

BRIGHT NEW
WINGS

A MUSICAL OF HOPE AND TRANSFORMATION

BOOK & LYRICS BY

RAGAN
COURTNEY

MUSIC BY

CYNTHIA
CLAWSON

ARRANGED BY

BURL
RED

Performance Time: Approximately 50 Minutes

Also Available:

JMG1136.....	Listening CD
JMG1137.....	InstruTrax CD
JMG1138.....	Orchestration CD-ROM*
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*Orchestration Instrumentation: Guitar/Mandolin/Banjo (ad lib) and String (or Electric) Bass (opt. drums); Synthesizer (opt.)

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Alfred Sacred

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Foreword

It is customary to write in this space a few well-chosen words that describe and summarize the musical work. I would like to take exception to that practice in order to share a personal feeling.

Arranging *Bright New Wings* has been for me a tremendously satisfying and fulfilling experience. I think you will have a similar reaction upon hearing it.

The mystery and vitality of Christian transformation is beautifully expressed in the words of the leper: “To be changed from a Caterpillar into a butterfly is amazing; but no more so then being changed from a leper into a child of God.”

So “come with us to another time and place,” and experience the magic and reality of *Bright New Wings*.

-Beryl Red

Production Notes

Staged performances of *Bright New Wings* by churches or schools do not require a performance license (other than the purchase of an ample number of choral scores and desired companion products). However, performances by churches, schools, semi-professional, or professional groups when admission is charged are subject to different licensing and royalty stipulations, and all such groups should contact Jubilate Music Group for details. Also, if you plan to videotape, film, or otherwise record your performance please contact Jubilate Music Group (866-742-7212 or info@jubilatemusic.com) to obtain mechanical and/or synchronization licenses.

A production of *Bright New Wings*, suitable to the message, suggests a simple set depicting a period from the American frontier. Several locales such as Appalachia or the Old West are possible. The use of multiple levels would add interest. Varied and creative lighting would be effective, but is not essential. Simplicity is the key to the whole production. If possible, each actor should have a stand mike to use near the chair in which he/she sits. There should be an assortment of old-fashioned chairs.

The choir members may be dressed in a manner which suggests an earlier period in American history. The men could wear blue jeans, overalls, or black pants; white shirts with sleeves rolled up three-quarters; and black string ties. The women could wear long dresses. Hand fans may be used at the director's discretion.

The six characters who have speaking parts are dressed in similar fashion except for the EXPLAINER who, whether male or female, might wear all black. The actors may or may not be singers; however, it would be appropriate for the EXPLAINER to sing the solo indicated in the song "Bright New Wings."

Beside the EXPLAINER's chair is a table covered with a long black cloth. On the table are the props associated with each character: an artificial butterfly attached to a long, slender wooden dowel (JOHN); an apron and broom (MARTHA); a small white blanket and cane (LAZARUS); a large, gaudy red shawl (THE SINFUL WOMAN); an elastic bracelet with little Christmas bells sewn on it (THE LEPER).

The nature of this work suggests that the actors try not to “act” but rather learn their lines, then tell the stories as honestly as possible, imagining that each telling is the first telling. The actors should listen to the truths in each story and speak as though souls were hanging in the balance. Remember, phony tears are phony. True emotion happens on stage as well as offstage, and a sensitive person can use it to heighten his/her performance. Forced emotion distracts the audience’s attention from what is being said. By telling the stories simply and truthfully, the right amount of emotion will be there. Love is an emotion. Joy is an emotion. Don’t be afraid of it, or apologize for, it but don’t abuse it.

Bright New Wings is written for mixed voices (SATB), but the music is arranged so that it can be performed by a three-part (SAB) choir by simply omitting the bass vocal line. The selection titled “Havin’ to Dust,” for treble voices, can be sung three-part (SSA) as shown, or two-part (SA) by omitting the notes in parentheses.

The songs, narration, and background music should flow continuously from one to another without undue interruption. In some cases, the narration should begin and end at particular points in the music score; these points are indicated by arrows. When such specific instructions are not given, the narration and music will relate in a more general way.

