

URBS BEATA

Composed by John Sanders (1933 – 2003)

A Cantata for Alto soloist, SATB choir, Solo Cello, Brass Ensemble, Percussion and Organ.

Libretto : Reverend Jonathan Hadfield (compiled from original, biblical and patristic sources)

Commissioned by the Three Choirs Festival Committee for performance in Gloucester Cathedral on Friday 24th August 2001 and based on an idea by William Armiger.

First Performance: James Bowman : Counter-tenor
Rachelo Howgego : Solo Cello
Solo Trio: Philip Colls (alto)
Mark Davies (tenor)
William Armiger (baritone)
Solo Treble: Edward Brech
Solo Baritone: Christopher Monk
Organist: Ian Ball
The Three Cathedral Choirs of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester.
Conductor : Adrian Lucas.

(The Cantata was created in a way which would make it both attractive to perform and, in terms of finance, readily accessible to a wide range of choral groups.

It does, however, require a countertenor soloist of some character and stage presence !)

It would make up about half of a concert programme.

Forces required: Choirs SATB with divisions; alto/counter-tenor soloist; soloists from the choir (Trio: ATB; Treble and Bass)
Organ; solo cello; 3 trumpets; 3 trombones; tuba; timpani; percussion (1 player) – bass drum, side drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, whip, gong, tubular bells.

The work is in ten movements:

- 1: Birth of Order from Chaos
- 2: The Primal Vision – the Hymn of the First Hierarchy.
- 3: The Fall of Satan and of Man
- 4: The Consequences
- 5: The Divine Image – Dimmed but not Destroyed
 - a: The Song of Western Atheism
 - b: The Song of Eastern Religion
- 6: The Finest Crack – the Jewish People
- 7: The Prophecy
- 8: The Medicine
- 9: The Resurrection
- 10: Urbs Beata – The Vision

John Sanders wrote the following note:

Much of the music is based on a sequence of 12 semitones first heard in No 1, representing the Birth of Order from Chaos. This sequence of notes (call it a 'tone-row' if you wish), appears in most of the movements in various guises and keys. Sometimes it is used to build chords, sometimes to create melodic passages for voice or cello, and in No 5(a) part of it becomes a Passacaglia – the duet between Alto and Cello soloists. So much for mechanics !.

The prime function of the music is to enhance the meaning and atmosphere of the words. In that sense it could be described as 'film music' ! Finding the right libretto took well over a year, but when Jonathan Hadfield gave me his text I immediately felt it had the right mixture of mysticism and realism to spark off the alchemy of inspiration.

X

Urbs Beata - The Vision

John Sanders (1933 - 2003)

Maestoso (♩ = 66) Organ *ff*

Soprano
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty — of light,

Alto
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty — of light,

Tenor
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty — of light,

Bass
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty of light,

Maestoso (♩ = 66) *ff*

Soprano
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty — of light,

Alto
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty of light,

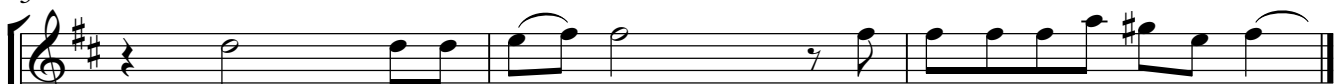
Tenor
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty of light,

Bass
New Je-ru-sa-lem, — ci - ty of light,

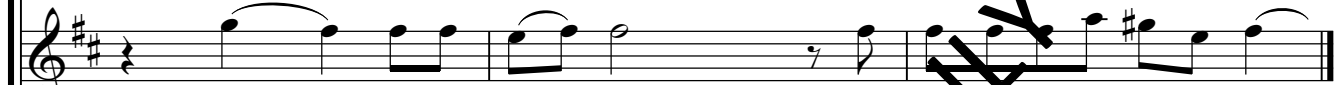
Maestoso (♩ = 66)

Piano reduction
Organ *ff* Brass

5

S. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

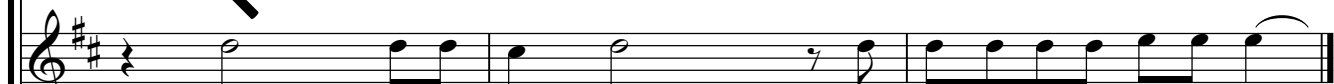
A. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

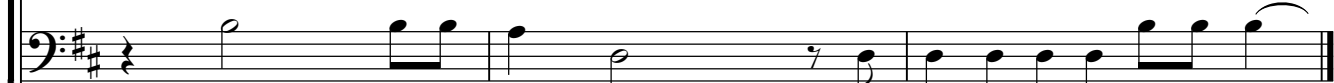
T. 
home of the right - eous and man-sion of the high-est King

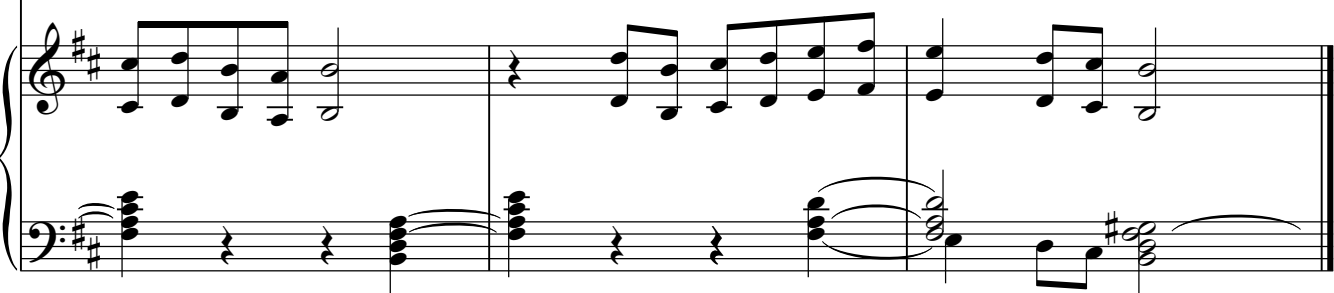
B. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

S. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

A. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

T. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

B. 
home of the right - eous, and man-sion of the high-est King

Kbd. 

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