

PEACE ASCENDS

I. AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.*

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.

*Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.*

(Agnus Dei),
qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
dona nobis pace.

*(Lamb of God),
who sits at the right hand of the Father,
grant us peace.*

II. WHERE CHARITY AND LOVE

Where charity and love abound, that is where God is found. Gathered by compassion, unified by love. (Charity, unified by love.) Where charity and love abound, that is where God is found. (Compassion. Abounding love and charity.) Where charity and love abound, that is where God is found. Gathered by compassion, unified by love.

Let us exult in God alone with gladsome heart we bow. With purity of heart, unified by love.

Let us beware, lest we be divided. Let strife give way and bitter quarrels cease. And in the midst of us be the Christ, our God.

Where charity and love abound, that is where God is found. Gathered with the saints above, looking on with love on to Thy countenance, O Christ our God, in joy beyond all joy with love beyond all love on through eternal ages!

III. ILLUMINATION

Adveniet Autem dies Domini ut fur

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief:
And the heavens will pass away with a roar
And the earth and all in it will be proven true by fire*

Cum igitur haec omnia dissolvenda sunt

*Since, therefore, all these things are to be
dissolved,*

Quales oportet vos esse in sanctis
Conversationibus et pietatibus

*What sort of people are you to be in lives of
holiness and godliness?*

Adveniet Autem dies Domini ut fur

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief:
And the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved!
And the heavens, they will melt as they burn!*

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promises as some understand slowness to be.

The Lord is patient and we are waiting for new heavens and earth where righteousness dwells and we will worship him.

Videbunt faciem eius
Nomen eius in frontibus eorum
Et nox ultra non erit
Et non egebunt lumine lucernae
Neque lumine solis
Quoniam Dominus Deus Illuminabit illos
Et regnabunt in saecula saeculorum

*They will see his face
His name will be on their foreheads
And night will be no more
And they will need no lamplight
Nor light of the sun
Because the Lord God will be their light
And they will reign in time beyond all time*

INSTRUMENTATION

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 A Clarinets
2 Bassoons

2 F Horns
2 C Trumpets
2 Trombones

Timpani
Percussion 1 (Crotales, 4 Toms & Triangle)
Percussion 2 (Marimba, Vibraphone, Tenor Drum, Field Drum, Bass Drum & Suspended Cymbal)

Strings

Transpose Score
Duration: *ca.* 27 minutes

NOTES

Peace Ascends was composed for the Southwestern Seminary Master Chorale and its conductor, David Thye. The inspiration for this work came from the story of Benjamin Larson, a seminary student who was helping the people of Haiti when the earthquake hit in January of 2010. Ben was buried under rubble from that earthquake and was singing a song of peace as he died. Tragedy eventually hits all people and *Peace Ascends* is a representation of how Christians can respond.

Agnus Dei begins with an unaccompanied solo baritone voice that is then joined by the low strings. The piece culminates with divided chorus singing in rhythmic canon creating a wall of moving lines. When this choral texture is presented, the text is a celestial scene of *who sits at the right hand of the Father*. The baritone returns in a quiet moment focusing on peace.

Where Charity and Love begins without a break from the previous movement, focusing on simplicity and the beauty of the choral sound. The orchestra begins with a two-part theme that is developed through the movement, and which the choir takes over at the end. This text is a translation and adaptation by the composer from the well-known ninth-century Latin text *Ubi Caritas*.

Illumination interrupts the ending of the previous movement with the biblical text *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief*. The choir presents the Latin text and baritone presents the English translation. The mixture of the Latin and English languages suggests eternal timelessness as it intersects with the present day. The first large section musically depicts the “day of the Lord” with an adapted quote from the second movement on the text *What sort of people are you to be in lives of holiness and godliness*. The second main section of the movement has a developed return of the divided chorus presenting the wall of moving lines from the first movement. The text is a celestial picture that emphasizes the hope of heaven

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BIOGRAPHY

Stephen P. Johnson is associate professor of theory and composition as well as the dean of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary School of Church Music where he teaches orchestration, composition and theory. His repertory includes various solo, chamber ensemble, large ensemble, and choral/orchestral performing forces that have been performed in various recitals, concert halls, and music festivals across the United States. Johnson studied composition with Edwin T. Childs, George Flynn, Donald Crockett, James Hopkins and Frederick Lesemann.

Some of Johnson’s performances and honors include winning the 1998 Phi Beta Mu Composition Competition for Illinois resident composers for his *Fanfare on the Austrian Hymn*; the selection of his woodwind quintet *Windy City*, for the 1999 Crane Festival of New Music with George Crumb; his orchestral work *Before Dawn’s Twilight* being selected for performance in the highly competitive New Music for Orchestra Concert by the USC Symphony in 2003; his *Four Preludes of the River* winning the 2004 Klienman Competition of DePaul University; the premiere in 2005 of his commissioned piece *Libera me* (revised) at the Hall of Crucifixion-Resurrection in Hollywood; and a commission in 2006 to accompany *The Crucifixion* and *The Resurrection* paintings at Forest Lawn, Hollywood, recorded at 20th Century Fox Studios.