Cast

In Order of Appearance

THE EXPLAINER

the narrator

JOHN

a farmer or cowhand: strong and athletic

MARTHA

a busy housekeeper: nervous and talkative

LAZARUS

a wealthy landowner: dignified and quiet

THE SINFUL WOMAN

a saloon-keeper: worldly-wise, with a warm sense of humor

THE LEPER

a happy-go-lucky man who might sit outside the sheriff's office and whittle: uneducated, but well loved by the townsfolk

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BRIGHT NEW WINGS

RAGAN COURTNEY, ASCAP

CYNTHIA CLAWSON, ASCAP
Arranged by BURYL RED, ASCAP

Introduction

Stately (♩=96) *rit.*

Joyously, with a lilting feeling (♩ = ca. 68)

EXPLAINER: Good evening.* I am here to explain who we are and what we are doing. If this were a show, I'd be a master of ceremonies; if this were a play, I'd be a narrator. But it's neither. "What is it, then?" you ask. Call it what you will, or don't call it anything; but *do* listen as we share our gifts and explore eternal truths.

EXPLAINER *narr. begins*

* Say "morning" or "afternoon" when appropriate.

Repeat (if needed)
for narration

Piano accompaniment for the first system, featuring a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

SOLO (EXPLAINER, if possible)

mf

I have a new song to

CHORUS (S.A.) *mp*

Song to
(T.B.) *mp*

Vocal staves for Soprano and Alto parts, with lyrics and performance markings.

narr. ends

Gm

Gm7

20

sing, And it's like bright new wings Float - ing through

sing, Bright new wings,

Vocal staves for Soprano and Alto parts, with lyrics and performance markings.

C7

F

C
E

Dm

Piano accompaniment for the second system, featuring a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

(JOHN saunters over in "cowpoke" fashion.)

JOHN: My name is John

Loping, "on the trail" feeling (in 2)

mf

Ever since I can remember, my brother and me were thought of by the town as "those trouble-makers."

mp (under narration)

rit.

We always seemed to be in the middle of it. We could outride and outshoot anybody; and if you didn't

believe us, we'd surely try to prove it to you! Somewhere along the line, folks started calling us "the sons of thunder." I guess if the truth be known, that's what we were--"Sons of Thunder"--just a bunch of hot air and noise--not much use to anybody.

One time -- because I was bored and had nothing better to do -- I did a senseless thing. There were some butterflies flitting around a bunch of wild flowers. I thought they made a great target so I started shooting. Those butterflies would explode in mid-air, never knowing what hit them. Pieces of their torn wings fluttered to the ground. When I shot the last bullet and the ringing stopped in my ears, my soul began to ache.

A few days later Pa and James and me were working when a man walked up to us and said, "Come, follow me." I did. I gave no thought to finishing the job we were doing. I just put down my tools and followed. Somehow I knew that *this man* was the only way I could stop the hurting in my soul.

Oh, friends, the things I saw and heard would take me until forever to tell you! I began to see what a *true man* was. I had had it all wrong. It took more strength than me and James

How Can I Understand

Lightly, with expression

CHORUS(ALTO)

120

mp

How can I un - der - stand the de - spair that

(TENOR)
mp

Em D F C

SOPRANO and ALTO
mp

He a - lone felt hang - ing there? How can I

TENOR and BASS
mp

C Bb Gm6 C#dim B7 Em

un - der - stand the need that Je - sus had to

D F C C

warmly
mf

see me freed?

The first system of music features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line begins with a half note chord (F#2, A2) and continues with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

F Bsus B

The piano accompaniment for the first system includes chords labeled F, Bsus, and B. The music is written in treble and bass clefs, showing the intricate fingerings and dynamics for the piano part.

mp

How can I — un - der - stand — sac - ri - fice or

The second system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "How can I — un - der - stand — sac - ri - fice or". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic patterns.

