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THE CHORAL MUSIC OF CONRAD SUSA

By

Gilbert Otis Jackson

A RESEARCH PAPER

In Conjunction with a Lecture-Recital

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

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This paper is an attempt to bring to the attention of choral directors and their ensembles the composer, Conrad Susa, and his choral music. The information contained in this paper is based on recorded conversations with the composer and from a study by the author of selected published choral works by the composer.

Susa is not an atonal composer nor does he employ twelve tone technique. He does employ tonal centers within his phrases, but they are difficult to determine. There is a strong tendency toward linear writing and his harmonic usage is characterized by the employment of bi-tonality and bi-modality. His penchant for the interval of a second, its inversion to the seventh, and expansion to the ninth is evident in the chordal structures contained in his works.

It is the composer's intent to express the text and to intensify the message and emotions contained therein. This goal and the composer's study of the text influences how the various musical resources are manipulated within his compositional technique. The works are musically descriptive and with the exception of the folk song settings, are difficult to prepare and perform. The problems arise when the vocal lines are combined and with Susa's penchant for conjunct motion result in seconds, sevenths, and ninths between the various voices. A director must know

Gilbert Otis Jackson

the ability of the ensemble, and the director must determine whether the ensemble can manage music which does not continuously move along common practice lines.

To the memory of my brother

DONALD JACKSON

To my sister

SHIRLEY ANN COOK

and

to Him,

the author and finisher of our faith.

** * **

*For I reckon that the sufferings of this
present time are not worthy to be compared
with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

-- Romans 8:18

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the composer, Conrad Susa, without whose assistance and cooperation this project could not have been completed.

I am grateful to the E.C. Schirmer Music Company, the copyright owners of the works from which the examples used in this thesis have been taken, for granting me permission to include examples from the published music of Conrad Susa.

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To my colleague and friend, Phillip Stubblefield, I express my gratitude for his advice and encouragement, and to my sisters and brothers, particularly Lillian E. Whitfield, Lucy R. Williams, and Nathaniel S. Jackson and my cousins, Monroe and Jean Turner, I wish to express my appreciation for their support.

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CHAPTER I

CONRAD SUSA

Conrad Susa is a prolific and skillful composer of choral music. Although there are numerous accompanied and several un-accompanied choral works among his compositions, his choral music is not well-known by choral conductors or their ensembles. This paper is an attempt to bring the composer and his choral music to their attention.¹

Conrad Susa is an American composer who was born in Springdale, Pennsylvania, on April 26, 1935. From childhood, Susa liked Gregorian chant. He studied clarinet, flute, French horn, piano, oboe, and organ. He "loved" extremely modern music, and he particularly "liked" such composers as Debussy, Bartok, and Schoenberg. Susa received a scholarship from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh where he took composition courses with Nikolai Lopatnikoff. After graduating *cum laude* from Carnegie-Mellon University, he studied composition with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti at the Juilliard School of Music.

¹Much of this paper is based on information recorded by the author during conversations with the composer at his home in San Francisco in March of 1983 (Appendix A includes the complete text of those conversations), and from a study by the author of selected published choral works by the composer.

Susa was a recipient of the George Gershwin Memorial scholarship, and he has won several other awards: the Gretchaninoff Prize, and the Edward J. Benjamin award in 1959, the Marion Freschl award in 1960, the Benjamin award again in 1961, the 1965 Prize Anthem Contest under the auspices of the American Guild of Organists, and a Ford Foundation Grant to compose music for the secondary schools of Nashville, Tennessee.

He has provided scores for the National Shakespeare Festival in San Diego, California, and also for the American Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Connecticut. His works have been played by the Nashville and San Diego symphony orchestras. He has been musical director for the Association of Producing Artists in New York City, and has taught under a Ford Grant at the American Shakespeare Academy winter school and under a Rockefeller Grant for the Association of Producing Artists at the Phoenix Theatre. He held the position of assistant editor of Musical America, and served as staff pianist for the Pittsburgh Symphony.² From 1967 to 1971 he was Field Director, Education Department, Lincoln Center, and is presently musical director at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, California.

A productive and skillful composer, Susa has written for off-Broadway theatre, opera, television, and the film world. He excels in choral writing, and among his works are numerous

²"Conrad Susa," *Diapason* 56 (August 1965): 10.

accompanied choral pieces, five serenades for various groups of voices and instruments, and a *Pastorale* for strings.

A quick examination of his choral music will reveal that much of it was written for Christmas, even though Susa prefers Easter in terms of its importance and extreme significance. In addition to Christmas carols, Susa discovered numerous other types which include: mystical carols, rock carols, Marion carols, and lullaby carols. As the composer relates, "I wanted to expand the Christmas range, if possible, by the kinds of texts that somehow have fallen out of favor these days." Church music and folk music settings make up the next large group of choral selections, and these are followed by a collection of assorted secular numbers. His music is published by E.C. Schirmer Music Company, and a complete listing of his choral compositions is provided in Appendix B. Appendix C provides general information on the individual works.

Susa finds that he can compose best either in the morning, in the evening, or during the night; he has a hard time composing in the afternoon. When composing, he would prefer to be warm, have a few familiar things around him, such as his mug with his pencils in it, and certain other magic talismans. Being somewhat of a mystic, Susa finds that he is unable to compose in a room in which he must overcome some kind of presence or in which someone has just held a meeting. He deeply resents anyone coming into the room and moving anything around while he is working; consequently, it

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is most difficult for him to share a work space except under very special conditions.

