A Selection of Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo for SATB Choir:

Composition, Interpretation, and Recording of The Phoenix Chorale’s

*Northern Lights: Choral Music by Ola Gjeilo*

by

Ryan Derrick Garrison

A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved April 2013 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

William Reber, Chair
Catherine Saucier
Jody Rockmaker
Jerry Doan

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013
ABSTRACT

Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978) is highly regarded as an accomplished and prolific composer of choral music. His creative output includes works for chorus, solo piano, and wind symphony. His unique style infuses elements of cinematic music, jazz and improvisation, with particularly intriguing selections of text. This study examines the factors that influence Gjeilo's compositional techniques, and the musical interpretations of conductor Charles Bruffy in his preparation for The Phoenix Chorale’s recording *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*. The eleven works discussed in this study are: *The Ground, Evening Prayer, Ubi caritas, Prelude, Northern Lights, The Spheres, Tota pulchra es, Serenity, Phoenix (Agnus Dei), Unicornis captivatur*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

As a relatively new and young composer, there is very little published literature on Gjeilo and his works. This study provides an intimate glance into the creative process of the composer.

By composing in multiple styles and with a variety of inspirational sources, Gjeilo creates a fresh approach toward composition of new choral music. His style is revealed through interviews and numerous collaborations with conductors and performers who have prepared and performed his music, as well through an examination of the eleven works recorded by The Phoenix Chorale.
DEDICATION

To my parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my committee, Dr. William Reber, Dr. Jody Rockmaker, Dr. Jerry Doan, and Dr. Catherine Saucier who have endured my lengthy candidacy in the completion of this project. In addition, I would especially like to thank Dr. Reber for stepping in as committee chair, and Dr. Kay Norton for her guidance and help in the early process of this project.

The completion of this project would have been nearly impossible without the support of my parents, Jerry and Catherine Garrison, and sister and brother-in-law, Jera and Michael Robertson. Their love and guidance is unmatched, and for that I am extremely grateful.

I am also extremely thankful for my tremendous friends and colleagues that offered invaluable support and insight during this process, especially Dr. Jeremy Peterman, Dr. Doug Harbin, Joel Rinsema, and Kira Rugen. Much appreciation is also extended to Mr. Charles Bruffy and my fellow singers of The Phoenix Chorale who I believe are some of the best musicians around! And to my dear friends, Phil Newland, Josh Hillmann, Gary Quamme, Carlos Arreguin, Kiersten Jungbluth, and Bernadette Wagner, and my choir at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, for their unending support and encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ola Gjeilo, who has been particularly patient and supportive during the completion of this project. His artistry and passion for the choral arts are truly unparalleled, and continues to amaze me.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Figures</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need and Purpose for the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 COMPOSER OLA GJEILO: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY AND WORK WITH THE PHOENIX CHORALE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 COMPOSITION OF SELECTED WORKS: NORTHERN LIGHTS: CHORAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS BY OLA GJEILO:</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESSIBLE WORKS:</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ground</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubi caritas</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODERATELY DIFFICULT WORKS:</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Lights</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spheres</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tota pulchra es</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED WORKS:</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix (Agnus Dei)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 INTERPRETATION AND RECORDING: NORTHERN LIGHTS: CHORAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS BY OLA GJEILO</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of Selected Repertoire</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Recording</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A PUBLISHED CHORAL WORKS BY OLA GJEILO</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSION</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Page

The Ground

1. “Piano with Voice Accompaniment,” mm. 1-5 ........................................ 21
2. “Melodic and Lyrical Soprano Motive,” mm. 1-4 ................................. 22
3. “Final Chorale” mm. 51-54.................................................................... 22

Evening Prayer

4. “Chord Identification,” mm. 25-28............................................................ 26
5. “Use of Unison in Male Voices,” mm. 29-36.......................................... 26
6. “Pattern of Chord Transitions,” mm. 71-79............................................. 27

Ubi caritas

7. “Opening Melodic ‘Chant’,” mm. 1-4......................................................... 31
8. “Delayed Resolution,” m. 27..................................................................... 32
9. “Second Delayed Resolution,” mm. 31-32 ............................................ 33
10. “Final Delayed Resolution,” mm. 44-45................................................. 34

Prelude

11. “Rhythms with Text,” mm. 10-12.............................................................. 37
12. “Key, Use of Drone, Melodic/Rhythmic Movement,” mm. 1-4 ............ 38
13. “Harmonic Texture (piano reduction),” mm. 27-31 .............................. 39
14. “Change in Meter in Concluding Section,” mm. 59-60....................... 40

1 All figures are from Ola Gjeilo’s music recorded on The Phoenix Chorale’s Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo. Walton Music Corporation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Lights</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. “Soprano Chant Motive,” mm. 1-4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. “Alto Chant Motive,” mm. 6-8</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. “Parallel Fifth Movement Establishes Key,” mm. 30-33</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Spheres</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. “Main Theme Prolonged,” mm. 1-7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. “Main Theme Continues,” mm. 23-29</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. “Ascending Clusters,” mm. 69-74</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21a/b. “Initial Theme Presented in Quarter Notes,” m. 81</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. “Parallel Fifth Movement,” mm. 81</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tota pulchra es</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. “Half Cadence and Key Identification,” m. 6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. “Common Tone Modulation,” mm. 13-14</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. “Stability of Key,” mm. 47-48</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. “Soprano Common Tone Modulation,” m. 62</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. “Rhythmic Movement and Texture” mm. 63-65</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serenity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. “Cello Solo,” mm. 10-14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. “Overlapping Effects Between Solo and Voices,” mm. 22-27</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. “Range and Dynamic Contrast Toward Climax,” mm. 64-68</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix (Agnus Dei)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. “Image and Music,” mm. 1-7</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. “Soprano Motive with Accompanying Voices,” mm. 26-32</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. “Homophonic Parallel Fifths,” m. 40</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 a/b. “Motive in Different Keys,” mm. 26-27/46-47</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. “Circle of Fifths Progression,” mm. 71-76</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. “Example of Ranges,” mm. 21, 86 and mm. 49, 85</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unicornis captivatur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. “Complex Rhythm and Frequent Meter Change,” mm 35-38</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. “Opening Chant Sequence,” mm. 1-4</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. “Chant Accompanied Through Complex Harmony,” mm. 10-13</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. “Additional Rhythmic Intensity and Meter Change,” mm. 14-17</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. “Response to Text,” mm. 22-24</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. “Asymmetrical Sequence,” mm. 25-27</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. “Lower Tessitura and Simplified Rhythm,” mm. 52-53</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. “Sustained Tonic,” mm. 75-78</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. “Surprise Rhythmic Measure,” mm. 119-121</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. “Ornamented Ascending Motive,” mm. 133-137</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. “Power of Conclusion,” mm. 141-143</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Night of the Soul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. “Instrumental Importance,” mm. 1-4</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. “Soprano Solo (range),” mm. 68-71</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. “Piano,” mm. 109-113</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. “Meter and Movement of Line,” mm. 132-133</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. “Rhythmic Complexity of Piano,” mm. 186-187</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. “Duple/Triple Motive in Piano and Use of Neutral Syllable in Choir,” mm. 204-205</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. “Return of Rhythmic Motive,” mm. 229-231</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. “Rhythmic Movement in Piano,” mm. 318-319</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. “Piano Solo and Importance of Strong Player,” mm. 193-199</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. “Rhythm Intensity of Piano/Doubled Strings,” mm.1-4</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. “Variety in Releases,” mm. 30-31</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. “Extended Release,” mm. 22-23</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. “Voices Extended Release,” mm. 23-26</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpts from the music of *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo* are reproduced [under copyright] by generous permission of Walton Music and publisher Gunilla Luboff.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I first encountered Ola Gjeilo’s choral music as a master’s student at Arizona State University. A choral professor had chosen Gjeilo’s Prelude, a short, exuberant piece of music, for an annual Arizona State University high school choral leadership workshop. Prelude was pleasantly accessible for students, presenting strong melodic motives, complex rhythm and harmonies, and significant dynamic variation, all composed in a simple ABA form. Its Latin text was simple, presented appropriately through its overall movement and motion. More importantly, I had a profound interest in the work’s presentation of varying styles, from the composer’s intended “joyful and celebratory starting and closing sections,” to its more serene, chant-like middle. It seemed that this composer had a particular interest infusing multiple music styles into his works. Kira Rugen, a singer with The Phoenix Chorale, described Gjeilo’s style:

At first listen, the music of Ola Gjeilo comes across as agreeable to the ear: simple, straightforward, easily evoking beautiful emotions. On the second or third listen, the complexity and multiple dimensions of his writing unfold. The density of the various compositional elements jumps out of the framework. Philosophically, Gjeilo seems to have a desire to create an atmosphere in which the listener can experience music that is direct and pleasing.\(^2\)

I became more familiar with the music of Ola Gjeilo as a singing member with The Phoenix Chorale. An ensemble specializing in championing new choral works, The

\(^2\) Ola Gjeilo, Prelude, Score. Composer’s Comments.

Phoenix Chorale and Artistic Director Charles Bruffy, sought out the young composer and provided him the opportunity to become the ensemble’s first composer-in-residence.

Charles Bruffy and The Phoenix Chorale have subsequently recorded *Prelude*, and ten other works, in an album devoted entirely to the choral music of Ola Gjeilo entitled *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*. Released on the international label, Chandos Records, the recording has received considerable acclaim, and was recognized by iTunes in 2012 as the Best Classical Vocal Album of the Year.\(^4\)

Recently described as “a fresh voice in choral music—fast becoming one of the most performed composers of choral music,”\(^5\) Ola Gjeilo has earned a renowned national and international reputation in choral composing through ongoing collaboration with some of the world’s top artists and choral organizations. His works have been performed in prestigious venues, such as New York City’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Los Angeles’ Disney Hall, the Kennedy Center, National Gallery in Washington D.C., and Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center. A distinguished keyboard and jazz improvisation enthusiast, he also continues to be an active performer. He has recorded and released personal piano albums with the multiple Grammy nominated label 2L, featuring lyrical pieces in the crossroads between classical, jazz, and popular music.

---

\(^4\) iTunes is an online application through ©Apple Inc., which organizes, plays, and sells digital music and videos.

Need and Purpose for the Study

Since Gjeilo is a relatively younger composer, there is little published literature or information regarding his choral music. Other than brief interviews, performance reviews, and the occasional standard biographical reference works, only minimal substantive references in choral magazines, newspapers, and journal entries, have appeared since the introduction of his choral music. Most of the resources provided are adequate in becoming familiar with the composer, however they do not touch upon his creative process and influences. Only rarely do they discuss his compositional techniques and the personal inspirations as heard in his works.

One of the most valuable resources for performers and conductors is the ability to access research on living composers. Such accessibility and research can yield helpful insight into the interpretation, understanding, and intentions in a work, which can vary significantly in the absence of the composer.

The positive response and reaction from audiences around the world toward Gjeilo’s choral music have been clearly established. Although his music continues to be performed and enthusiastically received from ensembles, conductors, performers, and audiences, the significant lack of resources justifies a study of his compositions.

Procedures

There were many factors taken into consideration while preparing an investigation into the choral music of Ola Gjeilo. This project provides a brief biography of Ola Gjeilo,

---

6 I have been involved in numerous performances of Gjeilo’s music with The Phoenix Chorale and have witnessed the positive responses of audiences.
followed by information on The Phoenix Chorale. It examines the compositional approach in the eleven selected works of the composer recorded by The Phoenix Chorale in *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*. Additionally, it includes conductor Charles Bruffy’s interpretations and insights, and his techniques used in preparation for the recording. Lastly, a comprehensive catalogue of Gjeilo’s published choral works to date is included.

I. Biography

The purpose of this study is to enhance the existing biography, with new information about Gjeilo’s family life, early influences and their roles in the development of his career. All information was obtained through correspondence with the composer via interviews, performances, recording projects, and phone conversations. From this information, we are able explore the influences which helped shape Gjeilo’s various viewpoints, text choices, and compositional styles heard throughout his works.

II. Discussion of Repertoire

Of the choral works by Ola Gjeilo, eleven pieces that were part of the May 2010 recording project by The Phoenix Chorale are included in this document. The project, in which I was active, required significant collaboration between composer, conductor, and ensemble. To showcase a broad range of influences and styles in composing, Charles Bruffy and Joel Rinsema, selected repertoire from Gjeilo’s earliest to most recent
compositions. \footnote{Joel Rinsema is the Executive Director and assistant conductor of The Phoenix Chorale.} Ubi caritas (2001), Tota pulchra es (2001), Prelude (2004), and Unicornis captivatur (2001), are among his earliest composed works. The remaining seven, The Ground (2010), Serenity (2010), Northern Lights (2008), Dark Night of the Soul (2010), The Spheres (2008), Phoenix (Agnus Dei) (2008), and Evening Prayer (2010) are among his more recent compositions. The Ground, Serenity, Northern Lights, Dark Night of the Soul, and Evening Prayer are premiere recordings.

Ensemble type and the division of voice parts throughout these works are clearly specified in each piece. Many works require divisi in one or more voices. When Gjeilo does not require the use of SSAATTBB (the division of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass sections), both voices from each section will sing the same line. Prelude, Ubi caritas, and Northern Lights do not require full divisi voicing. Gjeilo has also arranged Ubi caritas for women’s chorus (SSAA), and men’s chorus (TTBB). The discussed works are arranged in this paper by level of difficulty, from easiest to the most advanced. \footnote{The level of difficulty for each work was determined by my personal experiences preparing, performing, and conducting the composer’s music. I also refer to suggestions from JWPepper & Son®, Inc., an online music supplier, who provides level ratings of the music.}

Of the eleven selected choral pieces highlighted in this document, four are composed for accompanied chorus: Dark Night of the Soul, Evening Prayer, The Ground, and Serenity. In these works, the composer places strong emphasis on the keyboard. He also utilizes a string quartet in Dark Night of the Soul and The Ground, a solo cello in Serenity, and a tenor saxophone in Evening Prayer. The remaining seven
works are *a cappella*. The majority of Gjeilo’s compositions recorded on The Phoenix Chorale’s album are less than ten minutes in duration. One work, however, *Dark Night of the Soul*, is a larger multi-section work.

Gjeilo has been inspired and influenced by sacred literature, setting these texts in a vast majority of his earlier works, including those selected by The Phoenix Chorale. These works use text from the Latin mass, biblical texts of the Old and New Testaments, and sacred and mystical poetry. Although the meaning of the text is often the principal driving force of a choral work, Gjeilo often utilizes a text for its “singability or comfortable vowels,” so that its meaning is not the “focus or drive” of the work.\(^9\)

During Ola Gjeilo’s compositional process, the music is often influenced and further materialized through the aesthetics of his surroundings. Gjeilo explains, “I often record my musical ideas and listen to them further in an outside element—throughout the city or its parks. If the music corresponds with the beauty of the surroundings, it’s a sign that the music might be on the right path.”\(^11\) Lastly, his profound interest in jazz, film music, and improvisation continues to play a significant role in the development of his compositions.

With each accompanied work, a specific approach is taken toward the roles of the voices and instruments. In place of the traditional instrumental accompaniment, Gjeilo

---


\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Gjeilo, interview, 21 March 2013.
occasionally reverses the role of performing forces by having the voices play the
“accompanying” role through the use of “neutral vowel” within the vocal line.

Performance notes on the eleven works are provided to assist and alert the choral
director and ensemble of possible challenges in preparing and performing Gjeilo’s music.
Both Gjeilo and Charles Bruffy, the conductor of The Phoenix Chorale, have provided
suggestions as a result of their experiences in making and performing the music on

*Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo.*

**Appendices**

The first Appendix is provided at the conclusion of the paper, which catalogues
all of Gjeilo’s choral works to date, including titles, publishers, dates of publication and
publication numbers, source of text and language, style of work
(accompanied/unaccompanied), instruments utilized, duration of work, possible
programming type, appropriate level of work, and voicing. The second Appendix shows
the permission granted by Walton Music Corporation and Ola Gjeilo, to use the music
excerpts included in this paper.
CHAPTER TWO

COMPOSER OLA GJEILO: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
AND WORK WITH THE PHOENIX CHORALE

Background, Perspectives and Influences

Born in Skui, Norway, Ola Gjeilo has been surrounded by musical influences his entire life. Although he is not from a predominant musical family, Gjeilo was continually exposed to the arts and received encouragement to pursue music. His father, an amateur jazz musician and enthusiast, played the trombone and saxophone, and later provided Gjeilo with “more insight on the spiritual aspect of composition.” His grandmother gave the Gjeilo family a piano, and the composer began playing and improvising small tunes around the age of four. His parents were lovers of choral music and frequently played recordings of Christmas albums by King’s College, Cambridge and Sir David Willcocks. Gjeilo particularly enjoyed listening to Handel’s choral works, J.S. Bach’s *B-Minor Mass* and Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem*, as well as operas and British choral music.