How can I, — how can I

Em D F C

The piano accompaniment for the second system includes chords labeled Em, D, F, and C. The music is written in treble and bass clefs, showing the intricate fingerings and dynamics for the piano part.

know how God — could pay the price — and give His own on

C Bb Gm6 C#dim B7 Em
Bb Bb

The third system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "know how God — could pay the price — and give His own on". The piano accompaniment includes chords labeled C, Bb, Gm6, C#dim, B7, and Em. The music is written in treble and bass clefs, showing the intricate fingerings and dynamics for the piano part.

Havin' To Dust

(MARTHA:)

. . . I had work to do!

*Strong country gospel feeling, with intensity **

(♩ = 88)

CHORUS (S.S.A.)

f

I've been hav - in' to dust a lit - tle,

mf
** S.B.
f
(first time only)

Hav - in' to sweep a lot, — I've been hav - in' to wash the dish -

mf
f
G D

190

es, Hav - in' to scrub the pots, — I've been

mf
f
E7 A7

**This song should be sung with a feeling of anguish and frustration; avoid any temptation to sing flippantly or "corny" country.*

***Any sounds to indicate thumping (bass drum) and sweeping (sand blocks).*

****Whole-note chords may be played first time if pitch support is desired.*

hav - in' to cook the meals, _____ kiss the hurts and help them heal.

D D C G B

Does - n't an - y - bod - y know that my hurt - in' is

G7 D A C G

200
Second time to Coda ⊕ SOLO *mf*

I won - der how high _____ can a sum - mer breeze

Second time to Coda ⊕ CHORUS *mp*

real? Ooo

Second time to Coda ⊕

D (G/D) (D) G/D D G/D

mf

(MARTHA:)

but for another reason.

It's my way of serving Him and thanking Him.

Musical score for the first system, featuring vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a triplet and is marked "Moderately" and "mp".

(MARTHA:)

He gave me a new song!

Broadly

CHORUS (S.A.) *mf*

hold back

Musical score for the second system, including vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked "mf" and "Broadly". The lyrics are: "Now I have a new song to sing, And it's like bright new wings."

Slower than original tempo (in 6)

310 *Triumphantly*

rit. molto

Slowly

Musical score for the third system, including vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked "f" and "rit. molto". The lyrics are: "song to sing, And it's like bright new wings."

segue in tempo

The Truth of His Grace

320

Plaintively (♩ = 100)

Am(sus9)

Am
G

F#dim(m7)

Piano accompaniment for the first system. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *resp.* (respiratory) marking. The right hand features a melodic line with a wide interval, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. Chords are indicated as Am(sus9), Am/G, and F#dim(m7).

Fmaj7

Bdim(m7)

E

rit.

Piano accompaniment for the second system. The music continues with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The right hand has a melodic line with a wide interval, and the left hand has a steady bass line. Chords are indicated as Fmaj7, Bdim(m7), and E.

a tempo

MALE SOLO (first time only)

p esp. (tacet second time)

Male solo vocal line. The melody is simple and expressive, with a wide interval. The lyrics are: "A - lone in dark de - spair, with".

a tempo

CHORUS (second time only)

Chorus vocal line. The melody is simple and expressive, with a wide interval. The lyrics are: "gone, is gone, with".

(T.B.)
resp.

Bass line for the chorus. The bass line is simple and expressive, with a wide interval. The lyrics are: "To fear all hope is gone, with".

a tempo

Am

Dm
A

Am

Am
G

Piano accompaniment for the final system. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a wide interval, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. Chords are indicated as Am, Dm/A, Am, and Am/G.

330

no one to hear my plea,

(S.A.) *p esp.*

No one to lift me up,

Fmaj7 F6 Fmaj7 E7 Am

I cried in emptiness

(lightly)

lift me up,

To choke in my soul's dry

Dm A Am Dm A



Humorously *mf* *sarcastically* *segue narration*

SINFUL WOMAN: Me they jeered at. I have known the heat of vicious eyes burning hate into the back of my neck. I was the wicked woman who ran a tavern. All the things they said about me were true, and then some. But still I had feelings. Oh, I pretended it didn't hurt. "Sticks and stones" and all that, you know. I even once tried going to church, but one of the fine sisters got up and moved when I sat down beside her. It got so that I ventured out less and less during daylight. Like some creature of the night, I only breathed cool evening air in the dark alley behind my place of business.

