section. While the accompaniment has rising and descending thirds, the sopranos and tenors hold the pedal point as the altos and basses descend diatonically, ending in open fifths. The A section is then heard again with an extension that ends the movement with a fortissimo "Go".

The third movement, "Earth's only paradise", Andante tranquillo, is a ballad in five verses which depicts the beauty of Virginia. The folk-like quality is heightened by the pentatonic melody (see Example 23).

The melody is strophic and variation is achieved through changing the planes of sound (sectional solos), key, and accompaniment. The instrumental variation for

the accompaniment is often found in Baroque music. The first verse is sung by the tenor section in F major, with the accompaniment doubling the melody and filling out the harmony.

Example 23, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, third movement, "Earth's only paradise", page 24, measures 4 to 8.

Andante tranquillo ($\text{♩} = 60$)

And cheerfully at sea Success you shall receive To get the pearl and gold And down to hold

The second verse is sung by the altos in D major. The accompaniment is basically chordal in broad quarter notes, with inner voices moving in parallel stepwise thirds.

The sopranos sing the third verse in F# major. The accompaniment consists of portato, chordal eighth notes, with sixteenth note obbligato.

The bass section sings the fourth verse in Eb major. The accompaniment features a harmonic rhythmic pattern ($\overbrace{\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}}^{\text{♩}}$) which is treated antiphonally between the higher and lower registers. The complete chorus sings the fifth verse, first in unison, then breaking into parts, in the original key (F major). The accompaniment is chordal with obbligato in sixteenth notes. A short orchestral codetta ends the movement.

The fourth movement, "In kenning of the shore", (page 32), opens with an orchestral introduction in binary

form.

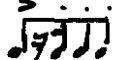
The first part is a fanfare, Allegro con brio, which depicts the sighting of land. The fortissimo fanfare is written antiphonally with superimposed harmonies (see Example 24).

Example 24, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, fourth movement, "In kenning of the shore", page 32, measures 1 to 4.

Allegro con brio (♩ = 116)

The second part, Large, begins piano in measure 12. It is a chorale-prelude on the old hymn, St. Anne, more commonly known as "O God, our help in ages past". Each phrase is followed by an inversion of the same phrase. The complete hymn is played twice. Early notation is suggested by use of the breve (≡) in the chorale-prelude. Following the orchestral introduction, the male voices enter with the fanfare figure, answered by the women's voices imitatively with superimposed harmony.

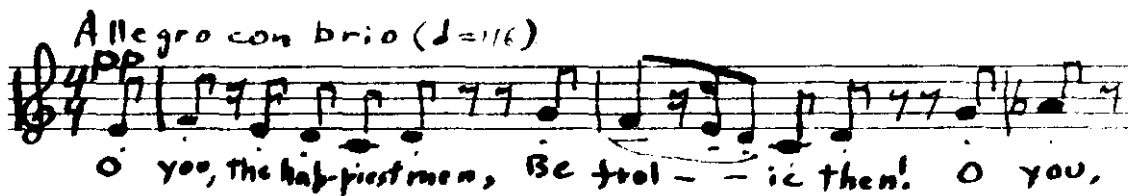
Three verses and a coda follow, Allegro con brio. Starting pianissimo, each verse gathers in intensity until the movement ends, fortissimo. The verses are very chromatic, and sequential progressions rise by minor thirds.

An ostinato () is used in the accompaniment for the remainder of the movement. The text of each verse is the same: "O ye, the happiest men, Be frolic then ! (repeat), Let cannons roar, (repeat), Frighting the wide heav'n"

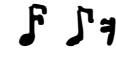
The lightness of the movement is characterized in the staccato melody; especially in the separation of the syllable "frol" (see Example 25).

Example 25, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, fourth movement, "In kenning of the shore", page 34, measures 49 to 51.

Allegro con brio ($\text{♩} = 116$)



O you, the happiest men, Be frolic — — ic then! O you,

The first verse begins in F major, has sequences in that key (measures 49 to 50), in Ab major (measures 50 to 51), in B major (measures 52 to 55), and cadences in C# minor at measures 56 to 57. The following verses follow a similar plan, progressing from Ab to F (measures 58 to 65), and Bb to Db (measures 69 to 87). The movement closes with a final statement of "O you, the happiest of men" using the same rhythm () in the key of C major in fanfare style on tonic and dominant harmony. The coda ends grandly, with a well-marked plagal cadence, in which the bass outlines an authentic cadence, in the accompaniment.

The fifth movement, "And in regions far", is marked Largo, and is an unaccompanied madrigal with a short

orchestral introduction and coda based on a cadence formula resembling sixteenth century madrigal style (see Example 26).

Example 26, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, fifth movement, "And in regions far", page 41, measures 1 to 3.

Largo (♩=54)

A: ii6 V I₆ V - I

The two strophic verses are basically pianissimo, but build to a forte in the middle of each verse. Although the two verses are in F major, the introduction cadences in A major, and the coda cadences in C major. The harmony is basically diatonic and modal, and has many added notes (see Example 27, measures 6 and 7). Cross relations, similar to those found in Renaissance madrigals, are found in measures 12 and 25. The prominent use of parallel fifths is consciously archaic (See Example 27, soprano and alto).