Although Gjeilo did not learn to read music until the age of seven, he had “good ears” and was able to retain what he heard. “I had been improvising since I was very young. I was pretty rebellious about learning to read music for a long time; I just wanted

---


13 Ibid.

14 Gjeilo, interview, 21 March 2013.
to play my own music or to learn music by ear. I’m really happy about that now, although I exhausted quite a few teachers.”\textsuperscript{15} While attending a high school in Norway specifically focused on the development of young musicians,\textsuperscript{16} Gjeilo received training in chord analysis and history. Additionally, he received guidance on the synthesizer by Leif Bratterud, whom he described as “a great teacher.”\textsuperscript{17} Gjeilo soon became interested in studying and playing jazz.

Ola Gjeilo’s styles have long been influenced by sacred church music. He sang Maurice Duruflé’s \textit{Ubi caritas} with his high school choir and following this profound experience, began studying a cappella choral works. Wolfgang Plagge, a pianist and composer of church music, was Gjeilo’s first composition teacher. Plagge provided further influence, guidance, and exposure in this style of composition.\textsuperscript{18}

In the 1990’s, many music institutions sought “somewhat edgy or avant-garde” compositions.\textsuperscript{19} Although these schools did not consider Gjeilo’s works to be particularly radical, he was able to easily find educational opportunities beyond high school. In 1998, the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester accepted him as a pupil. Living close to beautiful locations in England played a significant role in the

\textsuperscript{15} Ola Gjeilo, interview, 25 January 2013.

\textsuperscript{16} It is common in Norway to attend high schools that focus on specific fields of study, such as piano tuning and lumbering, along with general education.

\textsuperscript{17} Gjeilo, interview, 2013.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
initial stages of his compositional process. However, Gjeilo was not yet ready for the college experience.

After having been accepted to the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Gjeilo returned to Norway in 1999, where his main interest was composition. He continued to study church music for a more craft-based compositional education. It was during this tenure that Gjeilo became particularly interested in choral music.

Inspired by his love for New York City, Gjeilo moved to the United States in 2001 to attend The Juilliard School of Music. The compositions of the Juilliard faculty particularly influenced and inspired Gjeilo as he pursued an American education.

While at Juilliard, Gjeilo became more familiar with American composers and their choral music. Works by Eric Whitacre (b. 1970), Morten Lauridsen’s (b. 1943) Lux Aeterna, and Voyage by John Corigliano (b. 1938), a Juilliard professor, were all American composers and works that provided early choral exposure. Additionally, professional choral recordings by The Phoenix Chorale, The Kansas City Chorale,\(^\text{20}\) and Dale Warland Singers provided further exposure for the composer. He completed a Master’s Degree in Composition from the Juilliard School in 2006.

As a jazz and improvisation enthusiast, Gjeilo enjoys “bringing images alive through music.”\(^\text{21}\) His love for the combination of music and image as well as his belief in the “art of film and its ability to immerse oneself in deep expression” sparked his

\(^{20}\) The Kansas City Chorale, under the direction of Charles Bruffy, is the sister choir to The Phoenix Chorale.

\(^{21}\) Gjeilo, interview, 2013.
interest toward film and cinematic composers.²² Film composers that inspired Gjeilo are Thomas Newman (b. 1955), Howard Shore (b. 1946), John Williams (b. 1932), Alan Silvestri (b. 1950), Dario Marianelli (b. 1963), and James Newton Howard (b. 1951).

Gjeilo has also been profoundly influenced through the music of jazz composer and improviser, Keith Jarrett (b. 1945). Ola Gjeilo explains:

> His solo concerts, the music for the Scandinavian Quartet and the trio-work with DeJohnette and Peacock—his contribution has been immense; his way of playing just the right notes, nothing more, nothing less. He never uses his formidable technique to impress or provoke, but always to express as honestly as possible what is in him and around him at any given moment. You can feel that he is in love with the piano and with the music that flows through him.²³

Seeking further exposure to cinematic music, Gjeilo relocated to Los Angeles, California, where he was accepted to attend The University of Southern California from 2006-2007.

In 2012, Gjeilo was selected to be the composer-in-residence for the New York City-based professional choir, Manhattan Concert Chorale. In 2009-2010, the professional choral ensemble The Phoenix Chorale, selected Gjeilo to be its first composer-in-residence. During this residency, Gjeilo composed several new works, including *Dark Night of the Soul*, and all pieces were given premiere performances by the ensemble.

While at the Juilliard School, Gjeilo spent time in the recording studio improvising on the piano and laying down the initial groundwork for his instrumental CD, *Stone Rose*, which was released in 2007. In 2012, he released a sequel recording

---

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.
entitled *Piano Improvisations*. This release showcases Gjeilo’s love for spontaneity and improvisation, featuring fantasies based on his three choral works, *Ubi caritas*, *Tota pulchra es*, and *Prelude*. He also released two singles, *Shades of Violet*, and *Departures*, which represent his love for cinematic music, as well as Electronica, ambient, and jazz. All works are available through iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon.

Ola Gjeilo returned to New York City in 2013, and continues to receive commissions and perform with collegiate and professional ensembles throughout the United States and Europe. His music is published in the United States through Walton Music, publisher of his choral works since 2007, and Edition Peters.

**The Phoenix Chorale and Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo**

Arizona’s professional choral ensemble, The Phoenix Chorale, is a twenty-eight-voice chorus in residence at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in downtown Phoenix. The ensemble was founded in 1958. Formerly known as both The Phoenix Bach and Madrigal Society and The Phoenix Bach Choir, the group has performed across the United States and Canada under artistic directors Millicent Wesley, Wallace Hornibrook (b. 1925, d. 2002), Dan Durand, Vance George (b. 1933), Anders Öhrwall

---

24 Spotify provides commercial music streaming of major and independent record labels.

25 Amazon.com, Inc., is an online source that provides access to music, CDs, and MP3 downloads, among other amenities.

26 Millicent Wesley was the first conductor of The Phoenix Bach and Madrigal Society, a small study group focused on the music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.
(b.1932, d. 2012), Jon Washburn (b. 1942), and since 1998, Charles Bruffy (b. 1958). In 2009, the choir made its New York City debut at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall.

The Phoenix Chorale has made numerous recordings, both solo and in conjunction with The Kansas City Chorale. As The Phoenix Bach Choir, the ensemble released its debut recording, *Southwest Christmas*, under the direction of Jon Washburn.


---

27 Jon Washburn is currently the Conductor and Artistic Director of the professional vocal ensemble, The Vancouver Chamber Choir.

28 Chandos Records is one of the largest independent classical record labels in the world.

29 *Grechaninov: Passion Week* was acknowledged by The National Academy of Recording Artists in February 2008, with a Technical Grammy award for ‘Best Engineered Album.’ It was also nominated the same year for ‘Best Classical Album,’ ‘Best Surround Sound,’ and ‘Best Choral Performance.’

30 *Rheinberger: Sacred Choral Works* was acknowledged by The National Academy of Recording Artists in February 2009 with a nomination for ‘Best Choral Performance,’ and ‘Best Surround Sound.’

31 *Spotless Rose: Hymns to the Virgin Mary* was acknowledged by The National Academy of Recording Artists in February 2009 with a Performance Grammy award for ‘Best Small Ensemble Performance.’ It was also nominated the same year for ‘Best Classical Album.’
In January 2011, The Phoenix Chorale began preparation to record a subsequent solo project, *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*, a disc entirely dedicated to the choral works of the Norwegian composer. With assistance from the composer at the piano, the project was completed in May 2011 at Camelback Bible Church in Paradise Valley, Arizona. The recording also features The Harrington String Quartet, cellist, Emmanuel Lopez, and tenor saxophonist, Ted Belledin.\(^{32}\) The project was overseen by Ralph Couzens, Executive Producer of Chandos Records, and was produced and engineered by Sound/Mirror from Boston.\(^{33}\)

---

\(^{32}\) Emmanuel Lopez is the cellist with The Harrington String Quartet.

\(^{33}\) Blanton Alspaugh was the Producer and John Newton and Beyong Joon Hwang were the Sound Engineers from Sound/Mirror.
CHAPTER THREE

COMPOSITION OF SELECTED WORKS

NORTHERN LIGHTS: CHORAL WORKS BY OLA GJEILO:

The success of a choral ensemble depends to a great extent on the conductor’s selection of level-appropriate repertoire. This can often be a daunting task for the conductor. Although basic considerations, such as providing music on a particular theme or for a specific occasion is important, the choral conductor should first consider repertoire that fits the needs and interests of the particular age group and level of his choir. This includes the consideration of vocal ranges, preferred vocal style, adequate number of voices required to cover parts, and the physical limitations of the singers. The selection of repertoire should continue to energize, motivate, inspire, and provide growth for the individual voice within the ensemble.

This chapter, arranged by level of difficulty, presents a discussion of each work heard on the recording. The order was determined with consideration to the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph. The discussion identifies challenging elements and similarities to assist the choral conductor and ensemble in preparing Gjeilo’s music. The Ground, Evening Prayer, Ubi caritas, and Prelude are among Gjeilo’s more accessible compositions. Works of moderate difficulty include Northern Lights, The

---

34 The order was also determined through my experience preparing, performing, and conducting each work.

35 These works are appropriate for high school, community, and church choral ensembles.
Spheres, Tota pulchra es, and Serenity.\textsuperscript{36} Phoenix (Agnus Dei), Unicornis captivatur, and Dark Night of the Soul are some of Gjeilo’s more advanced works.\textsuperscript{37}

Many similar characteristics appear throughout Gjeilo’s compositions that should be considered before programming. These similarities are identified prior to the discussion of each work,\textsuperscript{38} and any distinctive characteristics are discussed in the additional performance notes.

The Ground, Evening Prayer, Ubi caritas, and Prelude are composed with smaller vocal ranges, which are appropriate for younger and less experienced ensembles. Gjeilo’s more advanced compositions, Phoenix (Agnus Dei), Unicornis captivatur, and Dark Night of the Soul utilize larger ranges and may not fit the physical limitations of younger singers. The tessitura in these works is wide, and large intervals between notes in the voice parts might prove difficult to execute. The more advanced works, including Prelude, also feature complex rhythmic passages. The best approach to learning these passages is through continued repetition in the rehearsal.

Ongoing repetition in the choral rehearsal will also be beneficial in dealing with the challenges of Gjeilo’s frequent key transitions. Ubi caritas, Tota pulchra es, Phoenix

\textsuperscript{36} These works are appropriate for advanced high school, community, church, and collegiate choral ensembles.

\textsuperscript{37} These works are more appropriate for advanced high school, collegiate, and professional choral ensembles.

\textsuperscript{38} The similarities include consideration of divisi, vocal ranges and technique, complex rhythm and meters, modulations, and the instrumental forces required in each work.
(Agnus Dei), Unicornis captivatur, and Dark Night of the Soul are works that present significant modulations.

Given Gjeilo’s use of full divisi, the conductor should consider the quality of voices as well as the quantity of voices to utilize in a work. As larger ensembles present challenges with blend, a smaller ensemble may seem ideal. However, a smaller ensemble would require more independently trained singers to cover the numerous parts. This should be considered before programming The Spheres, Tota pulchra es, Serenity, and Phoenix (Agnus Dei). Although Dark Night of the Soul and Unicornis captivatur are composed with significant divisi, less emphasis is placed on utilizing minimal vibrato, making the works appropriate for advanced smaller and larger ensembles.

In a majority of Gjeilo’s works, the use of vibrato should be utilized only to provide additional color in the sound. Heavy or uncontrolled vibrato can cause problems with intonation in Ubi caritas, Prelude, Northern Lights, The Spheres, Serenity, and Phoenix (Agnus Dei). The use of minimal vibrato is essential in The Spheres and Serenity, because of the work’s sustained vocal passages. In Ubi caritas and Prelude, however, the narrow ranges allow the choral director an opportunity to introduce this vocal style in a healthy approach.39

Gjeilo highlights the role of the instruments in The Ground, Evening Prayer, Serenity and Dark Night of the Soul. Evening Prayer and Dark Night of the Soul require a strong presence from the keyboard. Although the string quartet is not required to perform The Ground, it is required in Dark Night of the Soul. The cello and tenor

39 This vocal style includes the introduction to straight tone singing, which I refer to as the use of minimal vibrato in this paper.
saxophone solos in *Serenity* and *Evening Prayer* are especially unique to Gjeilo’s composition, and should be strongly considered before programming.
ACCESSIBLE WORKS

The Ground

Pleni sunt caeli et terra Gloria tua. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in excelsis. Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in excelsis. Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem. Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, grant us peace.\textsuperscript{40}

The Ground, an independent work based on a part of the final movement of Gjeilo’s Sunrise Mass for Choir and String Orchestra, is one of two extracted works from the mass, which may be performed as an isolated piece. The Ground was commissioned and arranged for the Desert Vista High School Choir (Phoenix, Arizona) and its director, Andrew DeValk, for SATB divisi chorus, piano, and optional string quartet.

\textsuperscript{40} Jeffers, Ron. Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire. Vol. 1, Sacred Latin Texts (Corvallis: Earthsongs, 1988), 54-56.
As the final movement in Gjeilo’s *Sunrise Mass for Choir and String Orchestra*, *The Ground* utilizes text from the Sanctus (*Pleni sunt caeli*) and Agnus Dei. Although Gjeilo observes traditions expected of the mass by setting the meaning of the Latin text appropriately, the English title reflects the musical evolution of the larger *Sunrise Mass*. Prior to *The Ground*, the *Sunrise Mass* depicts a journey of music through the heavens to the earth, where the work arrives at a grounded sense of peace and tranquility.\(^{41}\) Gjeilo provides the title to “convey a sense of having ‘arrived’ at the end of the Mass and to having reached a kind of peace and grounded strength.”\(^ {42}\)

**A Brief Description of the Music of *The Ground***

The music in *The Ground* demonstrates Gjeilo’s ability to compose with various influences and interests. In maintaining his symphonic approach in composing, the instruments play a significant role in *The Ground*. The voices are utilized as accompaniment to the piano in the introduction and conclusion, and in various instrumental bridges (Fig. 1).

---


Fig.1—“Piano with Voice Accompaniment,” mm. 1-5; The Ground
© Copyright 2010 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

Presented in three sections with an added conclusion, this simple homophonic work concludes the Sunrise Mass, with what Gjeilo refers to as a “Chorale” that honors the composer J.S. Bach. The melodic and cinematic-influenced motive is placed in the soprano (Fig. 2), where the rhythmic structure remains simple. As one of his favorite compositional devices, Gjeilo creates “a bed of warm and evocative sound,” by doubling the voices with the string quartet.

43 The conclusion is not in the original Sunrise Mass.
45 Parke, 7.
The melody of the chorale is presented three times in the work, each ascending in key by a major third: the first in G major; the second to B major; and the final to E-flat major. With each ascending modulation and statement, Gjeilo adds more divisi and dynamic variation. The final statement at m. 51 is the most symphonic, featuring all voices and instruments playing fortissimo (Fig. 3).
In the *Sunrise Mass*, the movement originally concluded following the final stanza. Later, Gjeilo composed a separate, gentle conclusion for the arrangement by adding the *Dona nobis pacem* text. Influenced by Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*,46 this concluding segment resolves with voices descending through a series of prolonged *decrescendo* and sustained notes. The piano brings the work to an end with an ascending cadence in E-flat major.

**Additional Performance Notes**

*The Ground* is a highly accessible work for a multitude of choral ensembles. Although the soprano line has notes in the upper register in the final stanza (mm. 51-54), the full accompaniment doubled by the string quartet, *divisi*, and dynamics allow the singers to comfortably utilize their full voices. Although the ranges for alto, tenor, and bass voices are accessible, a concluding low E-flat₂ in the lower bass (*divisi*) may be challenging for younger basses.47

---

46 Gjeilo, interview, 17 February 2013.

47 Scientific pitch is utilized to identify range throughout this paper. C₄ is middle C.
Evening Prayer

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,  
or watch, or weep tonight,  
and give your angels charge  
over those who sleep.

Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ.  
Rest your weary ones.  
Bless your dying ones.  
Soothe your suffering ones.  
Pity your afflicted ones.  
Shield your joyous ones.  
And all for your love’s sake.

Amen.48

As the final work composed for The Phoenix Chorale by Gjeilo as composer-in-residence, Evening Prayer presents a “crossover and blend of interests” with its infusion of jazz, improvisation, and hint of classical styles.49 Extremely uncommon in choral literature, the work features a largely improvised accompaniment in the piano and tenor saxophone, utilizing only chord symbols typically seen in jazz charts as the only guide throughout.50 Evening Prayer was commissioned by Donna Corcoran in memory of Richard Kiraly, and received its premiere in Phoenix, Arizona by The Phoenix Chorale in 2010.

48 An accurate source for this text is not found. Some sources (www.goodreads.com) directly credit this text to St. Augustine but do not provide a reference to historical background or English translation. Most sources (www.catholic.org, www.preces-latinæ.org, and www.cptryon.com) only attribute the text to St. Augustine.


50 At the time of recording, Evening Prayer was not a published work, and was accompanied by the composer and tenor saxophonist, Ted Belledin, for performance by The Phoenix Chorale. When the work is published, the composer intends to notate the accompaniment.
Text

The text was provided by Ms. Corcoran, and utilizes what is widely thought to be the composition of St. Augustine of Hippo. As one of the most influential thinkers in the history of the Catholic Church and author of *Confessions*, *On Christian Doctrine*, and *On the Trinity*, St. Augustine was known to have composed over one hundred texts and prayers in his lifetime. Although the original Latin text does not provide a source, many written prayers similar to the text of *Evening Prayer* have been attributed to St. Augustine.

A Brief Description of the Music of *Evening Prayer*

Gjeilo scores *Evening Prayer* for SATB *divisi* chorus, with an infusion of jazz and improvisation in the piano and tenor saxophone. This free form work begins with a simple, brief, yet expressive unaccompanied tenor saxophone solo. Gjeilo provides notation for this opening solo.

In an improvised style, the piano freely enters in m. 5, complimenting the melodic warmth provided in the tenor saxophone. Although no particular key is established throughout the opening passage, the first theme at m. 9 in the tenor saxophone (also heard at m. 29 in the unified male voices) briefly suggests A major. As the tenor saxophone concludes on the sustained tonic of A major, the piano takes more leadership in the conclusion of the introduction. Following four measures of completely improvised piano, the tenor saxophone re-enters with the piano at m. 25, as Gjeilo utilizes chord

---

identification as the sole musical guide for the instruments (Fig. 4). This chord identification further suggests the beginning in A major.

![Chord Identification](image)

**Fig. 4**—“Chord Identification,” mm. 25-28; *Evening Prayer* Reprinted with permission from the composer.

The voices enter at m. 29, with the men in unison taking over the initial theme heard from the tenor saxophone in the introduction. With the piano part completely improvised—no chord identification originally provided until m. 47—the composer allows for a free and expressive introduction of the text (Fig. 5). Furthermore, the unified male voices uniquely match the opening mellow tone and color of the tenor saxophone.

![Unison in Male Voices](image)

**Fig. 5**—“Use of Unison in Male Voices,” mm. 29-36; *Evening Prayer* Reprinted with permission from the composer.

An eight-measure, improvised bridge follows the men’s introduction of the text at m. 47, where Gjeilo provides further chord identification to guide both the piano and
tenor saxophone. A modulation to neighboring F# minor occurs at m. 55, with the text “Tend your sick ones, O Lord Jesus Christ.” The melody continues to be carried by the bass voice and doubled in the tenor saxophone—which is here notated—as Gjeilo again utilizes the remaining voices (SAT) in an accompanying role to the text and instruments. This theme, presented in both major and minor, appears several times throughout the work, in both instruments and voices.

All voices enter harmonically on text at m. 71. As Gjeilo composes an ascent to climax through numerous keys, he utilizes patterns of chords IV—V, to reach the next minor key. From mm. 71-79, Gjeilo transitions through A minor—F major—G major, before arriving to the next section of text in C minor (Fig. 6).

![Fig. 6—“Pattern of Chord Transitions,” mm. 71-79; Evening Prayer](image)

Reprinted with permission from the composer.

Transitioning to A minor at m. 94, the tenor saxophone and piano continue to be completely improvised, with guidance through minimal chord identification. As heard in many of Gjeilo’s later works with instruments, the voices enter on a neutral syllable at m. 98, in an accompanying role. A similar harmonic progression, as mentioned above,
occurs from mm. 94-142 through an array of dynamic changes. It reaches *fortissimo* as the work achieves its climactic moment in m. 143.

The initial conclusion begins at the climax at m. 143, where the soprano and tenor voices carry the theme in C major. Rather than having the work *decrescendo* toward the conclusion, Gjeilo maintains intensity within all performing forces. He re-emphasizes the text through unison voices doubled by piano, variation in dynamics, and an expressively improvised solo in the tenor saxophone. Although the rhythmic structure and meter throughout the work are simple, brief syncopation occurs in the voices concluding ‘Amen.’ The voices accompany the piano movement into the final measures with a concluding *decrescendo*.

**Additional Performance Notes**

Ola Gjeilo’s *Evening Prayer* presents a fresh alternative to traditional standard choral repertoire. Although the voices are vital in presenting the text, the improvised jazz influence on the piano and tenor saxophone should maintain the uniqueness of the work.

Particular attention should be given to clarity in diction and expressivity in phrasing. Dynamics within the vocal lines are important to both achieving a successful climactic point in the work, and to accompanying the improvised piano and tenor saxophone within the instrumental bridges.
**Ubi caritas**

*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.*
*Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.*

Where there is charity and love,
God is there.

*Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur.*
*Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.*

The love of Christ has gathered us together
Let us revere and love the living God.

*Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.*

And from a sincere heart let us love on another.

*Amen.*

One of his earliest composed choral works (2001), Gjeilo considers *Ubi caritas* to be one of his most performed and popular pieces to date.\(^{53}\) Originally composed for SATB *a cappella* chorus,\(^{54}\) Gjeilo has also arranged the work for Men’s (TTBB), and Women’s (SSAA) chorus. The work is dedicated to Lone Larsen, conductor of the Swedish professional choir, Voces Nordicae, which performed the North American premiere of *Ubi caritas*, at the 2007 American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Conference in Miami, Florida.

**Text, Form, and Meter**

Similar to *Tota pulchra es*, the text from the first of Durufle’s *Four Gregorian Motets*, had a significant influence on the composer. Related to the Eucharist, the text


\(^{54}\) *Ubi caritas* has minimal *divisi*, written briefly in the soprano voice.
‘Ubi caritas,’ is widely known as the antiphon for the first communion and the washing of the feet from the Mass for Maundy Thursday.

Although it may appear that *Ubi caritas* is presented in four parts, the work is arguably presented in three sections, which are closer to ABA form. As the opening and closing sections emulate one another, the middle section is significantly longer, complex, and more contrasting.

Gjeilo maintains a simple meter throughout the entire work. Occasionally, meter changes are used to lengthen or shorten phrases, appropriately adhering to the prosody of text.

**A Brief Description of the Music of *Ubi caritas***

The beginning of *Ubi caritas* opens with a flowing chant-like solo in the soprano voice (Fig. 7). Although this “composition is entirely original and is not based on any existing chants,” the motive is reflective of the Gregorian chant tradition, which pays “homage to the text’s ancient history.” Gjeilo intentionally places the conclusion of the solo chant in the alto voice to provide variation of color and timbre to echo the soprano

---

55 The contrasting material in mm. 28-32 is too brief to be a separate “C” section, and is best identified as a bridge. The initial conclusion of text followed by a repeat of the opening text in the final section strengthens this argument.

56 With the exception of stretching the concluding phrases (metrically) and an addition of a three-measure ‘amen’ coda/conclusion, the opening and closing material is nearly identical.


58 Parke, 7.
motive. Both voices conclude the opening text in unison. These chant-like sequences solidify the opening section key in F-sharp minor.

![Soprano](image)

Fig. 7—“Opening Melodic ‘Chant’,” mm. 1-4; *Ubi caritas*
© Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The chant sequence presented in the opening is repeated with all voices in unison at m. 8. Rather than concluding the phrase in unison, however, Gjeilo provides harmony and brief tension through dissonance.\(^{59}\) The opening chant sequence in the alto is also repeated by all voices in unison at mm. 12-13, concluding with similar harmonic movement before arriving on a perfect cadence in F-sharp minor. This cadence brings the opening section to an end.

The contrasting middle section begins following a modulation to A major. Gjeilo creates an exuberant and joyful approach to the new text through full harmony, accelerating tempo, and expressive dynamics.\(^{60}\) The section ascends to climax in m. 22, with the work’s only written *fortissimo*. As the soprano continues to carry the motive, Gjeilo composes two brief measures of *divisi* in the soprano, with the lower voice simply sustaining the tonic. *A diminuendo* leading to a delayed resolution (suspension in tenor)

\(^{59}\) Brief tension through dissonance occurs with the use of a VI chord with an added seventh, leading to a VII chord with an added ninth. This also occurs with the conclusion of the opening section at m. 15.

\(^{60}\) *A mezzo forte* begins the middle section, followed by the composer’s instructions to *crescendo poco a poco* toward the work’s climactic *fortissimo*. 

31
marks the conclusion of the climax and textual phrase (Fig. 8). Gjeilo composes these delayed resolutions numerous times throughout the work to conclude phrases.

Fig. 8—“Delayed Resolution,” m. 27; *Ubi caritas*  
© Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation  
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

Gjeilo modulates to B major for the final four-measures of the middle section.

This modulation occurs through the resolution of the tenor suspension to A-sharp in the previous measure. These four-measures present the remaining text of the antiphon. Again, Gjeilo places emphasis on decelerating tempo and the use of expressive dynamics (*mezzo forte, mezzo piano, crescendo, decrescendo*), adhering to the serene intentions of the text. The bridge and text cadence through use of another delayed resolution provided from the alto voice (Fig. 9).
The final section of *Ubi caritas* begins *piano* with a reiteration of the opening text. Like the beginning, the soprano voice continues to carry the initial motive. Rather than presenting the chant in unison however, Gjeilo immediately provides a full harmonic accompaniment in the remaining voices. Harmonic progression, phrase cadences, and meter change to support text stress, continue to emulate the opening section. The text ‘Christi amor,’ concludes the phrase starting at m. 40. This phrase is harmonically identical to the opening (mm. 15-16), however, it is prolonged through quarter, half, and dotted half notes.

Gjeilo changes meter two final times to prolong tension in the concluding ‘Amen.’ As the alto voice sustains an F-sharp pedal, the tenor and bass voices descend in stepwise motion, as the soprano ascends. In the final two-measures, the bass and soprano arrive immediately on the tonic and dominant of F-sharp major. The alto and tenor
voices provide final tension in the concluding delayed resolution (Fig. 10), eventually joining the soprano and bass on the third and dominant of F-sharp major.

Fig. 10—“Final Delayed Resolution,” mm. 44-45; *Ubi caritas* © Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

**Additional Performance Notes**

I had the pleasure of conducting Gjeilo’s *Ubi caritas* as guest conductor/clinician of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Northern Colorado High School Women’s Honor Choir in 2010.\(^61\) Among the programmed repertoire, *Ubi caritas* was the immediate favorite of the ensembles and their conductors.

Shortly after, I introduced the work to my church ensemble to present in the service for Maundy Thursday.\(^62\) It too became an immediate favorite of the ensemble—

---

\(^61\) The author introduced Gjeilo’s SSAA arrangement for Women’s Chorus. At the time, most of the singers and conductors were unfamiliar with the choral music of Ola Gjeilo.

\(^62\) The author introduced Gjeilo’s SATB arrangement for his church ensemble. This choir consists of 25 volunteer singers.
being utilized three years in a row at the request of the choir members. These additional performance notes are provided from my conducting standpoint based on these experiences.

During the initial learning process, transitioning through phrase endings to the next section may be difficult. The transitions between mm. 27-28 and mm. 32-33 are particular examples. In these measures, each phrase ending, extended through suspension and a delay in resolution, is followed by silence. After a moment of silence, Gjeilo then presents the new section following an immediate modulation. Lastly, Gjeilo extends the three-measure conclusion by utilizing one-measure of 5/4 meter. This can catch many ensembles by surprise.
## Prelude

*Exsultate, Jubilate.*  
Rejoice, resound with joy.

*O vos animae beatae,*  
O you blessed souls,  
*Exsultate, Jubilate.*  
Rejoice, resound with joy.

*Summa Trinitas revelatu*  
The Great Trinity is revealed

*Et ubique adoratur,*  
And everywhere adored,

*Date illi gloriam,*  
Give glory,

*Datum illi gloriam*  
Give it glory

*Summa Trias adoratur,*  
The Great Triad is adored,

*Date illi gloriam.*  
Give it glory.

*Tu virginum corona,*  
You, o crown of virgins,

*Tu nobis pacem dona.*  
Grant us peace.

*Tu consolare affectus,*  
Console our feelings,

*Unde suspirat cor.*  
From which our hearts sigh.

*Alleluia.*

---

Composed for *divisi* SATB unaccompanied chorus, Gjeilo’s *Prelude* synthesizes ideas from two previously written works for SSAA women’s chorus, *Nya Vägar* and *Exsultate, Jubilate.* A simple ABA work, its exuberant opening and closing sections emulate Scandinavian folk music, with melodic and rhythmic movement through mixed meter. The middle section provides variety in texture with more serene and chant-like elements.

---


64 The opening and closing sections of *Prelude* were reworked from *Nya Vägar.*


66 The middle section of *Prelude* was reworked from *Exsultate, Jubilate.*
Text, Rhythm, and Meter

The text for Prelude comes from the Latin motet ‘Exsultate Jubilate.’ With its contrasting sections, Gjeilo sets the natural prosody of the text, which results in a wide variety of mixed meter throughout (figures 11-13, below, demonstrate his prolific use of mixed meter in Prelude). Initially, the multitude of rhythmic movement may appear overwhelming. Upon closer examination, the rhythms correspond appropriately to syllabic stresses of the text (Fig. 11).

Fig. 11—“Rhythms with Text,” mm. 10-12; Prelude
© Copyright 2004 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

A Brief Description of the Music of Prelude

Prelude begins fortissimo in F-sharp major “anchored by a robust drone in the lower voices.” The alto and bass voices maintain this tonal center for the majority of the opening section on this sustained drone. The soprano and tenor voices introduce the

---

rhythmic folk-like dance element in unison (Fig. 12). Dynamics remain full, “with great force and joy,” in all voices.⁶⁸

In the opening section, Gjeilo places emphasis in the text with dynamics and tonal movement. A fortissimo entrance begins the work and text Exsultate, (“Rejoice!”) in all voices. A similar fortissimo entrance at mm. 9-10, expresses the text Summa Trinitas revelatur (“The Great Trinity is revealed”). In approaching the climax of the opening section at m. 16, a two-measure ascending motion in the soprano and tenor voices emphasize the text, gloriam, data illi gloriam (“give it glory!”). This text is repeated when all voices enter at m. 20, in a rhythmic conclusion to the opening section. As the section slows, the dissonance between melody and drone is resolved in the arrival of a cadence and decrescendo at m. 23.

---

⁶⁸ Ola Gjeilo, Prelude, Score. Composer’s Comments.
Following a brief pause, section B begins at m. 27 with a modulation to neighboring F-sharp minor. This middle section moves through a more complex harmonic texture created by dissonant intervals of seconds (mm. 29-30) and sevenths (mm.27-28), resolving to open fifth chord resolutions and cadences (Fig. 13).

As Gjeilo concludes the middle section, G-natural is no longer utilized, and added accidentals D-sharp and A-sharp (from mm. 35-38) provide a sense of movement and build toward the initial key. The middle section concludes with an open fifth cadence in mm. 39 followed by a short moment of pause.

Following this pause, the final section begins in a manner identical to the opening. Modulating back to F-sharp major, the alto and bass voices enter on the drone with an accented fortissimo. The soprano and tenor voices once again carry the melodic motive in unison, “sweeping the listener into the dance once more.”

