

THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR, A CHRISTMAS REVERIE was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Vance George, Director, in celebration of their twentieth anniversary season; the premiere took place at Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, California on December 6, 1992.

THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR, A CHRISTMAS REVERIE was conceived as a theater piece, although it may also be performed in concert format. If staged, the conductor should be absent or as inconspicuous as possible.

## CAST

THE LONELY PIANIST (center stage under a spotlight)

ANGELIC HOST (large group divided SATB placed in an elevated position or ringed about the hall; in darkness, holding candles)

CHEERFUL CAROLERS (solo SATB; possibly with mufflers and a lantern)

## PLOT SUMMARY

Alone on Christmas Eve, the LONELY PIANIST, oppressed by the relentless cheer of the Season amid the suffering in the world, seeks comfort in his music. To his surprise, his first notes awaken him to the ANGELIC HOST and their timeless message. He plays to them; they sing to him. CHEERFUL CAROLERS stroll by, whose song fills the LONELY PIANIST with nostalgia and melancholy. He ceases to play, trying to shut them out and listen only to the ANGELIC HOST. But the message of the CHEERFUL CAROLERS and the ANGELIC HOST conjoin to buoy him up in bliss, and the once-lonely PIANIST feels at one with the Season and Mysteries Eternal.

DURATION: ca. 6' 20"

Dedicated to the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, its director, Vance George, and to their pianist, Marc Shapiro

# The Midnight Clear

## A Christmas Reverie

for SATB Chorus, SATB Soloists and a Lonely Pianist

Various Texts

Conrad Susa

**Spacious, tranquil (♩ = ca. 44)**

**Carolers**

S. **A.**

**Angelic Host**

T. **B.**

**Lonely Pianist**

*mf mp*  
*sonore*

*mf mp*

*red.* \* *red.* \*

(Alone on stage in a spotlight)

*(off-stage)*  
*(Light candles gradually)*  
*mp blissfully*

Al - - - le - lu - ia!

*(Light candles gradually)*  
*p blissfully (echo) 3*

Al - - - le - lu - ia!

*(Light candles gradually)*  
*pp comfortingly (echo)*

O rest! O

*(Light candles gradually)*  
*p comfortingly*

O rest! O hear!

*(ringed about the hall)*

*accel. poco a poco*

5

Two empty musical staves, one for the treble clef and one for the bass clef, both in 4/4 time. The staves are marked with a '5' at the beginning.

*colla piano*

*p*

*mp*

*pp*

Musical staff with lyrics: "O rest and hear! \_\_\_\_". The staff is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a decrescendo.

*p*

*mp*

*pp*

Musical staff with lyrics: "O rest and hear! \_\_\_\_". The staff is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a decrescendo.

*p*

*mp*

*pp*

Musical staff with lyrics: "hear! \_\_\_\_ O rest, \_\_\_\_ o rest and hear! \_\_\_\_". The staff is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a decrescendo.

*p*

*mp*

*pp*

Musical staff with lyrics: "O rest, \_\_\_\_ o rest and hear! \_\_\_\_". The staff is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a decrescendo.

*accel. poco a poco*

Piano accompaniment for the vocal parts. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and a crescendo. The left hand features a bass line with a decrescendo. Dynamics include *mp* and *cresc. poco a poco*. The piece ends with a *loco* marking.

8ba.....

loco

9 *molto accel.*  
(All candles lit by now.)

Con moto (♩ = ca. 136), quasi una cadenza

*molto accel.*

Con moto (♩ = ca. 136), quasi una cadenza

8va

*molto*

*ff rapturously*

"Hodie Christus natus est"

Sost. Red. al %

12

8

*ff*

*ff*

% Sost. Red. al %

## Meno mosso, tranquillo

16

Two empty musical staves, one in treble clef and one in bass clef, both in 3/4 time signature.

Four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - - ia!". Performance markings include *pp blissfully*, *comfortingly*, *p*, and *morendo*. The lyrics are: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - - ia!".

## Meno mosso, tranquillo

8

Piano accompaniment staves. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes and a melodic line. The left hand features a sustained bass line. Performance markings include *mp dolente, espr.*

22

$\text{d.} = \text{d.}$

*mf* always cheerfully

It came up-on the

*mf* always cheerfully

It came up-on the

(Still off-stage)

(The Carolers gradually come nearer.)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Words by Edmund H. Sears (1846alt.), music by Richard S. Willis (1850).

*sempre pp* *lontano*, always full of wonder and joy

Glo - - -

*sempre pp* *lontano*, always full of wonder and joy

Glo - - -

*sempre pp* *lontano*, always full of wonder and joy

Glo - - -

*sempre pp* *lontano*, always full of wonder and joy

Glo - - -

$\text{d.} = \text{d.}$

*loco*  
8ba

28

mid - night clear, That glo - rious song of old, — From an - gels bend - ing near the earth, To

ri - a in ex - cel - sis

ri - a in ex -

ri - a in ex - cel - sis

ri - a in ex -

*piú cant.*