Susa's first attempt at composing choral music was to write a Mass. He wrote a number of *Kyries*. One *Kyrie*, of which only a fragment exists, was so complicated harmonically that Susa did not see how he was able to do it. According to the composer, "This would have been about 8th or 9th grade. I do not know how I was dealing with something so harmonically complex." In his writing, Susa has often discovered that the piece he had originally started to write is changed by additional ideas he receives in the process of writing. Frequently he finds that the piece he had intended to write never comes about.

In his mind Susa carries around many unwritten works, mainly because he has not found a circumstance to fit them. He has discovered that it is expensive and time-consuming to write works which will never be performed. To write such pieces requires a special commitment, one which Susa feels he cannot make.

He is not a composer of the common practice style. (In this style, the functions of the different chords and the harmonic meaning of the chord progressions are derived from their relationship to the tonic chord of the key.) Even though he may write a piece along common practice lines, it would not be characteristic of his style. His concept of keys is not based on the major and minor modes, but has more of a modal perspective.

The mention of style brings this reaction from the composer. "I think much too much is made of style, quite frankly. I think a

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work has to be done for what it needs, and I think the rest is theory." Susa states that a lot of other composers arrive at their styles very early, but that he seems to have a number of ways in which he prefers to write. "I think they all are me," Susa states, "and I think that the so-called eclectic atmosphere will be less important in later years as people will see whether the works themselves contain any unity"

In Susa's studio, one notices many volumes of prose and poetry. The unusual texts which the composer uses in his choral works come from these. When asked how he selects his texts, he replied, "I have all these books, but I select my texts by opening pages at random and whatever jumps out at me [is what I use]." There are a number of poems he would like to set, but he is unable to do so because he either cannot secure the copyright release, the music has not "spoken" to him, or he is just not ready to do it.

The ideas for any work are generated from the specific forces for which Susa is commissioned to write. The composer relates that the length of transitions between sections of text are determined for him by the kind of time frame in which he is working, the size of the work, and the size of the forces involved; by what purpose the text is serving, and whether the text is part of a larger work, or whether something is being expanded in the text.

Susa's publisher does not give him specific instructions regarding a work, but he would, like Susa to write a "hit." Susa finds himself to be a rather "appallingly uncommercial" person. He is not against commercialization, but it is not a chief concern.

As a composer, Susa feels that the kind of musical ideas one receives and the working out of those ideas is dependent on one's personality and knowledge. He views himself as a receptor--that is, one who receives the textual and musical ideas which later become a musical work. He would like to weave all the various styles and techniques of our musical heritage "into a new rich kind of strand," rather than having various ideas "flying apart" in his music, or his music demonstrate an eclectic aspect. The composer believes that in some of his later works he has been able to achieve this. He thinks of his music as being "new old-fashioned music" which is not seeking to break the frontiers of music or to teach other composers how to compose. Basically, he would like to find a way to make his music both obvious and strong in the hope "that people could feel they could relate to it." He does not despair when his music is not received well because he finds that someone eventually understands his intent.

Susa often puts his pieces away and then returns to them. He considers himself a great ruminator, and in the last six years, he believes he has become "fussier" in his writing. When asked in what ways he has become "fussier," he replied,

I want more tonal purity in the music; I want the sonorities to be cleaner. I am refining the style, and I am trying to remove unnecessary notes. Basically, I am trying, unlikely as it may seem, to work toward an extremely simple style if I can. I do not care how rich it is, but I want it to be fundamentally simple.

His hope is to make each piece "sufficiently pure so that it is able to stand on its own, and that the music is polished and evolved to a degree that it has its own life without me." Finally, his responsibility is to put the ideas into a comprehensible form so that those who perform it will understand his directions. We will now trace the development of Susa's craft and collected works.

The Development of His Craft and Collected Works

During his undergraduate years at Carnegie-Mellon University, Susa wrote a clarinet sonata, three dances for chamber orchestra, theatre scores, and a number of songs. He describes his music, of those days, as sounding like early Shostakovich--". . . that kind of busy violent energetic style." Then he set two Walt Whitman texts for solo voice which he now perceives as the actual beginning of what he calls his music. He is very fond of these songs, but because they are student works he has never sought to have them published.

In 1958, at Carnegie-Mellon, Susa wrote his first choral piece entitled *The Song of Ruth*. This work shows the influence of Ernest Bloch, whose *Sacred Service* is one of Susa's favorite choral works. He finds that "Bloch's emotionality is evocative coloration," and in *The Song of Ruth*, which also uses a Biblical text, he allowed

his "Bloch fantasies to be indulged." Susa feels that Bloch in some ways has been a continuing influence on his choral music. The use of small and large melismas by Bloch in his works was later incorporated by Susa into his madrigal style.

At Juilliard, Susa's music underwent a great simplification from his Carnegie-Mellon days, particularly in terms of melody and harmony. Susa received the Gretchaninoff Prize for his setting of the James Joyce poems even though his music was out of step with the music of that day, which was characterized by "austerity," an unromantic flavor, "plus all the watch-words of so-called modernism" as these words pertain to the music. Susa, on the other hand, wanted his music "to be romantic, accessible, and warm"; and yet he wished to "incorporate the latest contemporary facets." Susa closed out his work at Juilliard with several instrumental works, a *Canzona* and a symphony.