---

69 Parke, 10.
An alteration from the opening section occurs in m. 60 as Gjeilo prolongs a cadence without changing meter from the previous measure. In the opening section (m. 20), Gjeilo changes meter from 18/8 to 12/8 to arrive at a concluding cadence, followed with a fast release and immediate re-entrance on text. In the closing section, however, the meter does not change and the cadence is prolonged (Fig. 14). Lastly, Gjeilo composes an ascending conclusion to the work, placing the soprano and tenor voices a third higher than the previous conclusion of the opening section. The first and second alto voices are also higher, at a fifth and fourth, respectively.

Fig. 14—“Change in Meter in Concluding Section,” mm. 59-60; Prelude
© Copyright 2004 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

Additional Performance Notes

At first glance, the music in Prelude may appear demanding with its extensive rhythmic passages and frequent meter changes. However, its melodic movement is appealing, which can assist in the initial learning process of the work. The vocal ranges are accessible and lie in the middle part of the voice, allowing for significant dynamic presence (fortissimo, fff) when needed.

Stressing the text can assist the singer in becoming more comfortable with the work’s rhythmic passages and mixed meter. Although the drone in the alto and bass may seem simple, attention should be given to each release and accented re-entrance. These
entrances are important in providing additional rhythmic intensity to the melodic motive in the soprano and tenor voices.

Longer phrasing and legato movement of the middle section may present challenges with younger voices. Conductors should remind singers to maintain strong breath support to achieve contour of the line and text. Although the range does not present a problem, m. 32 can be challenging for tenors as they face a significant ascending interval leap of an octave through different parts of their range (F-sharp₃ to F-sharp₄). Sung on the text ‘Alleluia,’ unifying vowel placement within the tenor section can be difficult.

_Prelude_ can introduce great energy in the choral experience, and allow significant growth in younger and less-experienced choirs. Its exuberant opening and closing sections present a lively alternative to any concert opener or program encore.
Northern Lights

Pulchra es, amica mea, suavis et decora filia Jerusalem,
You are beautiful, my love, a sweet and comely daughter of Jerusalem.

Pulchra es, amica mea, suavis et decora sicut Jerusalem,
terribilis sicut castrotum acies ordinata.
You are beautiful, my love, a sweet and comely daughter of Jerusalem.
terrible as the sharp lines of a military camp.

Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.
Turn your eyes from me, because they have put me to flight. 70

Composed in December 2007 in his native Norway, Gjeilo was profoundly influenced with the imagery of nature that had surrounded him and the emotion it evoked.

Gjeilo recalls:

Looking out from the attic window that Christmas in Oslo, over a wintry lake under the stars, I was thinking about how this terrible beauty is so profoundly reflected in the northern lights, or aurora borealis. It is one of the most beautiful natural phenomena I’ve ever witnessed, and has such a powerful, electric quality, which must have been both mesmerizing and terrifying to people in the past, when no one knew what it was and when much superstition was attached to these experiences. 71

Written for SATB a cappella chorus (with minimal divisi), Northern Lights was commissioned by and dedicated to the Central Bucks High School-West (Doylestown, Pennsylvania) Chamber Choir and conductor Dr. Joseph Orht, with support from the


**Text and Form**

Through his selection of text for *Northern Lights*, Gjeilo shares his personal experience in witnessing the *aurora borealis* by creating a spiritual and visual component to the work. The biblical text, taken from the sixth chapter of the *Song of Songs*, provides a darkened texture to the work. It envisions “the beauty (*terribilis*) which is that of a beloved. A beauty so strong, it is almost overwhelming.”

*Northern Lights* is composed and divided into three sections identified as ABA-prime. The opening and closing sections present the text’s beautiful description of the ‘sweet and comely daughter.’ The contrasting middle section text describes the strong and ‘terrible beauty’ of the beloved.

**A Brief Description of the Music of Northern Lights**

The opening measures of *Northern Lights*, begins in the upper voices (soprano, alto, tenor) as the soprano presents a chant-like motive accompanied by the alto and tenor (Fig. 15). A dynamic marking of *piano* provides a light approach toward introducing the meaning of the text, *Pulchra es, amica mea* (“You are beautiful, my love”). The introduction arrives in m. 5 as the soprano voice suspends above the release in the alto and tenor.

---

72 Ola Gjeilo, interview by Ryan Garrison, Phoenix, AZ, 9 April 2013.
As the soprano voice suspends through m. 7, the chant motive is placed in the alto. This is similar to the soprano an octave lower (Fig. 16). As the soprano voice presents a descant echo of text above the chant, the bass and tenor voices provide stability in tempo and pulse. The soprano and alto voices share the chant motive throughout the entire opening section, concluding at m. 18. Although the key and tone center around B-flat (heard especially in the male voices), the chant sequence in the soprano and alto suggest the opening in D minor.

In the contrasting middle section, Gjeilo continues to provide a dramatic component with text to music by presenting the hauntingly beautiful description of the beloved. Following a modulation to A minor, the soprano voice enters (mezzo-piano) with the new text in a flowingly legato manner. As the soprano presents the new text and this image of ‘terrible’ beauty, the remaining voices ascend homophonically, repeating the text ‘Pulchra es,’ reminding the listener of the beloved’s ‘simple’ beauty. Gjeilo
composes the accompanying voices in ascending parallel fifth movement (Fig. 17), solidifying the new key.

The alto continues with the motive and final description of this image in m. 29 by descending chromatically through a suspension left in the soprano. An F-sharp, on which the alto motive begins, helps transition the work toward the new key of E minor. As the alto presents the final portion of text, the remaining voices provide a similar accompanying movement as mentioned above. The same text, ‘Pulchra es’ is utilized as well as ascending parallel fifth movement (Fig. 17). A sense of urgency also begins to unfold with Gjeilo’s use of dynamic contrasts and a prolonged crescendo to forte in the alto, accompanied at mezzo forte by the remaining voices.

Fig. 17—“Parallel Fifth Movement Establishes Key,” mm. 30-33; Northern Lights © Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The climax of the work begins at m. 36 with a prolonged seven-measure crescendo. As the alto voice concludes the text, the remaining voices continue to re-emphasize the image’s ‘simple’ beauty, through the text ‘amica mea.’ Dissonance provides additional harmonic texture through ascending motives in the soprano and tenor, all above a sustained bass line. The alto moves around the tonal center (G) provided in the bass. By m. 41, the soprano and bass voices crescendo on sustained pitches (E₅, G₃) as the tenor continues to ascend. This seven-measure crescendo builds to a fortissimo at m. 43, as all the voices arrive in E minor. The resolution is brief, however, as Gjeilo
concludes the climax with dissonance. The lower alto and tenor voices (*divisi*) descend to the seventh and ninth degrees of E minor.

The concluding section, which begins at m. 46, modulates back to the beginning key. The opening text is repeated as the soprano carries the chant-like motive, accompanied by the alto and tenor voices. The motive, however, alternates more significantly (than in the opening section) between the soprano and alto voices, while the male voices continue in their accompanying role.

The alto brings the repeat of text and the work to its conclusion at m. 63. As the remaining voices (STB) release and re-enter with their final pleas (*Pulchra es*), the alto voice continues to sustain the tonic for the remaining eight measures. Each accompanying plea becomes softer through successive dynamic markings of *mezzo piano, piano*, and *pianissimo*, achieving a calm and reflective conclusion. As the soprano, tenor, and bass release their final plea, the alto sustains the tonic until a *decrescendo* toward a silence concludes the work.

**Additional Performance Notes**

The music in *Northern Lights* is not especially demanding for the choir. Vocal ranges in all voice parts are accessible. Meter, rhythm, texture (minimal *divisi*) and harmonic movement also are not particularly demanding. Control and flexibility of vocal technique, however, are required to capture the dramatic essence of the text and music.

Dynamics play a vital role in communicating the dramatic intent of the text in *Northern Lights*. The many dynamic contrasts may challenge younger and less developed singers. The conductor should remind the ensemble to maintain breath
support and control, particularly through the extensively marked softer sections. Furthermore, its slower sections require significant energy to sustain elongated chords and support intonation.

The conductor should not become overly concerned with maintaining a particularly strict rhythm, tempo, and meter throughout, and allow for freedom by extending textual phrases and releases.
**The Spheres**

*Kyrie eleison,*
Lord, have mercy,

*Christe eleison,*
Christ, have mercy,

*Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy.\(^73\)

*The Spheres,* originally composed as the opening movement of his *Sunrise Mass for Choir and String Orchestra,* is one of the two works derived from the mass, which may be performed separately. Despite its use of the Latin text, its English title is intended to create an atmosphere and sense of “floating in space, in darkness and relative silence, surrounded by stars and planets light-years away.”\(^74\) This *a cappella* arrangement demonstrates Gjeilo’s personal and spiritual approach toward composing, and his strong desire to create visual images in the music he writes.\(^75\)

Gjeilo’s *Sunrise Mass,* from which *The Spheres* was derived, was commissioned and premiered by Majorstuen Chamber Choir and Nova Chamber Choir in 2008. This *a cappella* adaptation for SSAATTBB chorus was dedicated to conductor Gary Graden who premiered the work in Oklahoma City in 2009 with the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) College Honor Chamber Choir.


\(^75\) *The Spheres,* originally accompanied, is the only *a cappella* arrangement derived from the Mass.
Text, Form, and Key

Initially the beginning movement of his Sunrise Mass, Gjeilo’s setting of the Greek text ‘Kyrie eleison,’ respectfully observes the order and traditions of the Ordinary of the Mass.

The Spheres is presented in three contrasting sections, which will be discussed in further detail. Part I presents a formation of the initial motive and extended theme. A second unifying theme is presented in Part II as an ascent to climax, which leads to the presentation of the opening motive in Part III.

Gjeilo often provides dramatic intensity throughout his works by composing frequent key transitions. In The Spheres, however, Gjeilo maintains the same key of C-sharp minor for the full duration of the work.

A Brief Description of the Music of The Spheres

A recurring characteristic of Gjeilo’s compositional approach is heard in the opening section of The Spheres, an overlapping fade-in/fade-out effect. Accompanied with expressive swells and dramatic dynamic contrast (pianissimo, crescendo, mezzo piano, decrescendo), this effect evokes a serene atmosphere and visual component toward the formation of the main theme. The opening measures (beginning to m. 21) get no louder than a mezzo piano.

Gjeilo develops the main theme in a drawn-out approach (Fig. 18), from the beginning of the work to m. 21. As the soprano voices introduce the prolonged theme,

---

76 A similar technique is utilized in Serenity, discussed later in this paper.
the alto and tenor voices provide additional texture with each overlapping chord.

Beginning in m. 9, as each chord fades in and out, a new syllable is added to the line, completing the utterance of the text, ‘Kyrie.’ This concept continues until the entire text, ‘Kyrie eleison,’ is presented.

Fig. 18—“Main Theme Prolonged,” mm. 1-7; The Spheres
© Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The main theme continues to develop, similar to the opening, in m. 23, on the text ‘Christe eleison’ (Fig. 19). With the absence of the bass voice from mm. 23-38, the lighter texture of the upper voices provide the composer’s intended visual image of ‘floating in space.’

Fig. 19—“Main Theme Continues,” mm. 23-29; The Spheres
© Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

---

77 Ola Gjeilo, The Spheres, Score. Composer’s Comments.
The opening presentation of the theme is repeated in the soprano at m. 39, with full *divisi* in the remaining voices providing additional texture. Rather than having the theme suspend on the dominant, as heard in the opening, Gjeilo extends the theme in a descending movement, arriving on the tonic. A *crescendo* to *forte* concludes the theme and brings all voices to a sustained C-sharp minor triad at m. 61, where an eight-measure *decrescendo* provides a peaceful conclusion to the opening section and main theme.

The second theme is developed through a cluster of ascending minor scale tones and is repeated twice. Although brief, this theme provides an expansion of energy through tension in the ascending dissonance (Fig. 20). Gjeilo composes dramatic dynamics (*piano, crescendo, forte, fortissimo*), which provide additional tension.

Fig. 20—“Ascending Clusters,” mm. 69-74; *The Spheres*  
© Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation  
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation
The final section begins at m. 81 with a clearer statement of the opening theme, which was “hidden in the chiming entrances of the discrete vocal lines.” Gjeilo describes the final movement as a “chorale version of the theme—a microcosm of the entire Mass.” Rather than prolonging the main theme, Gjeilo provides the statement through descending intervals in a steady quarter note motion (Fig. 21/a and Fig. 21b). This statement also results in parallel fifth movement among the voices (Fig. 22).

---

78 Parke, 9.


80 Refer to previous Figures 18 and 19, which present the main theme in an extended overlapping effect.
The concluding section begins at m. 96, with reiteration of the text ‘Kyrie eleison.’ Each voice presents the text in a descending motive, arriving on and sustaining the tonic, which concludes the work in unison. Gjeilo provides one final crescendo prior to release, which is symbolic of the spiritual and contemplative journey that continues in the \textit{Sunrise Mass}, following this opening movement of \textit{The Spheres}.$^{81}$

\textbf{Additional Performance Notes}

As the beginning of Gjeilo’s \textit{Sunrise Mass}, \textit{The Spheres} provides an image of beautiful, serene, and sacred meditation on the spiritual journey “from heaven to earth.”$^{82}$ The music in \textit{The Spheres} is not necessarily demanding for the choir. The vocal ranges in all the voice parts are accessible. The sustained notes and dramatic dynamic intention of the upper soprano line may become challenging for younger voices, as the notes significantly lie in the break of the voice.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item $^{81}$ Rugen, Kira. \textit{About Ola Gjeilo’s Sunrise: Symphonic Mass for Choir and String Orchestra}. Arizona State University, 2010, 2.
\item $^{82}$ Parke, 9.
\end{itemize}
Tota pulchra es

Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te. Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee.
Vestimentum tuum candidum quasi nix, Your clothing is white like snow,
et facies tua sicut sol. And your face is like the sun.

Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te. You are completely pure, Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee.
Tu Gloria Jerusalem, tu laetitia Israel, You are the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel,
tu honorificentia populi nostri. and the honor of our people.
Tota pulchra es, Maria. You are completely pure, Mary.83

As one of Ola Gjeilo’s earliest choral compositions (2001), Tota pulchra es presents the composer’s profound interest and love for Latin text. Gjeilo was especially influenced by Duruflé’s Four Gregorian Motets,84 and sets the text of the second motet.85 The Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir provided the initial recording in 2008, with their release of Sacred North (Exlibris). Tota pulchra es is written for a cappella SATB divisi choir.

Text, Form, Key, and Meter

The prayer Tota pulchra es, utilizes the first three of the five antiphon texts for the Psalms of the Second Vespers for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed


84 Maurice Duruflé (b. 1902, d. 1986) composed a setting of the text for women’s voices.

85 Gjeilo also set the text ‘Ubi caritas,’ which is the first motet in Duruflé’s Four Gregorian Motets. Ubi caritas was discussed earlier in this project.
Virgin Mary. *Tota pulchra es* is a fourth century antiphon praising the Virgin Mary’s “pure, meek, and sinless nature.” The verses were derived from *The Song of Songs* and *The Book of Judith.*

*Tota pulchra es* is presented in three slow contrasting sections identified as ABC. The form is derived through the text and key modulations, and within each section, builds to its own climax.

The opening section is divided into two keys, beginning in A minor. A common tone modulation leads into the second half of the opening in G minor. Although the second half moves through numerous keys, the motive and accompanying roles pivot around E-flat, which becomes the common tone modulation (V of A-flat minor) leading into the next section. The second section begins and ends in A-flat minor. As the tenor voice sustains a C-flat in the conclusion of the middle section, Gjeilo provides a B-natural (V of E major) in the soprano voice, which begins the final motive of the third section. The work ends in E major.

Meter and rhythm are simple throughout. Meter change is minimal, and is provided to briefly shorten or extend phrases of text.

---

86 Jeffers, 224.

87 *The Song of Songs* provides the first two verses of text. The third verse of text is from *The Book of Judith.*

88 Common tone modulations are used frequently throughout *Tota pulchra es* and will be discussed in further detail below.
A Brief Description of the Music of *Tota pulchra es*

Adhering to the purity and meek nature of the text, *Tota Pulchra Es* begins with a serene entrance of women’s voices. Gjeilo provides a gentle approach toward the text ‘Tota pulchra es’ (“You are completely beautiful”), praising the Virgin’s pure and sinless nature. The motive is placed in the upper soprano and accompanied by the remaining voices for the first part of the opening section. The first conclusion of text occurs in m. 6 with an unsettling half cadence, which suggests the opening key of A minor (Fig. 23).