The sixth movement, "Thy voyages attend" (page 45), Allegro giusto, is subtitled, "Fuga". Although it is not always polyphonic, until the Largo at the very end of the movement. The fugue begins with unison tenor voices. The alto section states the answer tonally on the dominant degree at measure 4. The sopranos enter in the tonic key

at measure 7. The basses enter with the answer on the dominant degree but this statement occurs two measures later than the preceding entrances (measure 12).

Example 27, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, fifth movement, "And in regions far", page 41, measures 5 to 8.

Largo ($d=54$)

And in re-gions far Such he-ros bring ye forth As those from whom we came

And in re-gions far Such he-ros bring ye forth As those from whom we came

And in re-gions far Such he-ros bring ye forth As those from whom

And in re-gions far Such he-ros bring ye forth As those from whom we came

At measure 20, a stretto begins (see Example 28). Stretti are used elsewhere throughout the movement.

Example 28, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, sixth movement, "Thy Voyages attend", page 48, measures 20 to 22.

Allegro giusto ($d=100$)

Thy voy-ages at-tend In-dus-trious Hak-luyt, Whose read-ing shall en-fl

Thy voy-ages at-tend In-dus-trious Hak-luyt, Whose read-ing shall en-flame.

The verse is repeated five times, but phrases are repeated within each verse. The movement is in C minor, and the harmonies sometimes progress by root movements of a fourth upward (see Example 29). The accompaniment is scored for strings, which double the voice parts.

Example 29, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, sixth movement, "Thy voyages attend", page 53, measures 50 to 52.

— en-flame, — en-flame, — en-flame —
 — en-flame, — en-flame, — en-flame —
 — en-flame, — en-flame, — en-flame, en-flame, — en-flame, en-flame
 — en-flame, en-flame, en-flame, en-flame, en-flame, en-

After 87 measures of polyphony, the tempo slows to Largo (page 59), and the next eleven measures are in homophonic style. The text for this is the final part of the verse: "And much commend to after times thy wit". This passage is modulatory and leads directly into the Finale.

The final movement, "Finale: Go and Subdue!", is

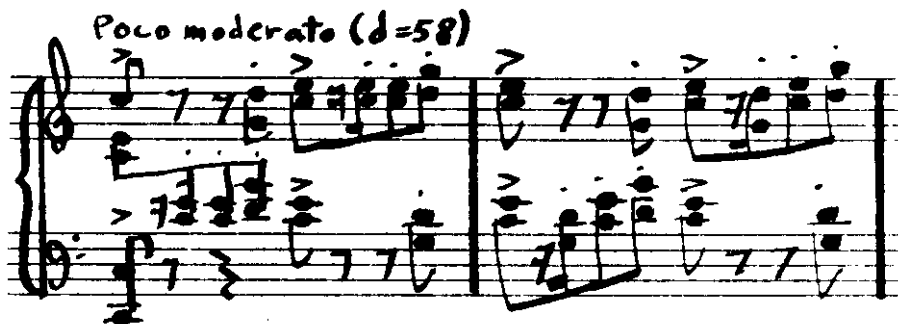
a recapitulation of themes previously used. Example 30 illustrates the beginning of Movement VII, which is a direct quotation from Movement II, measures 102 through 135 (pages 20 to 23).

Example 30, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, seventh movement, "Finale: Go and Subdue", page 60, measures 2 to 5.



After a rallentando the accompaniment plays a motive taken from Movement IV, measures 83 to 85 (see Example 31), while the choral punctuations of "Go!" begin to stretto.

Example 31, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, seventh movement, "Finale: Go and Subdue", page 63, measures 37 to 38.



Then the chorus follows, singing in unison, "Virginia, earth's only paradise" (measures 44 to 47), which is taken from Movement III, measures 11 to 14. The Finale ends with the fanfare motive in the accompaniment and the chorus once again punctuating "Go!".

The work as a whole is not extremely difficult, but would provide a good challenge to an above-average high school chorus. Although piano accompaniment is adequate, the orchestra can add much because of richer tone color possibilities. At times the range is fairly high. The greatest difficulties would be encountered in the sixth, or fugal, movement.

This new work has many moments of captivating charm, couples with Thompson's elegant and artful facility for transition from one early form to the next. It is an occasion-piece of considerable merit and fine taste.⁹

For all the work's conservative harmonic style, it is thoroughly satisfying; Thompson writes for chorus and orchestra with the utmost fastidiousness and tact; he knows the value of brevity and how to relate each section of the work to the whole.¹⁰

REQUIEM

The Requiem, Thompson's longest choral work, was commissioned by the University of California for the dedication of its new music buildings. The work was completed on March 21, 1958, and received its first performance at Berkeley, California, by the University of California Chorus, Edward Lawton, Conductor (to both of whom the work is dedicated) in May of 1958.

⁹Crowder, Musical America, p. 5.

¹⁰Ericson, Musical America, p. 38.

It is a work of approximately eighty minutes in length for unaccompanied double chorus. The composer has selected verses from the Bible for the text. "The work is not a liturgical mass and is cast in the form of a dramatic dialogue between two choruses depicting the triumph of faith over death".¹¹

The Requiem is divided into five parts, each (except the first) having many subdivisions. The scriptural passages are arranged in three sections: parts one and two have the quality of lamentations; parts three and four are songs of praise; and part five, words of consolation, concludes with a rather joyful "Alleluia, amen".

A recording is available on loan from E. C. Schirmer Music Company. However, the recording is not of fine quality. The pitch level falls to as much as a minor third low and there is occasional poor intonation. The great length of the work contributes to these flaws.