If business forced me to be on the public thoroughfare, I would protect myself behind an extra layer of rouge, or a bright new taffeta slip that would swoosh when I sashayed so proudly under my silk parasol. It was a flimsy defense -- no defense at all, you might say -- against the insults hurled at me.

I might have gone to my grave gussied up like a painted buffalo, if I hadn't met Jesus. Now, I didn't meet Him at church, like you might think. Some of the town's leading citizens were having a party, and who should show up but Him. He was a regular sort. He would laugh -- have a glass of sarsaparilla -- but He'd cut the small talk. When one of the fine gentlemen made an insinuating remark about me, and everybody laughed, He didn't. Oh, He smiled, but it wasn't cruel or mocking. It was sort of like He would smile at His sister if she had just gotten back from a long trip. I could have died from shame as their laughing continued to fall on me like

No Man Condemns You

my head held high because I was a clean woman. And my taffeta

Slow, strong gospel feeling (♩ = c. 84)

Chords: Bb, Bb7, Eb/Bb

Dynamic: *mp*

Musical notation for piano accompaniment, including treble and bass staves with chords and melodic lines.

petticoat didn't sound like vicious whispers circulating around my red skirt; it sounded like

Chords: Eb, Dm(Bb on top), Cm7, Bb, Bb7

Musical notation for piano accompaniment, including treble and bass staves with chords and melodic lines.

angels' wings as I walked into newness of life.

CHORUS (S.A.) *mp*

Lyrics: No man _____ con -

(T.B.) *mp*

Musical notation for the vocal line, including treble and bass staves.

Chords: Eb/Bb, Eb, Dm(Bb on top), Cm7, Bb

Dynamic: *mp*

Musical notation for piano accompaniment, including treble and bass staves with chords and melodic lines.

420

demns you, — and nei - ther — does He, —

Bb7 Eb Bb Cm7

He on - ly loves you — and — longs — to see you

F7 Eb Bb Cm7 D

free. — When hope — has left you — with

mp

Bb Bb7

mp

EXPLAINER: Is it not the desire to escape the confines of a stifling existence that causes the butterfly to struggle to get out of the cocoon? Does not the struggle itself help the creature to build up strength to spread its wings to fly to regions that were only dim dreams in the humble caterpillar's head? (*MUSIC begins.*)

(*The EXPLAINER brings over a bracelet, made of small bells, which he rattles as he hands it to the LEPER. At the same time, the LEPER is examining his forearm, amazed that there is no trace of his former disease. He looks up and laughingly addresses the audience in a "folksy" manner.*)

LEPER:
I tried to ignore

Darkly and mysteriously

the white patches that began to appear on my skin. But eventually I had to face the truth. I was a leper. Unclean. Impure. My family wanted to keep me in the house, away from the prying eyes of the neighbors until the end; but I feared contaminating them, so I left to join roving bands of decaying men and women that huddled together for support and fleeting moments of human contact. (*The LEPER puts on the bells brought to him by the EXPLAINER. He shakes them conspicuously as he talks, to accent what he is saying.*)

How can one explain the horror of watching one's body waste away? But that was almost bearable compared to the feeling one had when people would turn their faces in revulsion. Those of us who still had lips would call out, "Unclean! Unclean!" as we walked along the wayside. Some of us wore bells on our clothing to warn others of our approach.