![Fig. 23—“Half Cadence and Key Identification,” m. 6; Tota pulchra es](https://example.com/fig23.png)

© Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

As the women’s voices decrescendo to conclude the opening motive, Gjeilo utilizes a common tone modulation in the bass voices’ entrance at mm. 13-14. The basses enter on a sustained G (Fig. 24), which pivots the key of the second half to G minor. The men echo the serene approach to the text heard in the beginning from the women’s entrance. The motive is placed in the tenor voice and is accompanied through *divisi* bass lines. A *crescendo* begins in the baritone at m. 18 and is sustained through the
entrances of the remaining divided voices. The work continues to crescendo as all voices enter at m. 21.

Moving toward the opening section’s climax, Gjeilo composes complex harmonies with all voices divisi. As the motive returns to the upper soprano voice, the remaining voices provide an echo of the text throughout. Gjeilo creates dynamic intensity through his written instructions, sempre poco a poco crescendo. The motive begins mezzo piano and ascends to a fortissimo and climax at mm. 26-27. The climax is brief, however, as all voices decrescendo back to mezzo forte, and eventually mezzo piano. The bass voice concludes the opening section with another common tone modulation. This time, an E-flat is heard as the dominant of the upcoming key of A-flat minor.

The second section begins in the new key with the motive placed in the tenor voice. Gjeilo utilizes the lower voices (alto, tenor, bass), to present the new text, which equates the Virgin to the purity of snow and the brightness of the sun.\(^\text{89}\) The soprano voice is omitted for the duration of section two. As the motive alternates between the alto and tenor voices, the lower tenor and bass voice provides stability in the new key with frequent drones (Fig. 25), as seen in mm. 47-48.\(^\text{90}\)

\(^\text{89}\) Jeffers, 225.

\(^\text{90}\) The use of drones, which provides stability of key, is also seen in figure 38.
Section two begins piano and ascends gradually with frequent crescendi to the section’s climax, which is achieved by another fortissimo. The section begins to conclude with a decrescendo into a half cadence at m. 55.

The men’s voices provide a final reiteration of the text’s beautiful description of Mary to conclude section two. The lower tenor voice continues to carry the motive, as the upper tenor and bass voices provide a final echo of the text. As the section concludes in A-flat minor, the upper tenor suspends the third, which becomes the dominant of the proceeding key (V of E major). The work presents a final common tone modulation, as the soprano voice re-enters off the sustained C-flat provided from the tenor, written now as a B-natural (Fig 26).\(^{91}\)

\(^{91}\) The B-natural provides clarity toward the upcoming key of E major.
Gjeilo composes an exuberant and joyful approach toward the descriptive text of the final section. As the soprano voice introduces the motive, the remaining voices provide full harmonic texture. While the upper alto and tenor voices present a flowingly legato line, the lower alto voice provides a rhythmic echo of the soprano motive above (Fig. 27).

---

92 Jeffers, 225. The text further describes Mary: ‘Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel.’
Dynamics continue to play an important role toward presenting the descriptive intentions required of the text. The section begins piano, and a prolonged crescendo to forte provides a climax at m. 69. Similar to the previous sections, Gjeilo utilizes a decrescendo to conclude the text and the section.

The final text, which presents Mary as being ‘the honor of our people,’\(^9\) begins the conclusion of the work at m. 74. Gjeilo provides a brief moment of reflection toward the text through the voices lower tessitura and homophonic movement. The work continues to decrescendo into a half cadence in m. 78, which provides a final sense of urgency and resolve.

The soprano and tenor voices solidify the key of E major sustaining on the tonic at mm. 81-82, as the alto voices continue to migrate around the third and dominant, respectively. All of the voices arrive to the E major triad in m. 82.

**Additional Performance Notes**

The composer’s sensitive approach to the music in *Tota pulchra es* appropriately adheres to the descriptive imagery required of the text. Although vocal ranges are not especially demanding throughout all voice parts, the consistently high placement of the upper tenor voice can be challenging for younger singers.\(^9\) Control and flexibility of vocal technique is necessary to capture the essence of the text and music.

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^9\) The upper tenor line is placed in the higher part of the range for a large majority of the work. This includes the highest note, A-flat\(_4\).
Dynamic contrasts play a significant role in communicating the purity and meek intentions of the text, may also challenge younger singers. The work’s quiet sections call for a purer tone, which is best achieved through minimal vibrato. The work, however, does present opportunities to add color through vibrato, and allows for more comfortable, relaxed, and natural singing.
Serenity

O magnum mysterium, O great mystery,
et admirabile sacramentum, and wonderful sacrament,

ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, that animals should see the newborn
jacentem in praesepio! lying in a manger!

Beata Virgo, cujus viscera Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
meruerunt portare was worthy to bear
Dominum Christum. Christ the Lord.
Alleluia. Alleluia.95

Gjeilo, like many composers before him, provides his passionate impression of
the ancient text, ‘O magnum mysterium.’96 Through its alternate title Serenity,97 “an
allusion to the composer’s verbal instruction at the top of the score,”98 Gjeilo makes his
compositional intention clear: to provide a visual component toward the wonderment,
mystery, and fascination evoked in the text.

Serenity was commissioned by and dedicated to the Central Bucks High School-
West (Doylestown, Pennsylvania) Choir and director, Dr. Joseph Ohrt. This a cappella

95 Jeffers, Ron. Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire. Vol. 1, Sacred
Latin Texts (Corvallis: Earthsongs, 1988), 175.

96 Some other composers to utilize the text are Giovanni Gabrieli (b. 1554, d. 1612),
Giovanni Palestrina (b. 1525, d. 1594), Francis Poulenc (b. 1899, d. 1963), and more
recently, composers Javier Busto (b. 1949) and Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943).

97 It is common for Gjeilo to utilize English titles with Latin text, presenting his
spiritual approach toward the music, or in this case, setting the aesthetic meaning of the
text.

98 Parke, Kathryn. Northern Lights; Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo, ed. Finn S.
setting is composed for SATB divisi choir, accompanied by a solo cello or violin. Gjeilo’s intentions for Serenity are to provide a “passionate peacefulness—a peacefulness that is not passive, but filled with warmth, faith, passion, and gentle intent.”

Text and Form

A responsorial chant, the ‘O magnum mysterium’ text is derived from the fourth response for the Matins service for Christmas, which evokes “all the wonder and fascination of the incarnation of Christ.”

Serenity is divided into three sections identified as ABA. The opening and closing sections portray the text’s imagery and mystery through a serenely melodic cello solo (Fig. 28). The contrasting middle section is a cappella, and provides a sense of reflection to what is witnessed in the miraculous scene.

Fig. 28—“Cello Solo,” mm. 10-14; Serenity
© Copyright 2010 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

---

99 Upon publication, Gjeilo provided notation for both solo cello and violin. For the recording, Bruffy chose the cello.

100 Ola Gjeilo, interview by Ryan Garrison, Phoenix, AZ, 19 February 2013.

101 Ibid.

102 This solo was originally composed to text for soprano. It was later decided that its lengthy phrases and higher tessitura could be problematic for the singer to support throughout.
A Brief Description of the Music of *Serenity*

As an introduction, the opening movement begins *a cappella* in all voices. Gjeilo utilizes expressive swells in the voices, through a wide variety of dynamic markings, including *pianissimo, crescendo, piano,* and *decrescendo,* which is reflective toward the mystery of the text. These expressive swells in the voices provide the accompanying role to the cello solo, which enters at m. 10. As the cello enters, the dynamic swelling in the accompanying voices create an overlapping texture and continuance of sound between the two parts (Fig. 29).

![Fig. 29—“Overlapping Effects Between Solo and Voices,” mm. 22-27; Serenity © Copyright 2010 Walton Music Corporation Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation](image)

Although the cello solo ends at m. 31, it continues to double the motive placed in the lower alto voice at m. 33. The overlapping effect now occurs within the *divisi* of the voices, allowing for added dissonance and harmonic tension with the motive. Dynamics become more significant with markings of *piano,* prolonged *crescendo to mezzo forte,*
and *decrescendo* back to *piano*. The opening section cadences and concludes on a G major triad at m. 50.

Identifying key throughout the opening movement requires going beyond the initial sound. Despite its opening B minor triad, the work moves around a tonal center on G. The highest movement in the cello solo provides a climactic approach to G in mm. 25-26. Furthermore, the bass voices sustain open fifths on the tonic and dominant of G throughout, where in mm. 36-37, the tenor voice provides the third. Other parallel fifth movement descends or ascends by step around G, providing the brief dissonance and harmonic tension mentioned above, before resolving back to the tone center. Lastly, the sustained pedal on G in the tenor voices (the longest sustained voice in the conclusion of the opening) remains significantly present until the arrival of all voices on a G major triad at m. 50.

The contrasting middle section begins with a modulation to the dominant of the conclusion from the opening section. The high tenor and low bass voices solidify the new key, remaining on a D pedal for the full duration of the section.\(^{103}\)

This *a cappella* section especially highlights the women’s voices. Essentially a duet, an ascending unison introduction in mm. 51 splits into two separate melodic motives, heard as the soprano continues ascending, while the alto descends. The prolonged text in the alto, however, provides an echo response to the text presented one beat before (m. 55), suggesting the initial theme in the soprano. Other responses occur in the alto at m. 60 and m. 63. The general movement within the soprano and alto voices is

\(^{103}\) The high tenor voice briefly descends to the seventh in one measure, before ascending back to the tonic.
a similarly condensed idea of the opening section’s overlapping technique between the voices and solo cello.

The work begins to climax starting at m. 63, marked with a significantly sustained crescendo. An overlapping effect is utilized between the soprano and remaining voices, providing brief dissonance and intensity in the ascending motion of the line. This ascent is marked with dynamic contrast (five-measure crescendo to fortissimo in all voices), and wide vocal ranges, heard especially at the climax in the high soprano voice (Fig. 30).

![Fig. 30—“Range and Dynamic Contrast Toward Climax,” mm. 64-68; Serenity © Copyright 2010 Walton Music Corporation Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation](image-url)

Following the climax at m. 68, Gjeilo composes a homophonic descent in the soprano and alto above sustained chords in the tenor and bass voice. A prolonged three-measure decrescendo brings the middle section to a cadence in D major at m. 74, where the arrival of all voices is marked with a final crescendo to mezzo forte and decrescendo, toward release.

A transition back to the opening key begins the concluding section identical to m. 33, where the alto voice presents the melodic motive doubled by the cello. Gjeilo continues to utilize dramatic and expressive dynamic markings within each voice line,
providing additional overlapping texture. These extensive markings within each individual voice line are significant toward the larger build required of the composer (as instructed in the score), from mm. 79-87. Rather than allowing the motive to continue its ascent, however, Gjeilo begins a descent in the voices, placing the melody in the upper soprano, where it remains for the duration of the work.

An ‘Alleluia’ response concludes Serenity beginning at m. 95, with the upper soprano voice arriving and sustaining a tonic G the remaining thirteen measures of the work. As a crescendo from piano to mezzo piano is emphasized in the upper soprano, Gjeilo composes a decrescendo in the remaining voices, resolving dissonance of the previously sustained chord of second, third, and fourth scale degrees. Initial resolution is heard briefly through the arrival of the concluding G major, in m. 95. The alto and tenor provide final moments of dissonance, moving to the fourth and sixth degrees of G major, as the soprano and bass voice provide grounding to the work, sustaining the tonic. All voices arrive on a G major chord at m. 103, where a prolonged decrescendo provides a serene conclusion to the work.

### Additional Performance Notes

The music in Gjeilo’s Serenity presents a pleasant approach to this popular text. With the cello adding texture to the voices and through his use of dynamics, Gjeilo provides a component of imagery and reflection required by the mystical scene and its text.

The music in Serenity can be demanding for the choir. Although the range of the upper soprano is relatively wide (as seen in Fig. 30), the ranges in the remaining voices
are accessible. As the bass voice plays a significant role in providing darker texture, the lower notes need to be especially present, which can be difficult with younger developing voices. Lastly, control, support, and flexibility of vocal technique are required for the exceedingly sustained passages heard throughout the entire work.

Dynamics play a vital role in providing the mystical imagery and dramatic intent of the text. The breath and vocal support required for softer singing, and frequent use of crescendo to decrescendo, can be especially challenging for untrained or younger singers.
ADVANCED WORKS

Phoenix (Agnus Dei)

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.*
Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Gjeilo’s interest in composing this work evolved during his first visit to the southwestern city and its surrounding desert. It was here that “the quiet beauty and barrenness of the landscape,” provided a visual component that inspired the work. In addition, the art of glass sculptor Dale Chihuly, who was presenting an exhibit at the Phoenix Desert Botanical Gardens during his initial visit, also provided a lasting impression on the composer. Influenced by composer Thomas Newman, Gjeilo provides another cinematic approach in composing this new work. Phoenix (Agnus Dei), symphonic in nature, “is more like film music set to pictures and memories,” that is inspired by images of the city, the desert, and art. Composed for SATB divisi chorus, this

---


106 I joined the composer at the Phoenix exhibit of Mr. Chihuly’s work.


108 Parke, 5.
*a cappella* work was commissioned by Joy Crews Lubeck and dedicated to The Phoenix Chorale in celebration of its 50th anniversary season. The work received its premiere in Phoenix in February of 2009.

**Text**

The ‘Agnus Dei’ text was not selected for any specific reason or literal meaning, rather for its “singability and comfortable vowels.”

109 The text plays a “servant role” to the music. This allowed Gjeilo to compose longer sustained notes, melismas, and phrases. 

110 Gjeilo believes that other well-known composers may have utilized this technique for similar reasons. He was especially influenced by Barber’s *Adagio* and Elgar’s *Nimrod* as “two of the most hauntingly beautiful pieces ever written,” for utilizing similar compositional approach.

109 Ibid.

110 Gjeilo, interview, 17 February 2013.

111 For singers, this may be easier to achieve through the use of neutral vowels.

112 Gjeilo was influenced by the choral arrangement of Barber’s *Adagio* in which utilizes neutral vowels as text.

113 Gjeilo refers to Elgar’s *Enigma Variation (Nimrod is the ninth variation)* in which the composer gives general impressions of the subjects’ personalities, portrays visual components, and makes musical references to specific characteristics or events.

A Brief Description of the Music of Phoenix (Agnus Dei)

The work begins \textit{piano} with treble voices on sustained phrasing patterns. The melodic contour is placed in the upper soprano voice, accompanied by the lower soprano and upper alto (Fig. 31). Although no particular key is established, the entrance of all voices at m. 12 suggests E minor in the introduction, from the beginning to m. 25.

All voices enter in mm. 11-12, where E minor is established in the male voices, particularly the bass. As the upper soprano voice concludes the opening motive upon the entrance of the remaining voices, the lower soprano, alto, and upper tenor provide concluding movement, echoing the motive heard previously in the upper soprano. The introduction concludes at m. 24 with a perfect cadence in E minor.

Following a brief pause, Gjeilo immediately modulates to G major to begin the second section, placing the motive in the soprano voices as the remaining voices accompany through sustained notes and minimal movement (Fig. 32). Dynamics remain \textit{mezzo piano}.  

Fig. 31—“Image and Music,” mm. 1-7; \textit{Phoenix (Agnus Dei)}
© Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation
A prolonged crescendo to mezzo forte and another modulation (F# major) leads to a new motive presented at m. 36 in the upper soprano and tenor. The lower soprano and alto simultaneously move the line forward with a more rhythmic motion as the bass provides stability in the new key. Dynamic contrast and harmonic movement are provided by another crescendo to forte in mm. 39-40, and modulation (E-flat major). The following measure (m. 40) creates harmonic intervals and movement through the use of parallel fifths in the voices (Fig. 33). Although brief, m. 40 is the first homophonic measure of the work, and remains the only one until the final conclusion.
The second section concludes similarly to the introduction as the soprano voices bring the melodic motive to a cadence in the new key (E-flat major). The remaining voices echo the text to create a delayed resolution.

The melodic motive from the second section returns in the soprano voices at m. 46, following another modulation to A-flat major (Fig. 34/a-b). Although its melodic movement, rhythmic structure and meter remain identical, the accompanying voices are no longer in unison, providing additional harmonic texture through *divisi.* A sense of urgency is heard through the use of dynamic markings *mezzo piano, mezzo forte,* and *crescendo,* to an intense *forte,* for the final inclusion of the main melodic motive.
Following a crescendo in m. 55 and another modulation to G-flat Major, the melodic motive returns a final time at m. 56. The soprano voices continue to carry the motive; however, the upper tenor voice (in unison with the sopranos) is included, adding emphasis to the theme. The alto and bass voices in divisi maintain the full harmonic structure in the accompaniment.