Part one, "Lamentations", is the shortest of the five parts and is the only portion scored for triple chorus (divisi in Chorus II). Choruses II and III sing most of the material in an overlapping antiphonal style. The opening measures set the mood of the rest of the movement (see Example 32).

These chord progressions gradually expand in thirds. Superimposed harmonies, like those shown on the second beat of the second measure of Example 32, are frequently heard

¹¹From the vocal score published by E. C. Schirmer Music Co., Boston, Massachusetts, 1958.

in these passages. Chorus I enters at measure 17 (page 8) and is limited to short motives and occasional phrases in strict chordal style. The form of this movement is ternary. The B section begins at measure 24 and the beginning style returns at measure 49 (page 18).

Example 32, Requiem, part I, "Lamentations", page 3, measures 1 to 2.

Adagio ($\text{♩} = 60$)

It is interesting to note that Choruses II and III are in compound time ($\frac{12}{8}$ and $\frac{9}{8}$) while Chorus I is in simple time ($\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$), resulting occasionally in cross rhythms of twos and threes. Although modulation occurs, the harmony is for the most part diatonic. The movement begins in the Phrygian mode on E, and ends in E major. The final cadence is of particular interest due to its modal quality (see Example 33).

Part two, "The triumph of Faith", is divided into

three movements. The first movement, "Why make ye this ado?" (page 32) is 38 measures in length, and is highly imitative. The five measure question is stated in canon and remains basically the same in each statement (see Example 34). Chorus I asks the question four times and is answered three times by Chorus II.

Example 33, *Requiem*, part I, "Lamentations", page 31, measures 91 to 92.

Adagissimo

Handwritten musical score for "Lamentations" from a Requiem, measures 91 to 92. The score is written on five staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and another Bass line) in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked *Adagissimo*. The music is in a minor key with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "Nor - weep. Nor - weep." and "mourn. mourn. mourn.". The score shows a question phrase in the first four measures and an answering phrase in the next four measures, which is then expanded to seven measures in the subsequent two entrances.

The answering phrase is first four measures long (see Example 35), but is expanded to seven measures in length for the next two entrances. The answer begins in a strict chordal style and then becomes imitative (measures 8 to 10).

Example 34, Requiem, part II, first movement, "Why make ye this ado?", page 32, measure 1.

Allegro ($\text{♩} = 88$)

Why make ye this a-

Why make ye this a-do and

Why make ye this a-do and weep? —

Why make ye this a-do and weep? — Why

Example 35, Requiem, part II, first movement, "Why make ye this ado?", page 34, measures 7 to 8.

is of few days and

is of few days

is of few days

is of few

The second answer (measure 17) is an extended form of the first, and the last answer (measure 30) is much like the second but begins a third higher.

The second movement of part two, "What man is he" (page 45), follows without interruption. Throughout this movement, Chorus II "make a series of statements or asks questions which express human doubts when confronted by death".¹² These questions (see Example 36) usually rise a step each time they are presented.

Example 36, *Requiem*, part II, second movement, "What man is he", page 45, measures 1 to 3.

Allegro conciso ($d=100$)

What man is he that liv-eth and shall not see death?

Chorus I follows each statement with Lento tranquillo phrases that give words of consolation to each question or statement. Both choruses sing together from measure 44 to 64 as chorus I sings "Everlasting joy!" and Chorus II fearfully asks "How long Lord? Wilt Thou hide Thyself forever? Shall Thy wrath burn like fire". At page 61, Chorus I returns to its slower and more reassuring quietness for

¹²Brookhart, dissertation, page. 230.

"His anger endureth but for a moment. . . ." The movement closes with Chorus II reconciled to the consolations of Chorus I. Chorus II sings finally "Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously". This movement moves directly to the next.

The third movement of Part two, "Good tidings to the meek" (page 70), is done completely by Chorus I, except for the last three measures (page 79), at which point, Chorus II repeats "Behold ye. . ." from page 69, transposed to G major. The flowing and lyric melody is in homophonic style, although each part has individuality. The movement is built mostly through sequential development. It is in E minor and is in strophic variation form.

The third part, "The Call to Song", is divided into four movements. The first movement, "Be filled with the spirit", is sung by Chorus I alone. This short (31 measures) movement consists of three statements of a six measure round and a coda. After the initial solo statement in the soprano voice (see Example 37), a contrapuntal accompaniment is added as it moves from Alto I to Alto II.

The men's voices, in three and four parts, are used only for interjections of "None answer'd" after each statement of the them, and "None giveth answer" at the end.

"O let the nations be glad", the second movement (page 83), is a fugue of moderate length (65 measures) for Chorus I using the following subject: (see Example 38).

Stretto is found at page 85, measures 19 to 20, and

Example 37, *Requiem*, part III, first movement, "Be filled with the spirit", page 80, measures 1 to 6.

Lento e sereno ($d=60$)

Be fill'd with the spir-it, sing-ing and mak-ing
mel-o-dy in your heart to the Lord.

Example 38, *Requiem*, part III, second movement, "O let the nations be glad", page 83, measures 1 to 3.

Lento e sereno ($d=60$)

Be fill'd with the spir-it, sing-ing and mak-ing
mel-o-dy in your heart to the Lord.

page 86, measures 28 to 32. A countersubject is not consistently stated at the opening in each voice. The fugue is in G major. The five measure coda is in C minor and serves as a transition to the next movement. It is in homophonic style and is sung by the lower three voices.