Susa's first published choral pieces were two chanties, *Blood Red Roses* and *Shenandoah*. Adapted by Susa in 1962, they were first published by Elkan-Vogel Inc. in 1964; however, the copyright ownership has been recently transferred to the E.C. Shirmer Music Company. In these two chanties are stylistic characteristics which still find expression in his works--modal writing, pedal point, Susa's penchant for the interval of the second, non-functional chords, and much use of conjunct motion.

As a Ford Foundation fellow, Susa was named composer in residence in the Nashville, Tennessee Public Schools. In 1961, he

wrote *A Lullaby Carol* for them, and other works for the schools which were based on folk song material. In 1962 he provided two serenades which incorporated folk songs, and in 1963 he harmonized two other folk songs, *Red Rosey Bush* and *Pretty Polly*.

After the two sea chanties and the music previously discussed which Susa prepared for the Nashville Public Schools, the composer's choral writing made a shift to a greater degree of difficulty than that used in his earlier folk adaptations. This shift in difficulty is especially noted when these early works are compared to the works which follow such as the *Three Mystical Carols*, *The Birds*, and *The Knell*. It is with the sea chanties and the folk selections that choral directors who want to expose their ensembles of limited musical ability to Susa's music should begin. This approach allows the director and the group to follow Susa's compositional development. "The fact that my music is difficult," the composer says, "is not because I want it to be so, it must be to sound the way it does. I am simply not writing community choir music. A lot of my music is too difficult for average choirs, which I admit, but I think that enterprising people would seek it."

During this folk song stage of development, Susa continued to be interested in other techniques, and due to his work with the St. George's Episcopal Church Choir of Nashville, Tennessee, and its director, Gregory Colson, Susa was encouraged in the direction of church music. For Colson and his church choir Susa composed four anthems, which showed motivic writing (*Discovery and Praises*),

linear writing (*The Birds*), word painting (*The Knell*), and his interest in medieval music (*The Children's Begging Song*).

After his two-year stay in Nashville, Susa returned to New York City where in 1966 he composed *Three Mystical Carols* for Gregory Colson. These carols crystallized his interest in medieval music, and they are considered by Susa to be the most successful church pieces that he had written up until that time. Inspired by this work, and in somewhat the same style, Susa later set two beautiful medieval poems, *Adam Lay in Bondage* and *I Sing of a Maiden*. These were originally solo songs written earlier in Nashville, but in 1968 he arranged them for chorus.

Among Susa's favorite rock musicians of the mid-60's was Elton John. Some modal harmonies derived from the Elton John style reveal this influence in the *Even-Song*; on the other hand, the rock carols, *An Elegy Carol* and *Man is Born* (both written in 1969) were an attempt to incorporate the rhythmic aspects of rock. According to Susa, "I was still trying to incorporate the popular aspects. I felt that this medieval interest of mine might make my music seem remote and precious. I was really trying to find a stronger popular element myself, but I am still experimenting."

Trinity Sunday (1970), *Even-Song* and *Coloss. 3.3.* (both written in 1972) are settings of George Herbert texts. *Trinity Sunday* makes use of polychords, and it is somewhat uncharacteristic of Susa in that it moves along common practice lines. *Even-Song* shows the composer's employment of bi-tonality. *Coloss. 3.3.* is interesting

in that it is unaccompanied, is in eight parts (SSAATBBB), and has a tenor part which carries a sentence hidden within the text (see Example 40 on page 44 of Chapter II).

The piece, "Class Song," is taken from his opera *Black River* which was commissioned by the Minnesota Opera Company in the late '70's. In this piece Susa makes much use of double inflection (the simultaneous sounding of two tones of the same letter specification in a vertical structure, but which differ in pitch, e.g., C and C sharp). In 1976 he completed the *Hymns for the Amusement of Children*. This is a setting of six hymns by Christopher Smart (1722-1771) for four-part chorus of mixed voices with piano four-hand accompaniment. In this work Susa employs such styles as calypso, blues, and tango. (Notes on this work by the composer can be found in Appendix D.) Written in 1982, *The God of Love*, which is soon to be published, is based on the Twenty-Third Psalm, and the organ accompaniment illustrates Susa's first use of indeterminacy.

The various changes in Susa's style culminate in a music that can be described as tonal, intimate, and labelled by the composer as "new old-fashioned music."

The study of Susa's music can have greater meaning for choral directors if more knowledge and understanding concerning Susa's stylistic characteristics, the music itself, and the performance considerations are available to them. Therefore, the following chapters will consider the stylistic characteristics of Susa's

published choral music, the performance considerations relevant to that music, and the choral music itself.

CHAPTER II

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose of this chapter is to relate those stylistic characteristics which are peculiar to and help to identify the music of Conrad Susa. In this chapter, the harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, textural, formal, and miscellaneous stylistic characteristics of Susa's music will be discussed as well as the descriptive aspects.

Various composers emphasize different aspects of the materials of music. Debussy placed importance on "the primary intervals--octaves, fourths, and fifths--which he used in parallel motion."¹ With Stravinsky, rhythm was central to his art, and with Ruggles, we associate the full exploitation of all twelve tones of the scale. Likewise, the choral music of Conrad Susa results in a unique sound because of his preoccupation with certain aspects of music. The following discussion will indicate where Susa places his emphasis, and it will include the stylistic characteristics that find expression in his works.

As can be seen in Example 1, Susa places emphasis on the major and minor second, both horizontally and vertically, their inversions of a 7th and their expansions to a 9th. His vertical

¹Joseph Machlis, *Introduction to Contemporary Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), p. 116.

