

Instrumentation

The accompaniment to this work exists in two versions:

1. For piano four-hands

The pianists play from the vocal score.

2. For full orchestra

3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo)

2 oboes

2 clarinets in A

2 bassoons

4 horns in F

2 trumpets in C

2 trombones

bass trombone

timpani (optional)

percussion 1—suspended cymbal, bass drum, chimes, glockenspiel

percussion 2—xylophone, vibraphone

harp

celeste (or keyboard)

piano

organ (if no trumpets and trombones)

strings

Full scores and instrumental parts are available on hire/rental from the publisher's Hire Library or appropriate agent.

The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square have recorded this piece with orchestral accompaniment on the CD *Tree of Life: Sacred Music of Mack Wilberg* (SKU 5198840).

Composer's note

A Cloud of Witnesses weaves multiple witnessing stories of Christ's Resurrection into a single tapestry. Drawing on accounts from all four Gospel writers and the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, I have tried to convey something of the momentum of overlapping, successive stories and the breathless astonishment among Christ's followers as the reality of the Resurrection becomes clear.

To create a more panoramic and universal perspective, the piece avoids the use of soloists. Where the choir narrates the action, listeners sense that each event is a facet of a broader, more brilliant whole. And where the choir represents major characters, the audience recognizes that every 'actor' is less anachronistic and more symbolic of all human experience.

In scriptural witnessing stories, there is a clear distinction between visual recognition and spiritual understanding—between seeing and believing—a distinction that demarcates sacred and secular

interpretations of the events. Throughout the work, this difference is represented musically by chant-like accounts of physical ‘seeing’, interspersed with more contrapuntally enriched moments as Christ’s disciples come to a deeper spiritual understanding.

As one would expect, the simple, tightly circumscribed melodies of the narrative tend to be more declamatory. By contrast, the polyphonic responses—alleluias, spiritual awakenings, and Christ’s own injunctions—naturally inform, enrich, and elaborate upon the narrative facts. By design, these contrapuntal nodes cluster around small, close groups of pitches, creating harmonic ‘clouds’ as each individual account lends form and strength to the developing ‘cloud of witnesses’ (a metaphor borrowed from Hebrews 12:1).

Conveying this ‘cloud’ in just over twenty minutes allows listeners to grasp the scope and sweep of this revelatory period. After a short instrumental dawn, the women at the empty tomb enquire frantically, ‘Never shall we see him?’. Then, as the chronicle comes to an end, Christ repeats his own promise that he will continually be with those who believe. As the first words of the work are a repetition of the fear-filled ‘never’, the conclusion is a gentle, comforting, everlastingly sustained ‘always’.

Duration: 22 minutes

This note and the text may be reproduced as required for programme notes.

Text

The Women

Never, never shall we see him?
Never resting in his tomb?
Never, never to anoint him?
Never free of grief and gloom?
Peter, angels saw us frightened,
Knew we sought him crucified.
John, they told us, “He is risen!
Come and see where he once lay.
Go and tell he’s gone before you,
Gone to Galilee this day!”

Then, how they ran—
Peter the Rock and John, beloved one—
Certain to find his body still entombed within,
John stooping down and Peter striding in.

Peter and John

Here are the linen clothes.
Here is the napkin folded, neatly laid.

What kind of thieves would here be duly
staid
To loose this covering from his head,
And set it soft below?

Still, they saw with their eyes alone,
Doubting that he had risen,
Held captive by dread that they could be
imprisoned;
They wept in each other’s arms
And grieved the hour,
And mourned the day,
And rent their hearts,
And ran away.

For they knew not the scripture
That Christ must rise again.

Then Mary of Magdala
Looked into the sepulchre weeping
And saw there two angels,

As seraphim o'er the ark reaching,
Or sentinels at an empty well,
Or vessels of truth only heaven can truly tell.

The Angels

Woman, why do you weep?

Mary Magdalene

Because they have taken my Lord,
And I know not where to find him.

And turning round,
She saw a lowly gardener
Who asked the selfsame question:

The Savior

Woman, why do you weep?
Whom do you seek?

Mary Magdalene

If you've taken my Lord
(If you've hidden his body),
Where can he be found?
(For if he arises as Lazarus,
He'll come forth among wicked men
Without a friend.)

The Savior

Mary!

Mary Magdalene

Master!

And she reached out her hand,
Desiring to be nearer.

The Savior

Restrain me not, for I have not ascended
Into my Father's presence,
But go and tell my brethren I first ascend
to him—
To my God and your God—
The Father of us one and all.

Then ponder on this witness,
This precious reminiscence:
That she who first perceived him
By hope and believing,
Received him in her grieving,

And in our sorrow we will see him
Soon appear!