Rather than concluding the third presentation of the theme, Gjeilo immediately transitions into the ‘dona nobis’ text, where a harmonic progression beginning in G-flat major ascends toward the climax through a seven-bar crescendo. The first ascent concludes through a unison V of G-flat major (C#) in the soprano, alto, and tenor voices.

During the previous seven-bar crescendo leading to fortissimo (fff), a second homophonic ascent to climax begins at m. 71. As the soprano, alto, and tenor voices ascend, the bass voice descends through a stepwise circle of fifths progression (Fig. 35) to m. 77, as the work arrives in C major.
A brief conclusion begins following a measure of silence and modulation to E major. Dynamic contrast to piano and the absence of the soprano voice provide a darker timbre and color toward the conclusion. The soprano re-enters at m. 85, pianissimo (ppp), with a final peaceful plea (‘pacem ’), echoed by the remaining lower voices.

**Additional Performance Notes**

The music in *Phoenix (Agnus Dei)* requires a choir of more advanced and versatile singers. This beautiful setting of the ‘Agnus Dei’ text contains wide vocal ranges in all voices, especially in the soprano and bass. Control and flexibility of vocal technique are required to capture the essence of the music. This can be particularly challenging for young singers, due significant interval leaps in the soprano motive and its dramatic dynamic contrasts (Fig. 36). Its complex meter and rhythms in the motive and harmonic movement can also be challenging in the initial learning process.
With excessive sustained notes and long phrases, vibrato should only be utilized for additional color. Heavy and uncontrolled vibrato could cause intonation problems throughout the heavily composed divisi. This can make the work vocally demanding, and the conductor should plan rehearsals accordingly so that singers do not become vocally exhausted.
**Unicornis captivatur**

- **Unicornis captivatur**, The Unicorn is captured,
- **Aule regum presentatur**, It’s presented to the royal court
- **Venatorum laqueo**, In the hunters’ snare,
- **Palo serpens est levatus**, Creeping, it freed itself from the pole
- **Medicatur sauciatus**, Because it’s wounded, it heals itself
- **Veneno vipereo**, With the viper’s venom.

- **Alleluia canite**, Sing Alleluia,
- **Agno morienti**, To the dying lamb,
- **Alleluia pangite**, Sing Alleluia,
- **Alleluia promite**, Cry Alleluia
- **Leoni vincenti**, To the victorious Lion.

- **Pellicano vulnerato**, Life returns to the wounded Pelican
- **Vita redit pro peccato**, After miserable death
- **Nece stratis misera.**, In its nest for the sins of the world.
- **Phos fenicis est exusta**, The Phoenix’ light is burnt out,
- **Concremanturque vetusta**, The ancient sins of the world
- **Macrocosmi scelera.**, Are utterly consumed by flame.

- **Idrus intrat crocodillum**, The Hydra enters the crocodile,
- **Exitis privat, necat illum**, Deprives it of its entrails, kills it,
- **Vivus inde rediens;** And comes back alive;
- **Tris diebus dormitavit** Three days long
- **Leo, quem resuscitavit** the Lion slept till the King
- **Basileus rugiavit** Awakened it with a roar.\(^{115}\)

As one of Gjeilo’s earliest composed choral works (2001), *Unicornis captivatur* portrays the composer’s talent of combining early music elements of chant and text with modern harmony and dissonance. Composed for unaccompanied SSAATTBB chorus, *Unicornis captivatur* was “not written for any kind of occasion or commission, but born

from the inspiration of a particular text that lights a spark in the composer’s heart.”\textsuperscript{116}

The work received its premiere by the Norwegian Academy of Music Chamber Choir and conductor Grete Pedersen in 2001.\textsuperscript{117}

**Text**

As previously discussed, the music in many of Gjeilo’s recent compositions has been the priority of his work, rather than the text. The composer, however, provides an opposite approach in *Unicornis captivatur*, having been “greatly inspired by the colorful and powerful symbolism and just the sheer drama, joy and sense of triumph that the text exudes.”\textsuperscript{118}

The text comes from the Engelberg Codex, a compilation of medieval sacred monophonic works transcribed in the late 14th century, belonging to the library of the Benedictine Abbey in Engelberg, Switzerland.\textsuperscript{119} Parke explains:

*Unicornis captivatur* is filled with rich symbolism drawn from the mediaeval bestiaries, illustrated volumes containing descriptions of both real and fabulous beasts and birds, each description accompanied by some sort of moral lesson. Bestiaries were intended as serious encyclopedias of natural history, however bizarre its creatures may seem to us and however convoluted and laboured the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ola Gjeilo, *Unicornis captivatur*, Score. Composer’s Comments.
\item \textsuperscript{117} *Unicornis captivatur* is dedicated to Grete Pedersen. Ms. Pedersen provided the work’s benchmark recording with the World Youth Choir in 2003.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ola Gjeilo, *Unicornis captivatur*, Score. Composer’s Comments.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Engelberg Codex 314, ed. and trans. Wulf Arlt, Schweizerische Musikdenkmäler; Bd.11 (Winterthur, Schweiz: Amadeus, c1986).
\end{itemize}
moralisations. They were considered both scientific and moral authorities as late as the Elizabethan age.\footnote{Parke, Kathryn. \textit{Northern Lights; Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo}, ed. Finn S. Gundersen (Colchester, Essex C02 8HX, England: Chandos Records Ltd, 2012), 11.}

**Form, Key, Rhythm, and Meter**

The free form is developed through three contrasting sections, which present the descriptive passages of text. Gjeilo provides a response at the conclusion of each of these contrasting sections by utilizing the second stanza of text.

Frequent use of key transition also helps identify the free form. The first two descriptive passages are composed in E minor, followed by the response, which begins in the same key. This response, however, quickly transitions each time to parallel E major. The third and most prolonged passage travels through numerous keys, beginning in B minor. It continues, transitioning through C-sharp minor, F-sharp minor, F-sharp major, A-flat major, before concluding back in B minor. The response again begins in E minor and transitions to E major to conclude the work.

Gjeilo appropriately sets the natural prosody of the text, which results in significant transition of meter and rhythmically complex passages. The multitude of mixed meters and asymmetrical rhythms are especially important in presenting the syllabic stresses of the text, as seen in the bass line from mm. 35-38 (Fig. 37).
A Brief Description of the Music of *Unicornis captivatur*

Gjeilo begins the work in E minor, with a strong and melodic unison chant motive in the soprano (*divisi*) voice. This chant begins *piano* and introduces the mystical nature and dramatic intent with the first stanza of text. Although meter change is minimal to start, the flowing legato motive is presented with rhythmic intention (Fig. 38).

A repeat of the opening text and chant motive continues in the upper soprano voice at m. 10. Unlike the opening, however, Gjeilo composes complex harmony in the lower soprano and alto voices to accompany the motive (Fig. 39).
Although similar to the opening, Gjeilo accents the text through additional rhythmic movement and frequent meter change (Fig. 40). The opening sequence and first stanza of text concludes at m. 21 in E minor, with all women’s voices arriving in unison.
Gjeilo provides a variety of musical texture in the response sequence. The ‘Alleluia’ response begins softly in the previous key of E minor before a dramatic crescendo to fortissimo transitions the sequence into E major, accentuating the joyful intentions of the text (Fig. 41).
This asymmetrical sequence “sparkles like a Renaissance dance” with accented text, frequent meter change, complex rhythms, and vocal ornamentation (Fig. 42). The first response concludes in E major at m. 31.

---

121 Parke, 11. Parke refers to the musical elements to provide her description of this passage.
The second stanza of text begins following a transition back to the opening key of E minor. Gjeilo composes this second section similar to the women’s presentation of the opening text at m. 10. Its melodic and harmonic movement, as well as complexity in rhythm, accented text, and frequent meter change, closely mirror the first section. As the soprano continues to carry the motive, the remaining voices provide the accompaniment. Despite brief divisi in the bass voices, the section is relatively simplified in four-part SATB. Dynamic variation is minimal and remains mezzo forte the full duration of the second stanza.

Although the second ‘Alleluia’ response begins mezzo forte, it is identical to the first response. A minor compositional alteration occurs in the response’s final measure, as Gjeilo’s places the baritone, tenor, and alto voices higher in the concluding E major triad.\footnote{The baritone and tenor voices conclude a third higher than the previous response, on the third and fifth of the chord, respectively. The alto voice is raised from the fifth to the tonic.}

Following a modulation to B minor, the extended third section and introduction of the final text begins forte at m. 52. Presenting the first two lines of the text’s darker imagery, Gjeilo places all the voices in a lower tessitura and simplifies the overall
rhythmic contour. Quarter note motion provides for a legato presentation of the text (Fig. 43).

A modulation ascends to C-sharp minor and begins two repetitions of the first two lines. A crescendo marks the final repetition of text at m. 60 as the soprano motive vocally ascends to a fortissimo, and the section moves briefly into F-sharp minor. A ritard and decrescendo brings the text to conclusion. Gjeilo begins to modulate keys with an added E-sharp in the alto voice, which leads into the next lines of text presented in F-sharp major.
Gjeilo introduces the next line of text through a *piano* marking and instructions to slow the tempo. As the tenor and bass voices conclude and sustain the tonic and dominant of the new key, a contrasting and legato motive presents the next line of text in the soprano and alto voices. Similar to the opening section, the lower soprano and alto voices supply the accompanying line to the upper soprano motive. The motive concludes in m. 76, as a sustained G-sharp in the upper soprano provides the tonic for the next key transition to A-flat major (Fig. 44).

![Fig. 44—“Sustained Tonic,” mm. 75-78; *Unicornis captivatur*](image)

© Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The tenor and bass voices repeat the text, emulating the melodic and harmonic movement provided from the soprano and alto. Gjeilo places the motive in the upper tenor voice, as the lower tenor, baritone, and bass voices provide the accompanying support. The section continues to grow dynamically through a *poco a poco crescendo* to *mezzo forte*, as the soprano and alto voices are added for a final repeat of the text. Gjeilo prolongs the passage by repeating the text ‘*inde rediens*’ throughout all voices. This particular line of text concludes on a half cadence in A-flat major at m. 98, followed by a grand pause.

---

123 *meno mosso* (quarter note=96)

124 ‘*inde rediens*’ translates to ‘come back alive.’
The presentation of the most expressive lines of text begins *pianissimo* following another modulation to B minor.\(^{125}\) Gjeilo utilizes a multitude of dynamic markings, including *pianissimo, poco a poco crescendo, fortissimo, decrescendo,* and *piano,* for the third stanza of text. The text concludes in m. 106 on a B major triad.\(^{126}\)

The final response passage begins similar to the previous, following a simple, but brief modulation to E minor,\(^{127}\) and immediate acceleration back to Tempo I.\(^{128}\) For the first repeated response, dynamic markings, melodic and harmonic movement, rhythmic intensity, and frequent meter change emulate the previous responses. The soprano voice, however, presents a more active line through additional ornamentation composed in the motive. Furthermore, Gjeilo composes a complex rhythmic motive in the bass at m. 120 (Fig. 45). As the bass voices present the text on the strong beats, the remaining voices echo on the weak beats. This first response concludes in E major at m. 124, following a prolonged *crescendo* to *fortissimo.*

---

\(^{125}\) The lower bass provides stability in the new key with a sustained pedal B.

\(^{126}\) A raised third in the baritone voice solidifies the conclusion of the passage in B major.

\(^{127}\) Response quickly transitions to E major, similar to the previous responses.

\(^{128}\) Tempo I (quarter note=116)
The final ‘Alleluia’ response begins with an identical key transition, wide
dynamic variation, rhythmic intensity, and frequent meter changes. As mentioned
previously, Gjeilo prolongs the phrases through a heavily ornamented ascending motive
in the soprano and tenor voices (Fig. 46). This rhythmically boisterous response
concludes abruptly in m. 141 with a grand pause. This allows the ensemble to prepare for
the full homophonic conclusion to the work.

A molto rit. and dramatic dynamic markings (fff) bring the voices together for one
final reiteration of ‘Alleluia’ to conclude the work. The IV-V-I chord progression in E
major concludes on the sustained major triad (Fig. 47).
Additional Performance Notes

*Unicornis captivatur* is a challenging work that is best suited for a choir of more advanced singers. Its frequent use of *divisi* throughout requires a strong and vocally independent ensemble. The vocal ranges for the majority of the voice parts are wide,\(^{129}\) requiring at times, significant flexibility in its faster passages and sheer volume in its most dramatic moments. Although the harmonic complexity of the work is not especially

\(^{129}\) The range is especially high in the upper soprano and upper tenor, and low in both alto voices and lower bass.
challenging, the use of frequent meter and tempo changes, complex rhythms, and key transitions can make the work difficult.

To capture the colorful and powerful intentions of the text, Gjeilo provides dramatic dynamic variation throughout the work, which requires significant control and flexibility of vocal technique. This may be challenging for younger singers and less-experienced ensembles. Furthermore, a more focused and purer tone is ideal for the softer chant passages, which is best supported with minimal vibrato. The work, however, does present opportunities to add color through vibrato, and allows for more comfortable, relaxed, and natural singing.
Dark Night of the Soul

One dark night,
Fired with Love’s urgent longings
   Ah, the sheer grace!
I went out unseen,
My house being now all stilled;

In darkness, and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
   Ah, the sheer grace!

In darkness and concealment,
My house being now all stilled;

On that glad night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
Nor did I look at anything,
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart.\textsuperscript{130}

Through various musical influences and the talent for creating image through music, Gjeilo’s Dark Night of the Soul presents a symphonic “journey of the soul as it leaves its earthly prison and travels toward reunion with God.”\textsuperscript{131}

Composed for SATB\textit{ divisi} chorus, piano and string quartet, Dark Night of the Soul was commissioned by and dedicated to Walton Music Publisher Gunilla Luboff in memory of Norman Luboff.\textsuperscript{132} The Phoenix Chorale premiered the work in Phoenix, Arizona in February 2010. The symphonic work, with its highlighted instrumental


\textsuperscript{131} Parke, Kathryn. Northern Lights; Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo, ed. Finn S. Gundersen (Colchester, Essex C02 8HX, England: Chandos Records Ltd, 2012), 8.

\textsuperscript{132} The string quartet in Dark Night of the Soul is used to double the piano, the right-hand melody in the piano, or the voices throughout the entire work.
presence, cinematic approach and intriguing selection of text, has received high accolades from choral enthusiasts, directors, and audiences.

Text

The text of Gjeilo’s *Dark Night of the Soul* is based on *The Ascent of Mount Carmel—The Dark Night*, a Spanish poem by St. John of the Cross, in 1581. The text was discovered and suggested to Gjeilo by The Phoenix Chorale Executive Director, Joel Rinsema. With this text, Rinsema challenged Gjeilo to expand his writing beyond the use of the Latin language, which to this point was predominant throughout his choral music.

St. John of the Cross was a founder of the Discalced Carmelites, alongside St. Teresa of Avila, and was regarded as a profound theologian, poet, and reformer. Thought of as one of the Church’s greatest “Mystical Doctors,” St. John of the Cross’ writings continue to appeal to scholars and readers alike.

*The Ascent of Mount Carmel—The Dark Night* of 1581 is a poem that consists of eight stanzas divided into four sections. The first two stanzas of Gjeilo’s musical setting of this text proclaim “the effects of the two kinds of spiritual purgation: one, a purification of the sensory part; the other, a purification of the spiritual part.” The third stanza, as part of the remaining six stanzas “proclaims some of the marvelous results which are obtained from the spiritual illumination and from the union with God through love.”

---

133 Kavanaugh, 16.

134 Ibid. 295.

135 Ibid.
A Brief Description of the Music of Dark Night of the Soul

The opening of Dark Night of the Soul presents Gjeilo’s predilection for showcasing important roles in the instrumental lines. No longer being used solely as an accompanying force, Gjeilo places particularly strong emphasis on the piano and string quartet to introduce the work’s overall dramatic intensity. Gjeilo has described this as a “reversal of forces,”\textsuperscript{136} where the voices, despite presenting text, now play the accompanying role typically provided by instruments. Beginning in E minor, an accented, asymmetrical motive in the piano provides a dramatic introduction to the opening section (Fig. 48).\textsuperscript{137}

Fig. 48—“Instrumental Importance,” mm. 1-4; Dark Night of the Soul
© Copyright 2011 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The motive continues throughout the entire opening section (mm. 1-109), where overlapping dissonances between the voice and instrumental lines provide intensity to the

\textsuperscript{136} Ola Gjeilo, interview by Ryan Garrison, Phoenix, AZ, 19 February 2013.