The third movement, "Sing unto Him", is also for Chorus I, which is divided in various combinations up to seven parts. The greatest portion of the movement pits the men's voices against women's voices, both singing, "Sing unto Him". The antiphonal phrases use melismas

composed primarily of sixteenth notes in parallel thirds, Allegro con spirito.

Occasionally the text, "Sing unto Him", ascends from voice to voice, utilizing the first and fifth degrees of the scale in the style of a fanfare (see Example 39).

Example 39, Requiem, part III, third movement, "Sing unto Him", page 91, measures 1 to 2.

Allegro con spirito (♩=92) sing un-to Him

Sing un-to Him,

Sing un-to Him,

The image shows a handwritten musical score for two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con spirito' with a metronome marking of quarter note = 92. The lyrics 'sing un-to Him' are written above the top staff. The bottom staff has the lyrics 'Sing un-to Him,' written below it. The music consists of sixteenth notes in parallel thirds, characteristic of a fanfare style.

"Talk ye of all His wondrous works", which is used five times throughout the movement, is in a strict chordal style.

The movement is in F major throughout and the harmonies are diatonic. However, triads are occasionally superimposed when the antiphony overlaps. The movement ends on a unison Ab and moves directly to the next part.

"Utter a Song", the fourth and final movement of Part three, begins with twenty measures in declamatory style which serve to introduce a second fugal section. A transition from measures 17 to 20 prepares for the fugue in C major. After the introduction, Chorus II sings the fugue, beginning at measure 21, and is joined by Chorus I

for the coda. The fugal subject is an extended version of the subject of the previous movement (see (Example 38). The movement ends, fortissimo, in C major.

The fourth part. "The Garment of Praise" (page 120), contains five movements. The first movement, "Sing with the spirit", is a sixteen measure pianissimo antiphonal chorus of a devout mood. The next three choruses each begin with a recitative for the baritones. "Let every thing that hath breath", the second movement, is an antiphonal chorus with much overlapping. The harmonies are diatonic throughout in Bb major.

The third movement. "Let them give glory" (page 130), is in four sections, each set off by a double bar. The first section is a six measure recitative for the baritones. The next section (at measure 7) is an antiphonal setting of "Let the earth rejoice". It is in Db major but cadences in F major. The third section (at measure 31), "Let the multitude be glad thereof", is an imitative section. The fourth section (at measure 56) is a restatement of the second section with a majestic three measure coda.

The fourth movement. "Praise Him all ye stars of light" (page 150), is also divided by double bars into four sections. The next section, scored for four-part women's voices, is fourteen measures long (measures 9 to 23). A sustained melody in F major, characterized by octave leaps in the soprano, is sung against humming in the lower voices which hovers between two chords in eighth note stepwise movement. The third section (measures 24 to 43), "And all the sons

of God shouted for joy", begins dissonantly and imitatively. The superimposed fifths in the men's voices are answered by the women's voices. The harmony becomes more consonant as the antiphonal effect continues. The fourth section (measures 44 to 95). "For they went at large like horses", contains much text painting. The staccato notes, leaps, and quick tempo suggest the galloping of horses and the leaping of lambs (see Example 40).

Example 40, Requiem, part IV, fourth movement, "Praise Him all ye stars of light", page 166, measures 70 to 71.

Allegro vivace (♩=90)

and leapt like lambs, and leapt like
went at large like horses, for they went at large like horses, for they

The movement ends in a homophonic setting of "Praising Thee, O Lord", in the key of F major.

The final movement of the fourth part, "I am their music" (page 176), is a very quiet section that begins in strict chordal style. "I will praise the Lord. . .",

beginning at measure 12, is set antiphonally between the two choruses. The Ab tonality is maintained throughout the thirty measure movement. The movement ends with the musical material which opened, "Sing with the spirit" (compare pages 120 and 178).

The fifth part, "The Leave-taking" (page 183), is divided into five movements. The first movement, "Ye were sometimes darkness", opens with a twenty-five measure introduction (measures 1 to 12), and Chorus II repeats an almost-exact version a step higher (measures 12 to 26). The rest of the movement, "Walk as children of light" (measure 27), consists of an extended antiphonal development of two themes (see Examples 41 and 42).

Example 41, Requiem, part V, first movement, "Ye were sometimes darkness", page 187, measures 26 to 27.



Example 42, Requiem, part V, first movement, "Ye were sometimes darkness", page 192, measures 48 to 49).



Throughout the movement there is a steady quarter note movement in the bass voice which serves as a text painting device. There is much parallel third motion and motivic imitation.

The second movement, "The Lord shall be unto thee" (page 209), is very short and is scored for only Chorus II. An outstanding feature is the use of a pedal point in the soprano voice through the last two-thirds of the movement. The overlapping of the rhythmic figures serves as a text painting device for "an everlasting light".

"Return unto thy rest", the third movement (page 212), is also very short and is sung by Chorus II alone. It is homophonic in style. The outstanding feature of this movement is the root progressions of a second (up or down) from measures 26 to 32.

The fourth movement, "Thou hast given him" (page 215), like the two preceding movements, is very short, very quiet, and is sung by Chorus II. It is similar in musical material to the opening portion (measures 1 to 13) of "I am their music".