Example 1: *Serenade No. 2*²

Piano Reduction
(for rehearsal only)

tenderly

J. ca. 52

quintal structure

quartal structure

structures often contain quintal and quartal arrangements as well as the conventional tertian formations. Example 2 shows further evidence of his engrossment with the second, as he has the tenor line of the accompaniment moving horizontally almost totally in seconds (measures 47-51). This example also shows another important stylistic characteristic in Susa's music--the use of pedal point.

Examples 2, 3, and 4, respectively, illustrate a pedal point in the accompaniment, a pedal in the bass voice as well as in the organ accompaniment, and an inverted pedal in the soprano voice. A unison pedal in the voice parts, which is doubled in the top line

²The examples of Conrad Susa's choral music, which have been used in this research paper, are under the copyright ownership of E. C. Shirmer Company and were used by permission.

Example 2: Serenade No. 2

46 47 E VERSE 3. 48

oth-er one, pass you by. If I had known

pp dolce

C# pedal point

49

be-fore I court-ed _____ that love had been so hard on

Example 3: I Sing of a Maiden

30

came all so still, _____ he came all so

came all so still, _____ he came all so

came all so still, _____ he came all so

p intense

pedal point He came all _____ so

pedal point

Example 4: Shenandoah

The musical score for "Shenandoah" is presented in two systems. The first system includes four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Soprano: "way, you roll-ing riv-er, oo — A -"; Alto: "way, you roll-ing riv-er, O — Shen-an-doah, I long to hear you, — A -"; Tenor: "way, — O Shen-an-doah, I long to hear you, — A -"; Bass: "way, — a - way — A -". The piano accompaniment features a prominent "Inverted pedal point" in the right hand. The second system continues the vocal parts with lyrics: Soprano: "way, I've gone a - way, — a - cross the wide Mis-sou-ri."; Alto: "way a - way. oo — oo — oo — oo"; Tenor: "way a - way. oo — oo — oo"; Bass: "way. oo — oo — oo". The piano accompaniment continues with the same inverted pedal point. Dynamic markings include *p*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ppp*. Performance instructions such as *>* (accent) and *<* (decrescendo) are also present.

of the accompaniment, can be seen in Example 5. From *An Elegy Carol*, pedal points can be found in the soprano, alto, and bass with these doubled in the organ as an accompaniment to the baritone solo (Example 6).

Example 5: Adam Lay In Bondage

33 *ff* *pedal point*

De o gra ti as.

ff *pedal point* *non rit.*

Example 6: An Elegy Carol

49 *ppp* *no re - ply? Why love when the truth of love is mis -*

ppp *Sleep.*

ppp *Sleep.*

ppp *Sleep.*

ppp *Sleep.*

ppp

One can glean more stylistic characteristics from *Serenade No. 2* (measures 72-76 of Example 7) when one observes the vertical sonorities which consist of triadic harmonies, polychords, seventh and ninth chords, groups of seconds spread out (the first beat of measure 76), and seconds in clusters. These are non-functional "color" chords which become principal structures in Susa's writing.

Example 7: *Serenade No. 2*

The image displays a musical score for measures 72 through 77 of 'Serenade No. 2'. The score is written for a single melodic line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). Measures 72 and 73 show the beginning of the piece with a treble staff containing rests and a piano accompaniment featuring eighth-note patterns. Measures 74 and 75 continue the piano accompaniment with more complex rhythmic figures. Measure 76 is marked with a 'rall.' (rallentando) and features a 'ped.' (pedal) marking. Measure 77 concludes the sequence with a final chord. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Man is Born, Example 8, illustrates Susa's use of triadic harmonies which he combines to form polychords. Susa enlarges these sonorities by the addition of different triadic structures in the treble line of the organ accompaniment which sound above those in the treble voices.

Example 8: *Man is Born*

88 *c.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.* *c.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.* *c.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.*

All is hope- and Faith in Man- as God is Man- is

91 *g.m.* *f.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.* *g.m.* *f.m.*

Love, is Love,

Example 9, from *Serenade No. 2*, shows the use of cross relation (measure 75) and double inflection or split-interval sonority. The "Class Song," from Act III of Susa's opera *Black River*, reveals Susa's exploitation of cross relation and split-interval structures (Example 10).

Example 9: Serenade No. 2

Example 9 shows a musical score for measures 75 through 80. The score is written for a single melodic line on a five-line staff. Measure 75 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a half note F#4, and then a quarter note E4. A dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) is present. The melody continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 76. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is placed above the staff in measure 77, with a dashed line indicating a gradual deceleration. The piece concludes in measure 80 with a final half note G4.

Example 10: Class Song

Example 10 presents a musical score for measures 21 through 24 of a piece titled "Class Song". The score is arranged for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.), along with a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "blanch its blush, to dim its light; To mock it when its". The vocal lines feature various melodic intervals and some triplets. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands. Measure numbers 21, 22, 23, and 24 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Characteristic of Susa's writing is his non-adherence to conventional cadential formulas. Although his music often opens with a strong tonal center, many of the final cadences lack tonal definition (see Example 11).

Example 11: Serenade No. 2

The musical score for Example 11: Serenade No. 2 is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 90-94, includes a vocal line with the lyrics "val - ley, and weep and pass all my trou - bles" and a piano accompaniment. The second system, measures 95-99, continues the piano accompaniment with various dynamics and markings.

Note too that in lieu of functional chord progressions to shape his phrases and define tonality, Susa may resort to *ostinati* patterns to provide unity in his works. One such *ostinato* is exhibited in Example 12.