\textsuperscript{137} The string quartet doubles the piano in the opening section.
work. A single soprano voice emerges above the accompanying voices and instruments in m. 53, providing a symbolic plea with the text, “I went out unseen, my house now being all stilled.” This solo, which is heard over the accompanying voices and active instrumental lines, is high in range and requires significant breath support for the sustained notes (Fig. 49).

![Fig. 49—“Soprano Solo (range),” mm. 68-71; Dark Night of the Soul](Image)

At the conclusion of stanza one, a sense of calmness and serenity occurs at m. 109, with an instrumental bridge and piano solo. The voices continue in the accompanying role (on a neutral syllable), while the piano introduces a new melodic motive (Fig. 50), until its conclusion at m. 130.

![Fig. 50—“Piano,” mm. 109-113; Dark Night of the Soul](Image)

As the work modulates to F minor, Gjeilo continues to emphasize the significant role of the piano into m. 132. Despite the unified chant-like motive in the male voices at
m. 135, a sense of intensity to the work remains with the piano’s continual eighth-note movement, heard throughout the entire presentation of stanza two (Fig. 51).

Fig. 51—“Meter and Movement of Line,” mm. 132-133; *Dark Night of the Soul* © Copyright 2011 Walton Music Corporation Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The instruments perform a *decrescendo* leading into m. 156. Combined with the voices singing *pianissimo* in the accompanying role, the soprano solo re-enters at m. 158, and presents a new melodic motive. The repetition of the text “Ah, the sheer grace!” in a sustained legato manner allows for the high-ranged soprano solo to penetrate the accompaniment sufficiently. The solo ends at m. 168, joining the voices in the conclusion of stanza two: “my house being now all stilled.” The work builds in intensity in mm. 173-174 with a two-bar *crescendo*. This subsequently leads to the climax and is the dramatic section of the work.

Gjeilo continues to emphasize the poem’s line, “Ah, the sheer grace,” as the work moves into m. 175. This section illustrates film music’s distinctive influence on Gjeilo, with a cinematic approach toward the climax through transitioning meters, ascending keys, and dramatic dynamic contrast. He creates intensity through full harmony in the voices, and within the rhythmic complexity of the piano (Fig. 52). The dramatic urgency and climax of section two concludes at m. 190 with a *decrescendo* over two measures, providing another sense of calm and conclusion to the text.
The significant role of the piano continues following the concluding middle section with a solo that transitions into the next verse from mm. 192-199. An introduction to stanza three begins at m. 200, where Gjeilo again places the voices in an accompanying role, on neutral syllables, as the piano features another rhythmically complex and melodic motive (Fig. 53).

---

138 This solo transition will be the focus on the importance of the piano, discussed in the additional performance notes for *Dark Night of the Soul.*
The text of stanza three is introduced at m. 208, transitioning to A minor, for the works first and only *a cappella* section. With consideration to the text “On that glad night, in secret, for no one saw me,” Gjeilo composes for the calm and serenity in this literary passage, appropriately described by Kavanaugh:

Although the soul in its progress has not the support of any particular, interior light of the intellect or of any exterior guide that may give it satisfaction on this lofty path—since these dense darknesses have deprived it of all satisfaction—love alone, which at this period burns by soliciting the heart for the Beloved, is what guides and moves it and makes it soar to God in an unknown way along the road of solitude.\(^{139}\)

\(^{139}\) Kavanaugh, 389.
The *a cappella* section is brief. The soprano solo re-enters briefly in m. 216 followed by the piano. The solo releases with the accompanying voices at m. 217, and the piano brings the section to a cadence with a pause at m. 220. A recapitulation of the opening material begins at m. 221, continuing the text of stanza three. The rhythmic motive from the beginning returns following another modulation to the opening key of E minor, allowing for the piano and string quartet to emphasize the accented, asymmetrical motive accompanied by the voices. The conclusion of the text is given simultaneously to all voice parts with a rhythmic reiteration of “Ah, the sheer grace” (Fig. 54).

![Fig. 54—“Return of Rhythmic Motive,” mm. 229-231; *Dark Night of Soul*](image)

© Copyright 2011 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation
The asymmetrical motive from mm. 221-313, combined with accented rhythms, continual dissonance and resolution, and expressive dynamics, all set the scene for a final sense of intensity. An abrupt pianissimo brings this passage to conclusion at m. 313, where the voices, now homophonic, present the final text “dark night of the soul.” Arpeggiated sixteenth-note patterns in the piano continue to provide a driving force toward the conclusion (Fig. 55).

![Fig. 55—“Rhythmic Movement in Piano,” mm. 318-319; Dark Night of the Soul](image)

© Copyright 2011 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

The resolution of dissonance creates a serene and peaceful conclusion at “On that glad night, here the Dark Night ending.” Gjeilo combines a lyrical piano motive from

---

140 Kavanaugh, 389.
m. 322 to the end with voices that *decrescendo* to *pianissimo* on a sustained neutral syllable.

**Additional Performance Notes**

Gjeilo’s *Dark Night of the Soul*, in its symphonic nature, takes a significant leap beyond choral music’s traditional and standard repertoire. Its cinematic approach and intriguing text, present an opportunity for variety in concert programming.\(^1\)

A difficult, but accessible work, *Dark Night of the Soul*’s full *divisi* may seem more appropriate for larger ensembles; however, a smaller ensemble of trained voices may prove just as adequate, if not more so. Challenges may arise in the work’s larger vocal ranges, constant rhythmic motion, and vocal releases, which are particularly challenging in rhythmic passages of the opening and closing sections.\(^2\) Additionally, the high range of the soprano solo and a multitude of key changes can prove particularly daunting.

An accomplished pianist, Gjeilo composed *Dark Night of the Soul* with the full intention of highlighting the role of the piano. No longer being utilized as mere

---

\(^1\) Ola Gjeilo, interview by Ryan Garrison, Phoenix, AZ, 19 February 2013. In Gjeilo’s more recent compositions, a cinematic approach is best identified with the role of the performing forces. Similar to film music, Gjeilo frequently places the voices in the accompanying role on neutral vowel with simple meter, allowing the rhythmically complex and melodic instrumental lines to be especially highlighted. This ‘non-diegetic’ or ‘non-literal’ sound plays the significant role in creating the atmosphere and mood within a film. This is the sound that appears from a source outside the story space, or in this case, the text of the music.

\(^2\) The soprano solo extends to a B\(_5\), often sustained significantly. The lower bass continually sustains D\(_2\) and E-flat\(_2\) throughout. The remaining inside voices and ranges are accessible.
accompaniment, the piano sets the drama of the work and text heard in the asymmetric opening and closing sections, and metrically complex solo bridges and passages, which may be difficult for an amateur pianist (Fig. 56).

Fig. 56—“Piano Solo and Importance of Strong Player,” mm. 193-199; *Dark Night of the Soul*
© Copyright 2011 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation
CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETATION AND RECORDING:

NORTHERN LIGHTS: CHORAL WORKS BY OLA GJEILO

As is the case with any performance, the artistic interpretation of music varies from conductor to conductor. This section discusses specific interpretive choices that conductors Charles Bruffy and Joel Rinsema made in producing The Phoenix Chorale’s recording of Gjeilo’s music, followed by a glance into the early developments of the recording project.

**Interpretation of Dark Night of the Soul, Evening Prayer, and The Ground**

These three works presented minimal opportunity for conductor interpretation, especially with Gjeilo leading the ensemble from the piano. The composer provides extremely detailed markings in each piece, which Bruffy applied in recording these works.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, these three pieces emphasize the important roles of the instruments. Since the piano is a main priority, the conductors and producers determined that removing the piano lid would allow for the piano to provide a brighter, more articulate presence. This brighter quality was effective in achieving the more dramatic intentions of the music. Furthermore, this allowed for legato solo sections to be more present over the accompanying voices.

In *Dark Night of the Soul*, Bruffy suggested that the string quartet play *marcato* or more “off the string, to provide a louder, more forceful, and intense rhythmic thrust
toward the dramatic opening—to match the intensity of the piano (Fig 57)." The adjustment was effective in showcasing the instruments throughout the work.

Fig. 57—“Rhythm Intensity of Piano/Doubled Strings,” mm.1-4; *Dark Night of the Soul* © Copyright 2001 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

Gjeilo and Ted Belledin initially took on the conductor’s role for *Evening Prayer*, performing the improvised instrumental motives. In the early recording stages, Bruffy had insisted on not conducting the work, with Gjeilo and Belledin controlling the overall movement and tempo. Eventually, however, the performing forces insisted that Bruffy provide stability in presence and gesture toward unifying tempo, phrasing, and releases with the instruments.\(^1\)

In *The Ground*, Gjeilo and Bruffy collaborated closely to guide the ensemble through numerous musical and textual transitions. Although Gjeilo provides many essential markings (*poco rit.*, *rit.*) throughout, not every phrase ending had these instructions. Bruffy utilized the *crescendo* and *decrescendo* to slightly and briefly stretch each conclusion before transitioning into the next musical phrase.

\(^{1}\) Charles Bruffy, interview, 27 February 2013. The string quartet doubles the piano.

\(^{1}\) The singers of the ensemble and the instrumentalists preferred Mr. Bruffy leading the ensemble.
Interpretation of *Phoenix (Agnus Dei)*

Bruffy’s interpretation of *Phoenix (Agnus Dei)* provided intensity to the composer’s visual intentions in the work. Adhering to Gjeilo’s expressive dynamics, Bruffy took liberties with tempo by utilizing the marked *crescendo* or *decrescendo* to stretch phrases, which either continued into other phrases, or cadenced.\(^{145}\) This concept brought out the strongest aspect of Gjeilo’s writing. Rinsema explains:

> Ola has a good sense of phrasing and voice leading in all vocal lines. All of his works have a strong introduction, climax, and ending. His transitions (harmonic and melodic) are thoughtfully written, and create a sense of drama within the piece.\(^{146}\)

Although not included in the score, Bruffy suggested the upper tenor join the soprano in m. 46,\(^{147}\) to provide additional color of tone to the motive. This provided variation from the first response and began the initial climax to the work. The upper tenor voice remained on the motive until m. 50, before returning to its *divisi* line in m. 51.

Interpretation of *Prelude, Northern Lights, Tota pulchra es, Ubi caritas* and *Unicornis captivatur*

Bruffy utilizes similar interpretive approaches to each of these works’ complex harmonies and descriptive Latin texts by stretching the tempo to mold phrases together. By placing particular emphasis on text and text movement, Bruffy eliminates the concern

\(^{145}\) Bruffy particularly applied this concept in mm. 35-36, mm. 39-40, and mm. 70-71.

\(^{146}\) Rinsema, interview, 2013.

\(^{147}\) In the original score, the upper tenor eventually joins the soprano motive, but not until m. 56.
with meter and meter transition. This interpretation is applied to the slower and legato chant-like passages in each work.\textsuperscript{148}

In \textit{Prelude}, Bruffy’s interpretation of Gjeilo’s beginning instructions, “with great force and joy,”\textsuperscript{149} is taken literally. With the opening and closing movement’s “joyful and celebratory”\textsuperscript{150} motive, Bruffy’s tempo exceeds the composer’s marking. Rinsema explains Bruffy’s organic approach exploring the character of the work:

In early performances of \textit{Prelude}, Bruffy’s interpretation of the work was more aggressive and strident. Particularly catching his ear was the medieval-like organum presented through the drone. He had the singers accentuate the drone through a more brassy and nasal tone. Although this was not intended by the composer, the approach was still affective.\textsuperscript{151}

During the recording sessions, Gjeilo insisted on an additional low F-sharp\textsubscript{2} and C-sharp\textsubscript{3} drone in the lower bass voices to provide more of a foundation.\textsuperscript{152} This allowed for a sense of arrival to the conclusion following the middle sequence.

In \textit{Northern Lights}, Bruffy placed significant emphasis on the role of the accompanying voices from mm. 21-35. Although Gjeilo composed each release on the third beat, Bruffy either shortened or extended each release to “clear a way for other harmonies and place more emphasis on the text in the motive.”\textsuperscript{153} The first release is

\textsuperscript{148} This interpretation was especially applied in \textit{Ubi caritas} and \textit{Tota pulchra es}.

\textsuperscript{149} Gjeilo, \textit{Prelude}, score. Composer’s Comments.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{151} Rinsema, interview, 2013.

\textsuperscript{152} Gjeilo, interview, 13 February 2013.

\textsuperscript{153} Bruffy, interview, 2013.
placed near the off-beat of two; the second on the off-beat of three; and the final on the originally intended beat three release (Fig. 58).

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
1 & 3 & 2
\end{array} \]

Fig 58—“Variety in Releases,” mm. 30-31; *Northern Lights*
© Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

In *Unicornis captivatur*, Bruffy creates additional intensity toward the descriptive text by having the ensemble sing multiple phrases without organized breath. This is especially effective in mm. 52-65 and mm. 66-93. In measures where breathing opportunities would be typical, Bruffy provides a slight crescendo, “to drive the intensity of the text and harmonic movement forward.”

**Interpretation of Serenity and The Spheres**

Gjeilo utilizes an overlapping fade-in/fade-out effect to achieve a visual component in *Serenity* and *The Spheres*. In *Serenity*, this technique is applied between the solo cello and accompanying voices in the opening and closing sections. Gjeilo applies the same technique between the voices in the opening section of *The Spheres*.

---

\[ \text{Ibid.} \]
In both works, Bruffy takes significant liberties with tempo by stretching the overlapping chords between each voice entrance. Rather than focusing on a precise meter throughout, Bruffy extends the phrases by having each voice enter when cued. Combined with Gjeilo’s dynamic markings, the intended imagery is achieved.

In *Serenity*, Bruffy’s relaxed sense of tempo is immediately established in the opening measures. Rather than strictly adhering to the length of each sustained note and releasing on the intended rest, he utilizes the *decrescendo* to “extend and prolong the accompanying ‘echo effect,’”¹⁵⁵ into the second half of the measure. This also allows for an appropriate give and take between the solo cello and voices (Fig. 59).

Fig. 59—“Extended Release,” mm. 22-23; *Serenity*  
© Copyright 2010 Walton Music Corporation  
Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.
Bruffy applies the same concept in *The Spheres*, having the voices extend briefly into the next measure of rest. This allows for a continued overflow of sound between each of the voice lines (Fig. 60).

**Fig. 60**—“Voices Extended Release,” mm. 23-26; *The Spheres* © Copyright 2008 Walton Music Corporation Reprinted with permission from Walton Music Corporation

**The Recording**

From 2009-2010, during Gjeilo’s tenure as composer-in-residence, The Phoenix Chorale either performed or premiered music of the composer in each of its four themed concerts. The response was immediate, appealing to a significantly broad range of audiences and singers.\(^{156}\)

Shortly thereafter, Joel Rinsema provided archival recordings of the early performances to Blanton Alspaugh and Ralph Couzens.\(^{157}\) The two were aware of the popularity of Gjeilo’s music and concluded a recording would be truly warranted.

Rinsema explains:

\(^{156}\) As a performer involved in premiering Gjeilo’s music, I recall the abundance of enthusiasm from interacting with audience members following numerous performances. These performances were given to choral scholars, performers, and general enthusiasts.

\(^{157}\) Mr. Rinsema played a significant role in the overall development of *Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*. Mr. Rinsema also provided valuable artistic insight while working closely with Mr. Bruffy.
Our record label, Chandos, encouraged us to record a CD of a young, relatively unknown but quality composer. They knew of the success of the Whitacre and Lauridsen discs on other labels, and wanted the kind of commercial success that those experienced. Also, we felt the repertoire fit the [Phoenix] Chorale’s sound perfectly—repertoire that Charles [Bruffy] could apply significant artistic interpretation and insight. Gjeilo’s attention to beautiful melodies, and sensitive choral writing were very appealing to us, and we knew that it would appeal to a broader audience. To put it simply: this recording would share with the world a new voice in choral music that celebrates the musical and compositional styles and traditions of the past, while at the same time bringing new harmonies, textures, and styles of the next generation of choral composition.