Time and again we heard stories of a Man of God who was going about the countryside healing sick people, and each time the stories would become harder to believe -- crooked limbs straightened, blind eyes opened -- and hardest of all to believe, the dead brought to life. Not that I dreamed I would be healed; but I had yearned for death so long that even this slight

slightly slower second time
mp - mf

“Thank You, Je - sus” is all I can

The first system features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "Thank You, Je - sus" and "is all I can". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in the vocal line.

slightly slower second time

A_b *C7*
mp - mf

The second system shows the piano accompaniment for the second system. It includes the same vocal line as above. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Chord symbols *A_b* and *C7* are placed above the staff. The dynamic marking *mp - mf* is also present.

say, — I say, Thank You for giv - ing me

The third system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "say, — I say, Thank You for giv - ing me". The piano accompaniment continues with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

C7(no3) Fm *Fm* *D_b* *Cm* *B_bm* *A_b*
F *E_b* *E_b* *E_b* *E_b*

The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment for the third system. It includes the same vocal line as above. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: *C7(no3) Fm*, *Fm*, *D_b*, *Cm*, *B_bm*, and *A_b*. Below the staff, the notes *F*, *E_b*, *E_b*, *E_b*, and *E_b* are written.

new life to - day, Thank You for

530

The fifth system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "new life to - day, Thank You for". The piano accompaniment continues with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. A box containing the number "530" is located above the staff.

B_b9 *D_b* *E_b7* *Cm* *B_bm*
E_b *E_b* *E_b* *E_b*

The sixth system shows the piano accompaniment for the fifth system. It includes the same vocal line as above. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: *B_b9*, *D_b*, *E_b7*, *Cm*, and *B_bm*. Below the staff, the notes *E_b*, *E_b*, *E_b*, and *E_b* are written.

lov - ing me in spite of my sin, my

Ab Ab7 Gb Db

sin. I've o-pened my heart, Je - sus, Won't You come in, come.

Ab Bbm7 Ab Eb Db Eb

in? in? I've o-pened my heart, Je - sus,

Ab Fm Ab7 Eb Gb Db Bb7 D Ab Eb Fm

540

Slowly, with strength rit.

Broadly in? *p*

Won't You come in, come in? *p*

Broadly

Bb7 8va Db Eb Ab Db Ab *p*

ad lib.

segue in tempo

Freely

mf *decresc.*

EXPLAINER: Now you have heard these stories – how each person was transformed by the living Christ into a new creature. *rit.*

550

p

You see, all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and the price we pay for sinning is

With a lilting feeling (♩. = ca.68)

mp

Bright New Wings

death. But there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
Behold, all things are made new!

Are you tired of

Musical notation for the first system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

being a crawling creature? Would you like to be transformed from a caterpillar into

560

Musical notation for the second system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

a butterfly? If you will let Him, He can change you right now; and you, too, can have

*Repeat (if needed)
for narration*

Musical notation for the third system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

bright, . . . new . . . wings . . .

Joyously, with a lilt

CHORUS (S.A.) *mf*

Musical notation for the fourth system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

I have a new song to

(T.B.) *mf*

Musical notation for the fifth system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

Am

Am7

Musical notation for the sixth system, including piano accompaniment and vocal line.

570

sing, And it's like bright new wings Float - ing through

D7 G D/F# Em

ev - 'ry - where.

God's sweet air, Tell - ing folks ev - 'ry, ev - 'ry -
ev - 'ry, ev - 'ry,

Am Am7 D7 D/C B E/B

where ev - 'ry - where Of a new life to live, Of a new

where

B G/B G Am Am7 D7

rit. molto

Mak - ing us all, mak - ing us

God's great throne, Mak - ing us, mak - ing us all

Mak - ing us, mak - ing us

This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics: "God's great throne, Mak - ing us, mak - ing us all". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef with lyrics: "Mak - ing us, mak - ing us".

F Am D

rit. molto
Am

This system contains the piano accompaniment for the second system, consisting of two staves. It features chords F, Am, and D in the first measure, and a *rit. molto* marking with an Am chord in the second measure.

all

ten.

mp

His own.

mp

all

This system contains the vocal and piano accompaniment for the third system. The top staff has lyrics "all" and "His own." with musical notation including a *ten.* (tenuto) mark and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The bottom staff has lyrics "all" and "His own." with musical notation including a *mp* dynamic.

D

D7

Em

G7

D

This system contains the piano accompaniment for the fourth system, consisting of two staves. It features chords D, D7, Em, and G7/D in the first measure, and a *mp* dynamic in the second measure.