Because Susa's choral music does not generally move along common practice lines, traditional techniques of analysis are not always suitable to explain his music. Let us look at an early work, *Serenade No. 2*.

This work opens with a melodic figure of a second which becomes an important motive in its construction. In measure two, one can observe quintal structures on beat one and on the first half of beat four, while in measure three, a quartal chord can be

Exempl

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those

measur

onset,

Example 12: *My Dove, My Beautiful One (Joyce Songs)*

24

una corda

26

I wait by the ce-dar tree,

29

My sis-ter, my love. White-

found on the first beat. In addition to these quintal and quartal structures, vertical sonorities that employ mixed intervals, especially those which contain seconds, are used--note measure 4, beat 4 measure 11, beat 1. While the *Serenade* is centered about F at the onset, and, while F continues to be the focal point of the melodic

line, the lack of functional harmony and cadential identification tend to obscure the tonality. The use of cross relationships as can be noted in measure 12, beat 4, measure 14, beat 1, etc., might suggest that Susa is consciously employing both the major and minor modes of F (Example 13).

Example 13: Serenade No. 2

Piano Reduction
(for rehearsal only)

ca. 53

1. *tenderly* *mf*

2. *mf*

3. *mf*

4. *mf*

5. *mf*

6. *mf*

7. *mf*

8. *mf*

9. *mf*

10. *mf*

11. *cresc.*

12. *f*

13. *f*

14. *dim.*

15. *p*

Bitonality or polytonal treatment is perhaps suggested in measure 31 where the upper part of the right hand is centered around C, and the left hand is centered around A flat. In measure 32 the trable-bass relationship changes from C to D flat (Example 14).

Example 14: Serenade No. 2

The musical score for Example 14, *Serenade No. 2*, spans measures 31 to 39. The score is written for piano and features a complex bitonal/polytonal structure. Measures 31 and 32 are marked with a 'C' and a 'D' respectively, indicating the tonal centers. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f*, *dim.*, *p*, *pp*, and *p dolce*. The tempo/mood is indicated as *Pochiss. più mosso* in measure 34. The score concludes with the lyrics 'They'll tell' in measure 39.

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39

C *D* *Pochiss. più mosso* *VERSE 1.* *39 p dolce*

They'll tell

Bitonality is again shown in Example 15. Here the voice line, centered about A, reveals a split third and sixth interval while the melodic line in the accompaniment confirms C.

Example 15: Serenade No. 2

56 VERSE 4 **f** *dolciss.* *sub. f*
 line, — I wish I was some lit-tle spar-row,
pp dolciss.
 59
 and I had wings could fly so high.

One can observe Susa's use of tertian harmonies which in some cases result in polychords (measures 71-75 of Example 16). In measures 75, the lower staff is declaring E flat major and the top E minor. E minor appears to momentarily win out during the remainder of the passage with the A in measure 76 acting as a subdominant pedal. However, the E flat is once again heard as it is sounded after the G a major third away in measure 77.

Example 16: *Serenade No. 2*

The musical score for Example 16, *Serenade No. 2*, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 70-72) is marked 'Tempo I' and 'dolce, sostenuto'. The second system (measures 73-74) continues the melody. The third system (measures 75-77) includes a 'rall.' marking and a 'dim.' marking. The score features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

The final section of this work begins at letter H and is centered about C through measure 87. The vocal line, which begins and ends on C, has a distinct Mixolydian flavor, even though the tone E is not present--the right hand of the accompaniment (measures 80-81 and the half note on C in measure 82) gives forth all but the A of the Mixolydian mode on C. Beginning on the second beat of measure 81 and continuing through measure 87, Susa allows the alto voice of the accompaniment to double the vocal line (Example 17).

Example 17: Serenade No. 2

Handwritten musical score for "Verses 80-83" of "The Lord of the Rings". The score is written on four systems of staves, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line.

- System 1 (Verse 80):** The tempo is marked "Tempo 1, ma poco maestoso" and the mood is "Tranquillo". The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The piano part begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The vocal line starts with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *mp* and a tempo marking of *mp grande*.
- System 2 (Verse 81):** The piano part has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The vocal line has a dynamic marking of *p*.
- System 3 (Verse 82):** The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p*. The vocal line has a dynamic marking of *p*. The lyrics "But as I am no lit-tle" are written below the vocal line.
- System 4 (Verse 83):** The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p*. The vocal line has a dynamic marking of *p*. The lyrics "No less vocal line" are written below the vocal line.

The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The piano part is written in a treble clef with a key signature change to two flats. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature change to one flat. The lyrics are written in a cursive, handwritten style.

84 spar - row, nor none of those that fly so high; —

87 I'll go a - way to some lone - some

90 val - ley, and weep and pass all my trou - ble

94 a tempo by.. a tempo

Although tonal unity is provided by the repetitive pattern that began in measure 78, the stress that is placed on the major second in the final measures of the work, obscures its final resting place.

Summary of Harmonic Stylistic Characteristics

1. The vertical use of seconds, fifths, sevenths, and ninths
2. The horizontal use of seconds and fifths
3. The use of seconds in the accompaniment
4. The use of pedal point and of inverted pedal point
5. The use of cross relation and split-interval sonorities
6. The use of non-functional "color" chords
7. The occurrence of an ambiguous final tonality
8. The departure from conventional cadential formulas
9. The key center becomes obscure as the piece progresses
10. The music is tonal
11. The use of the following sonorities:
 - a. Triadic harmonies
 - b. Groups of seconds spread out
 - c. Cluster of seconds
 - d. Polychords
 - e. Seventh chords
 - f. Ninth chords
 - g. Incomplete sonorities
12. The use of *ostinato* technique
13. The common practice style generally not followed
14. The use of two modes simultaneously
15. The use of two key centers simultaneously.