The recording presented the opportunity to collaborate closely with a living composer. Although Bruffy essentially had the final say in the interpretation and presentation of the music, it was unique to have the opportunity to investigate and explore the artistic possibilities of each piece with the composer present. Bruffy, Rinsema, and the team of producers spent considerable time deciding which of Gjeilo’s music would be performed on the recording. Rinsema explains:

We wanted to perform and record an overview of Gjeilo’s works. He is a young and gifted composer who has only been writing [quality] choral music since the early 2000’s, but in that time span, his compositional style has already shown quite a bit of diversity. *Ubi caritas* and *Unicornis captivatur* are examples of some of his early works that are more traditional and conventional in approach to melody and line, whereas *The Spheres* and *Dark Night of the Soul* are more minimalistic works, while still retaining melodic integrity. We felt that if we were presenting this album to the world as a fair representation of his first twelve years of serious compositional output, that we needed to show that diversity.

---


159 Gjeilo was present for the entire recording process, and his role at the piano in *Dark Night of the Soul* and *Evening Prayer* was essential toward the interpretation of those pieces.

160 Rinsema, interview, 2013.
Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo has had more popular success than any prior recording by The Phoenix Chorale, particularly with new and younger listeners and audiences.161 “Many have agreed on the recording’s high quality of performance, and the appeal Gjeilo’s works have had to a broader public.”162 James Unger, a fan of the album, provides his impressions on Amazon via his personal blog site, stating:

If you are a fan of choral harmonies and deeply emotional, absolutely breathtaking sounds, than this recording is a must have! I was simply mesmerized by the tranquil harmonic beauty—it really caught me off guard. Fans of movie soundtracks, classical choral and symphonic works will adore this album!163

Marcus DiBenedetto, provided his impressions of the disc in his blog:

This choral work is breathtaking—The Phoenix Chorale does a superb performance. Each track has its “cathedral” overtones, as a “new age” aspect weaves its way throughout the music. The engineering is excellent and makes use of your entire surround sound.164

The enthusiastic responses from younger and newer listeners of choral music (similar to those above) continue to have an appeal with Gjeilo’s ability to infuse multiple music styles in his compositions. His jazz oriented and cinematic approach to recent

---

161 The recording has had significant online success with high-customer rankings on iTunes and Classical Billboard.

162 Rinsema, interview, 2013.


works has been described as “pleasing to the ear and comforting to the soul,”\textsuperscript{165} with their strong melodic motives, complex harmonies, and the unique roles in the instruments. Gjeilo continues to generate interest from a broad range of audiences by composing with this approach.

The accessibility of Gjeilo’s earliest music, such as \textit{Ubi caritas} and \textit{Prelude}, continues to present opportunities for growth for various levels of ensembles. Younger and less experienced ensembles have found these work’s traditional melodies combined with modern harmonies most appealing. More importantly, these works provide the tools to introduce aspects of choral singing, which include performing \textit{a cappella} music (choral blend in the ensemble), a historical approach to varying styles, and an introduction to vocal techniques (vocal pedagogy).

With the release of this recording by the Grammy-award winning Phoenix Chorale, produced and released on Chandos, the world’s largest independent classical record label—has made Ola Gjeilo’s music more accessible to potential listeners, including those in the younger generation. Only time will tell how Gjeilo’s music will be received by future generations. Based on my experience preparing, performing, and conducting Gjeilo’s music, in addition to the commercial and popular success of this recording, I believe that Ola Gjeilo will be recognized as one of the prominent choral composers of the early 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.

REFERENCES

Books


Manuscript


Periodicals


Papers


Websites


Interviews


_______. Interview by author, 5 March, Phoenix. Email correspondence.


_______. Interview by author, 17 February 2013, Phoenix. Phone correspondence.

_______. Interview by author, 20 February 2013, Phoenix. Email correspondence.

_______. Interview by author, 4 March 2013, Phoenix. Email correspondence.

_______. Interview by author, 21 March 2013, Phoenix. Phone correspondence.


_______. Interview by author, 25 February 2013, Phoenix. Email correspondence.

_______. Interview by author, 24 March 2013, Phoenix. Phone correspondence.

_______. Interview by author, 27 March 2013, Phoenix. Email correspondence.
Music


________. *Evening Prayer*. (Unpublished)


APPENDIX A

PUBLISHED CHORAL WORKS BY OLA GJEILØ
Choral Works

TITLE: Away in a Manger (arr.)
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.
LANGUAGE: English
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2012
CATALOG NUMBER: 10304767
UPC: 884088657208
PUBLISHER ID: 08501835
VOICING: SATB a cappella
LEVEL: Easy/Medium
DURATION: 4:30
INSTRUMENTS: None
NOTES: Original melody by William J. Kirkpatrick. Separate octavo included from Christmas Carols vol. 2.
RECORDINGS: Tora Augestad/Nova Chamber Choir at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Christmas Carols vol. 1
TEXT SOURCE:
LANGUAGE: English
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2012
PUBLISHER CODE: WW1487
VOICING: SSAATTBB a cappella
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 14:00
INSTRUMENTS: None
NOTES: 3 of 7 Christmas carol arrangements commissioned for Nova Chamber Choir’s To Whom We Sing Christmas CD. Included songs: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, In the Bleak Midwinter, God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen. All works required use of double choir.
RECORDINGS: Recording excerpts at www.olagjeilo.com
   O Come, O Come, Emmanuel—The Phoenix Chorale
   In the Bleak Midwinter—Nova Chamber Choir
   God Rest You Merry Gentlemen—The Phoenix Chorale
TITLE: Christmas Carols vol. 2
TEXT SOURCE:
LANGUAGE: English
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2012
PUBLISHER CODE: WW1488
VOICING: SATB a cappella
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 16:00
INSTRUMENTS: None
NOTES: 4 of 7 Christmas carol arrangements commissioned for Nova Chamber Choir’s To Whom We Sing Christmas CD. Included songs: Away in a Manger, The Holly and the Ivy, Coventry Carol, The First Nowell.
RECORDINGS: All recording excerpts at www.olagjeilo.com
Away in a Manger—Tora Augustad/Nova Chamber Choir
The Holly and the Ivy—The Phoenix Chorale
Coventry Carol—The Phoenix Chorale
The First Nowell—Alison Chaney/The Phoenix Chorale

TITLE: Dark Night of the Soul (1579-1581)
TEXT SOURCE: St. John of the Cross
LANGUAGE: Spanish poem translated in English
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2011
CATALOG NUMBER: 10278640
UPC: 884088580544
PUBLISHER ID: 08501791
VOICING: SSAATTBB
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 14:00
INSTRUMENTS: Piano and String Quartet
NOTES:
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—
Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo
The Phoenix Chorale at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Evening Prayer
TEXT SOURCE: St. Augustine of Hippo (attributed)
LANGUAGE: English
PUBLISHER: Not available
DATE OF PUBLICATION: Not available
VOICING: SATB
LEVEL: Medium
DURATION: 6:00
INSTRUMENTS: Piano, Tenor Saxophone
NOTES: currently not available for sale
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—
Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo
TITLE: Gloria
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.
LANGUAGE: Latin
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION:
CATALOG NUMBER: 10067365
UPC: 884088313159
PUBLISHER ID: 08501690
VOICING: SSAA
LEVEL: Medium/Advanced
DURATION: 3:25
INSTRUMENTS: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, 2 Horns, Timpani, and String Orchestra. Four-hand accompaniment.
NOTES: Commissioned for St. Olaf Christmas Festival
RECORDINGS: St. Olaf Manitou Singers and Orchestra at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: The Ground
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.
LANGUAGE: Latin
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2010
CATALOG NUMBER: 10276430
UPC: 884088552435
PUBLISHER ID: 08501774
VOICING: SATB
LEVEL: Easy/Medium
DURATION: 3:30
INSTRUMENTS: Piano and optional string quartet
NOTES: Extracted from Sunrise Mass
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo
Central Washington University Chamber Choir at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Holly and the Ivy (arr.)
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.
LANGUAGE: English
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2012
CATALOG NUMBER: 10304829
UPC: 884088657482
PUBLISHER ID: 08501836
VOICING: SATB a cappella
LEVEL: Medium
DURATION: 3:30
INSTRUMENTS: NONE
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale at www.olagjeilo.com
TITLE: Luminous Night of the Soul  
TEXT SOURCE: Charles Anthony Silvestri/St. John of the Cross  
LANGUAGE: English  
PUBLISHER: Walton Music  
CATALOG NUMBER: 10304832  
UPC: 884088657604  
PUBLISHER ID: 08501837  
VOICING: SATB  
LEVEL: Advanced  
DURATION: 9:00  
INSTRUMENTS: Piano and String Quartet  
NOTES: Sequel to Dark Night of the Soul, but may be performed separately.  
RECORDINGS: Cantare Houston with Ola Gjeilo at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Northern Lights  
TEXT SOURCE: Anon. Text from Song of Solomon  
LANGUAGE: Latin  
PUBLISHER: Walton Music  
CATALOG NUMBER: 10090831  
UPC: 884088493615  
PUBLISHER ID: 08501748  
VOICING: SATB a cappella  
LEVEL: Medium  
DURATION: 4:35  
INSTRUMENTS: None  
NOTES: Music inspired by the aurora borealis atmospheric lights.  

TITLE: Phoenix  
TEXT SOURCE: Agnus Dei  
LANGUAGE: Latin  
PUBLISHER: Walton Music  
INVENTORY #HL 08501749  
UPC: 884088493622  
PUBLISHER CODE: WW1446  
VOICING: SSAATTBB a cappella  
LEVEL: Advanced  
DURATION: 5:30  
INSTRUMENTS: None  
NOTES: Inspired by Phoenix and the Arizona desert.  
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo  
Sofia Vokalensemble at www.olagjeilo.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SATB</th>
<th>a cappella</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
<th>RECORDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Great concert opener and closer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXT SOURCE</td>
<td>Exsultate, Jubilate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo</em>&lt;br&gt;Sofia Vokalensemble at <a href="http://www.olagjeilo.com">www.olagjeilo.com</a>&lt;br&gt;University of Houston Concert Chorale at <a href="http://www.olagjeilo.com">www.olagjeilo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER</td>
<td>Walton Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATALOG NUMBER</td>
<td>10027661</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>884088144715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER ID</td>
<td>08501649</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SATB</th>
<th>a cappella</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
<th>RECORDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanctus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uranienborg Vokalensemble at <a href="http://www.olagjeilo.com">www.olagjeilo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXT SOURCE</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER</td>
<td>Walton Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATALOG NUMBER</td>
<td>10046163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>884088223397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER ID</td>
<td>08501675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SSAATTBB</th>
<th>divisi a cappella</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
<th>RECORDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Eve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate/Advanced</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Inspired through photography by Jake Rajs, in the book <em>These United States</em>.&lt;br&gt;<em>Second Eve</em> was commissioned by, dedicated to, and later premiered by the Riverside City College Chamber Choir and conductor John Byun in Riverside, California, Oct. 2008.</td>
<td>The Phoenix Chorale at <a href="http://www.olagjeilo.com">www.olagjeilo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXT SOURCE</td>
<td>Sancta Maria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE OF PUBLICATION</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER</td>
<td>Edition Peters (PE.P72296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATALOG NUMBER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER ID</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOICING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TITLE: Serenity
TEXT SOURCE: O magnum mysterium
LANGUAGE: Latin
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
CATALOG NUMBER: 10304873
UPC: 884088641290
PUBLISHER ID: 08501809
VOICING: SSAATTBB
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 6:00
INSTRUMENTS: Violin or Cello
NOTES: Instrument utilized in opening and closing. Middle section is a cappella for choir.
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—
Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo
Sofia Vokalensemble at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: The Spheres
TEXT SOURCE: Kyrie
LANGUAGE: Latin
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
CATALOG NUMBER: 10088077
UPC: 884088475710
PUBLISHER ID: 08501725
VOICING: SATB divisi a cappella
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 5:30
INSTRUMENTS: None
NOTES: A cappella arrangement from beginning of Sunrise Mass
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—
Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo
The Phoenix Chorale at www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Sunrise Mass
TEXT SOURCE: Latin Mass
LANGUAGE: Latin
PUBLISHER: Walton Music
CATALOG NUMBER: 10304081
UPC: 884088650643
PUBLISHER ID: 08501827
VOICING: SSAATTBB
LEVEL: Advanced
DURATION: 32:00
INSTRUMENTS: String orchestra
NOTES: Symphonic Mass
RECORDINGS: Excerpts at www.olagjeilo.com
TITLE:  Tota pulchra es  
TEXT SOURCE:  Anon.  
LANGUAGE:  Latin  
PUBLISHER:  Walton Music  
DATE OF PUBLICATION:  2001  
INVENTORY #HL 08501700  
UPC: 884088324971  
PUBLISHER CODE:  WW1417  
VOICING:  SATB a cappella  
LEVEL:  Advanced  
DURATION:  6:30  
INSTRUMENTS:  None  
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—
*Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo*
Sacred North (Exlibris) Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir at
www.olageilo.com

TITLE:  Tundra  
TEXT SOURCE:  Charles A. Silvestri  
LANGUAGE:  English  
PUBLISHER:  Walton Music  
DATE OF PUBLICATION:  
CATALOG NUMBER: 10276418  
UPC: 884088549275  
PUBLISHER ID: 08501772  
VOICING:  SSAA  
LEVEL:  Moderate  
DURATION:  3:30  
INSTRUMENTS:  Piano and optional string quartet  
NOTES: American Choral Directors Association Women’s National Honor Choir consort, Chicago, Illinois.  
RECORDINGS:  University of Mississippi “Ole Miss” Glee at
www.olageilo.com
TITLE: Ubi caritas  
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.  
LANGUAGE: Latin  
PUBLISHER: Walton Music  
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2001  
CATALOG NUMBER: 10025943  
UPC: 884088141134  
PUBLISHER ID: 08501631  
VOICING: SATB a cappella  
LEVEL: Moderate  
DURATION: 3:00  
INSTRUMENTS: None  
NOTES: Accessible to good high school choirs.  
RECORDINGS: The Phoenix Chorale—  
"Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo"  
Central Washington University Chamber choir at  
www.olagjeilo.com

TITLE: Unicornis captivatur  
TEXT SOURCE: Anon.  
LANGUAGE: Latin  
PUBLISHER: Walton Music  
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 2001  
CATALOG NUMBER: 10046197  
UPC: 884088223502  
PUBLISHER ID: 08501679  
VOICING: SATB a cappella  
LEVEL: Advanced  
DURATION: 7:00  
INSTRUMENTS: None  
NOTES: Text from Medieval Latin poetry  
RECORDINGS: “The Phoenix Chorale—  
"Northern Lights: Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo"  
World Youth Choir at www.olagjeilo.com
APPENDIX B

COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSION
--- On Tue, 11/20/12, Bynumite@aol.com <Bynumite@aol.com> wrote:

From: Bynumite@aol.com <Bynumite@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Project completion--Ryan Garrison
To: rgarrison01@yahoo.com
Date: Tuesday, November 20, 2012, 1:17 PM

Dear Ryan,
Forgive me for my silence! This is totally my fault and my apologies are very sincere!
We are in the midst of production here and I lost track of your request.

You hereby have Walton's permission to include music excerpts in your
dissertation material (I find the Figures most interesting - thanks for including them!).

Good luck with your dissertation!
All best,
Gunilla Luboff

Gunilla Luboff, publisher
Walton Music
1028 Highland Woods Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27517, USA
ph. 919.929.1330
fax 919.929.2232
email: info@waltonmusic.com (editorial office)
email: bynumite@aol.com (publisher direct)
www.waltonmusic.com
Friday, March 8, 2013 12:21 AM

Dear Ryan,

I hereby give you permission to use material from my unpublished score *Evening Prayer* for your dissertation.

All best,
Ola Gjeilo.

On Wed, Mar 6, 2013 at 8:55 PM, Ryan Garrison <rgarrison01@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good evening, Ola.

Since *Evening Prayer* is not yet published, I will need your permission to use the few figures I present in the document.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to let me know.

Hope your travels are going well! ;)

Thanks,
Ryan

--

[www.olagjeilo.com](http://www.olagjeilo.com)
[www.facebook.com/ola.gjeilo](http://www.facebook.com/ola.gjeilo)
[www.youtube.com/olagjeilo](http://www.youtube.com/olagjeilo)

Atlanta, GA
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Kay Norton
MUSIC BUIL

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 02/07/2013

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 02/07/2013

IRB Protocol #: 1302008773

Study Title: "A Selection of Choral Works by Ola Gjeilo for SATB Choir: Composition, Interpretation, and Record Chorale's Northern Lights"

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.