SOLO *freely mp* *very slowly* 620

He filled my soul.

freely p *very slowly*

Oh, my soul.

freely p *very slowly*

A C# A7 C# D (D/A) D (D/C)

p (lead)

segue

Thank You, Jesus (Reprise)

*LEPER: "Thank You, Jesus" is all I can

CHORUS (background) *p* (S.A.)

Thank You, Je - sus, I

p (T.B.)

Reverently (as before)

Bb Bb Gm Bb7 Eb G7
Ab Ab F (bring out melody throughout) D

(mel.)

*Phrasing of narration should correspond to the phrasing of the melody in the accompaniment, and should be spoken in a natural manner.

say. LAZARUS: Thank You for giving me

say, — I say, oh, Thank You,

The first system of music features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a whole note chord, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines.

Cm(sus 4&9) Cm Eb Bb Ab Gm Bb Fm Bb Eb

The piano accompaniment for the first system is written for both hands. It features a consistent bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines, providing harmonic support for the vocal line.

. new life today. SINFUL WOMAN: Thank You for

Je - sus to - day, to - day, oh,

The second system of music features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a whole note chord, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines.

F9 Fm Bb Bb7 Gm Bb Fm Bb

The piano accompaniment for the second system is written for both hands. It features a consistent bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines, providing harmonic support for the vocal line.

[630] loving me in spite of my sin.

Thank You, Je - sus, in spite of my

The third system of music features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a whole note chord, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines.

Eb Eb7 Db Ab Db Ab

The piano accompaniment for the third system is written for both hands. It features a consistent bass line and a treble line with chords and moving lines, providing harmonic support for the vocal line.

680

sin. — my sin. I've o - pened my heart, Je - sus, Won't You come

Ab Eb Ab Eb Bb Cm7 Bb Eb F

3

Slowly, with strength

in? I've o - pened my heart, Je - sus,

ff *rit.*

ff

Slowly, with strength

Gm Bb7 Ab Eb C7 Bb Gm

F E F rit.

3

Broadly

Won't You come in, come in.

Broadly

8va *ad lib.*

C7 Eb Bb Eb Bb

F



Referred to many as the “singer’s singer” and called “The most awesome voice in gospel music” by Billboard Magazine, **Cynthia Clawson** has received a Grammy and five Dove awards for her work as a songwriter, vocal artist and musician. Her career has spanned over four decades with 22 recordings to her credit.

She was three years old when her father first asked her to sing in the small church he pastored, and Cynthia has not stopped since – from local neighborhood churches to London’s Wembley Stadium. Though never considered a southern gospel singer by critics and fans, she has been honored to be a frequent guest on Bill and Gloria Gaither’s Homecoming Series. Cynthia has reached millions throughout the world with her music.

A graduate of Howard Payne University with a major in vocal performance and a minor in piano, Cynthia was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from her alma mater in 2007. She holds the same honorary degree from Houston Baptist University in 1995.

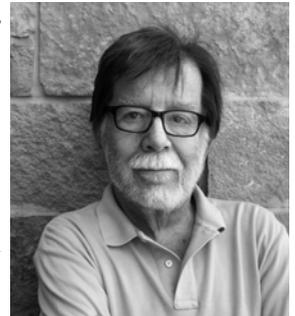
Her rendition of *Softly and Tenderly* set the evocative tone for the soundtrack of the Academy Award winning movie *The Trip to Bountiful*.

Included in her schedule, Cynthia has performed as a guest artist for Grammy-nominated *Conspirare*, a choral group recognized as the preeminent a cappella choral ensemble in the United States. She’s also performed with the Houston Chamber Choir as well as years of singing with church choirs around the world.

Her talents bridge the arts of music, theater and cabaret. Her eclectic style allows her artistry full expression.

Cynthia currently resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico and is married to lyricist, poet and playwright, Ragan Courtney.