Then she ran back,
Breathless, telling them
How her night of mourning
Became her joy in the morning.
Ashes to ashes—
Beauty for ashes!
But these were idle tales to those who
doubted.

When James's mother went—Mary—
And Salome and the women,
They saw two angels sitting,
Waiting to lift the burden of their fear.

The Angels

Why are you here?
Why are you seeking him, grieving?
Why look for life where death its spoils is
keeping?
Come see where he was sleeping,
Then go and tell he has risen,
And waits where his first draught of fish
was given.

As the women ran to tell,
Christ greeted them with 'All hail'.
And bowing down, they worshipped him with
joy!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

That day,
As two disciples left Jerusalem
In flight to the village of Emmaus,
A fellow traveler joined them by the way,
Imploring, 'Why do you walk along this road
so sad?'
And they marveled that he was unaware.

The Two Disciples

Have you not heard that Christ
Has been condemned and crucified?
We trusted he was the one who would
redeem all Israel.
But thieves did steal his body,
And women speak of angels!
And seeing none of it with our eyes
Can we believe it's true?

Good man, then what can we do but weep
And sorrow through and through?

The Savior

O ye foolish, tender children,
How slow in your hearts to believe
What prophets foretold
From Moses till now—
Remember all the scriptures saying
One should suffer even death for you!

And they drew nigh to the village,
Pleading for the stranger to tarry:

The Two Disciples

Abide with us, 'tis eventide.

And so they sat at meat, all three together.
And when he took the bread and broke it,
Even the bread of his affliction,
And he blessed and freely
Gave it unto them,
Their hearts beheld that it was Jesus—
Saw him, felt him, knew him,
And he quickly vanished!

The Two Disciples

Then it was him!
Our Lord and Master!
Jesus, Savior, our Redeemer!
Were our hearts not burning,
Souls not yearning,
Though our eyes were not discerning
Of him?

And leaving the village,
That very hour returning
To where the eleven were gathered, meeting,
These two told what had happened—
How first they misperceived him,
But breaking bread, they knew him,
And knowing, then could not see him.
Marveling thus with soft hearts opened,
Christ came among them.

The Savior

Peace be unto you.
My peace I give unto you.

Still they were all affrighted—
They thought they'd seen a ghost!
And trusting not their hearts
But eyes instead,
They yet believed but
Not for joy.

Thus, in their fearing,
The memories of his being
Were hidden from them,
And withered in them,
Until they heard him saying:

The Savior

Why are ye troubled?
What thoughts arise in your hearts?
Behold my hands,
Behold my feet,
For spirits have not this flesh—
This bone that ye see and feel me have.

Then he ate of fish before them,
Rehearsed the words of the prophets,
And calling them forth to tender his wounds,
He readied them to hear his sweet command:

The Savior

Be ye witnesses of these things!
And as God my Father sent me,
So peacefully do I send thee,
And bless thee,
And breathe on thee and say:
Receive the Holy Ghost!

But Thomas disbelieved,
For he saw not.
And since he had not beheld Christ,
What witness could he then bear?
And eight days hence, to him and more
Christ came:

The Savior

Peace be unto you.
My peace I give unto you.
Arise, come forth—
Come, Thomas, see
And feel my wounds for thee.

And reaching, Thomas witnessed,
And heard the call,

The Savior

Be not faithless but believing.

And feeling, believing, Thomas cried,

Thomas

My Lord, my God!

Away to Galilee
The erstwhile fishermen hurried,
But all night caught nothing
Until Christ called to them, 'Children!'
Then drawing in their nets
A draught was given
Which they did bring before
Their risen Lord.

The Savior

Peter, lovest thou me?

Their Master asked.

Peter

Yea, Lord, I do!

And three times Peter reassured,

Peter

Thou knowest I do!
Thou knowest I do!
Thou knowest I do!

Then came the Savior's plea:

The Savior

Go feed my lambs,
Go feed my sheep!
Go feed my sheep!

And at his call unto the mountain top
They gathered, some to worship, some yet
doubting,
With this question in their hearts:

The Apostles

Is it time?

Wilt thou now restore thy kingdom unto
us—

To all the House of Israel?

Is it time?

The Savior

It is not for you to know what God has
put—

Has kept—within his holy power.

Fear ye not!

Ye shall yet receive his power

When soon the Holy Ghost shall come
upon you.

Then, preach my word!

Be a witness unto me in all the world!

And thus he vanished from the sight
Of their eyes,
In a cloud.

Yet still they did yearn to see

Till two angels asked,

The Angels

Why gaze up and grieve?

For your Lord and Master soon will come

As you have seen him go!