The section that follows will focus on the melodic lines of Susa.

Melodic Stylistic Characteristics

Susa's melodies are influenced by his affinity for Gregorian chants, and are vocally conceived. Example 18, from *The Knell*, illustrates Susa's use of choral speech (chant); *Even-Song* shows the basses being asked to sing in falsetto (measure 49). Xenakis, Penderecki, Legeti, and Crumb, to mention but four twentieth century composers, use the voice in non-traditional ways. Susa, however, is quite conservative in his handling of the voice.

Example 18: The Knell

40 *pp (spoken tonelessly)*
 ...et lux per-pe-tu-a lu-ce-at e-is.
 some re-lief.
pp (spoken tonelessly)
 ...et lux per-pe-tu-a lu-ce-at e-is.
pp (spoken tonelessly)
 ...et lux per-pe-tu-a lu-ce-at e-is.

Example 19: *Even-Song*

47

spacious, confident

mf

p

S wake with thee for ev er.

A

spacious, confident

mf

p

T wake with thee for ev er.

B

falsetto

p

for ev er.

mp

pp

Wide ranges for all voice parts are characteristic of Susa's writing. Example 20 shows all four voice parts at the extreme of their upper range; the wide range of each voice part from the "rock" carol, *Man is Born* is charted in Example 21.

Although Susa's setting of poems by James Joyce come early in his writing, the third movement of this work, "I hear an army," illustrates a melodic characteristic which still finds expression in his later works--the writing of choral parts in octaves.

Vertical relationships of a third, fourth, fifth, or sixth are used by Susa in parallel conjunct motion. *The Birds*, written by Susa in 1967, shows the alto, tenor, and bass voices moving entirely

Example 20: Even-Song

45

ff *slackening to the end* *f*

S — wake — with thee for — ev — er, And

A — wake — with thee for — ev — er,

T — wake — with thee for — ev — er, And

B — wake — with thee for — ev — er, *slackening to the end* *mf*

Example 21:

Soprano Alto Tenor Bass

by conjunct motion in a fifteenth century technique of composition called *fauxbourdon*. The accompaniment likewise is moving in conjunct motion except for one instance in measure five (Example 23).

Example 22: *I hear an army*

Massive, lunging ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 88$)

Choral parts in octaves

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

I hear an ar - my charg-
I hear an ar - my charg-
I hear an ar - my charg-
I hear an ar - my charg-

Piano

Massive, lunging ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 88$)

3

- ing u - pon the land, _____ And the
- ing u - pon the land, _____ And the
- ing u - pon the land, _____ And the
- ing u - pon the land, _____ And the

Piano

Example 23: *The Birds*

5

old, The

p sotto voce

Al

p sotto voce

Al

p sotto voce

Al

f fauxbourdon

Phrases vary in length, and the melodic material within the phrase often contains repeated notes (Example 24). While the use of repeated notes is characteristic, the repetition of an entire melodic line is avoided.

Example 24: *I hear an army (Joyce Songs)*

The image shows a musical score for the song "I hear an army" by Joyce Kilmer. It features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics: "They cry un-to the night: their bat - tle-name:". The piano part has a complex, rhythmic accompaniment. A bracket labeled "repeated notes" points to the first two vocal staves, indicating the repetition of notes. The score is marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Summary of Melodic Stylistic Characteristics

The list below represents the melodic stylistic characteristics of Susa's music:

1. Wide ranges for all parts
2. Use of repeated notes
3. Repetition of a melodic line is generally avoided
4. Conjunct melodic movement is important, but he also moves in perfect intervals, thirds, sixths and sevenths
5. Tendency toward melismatic writing

Rhythmic Stylistic Characteristics

Susa gives serious consideration to the text and, consequently, the rhythms that he employs follow the vowel lengths of the text. Syncopation, which is often found in his works, occurs to provide intensification (Example 25), as an outgrowth of the composer's attempt to incorporate "rock and roll" rhythms into his writing (Example 26), and the rhythmical needs of the text.

Example 25: *Trinity Sunday*

syncopation

più e più espressivo

29

fall, Who God & Saints and

(legato)

In order to achieve a sense of freedom and flexibility in his music, he tries to minimize the rhythmic strength and activity of the first beat of the measure. Part or all of the first beat may be

Example 26: *Man is Born*

With a heavy steady beat ($\text{♩} = 116$)

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Organ

f non legato

5

9

robust, full of enjoyment
f

World, a - rise, - sing

The musical score for 'Man is Born' is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the Organ part. The organ part is marked 'f non legato' and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system begins at measure 5 and continues the organ accompaniment. The third system begins at measure 9 and introduces the vocal melody for the Soprano part, which is marked 'robust, full of enjoyment' and 'f'. The lyrics 'World, a - rise, - sing' are written below the vocal staff. The organ accompaniment continues throughout the third system.

occupied with a rest or the fourth beat of the measure will be tied into the first beat of the next measure (Example 27).

Example 27: *Man is Born*

31

Love the glorious gift that Man is. Hear my words! Man

Frequent meter changes occur (Example 28) as well as asymmetric meters and divisions (Example 29). These are used to gain flexibility and accommodate the text.