Ragan Courtney is a communicator. As a ninth grader he had his first poem published, and this event directed him into a study of literature and a career in writing. When he graduated from Louisiana College, he enrolled in The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, but left after one semester to study acting at The Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater in New York City. After graduating from the Playhouse, Ragan worked at various jobs in the city while working toward the goal of a career in theater. His break came when he and his cousin, C.C. Courtney, wrote and starred in the musical, *Earl of Ruston*. After touring the South the show opened on Broadway in the Billy Rose Theater, but it closed within a week. Devastated at this sense of failure, Ragan was deeply depressed; however, at his lowest point he had a profound spiritual experience that transformed his life.



Out of this experience he wrote, *Celebrate Life!* with his good friend Buryl Red that went on to sell over a million copies and be performed in countless venues. He then wrote, *Bright, New Wings*, with his wife, Cynthia Clawson, and it, too, was a success. In addition to *Celebrate Life!* and *Bright, New Wings*, Courtney has written and published the following church musicals: *Beginnings*, *Lottie D.*, *Acts*, *In the Name of the Lord*, *Song of Bethlehem*, *Angels*, *In Obedience*, and *Room at the Inn*, to name a few. He also wrote and published five books of poetry. They are: *Poems*, by Broadman Press; *The Wind I Soar On* and *Death Has Set My Mind on Fire*, by Triune Publishing; *Suddenly Single*, by Zondervan Publishers; and *Three Voices*, by Convention Press.

Ragan taught at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; worked for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tennessee as a Drama and Worship Consultant; and was the Director of the Center for Christianity and the Arts at Houston Baptist University. He has conducted countless workshops across the country on creative worship. Additionally, he has written, directed, and performed in plays and pageants for nearly 25 years including the remarkable presentation *A Christmas Spectacular* at Houston’s First Baptist Church.

Ragan lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico with his wife where he continues writing.



Buryl Red was a noted composer, arranger, and producer. His work, described by the *Washington Post* as “uncommonly creative,” has been heard in such widely diverse places as Carnegie Hall, *Saturday Night Live*, thousands of churches, schools and theaters (including Broadway and Radio City Music Hall) around the world. His output includes more than 2,500 published compositions and arrangements, production of over 4,000 CD’s, author/editor of more than 50 college/school music textbooks, and the musical supervision, composition, and/or arranging for several hundred shows, documentaries, and music specials, many of them award-winning, for network and cable television. Several of his choral works including *Celebrate Life* (with lyrics by Ragan Courtney), *It’s Cool in the Furnace* (with lyrics by Grace Hawthorne) and the first performing edition of the Pergolesi *Magnificat* (with Virginia Red) are considered landmarks. He was the executive record producer, or consulting producer, for all of the most widely used school music textbooks in the United States including the Silver Burdett Ginn *Making Music* series.

In 1969, at the behest of the Southern Baptist Radio & Television Commission, Buryl Red founded The CenturyMen, an auditioned men’s chorus of professional Christian musicians who are music ministers and educators from across the United States. Red co-arranged and orchestrated most of the music for The CenturyMen since its inception.

Other major collaborations have resulted in a Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Orchestrations (*Violet*, winner of the New York Drama Critics award for Best Musical), and orchestrations for *Caroline or Change* (6 Tony nominations on Broadway and winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Musical in London).

Buryl was co-orchestrator with Joseph Joubert, on the feature film *Nights in Rodanthe* starring Diane Lane and Richard Gere. Together with Michael McElroy they received a Grammy nomination as arrangers for their setting of “Joy To the World” from the Broadway Inspirational Voices CD *Great Joy – A Gospel Christmas*. With Linda Twine and Joseph Joubert, Buryl created the music score for the acclaimed Emmy nominated documentary, *We Shall Not Be Moved*, narrated by Ossie Davis.

Buryl was honored with many civic and professional awards and honorary degrees. Among his most recent honors are the Tercentennial Medal from Yale University, the Exemplary Leadership in Christian Music Award from Baylor University, and the W. Hines Sims Award from the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference. As evidence of his versatility and eclectic interests, Buryl Red enjoyed the distinction of having been nominated for Grammy awards in both the popular division (arranging) and the classical division (classical crossover). He was particularly honored with the inclusion of his well-known song, “In Remembrance”, in the *African-American Heritage Hymnal* published in 2001.