The Requiem concludes with "Amen and amen, alleluia" (page 218), a joyful and triumphant chorus based on two themes. The "Amen" theme (see Example 43) is fugal in quality as compared to the "Alleluia", theme (see Example 44), which is accompanied in chordal style. These two styles are alternated until measure 95, where the themes are sung simultaneously. The chorus builds to a climax after which

the tempo is slowed and the dynamic decreased to a pianississimo ending in E major.

Example 43, *Requiem*, part V, fifth movement, "Amen and amen, alleluia", page 218, measures 1 to 4.

Allegro moderato ($\text{♩} = 96$)

Example 44, *Requiem*, part V fifth movement, "Amen and amen, alleluia", page 221, measures 22 to 25.

A major difficulty involved in performance of this work is maintaining the pitch over long passages. The present writer feels that "Sing unto Him", "Praise Him all ye stars of light", "Ye were sometimes darkness", and "Amen and amen, alleluia", are overlong and tend to be monotonous because of excessive repetition of similar material.

Reviewing the premier performance, Alan Rich had the following comments:

To offer a work of these proportions to a university chorus is to flirt with danger, and it is likely that a supporting piano will be needed frequently and importantly, as it was in Berkeley, whenever the piece is sung. Within its conservative framework the work has many moments of simple and poignant beauty, and the composer's command of choral color is well enough known not to require mention here. It cannot, however, be proclaimed a composition completely devoid of tedium.¹³

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Glory to God in the Highest was written in 1958 and is a cappella. It is dedicated to Harold C. Schmidt. The text is taken from the Gospel According to St. Luke, II: 14; "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will t'ward men."

The form of this piece is ternary (ABA). The A sections are twenty-nine measures of Allegro spiritoso. An interesting aspect of these sections is the frequent metric changes of $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, and $\frac{3}{4}$, which are used to maintain the natural speech rhythms (see Example 45). The sections are generally fortissimo throughout and vitally rhythmic. Only the words "Glory to God in the highest" are used for the A sections. The harmony includes

¹³Alan Rich, "Current Chronicle", The Musical Quarterly, XLIV, no. 3 (1958), 367-370.

many passing seventh and ninth chords and is in the key of C major.

Example 45, Glory to God in the Highest, measures 1 to 6.

Allegro spiritoso ($\text{♩} = 120$)

ff Glory to God in the Highest, God in the highest,

The remaining text is set in the twelve measure B section (measures 30 to 42). It is much slower, softer and restrained. A $\frac{3}{4}$ meter is used throughout. It is characterized melodically by a diatonically descending bass line. The harmony is modulatory and cadences in E minor.

The second A section is an exact repeat of the first A except for the final cadence. The most difficult aspect of this piece lies in the changing meter and dislocated accents. The vocal ranges are not extreme and the lines generally move diatonically.

THE GATE OF HEAVEN

The Gate of Heaven is also a cappella. It was written in 1959, and is dedicated to Arthur S. Talmadge and the Hollins College Choir, in memory of Stephen

Davidson Tuttle. The text consists of three verses from the Old Testament: Psalm 122: 1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"; Habakkuk 2: 20, ". . . the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him"; and Genesis 28: 17, ". . . this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven".

The form of this eighty-two measure composition is ternary. The music for the A sections is similar. However, the end of the final A (measures 49 to 82) is altered (for example, measure 60 does not exactly correspond to measure 12). The following table illustrates the form, measures, and keys:

A	B	A
1-27	28-48	49-82
D	C	D

An interesting rhythmic device is the augmentation and diminution of a six note motif in the opening of the A Section (see Example 46).

Example 46, The Gate of Heaven, measures 1 to 3.

Allegro con spinito (♩=84)

I was glad, I was glad, I was glad, I was glad, I was glad, I was glad,

The B section, in addition to being slower (Lento)

moderato), is also quieter, more sustained, and in chordal style. Parallel triads and seventh chords are also characteristic of this section.

The piece is not generally difficult, however, the singers may find trouble, rhythmically, when the beat is divided into one, two, three, or four notes. Tenors may have difficulty when the range rises to g', a', and b'. Since there is much text repetition and many harmonic sequences, the conductor must be well aware of line, tone color, and dynamics, if an interesting performance is desired.

THE BEST OF ROOMS

The Best of Rooms is also a cappella. It was composed in 1963 and dedicated to William and Edith Ballard. The text was taken from "Christ's Part" (1647), by Robert Herrick:

Christ, He requires still, whereso'er He comes,
To feed, or lodge, to have the best of rooms:
Give Him the choice: grant Him the nobler part
Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.

The tempo marking is Adagio intimo e devoto, indicating an intimate and devotional mood of the piece. Starting in Ab major, the upper voices move smoothly and chordally over a pedal bass note. The first two lines of poetry are set in fifteen measures. The next line begins in strophic form, but the lines are extended after the first few measures.

From measures 20 to 29 chromaticism, enharmonic progressions, and irregularly resolved dominant sevenths occur. The climax of the composition is reached between measures 29 and 39 in diatonic and easy intervals. As the composition concludes, the harmony in the cadence becomes modal. The last two chords (dominant seventh on the subtonic degree to tonic) sound much like a plagal cadence (see Example 47).

Example 47, The Best of Rooms, measures 45 to 50.