Susa also achieves the effect of rhythmic flexibility by accenting normally unaccented portions of the measure. An example of the use of shifted accents occurs in *The Shepherds Sing* (Example 30). With the exception of the first soprano part (measure 36), the remaining divided female voices enter rhythmically staggered on the normally unaccented portion of each beat. As the shift of accent progresses through the female voices, Susa achieves the effect of bells ringing.

Example 28: *Let Us Gather Hand in Hand*

17

child was God, that child was man, And in that child our life be-gan.

child was God, that child was man, And in that child our life be-gan.

child was God, that child was man, And in that child our life be-gan.

(tutti) *f*

Al-le-

Example 29: *He Who Hath Glory Lost (Joyce Songs)*

4

glo-ry lost, nor hath Found an-y soul to fel-low

glo-ry lost, nor hath Found an-y soul to fel-low

glo-ry lost, nor hath Found an-y soul to fel-low

glo-ry lost, nor hath Found an-y soul to fel-low

(*f*)

Example 30: *The Shepherds Sing*

[illegible][illegible]

Summary of Rhythmic Stylistic Characteristics

1. He tries to avoid the rigidity of the barline
2. His rhythm is an attempt to follow the vowel lengths of the text
3. He uses syncopation often
4. He makes use of frequent changes of meter
5. He uses asymmetric meters and divisions
6. He employs shifted accent
7. He tries to achieve flexibility of rhythm by minimizing the strength and activity of the first beat of the measure
8. The vocal lines move independently of repeated rhythmic patterns in the accompaniment.

Textural Stylistic Characteristics

Basically, the texture of Susa's music consists of four vocal lines and organ accompaniment. His texture may range from a solo voice accompanied (Example 31) or unaccompanied (Example 32) to a divisi of six voices accompanied (Example 33) or seven voices unaccompanied (Example 34) from *Coloss 3.3*. Example 34 also illustrates the crossing of voices. In this example, the alto voices cross over the soprano voices (measure 24), and the second alto crosses under the tenor at the end of this measure.

The movement melodically from unison or octave to harmony occurs often in Susa's writing (Example 35), and there is a slight tendency toward melismatic writing.

Susa alternates homophonic and polyphonic sections (Example 36). Example 37 reveals his tendency toward contrapuntal activity.

Example 31: An Elegy Carol

Baritone Solo

86

bleed-ing heart_ a - gain_ to rend?_ Why was I

Example 32: An Elegy Carol

Somewhat freely, without self-pity. ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 44$)

Baritone Solo

Why must I al-ways be a-lone? Why must I

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ

($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 44$)

Example 33: *The Conclusion of the Matter*
(Hymns for the Amusement of Children)

20 a little slower *dim.* *pp* *quiet, joyous*
divisi of six voices

Let no foul fiend re - tard your pace, Ho -

Let no foul fiend re - tard your pace, Ho -

Let no foul fiend re - tard your pace, Ho -

Let no foul fiend re - tard your pace, Ho -

Let no foul fiend re - tard your pace, Ho -

a little slower *dim.* *pp*

Example 34: *Coloss. 3. 3*

22 *f* *p*
divisi of seven voices

winds toward Him, whose hap - pie birth Taught me to live here so, That

— toward Him, whose hap - pie birth taught me to live here so, That

Him, That

whose hap - pie birth Taught me to live

Example 35: I Hear An Army (Joyce Songs)

31

— out of the sea and run shout - ing by the

— out of the sea and run shout - ing by the

mp out of the sea and run shout - ing by the

come out of the sea and run shout - ing by the

gva...

Example 36: David's Kingly City

p con moto Al - le - lu - ia, *p* Al - le -

mf con moto end - less peace. Here is

mf con moto end - less peace. Here is

mf con moto end - less peace. Here is mu - sic

mf con moto end - less peace. Here is mu - sic

mf

The canonic activity which occurs in this example illustrates imitation that is free (measures 7-8 and 10-11) and strict (measure 9 through the down beat of measure 10); however, it is more characteristic for the imitation to be free.

In measure 33, of Example 38, Susa pairs the soprano and bass voices, and in measure 34 he pairs the alto and tenor voices. Susa often employs this technique, and he is more likely to pair the soprano and alto or tenor and bass than any other combinations. Whenever three voices are grouped, he favors the soprano-alto-tenor combination (Example 39).

Example 38: I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)

33 *mf espressivo*

shore. My heart, have you no wis - dom

mf espressivo *s*

shore. My heart, have you no wis

mf espressivo *s*

shore. My heart, have you no wis

mf

shore. My heart,

gva... loco *gva... loco* *gva... loco*

mp

Example 39: *I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)*

14

They cry un-to the night: their bat - tle-name:

They cry un - to the night:

They cry un-to the night: their bat - tle-name:

1

Summary of Textural Stylistic Characteristics

1. A basic texture of four vocal lines and organ or piano accompaniment is used. Within these textural arrangements occur:
 - a. alternation of homophonic and polyphonic sections
 - b. crossing of voices
 - c. unison singing or singing in octaves by all voices or by two or three vocal parts
 - d. divisi of the voice parts
 - e. use of imitation which is generally free
2. Pairing of voices, the soprano-alto combination, and the tenor-bass combination are favored
3. Movement from voices in unison or octaves to harmony.

Formal Stylistic Characteristics

Formally, *The Shepherds Sing*, *This Endry's Night*, *Let Us Gather Hand in Hand*, and the sea chanty, *Blood Red Roses*, are selections in which Susa employs a refrain, while a return to the opening idea is incorporated into *Trinity Sunday*. *Coloss. 3.3* is interesting from a formal viewpoint in that it could be described as a motet with a *cantus firmus* in the tenor, but what the tenor is really carrying is the sentence hidden within the text (Example 40).

