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Commissioned by the Choral Arts Ensemble of Rochester (Minnesota), Michael Culloton, Artistic Director

Musica, Dei donum optimi

for SATB Chorus (divisi) unaccompanied

Anonymous 16th-century Latin poem

Daniel Pinkham (1923–2006), tr.*

Stephen Chatman

Smoothly; with expression ♩ = 76

Music, gift of the best god,

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Musical score for Soprano and Tenor/Bass parts, measures 1-4. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Smoothly; with expression' with a quarter note equal to 76. The lyrics are: 'Mu - si - ca, De - i do - num op - ti - mi, mu - si - ca,'. Dynamics include *pp* and *p*. A 'Faster' section begins at measure 4 with a quarter note equal to 84.

Musical score for Soprano and Tenor/Bass parts, measures 5-9. The key signature is B-flat major and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Faster' with a quarter note equal to 54. The lyrics are: 'De - i do - num op - ti - mi, mu - si - ca, De - i do - num'. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. Performance instructions include 'stagger breathing, cresc. poco a poco'.

Musical score for Soprano and Tenor/Bass parts, measures 10-14. The key signature is B-flat major and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'op - ti - mi, De - i do - num op - ti - mi, De - i do - num op - ti -'. Dynamics include *poco f* and *dim. poco a poco*. Performance instructions include '(cresc.)', '(rit.)', and 'stagger breathing'.

Musical score for Soprano and Tenor/Bass parts, measures 15-18. The key signature changes to B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Faster' with a quarter note equal to 84. The lyrics are: 'mi, tra - hit ho - mi - nes, tra - hit'. Dynamics include *pp* and *p*. Performance instructions include '(ritard.) (dim.)', 'attracts mortals,', 'stagger breathing', and 'accelerando poco a poco it attracts gods,'.

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stagger breathing until measure 31 or 33
Music softens

19 (accel.) *mp* *mf*

de - os, tra - hit ho - mi - nes, tra - hit de - os. Mu - si -

tormented spirits

25 *f div.* $\text{♩} = 54$ *dim. poco a poco* *unis.* ()

S ca - tru - ces mol - lit a - ni - mos, ()

A *f* *dim. poco a poco* ()

T *f* *dim. poco a poco* ()

B ca - tru - ces mol - lit a - ni - mos, ()

$\text{♩} = 54$

(for rehearsal only)

32 (dim.) *poco rit.* *pp* *poco accel.* $\text{♩} = 54$ *stagger breathing* *mf*

S a - ni - mos, mu - si - ca tru - ces, mu - si - ca tru - ces

A

T (dim.) *pp* *mf*

B

38 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 44$ *p* *pp* *accel. poco a poco* *and cheers sad minds.* *mp*

S mol - lit a - ni - mos tris - tes - que men - tes e - ri - git,

A

T *p* *pp* *mp*

B

66 *mp ten.* *p, pp* *accel. poco a poco* *p stagger breathing*

S 1 ca, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

S 2 *mp ten.* *p, pp* *p stagger breathing*

A vel ip - sas ar - bo - res, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

T *ten. mp* *p, pp* *p stagger breathing*

B vel ip - sas ar - bo - res, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

accel. poco a poco

71 *(accel.) mp* *stagger breathing until measure 83* *mf* *f div.* $\text{♩} = 54$

S ar - bo - res, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

A *mp* *mf* *f*

A ar - bo - res, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

T *mp* *mf* *f*

B ar - bo - res, mu - si - ca, mu - si - ca, vel ip - sas

$\text{♩} = 54$

(accel.)

92

rit.

p

hor - ri - das mo - vet fe - ras.

*

p div.

hor - ri - das mo - vet fe - ras.

rit.

* Some tenors may sing the baritone part in mm. 92-98.

July 9, 2007
Vancouver, B.C.
4'00''

Musica, Dei donum optimi

Musica, Dei donum optimi, trahit homines, trahit deos.
Musica truces mollit animos tristesque mentes erigit.
Musica vel ipsas arbores et horridas movet feras.

*Music, gift of the best god, attracts mortals, it attracts gods.
Music softens tormented spirits and cheers sad minds.
Music also stirs the very trees and tames frightful wild beasts.*

Anonymous 16th-century Latin poem
English translation by Daniel Pinkham (1923–2006)