Then be ye witnesses!
A cloud of witnesses,
Who feel and know and sing
Of Christ who rose to walk with us,
To heal and comfort us,
Renew and ransom us,
Till by his grace we rise
And run with joy this blessed race,
At last to see his face!

O may our hearts receive
And evermore believe
His promise sure,
'Lo, I am with you alway'.

David Warner

Based on the Gospels and Acts 1,
King James Version

for The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square

A Cloud of Witnesses

David Warner
(based on the Gospels and Acts 1)

MACK WILBERG

Slowly $\text{♩} = 50$

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

PRIMO

SECONDO

pp

Ped. _____

9

moving ahead

p *pp*

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 56$ moving ahead

16

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 66$ moving ahead

23

f *mf* *f* *mf*

Ped. Ped.

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 76$ moving ahead

29

ff *ff*

Ped.

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 84$

Measures 36-41 of a musical score in D major. The score is written for piano with two systems of staves. The first system (measures 36-37) features a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with a melody. The second system (measures 38-41) continues the melody in the bass staff and adds a treble staff with chords. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. Pedal markings are present at the end of measures 37 and 41.

moving ahead

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 92$

Measures 42-48 of a musical score in D major. The score is written for piano with two systems of staves. The first system (measures 42-43) features a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with a melody. The second system (measures 44-48) continues the melody in the bass staff and adds a treble staff with chords. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. Pedal markings are present at the end of measures 43 and 48.

moving ahead

Measures 49-54 of a musical score in D major. The score is written for piano with two systems of staves. The first system (measures 49-50) features a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with a melody. The second system (measures 51-54) continues the melody in the bass staff and adds a treble staff with chords. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. Pedal markings are present at the end of measures 50, 52, and 54.

slightly faster $\text{♩} = 96$

55

ff

ff

60 (The Women)

S.1

S.2

SOPRANO 2 *ff* with agitation
'in his tomb? _____

ALTO 1 *ff* with agitation
'shall we see him? _____ Ne-ver,

ALTO 2 *ff* with agitation
'Ne-ver, ne-ver _____ Ne-ver rest-ing, _____

f

f

SOPRANO 1 *ff* with agitation 'Pe-ter, an - gels _____

65

Ne-ver free of _____

ne - ver _____ grief and gloom? _____

to a - noint him? _____ saw us _____

f *f* *f* *f*

sim.

70

cru-ci - fied. _____ "He is ris - en! _____

Knew we sought him _____ "Come and _____

fright - ened, _____ John, they told us, _____

f *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

75

Go and tell he's gone be -

see where gone be - fore you,

"He once lay. Go and tell he's

With marked rhythm and articulation

80

-fore you to Ga-li - lee.

he is gone to Ga-li - lee.

gone to Ga-li - lee.

With marked rhythm and articulation

f *poco marc.*

f *poco marc.*

Ped.

86

S. *Gone! Gone! Gone to Ga - li - lee this day!"* —

A. *unis. Gone! Gone! Gone to Ga - li - lee this day!"* —

ff poco marc.

Ped.

91

ff poco marc.

marc.

marc.

TENORS & BASSES *unis.**f poco marc. with agitation*

96

T./B.

Then, how they ran— Pe-ter the Rock and

100

John, be - lov - ed one— Cer-tain to find his bo - dy still en - tombed with -

103

- in, John stoop - ing down and Pe - ter strid - ing in.

107

Ped. *Ped.* *sim.*

(Peter and John)

112

TENORS *f*

BASSES

'Here are the lin - en clothes. Here is the nap - kin

116

fold - ed, neat - ly laid. What kind of thieves would here be du - ly staid — To

Measures 116-119. The vocal line features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 117. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand.

120

loose this co - v'ring from his head, and set it soft be - low?

Measures 120-123. The vocal line continues with a similar melodic pattern. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note bass line and a more active right-hand melody.

124

Measures 124-127. The piano accompaniment features a more complex right-hand melody with many beamed sixteenth notes. The left hand continues with the eighth-note bass line.

129 1.B. *unis.* ***f***

Still, they saw with their eyes a - lone, Doubt - ing that he had ris'n,

f ***ff*** ***f*** ***ff*** ***f***

Ped. *sim.*

133

Held cap - tive by dread that they could be im - pris'ned; They wept in each

136

BASSES

o - ther's arms And grieved the hour, And mourned the day, And rent their hearts, And

140

mf

ran a - - way.

f poco marc.

f poco marc.

Ped.

145

149 **TENORS & BASSES** *mp with introspection* **rit.**

T./B. For they knew not the scrip - ture That Christ must rise a -

154 **a tempo**

- gain.