Handwritten musical score for "The Best of Rooms" measures 45 to 50. The score is written on two staves. The top staff is for the vocal line, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Adagio" and "molto lento". The lyrics are "the best of all's the heart, - the heart." The music features chromaticism and enharmonic progressions.

The major difficulties are the singing of enharmonic intervals and chromatic harmony.

A FEAST OF PRAISE

A Feast of Praise was written in 1963. It was commissioned by the Department of Music, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, and is dedicated to Harold C Schmidt, Director of Choral Music. Its first performance was at Stanford on August 11, 1963. The accompaniment is scored for brass choir and harp, or for piano. The work is in three movements and is approximately fifteen minutes

in duration. Although the work has not yet been formally published, a photolithographic print has been made available prior to formal publication.




The first movement, "The Stars in Their Watches", is in ternary form with a coda. The text is taken from Baruch 3: 34, a book of the Apocrypha. The melodic contour of the A section (measures 1 to 34) is generally descending and diatonic (see Example 48). The harmony is diatonic and many sequential progressions are used. Each phrase is answered antiphonally by the brass choir.

Example 48, A Feast of Praise, first movement, "The Stars in Their Watches", page 3, measures 7 to 9.

Allegro moderato (d=80)

The stars shine in their watches and re-joice,

The B section (measures 35 to 74) is modulatory and consists of major chords progressing up a whole step and back again. Each three-note pattern is answered in the accompaniment in an overlapping manner (see Example 49). Only "Here we be", is used for the text. The B section begins piano, builds in volume to a forte, and returns to pianissimo. There is much repetition of progressions in various keys and the motive is usually


, sometimes 
, and finally 
. The last six measures consist of a fortissimo "Here we be" which leads to the return of the A section.

Example 49, A Feast of Fraise, first movement, "The Stars in Their Watches", page 7, measures 43 to 46.

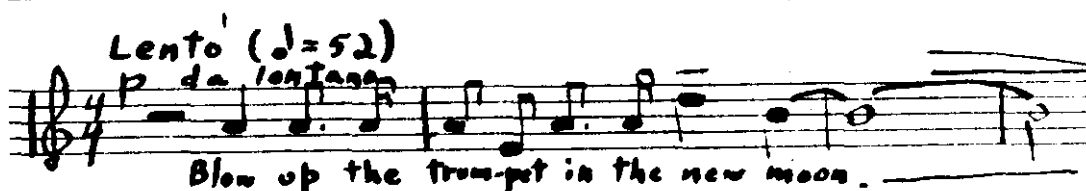


As the A section returns at measure 75, minor rhythmic changes are made to accommodate the new text. After the restatement, the coda, which uses material from the B section, begins at measure 104. The chorus ends on a unison C as the accompaniment plays an F major tonic triad.

The first movement is more traditional in harmony than the other two movements. Chords are tertian, and, except for the B section, are diatonic. The key of the B section shifts frequently and suddenly.

The second movement, "Nocturne", is built on a single verse from Psalm 81: 3: "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon". Text painting is evident in the melodic line which suggests the blowing of a trumpet. The outlined minor seventh is a characteristic which is outstanding (see Example 50).

Example 50, A Feast of Praise, second movement, "Nocturne", page 15, measures 3 to 6.



The motive is passed from tenor to alto, soprano, and bass. Between statements, harp arpeggios provide a harmonic background built basically in fifths. As the bass voice ends its statement, the other voices gradually enter with a leap of a minor seventh (outlined in the first statement of the theme of this movement). The first section ends with a six measure chordal setting (see Example 51).

There is a predominant use of quartal harmonies, and the tonality is indeterminate. An interlude of harp arpeggios leads from this point (measure 25) to measure 36, where the trumpet pattern (see Example 50) is stated in the accompaniment by Trumpet I. The chorus answers "in the new moon" with a leap of the characteristic seventh. This

pattern is repeated after a few ninth chords in the accompaniment. The chordal setting of measures 20 to 26 (Example 51) is repeated a half step lower with trumpet answers in an antiphonal style. The movement ends in unison against a ninth chord. The low scoring of the horns at measure 53 is an interesting effect.

Example 51, A Feast of Praise, second movement, "Nocturne", page 16, measures 22 to 25.

blow up the trumpet in the new moon, the new moon, the new moon, the new moon.

The text of the third and final movement, "God is gone up with a shout", is taken from Psalm 47: 5-7. Superimposed chords are used throughout the movement, and there are many chords built in fifths. Metric changes are used frequently ($\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{5+3}{8}$, and $\frac{3}{2}$) to properly accent the text and to provide rhythmic interest. The form is ABAB Coda, with a vocal fanfare passage placed between B and A, and B and the coda.

The A section (measures 1 to 25) is scored antiphonally for the chorus and brass choir with both groups in homophonic style. This points to a new rise in importance in

the accompaniment, since previous antiphonal effects were used between two choruses (see Example 52). After repetitions of the theme, it appears in diminution (measures 16 to 19 and 21 to 25). The harmony is built in fifths and the melodic line is in declamatory style.

Example 52, A Feast of Praise, third movement, "God is gone up with a shout", page 22, measures 6 to 8.

Allegro con spirito ($\text{♩} = 100$)

Sing praises to God, sing praises

sing praises to God, sing praises

The B section (measures 26 to 44) is characterized by accompanied sectional solos. The melody contains complex rhythmic groupings and appears first in the soprano, then alto, tenor, and bass. The accompaniment consists of triplets, against which are pitted duplets and septuplets (see Example 53).

The fanfare at measure 44, "Sing ye praise", relates to the "trumpet" motive in the second movement (Example

Example 53, A Feast of Praise, third movement, "God is gone up with a shout", page 24, measures 26, 29.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Soprano (Sop.) voice, with lyrics: "prais-es un-to our King, sing prais-es. For God is the King of a# the earth." The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, marked "fp non staccato". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

50). The A section is restated at measure 50 and the B section at measure 64.

The coda, which begins after another fanfare at measure 93, is instrumental and uses material from A. The chorus enters in the last four measures in unison against a ninth chord.

This work differs in style (quartal harmony, irregular rhythmic groupings, antiphonal use of instruments against voices, etc.) from Thompson's previously traditional and conservative writing. The difficulties encountered when performing this work include dissonant harmony, co-ordination of the conflicting rhythmic groupings (see Examples 52 and 53), and balance between the voices and instruments.

PART III, STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

Of the various sources of text used by Thompson, the Bible is the most frequently used, with the greater emphasis on the Old Testament. Thompson believes that, "In one Book or another, the Bible says everything that one could wish to say in a sacred text and says it in the most beautiful way."¹⁴

The Book of Psalms, generally a favorite source, is used for only three compositions: The Gate of Heaven, A Feast of Praise, and the Requiem. Verses from other books of the Bible are combined with the Book of Psalms for these compositions. The Peaceable Kingdom, which prophesies the rewards of the righteous and wicked, is based on verses selected from the Prophecy of Isaiah. Thompson carefully selected the individual verses so they would blend into the framework of the composition.

The New Testament is used as a source for Glory to God in the Highest and the Requiem, the latter of which contains verses from various sections of the Bible. Part of the text of A Feast of Praise is from Baruch, a book of uncanonized books belonging chronologically between the Old and New Testaments.

Randall Thompson, unpublished essay on the Requiem, obtainable on loan from E. C. Schirmer Music Co., 600 Washington St., Boston, Massachusetts.

A few of his religious works are non-Biblical. The text of The Rest of Rooms was taken from a poem by Robert Herrick, a seventeenth poet. The Mass of the Holy Spirit is based on the Ordinary of the Mass, and is sung in English, except for the Kyrie.

The poems of three contemporary poets have been set by Thompson: Robert Frost, Frostians; Stephen Vincent Benet, Rosemary; and Hilaire Belloc, Tarantella.

Texts based on writings of historical significance include the six Odes of Horace, the Ode to the Virginian Voyage, By Michael Dryton, and The Testament of Freedom, which is taken from three writings of Thomas Jefferson.

The text of Americana is five anonymous writings from "The American Mercury" magazine. Now I lay me down to sleep is based on the well-known verse from "The New England Primer". Fueri Hebraeorum is the only composition with a text written by Thompson.

Thompson prefers texts which have borne the test of time--the Bible (and books of the Apocrypha), Jefferson, Robert Herrick, Drayton, and the like. Recent and contemporary writers are utilized quite sparingly.

Thompson's melodic writing is generally diatonic and is frequently modal. Chromaticism is employed only occasionally to heighten dramatic feeling, such as in the Ode to the Virginian Voyage, Movement II, measures 75-82. A few uses of pentatonic scales can be found in The Peaceable Kingdom, opening of the sixth chorus, and in the subject

of the third movement of the Ode to the Virginian Voyage.

The use of pentatonicism is usually meant to convey a folk-song quality.

Thompson's lines are individually interesting and can be sung with ease. The smoothness in his melodic lines is comparable to sixteenth century vocal style, which he apparently admires.

Melodic development is achieved mainly through sequencing. However, themes are often extended and developed motivically. Phrases are generally balanced when the poetry is set. When prose is set, as in The Testament of Freedom, phrase lengths are sometimes irregular. The mood and nature of the text also play a key role in the use of lyric, recitative or declamatory melodic writing. Thompson also uses an absence of lyrical melody when a purely harmonic style is desired. Examples of these latter three types (recitative, declamatory, and absence of melody) are particularly evident in The Peaceable Kingdom.

Text painting is used by Thompson. In the Requiem, long melismatic phrases are used to describe "everlasting", "life", and "alive" in Part II, and cross relations are used to describe "darkness" in Part V. Text painting is usually used for a general idea, such as pianissimo for "Grant us Thy peace", a descending line for "Thou art dissolv'd", and a light, staccato setting for "O you, the happiest men".

Thompson's contrapuntal technique is an important

characteristic of his style. Points of imitation, canon, and fugato occur frequently. The devices of augmentation, diminution, and inversion are used to a lesser extent. Canons are particularly evident in the Mess of the Holy Spirit. However, it is easy to overlook much of the counterpoint because it seems so natural and spontaneous.

The harmony used by Thompson is generally quite traditional. Tonality is usually major or minor, but modal harmonies are a vital part of Thompson's style.

Chords are almost always tertian. Quartal harmonies are used for emphasis, such as in the third chorus of The Peaceable Kingdom (see Example 4). Chromaticism is used occasionally, such as at the opening of the second movement of the Ode to the Virginian Voyage (see Example 22) to heighten dramatic feeling. Although superimposed chords are not the norm, some examples are found, such as at the opening of the fourth movement of the Ode to the Virginian Voyage (see Example 24), and the first movement of the Requiem (see Example 32). They usually result from overlapping voices.

Probably the most characteristic harmonic devices used by Thompson are sequencing and intervallic and triadic parallelism, particularly parallel sixths or thirds and parallel first and second inversion triads. Sevenths, ninths, and added notes are commonly used with triads.

Cross relations, another infrequently used device,

occur in the fifth movement of the Ode to the Virginian Voyage, and are in imitation of sixteenth century madrigal style. They are also used in the Requiem for extraordinary effects (to illustrate "darkness").

In addition to traditional authentic and plagal cadences, modal cadences (subtonic to tonic and others) are frequently used.

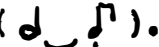
Natural speech rhythms of the text strongly influence the rhythmic patterns in Thompson's choral music. Rhythms seem to be chosen primarily for their suitability in projecting the text. Thompson uses three means to maintain natural speech rhythms: first is the use of frequent metric changes, as in Feast of Praise; second is irregular subdivisions of the beat (see Example 52); and third is the manipulations of rests and syncopations within the existing time signature (see Example 4). The latter method is the most common.

The forms of much of Thompson's choral music are sectional, following the subdivisions of the text. Ternary form is used for some smaller works, such as Glory to God in the Highest and The Gate of Heaven. Other smaller works, such as The Last Words of David and Alleluia, are through-composed. Thompson uses several methods for unifying large works.

I have long felt the need for groups of works which are somehow related to each other to avoid a patchwork of isolated, heterogeneous works, however excellent in themselves. Such groups or cycles of choruses can be of three general kinds, with some possible overlapping: (1) those

based on a unifying idea (Americana); (2) those drawn from the work of a single author (Odes of Horace; Rosemary; The Testament of Freedom; Ode to the Virginian Voyage; Frostiana); and those based on the unfolding of a dramatic narrative (The Peaceable Kingdom; Mass of the Holy Spirit; Requiem).¹⁵

Unity is also achieved through the cyclical use of thematic material, such as in The Peaceable Kingdom, and through the use of motivic or thematic elements in different passages of a work. When thematic material is returned, such as in The Gate of Heaven, the texts are occasionally changed to make the work more interesting.

Thompson's works are very carefully edited. Interpretive and expressive markings are profusely used. Metronome indications appear in most of his composition. Releases are often carefully marked by a tied, staccato eighth note ().

Although certain works have instrumental accompaniment, piano scores are included for practical reasons, i.e., Thompson realizes that orchestras are not available to all choral groups. Orchestrations are available on rental from the publisher.

Thompson is well aware of the average vocal range and technique, and writes his music within limitations which do not require extreme virtuosity. His music is never too difficult to be performed effectively by groups of average competence. Besides being quite singable, his music always has a pleasant choral sound.

¹⁵Thompson, extended essay on Requiem.

SUMMARY

Randall Thompson has said that "a composer's first responsibility is, and always will be to write music that will reach and move the hearts of his listeners in his own day".¹⁶ Whether or not one accepts this statement, an awareness of it is necessary for an understanding of Thompson's choral style. The fact that his works are so frequently performed indicates that Thompson has to some degree fulfilled this responsibility.

He writes at times, very impressively and grandly, and at other times, very delicately. He excels in small forms and when working within limitations of expression and form. However, the present writer feels that some of his longer works are over-long. There is a tendency to overwork material. This is particularly noticeable in the Requiem.

Due to the increase in use of dissonance, harmony in fourths and fifths, and elevation of the accompaniment to a plane equal to that of the singers, the present writer believes A Feast of Praise will indicate a shift in style if followed by other works of similar or more progressive tendencies.

Randall Thompson has consistently gone
 - a way of his own, little influenced by many
 of the more radical tendencies of contemporary

music, evolving a style based on the safer, more tried practices of older masters. It is unusual in this day to find a composer using musical words for the most part familiar to everyone, yet writing music that is contemporary in feeling and sincerely admired by his colleagues. His splendid craftsmanship, sharp sensibility and good taste may be important factors in accounting for his success not only with fellow musicians but with his audiences.¹⁷

Although Quincy Porter made this statement nearly a quarter of a century ago, it is still a valid comment on the choral music of Randall Thompson.

¹⁷Quincy Porter, "Randall Thompson", Modern Music, XIX, No. 4 (1942), 237-242.

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APPENDIX

List of Choral Works

1924	Odes of Horace, combination ¹
1928	Pueri Hebraeorum, SSAA Double Chorus
1930	Rosemary, SSAA
1932	The American Mercury, combination ²
1936	The Peaceable Kingdom, SATB and Double Chorus
1937	Tarantella, TTBB
1940	Alleluia, SATB
1943	The Testament of Freedom, TTBB
1947	Now I lay me down to sleep, SSA
1949	Last Words of David, SATB
1955-56	Mass of the Holy Spirit, SATB
1956-57	Ode to the Virginien Voyage, SATB
1957-58	Requiem, SATB/SATB Double Chorus
1958	Glory to God in the Highest, SATB
1959	Frostiana, combination ³
1959	The Gate of Heaven, SATB
1963	The Best of Rooms, SATB
1963	A Feast of Praise, SATB
1965	Passion According to St. Luke, unpublished

¹ 5 SATB, 1 TTBB

² 4 SATB, 1 SSAA

³ 2 SATB, 2 SAA, 2 TBB, 1 SSA/TTBB