Example 40: Coloss 3.3

My words and thoughts do both express this notion
 That Life hath with the sun a double motion.
 The first Is straight, and our diurnal friend,
 The other Hid, and doth obliquely bend.
 One life is wrapt In flesh, and tends to earth:
 The other winds towards Him, whose happy birth
 Taught me to live here so, That still one eye
 Should aim and shoot at that which Is on high:
 Quitting with daily labour all My pleasure,
 To gain at harvest an eternal Treasure.

--George Herbert

Much of Susa's music moves along through composed lines, but often he will close off a work with material used previously (Example 41).

Example 41: An Elegy Carol

8 *poco rall.* Gently rocking ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$)

Why was I born if to die?

(*poco rall.*) Gently rocking ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$)

p sempre legato

89 *poco rall.* ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$) *mp*

born if on-ly to die, — to die?

pp Hush. *pp* Hush. *pp* Hush. *pp* Hush. *pp* Hush.

poco rall. ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$) in augmentation

p

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins at measure 8 with the lyrics 'Why was I born if to die?'. The tempo is marked 'poco rall.' and the mood is 'Gently rocking' with a tempo of approximately 80 beats per minute. The piano accompaniment features a 'p' (piano) dynamic and 'sempre legato' instruction. A diagonal line connects the end of the first vocal phrase to the start of the second at measure 89. The second vocal phrase begins with 'born if on-ly to die, — to die?'. The piano accompaniment includes multiple staves, with some parts marked 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'Hush.'. The score concludes with a 'poco rall.' marking and a tempo of approximately 80 beats per minute, with the instruction 'in augmentation'.

Descriptive Music

The texts in Susa's sacred works are unusual in that they come from old sources such as Hildebert of Lavardin (1055-1133) or George Herbert (1593-1633). The texts are often personal in that they are in the first person, or they deal collectively with the individual and one's relationship with Christ.

Susa's ultimate goal is the expression of the text. The manner in which he manipulates the materials of music and the resulting stylistic characteristics come about because of the composer's commitment to this goal. Susa tries to set the text as simply as possible and to highlight the various experiences and moods within the text. This aspect of Susa's writing brings about works which are musically descriptive.

The Knell provides an excellent example of Susa's descriptive writing and word-painting. "Knell," used as a noun, is the sounding of a bell which is rung slowly as at a funeral. Susa's setting is that of a funeral scene with a slow bell tolling in the tenor line and another in the bass line (Example 42). From the opening through measure 13, the music is inactive, the voices parts are low, contain repeated notes, and the coloration is dark. Susa uses an ascending line on the text, "Lord, help thy servant," the word painting of "perplexed soule" is done with up and down movement on "perplexed" and disjunct movement by a major third down to "soule" (measures 4-7). One can detect the upward action of the eyes on "Doth wishly look," as Susa moves the melodic line up a perfect fifth. "Stand" (measure 12) is enhanced by the upward direction of the line and by agogic

Example 42: *The Knell*

Example 42: *The Knell*

Tempo: Lento (♩ = ca. 50)

Vocal parts:

- Soprano: The Bell doth tolle:
- Alto: The Bell doth tolle:
- Tenor: De pro... dis... cla...
- Bass: pro - fun... cla -

Organ accompaniment:

The organ part features a wide disjunct motion in the bass line and a pleading melody in the upper register.

accent, while "struggling" is not only described by the moving melodic line, but also by the cross relation (measure 13).

A change of mood, that completely erases the funeral scene, is made by the organ accompaniment in measures 14-15. One can observe how the pleading is intensified by the wide disjunct motion in the bass line (measures 20-24), and the figuration employed in the accompaniment (see Examples 44 and 45). A gradual slowing in measure 25 prepares a full outcry by the chorus on "Lord" which Susa sets in the upper range of the voices.

The voices move pleadingly through this portion of text which asks special consideration of the Lord--"Lord make thy Blood Convert and colour all the other flood and streams of grief." In this section

Example 43: *The Knell*

Lord, help thy ser - vant whose — per - ples - ed
 Lord, help thy ser - vant *p* (soft voice) Do-mi - ne:
 ...vi ad ad te
 ma...

Sole *mp* On ei - ther
 Doth with ly 5 look
 es - au - di vo - cem me... Fi - am su - res tu - m in - ten - den - tes...
 me am.

[illegible]

Example 44: The Knell

14 Poco più mosso (♩ = ca. 72)

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1000

of text, Susa uses the color of various chords to elevate the meanings of words in the text. One should note the coloration of the sonority on "Blood," and also to include the sonority in the accompaniment. The last syllable of the word "colour" is heightened by a non-functional "color sonority" as if to play on the word (Example 45).

The alto line, from measure 28-32, is descriptive writing used to communicate the text. The wide leaps reach down into the depths of despair, and the conjunct movement down from the word "streams" points out this word as does the final note on "grief" finds one at the deepest depths of sorrow. At this spot in the music, the alto voice is the lowest note sounding in the choral parts (Example 46).

The accompaniment once again provides a change of mood (measures 32-33), the original tempo returns, and Susa uses tertian harmonies to articulate the sweetness of "Julips and Cordials," as well as parallel conjunct movement of the bass and tenor voices in major and later minor sixths.

The work closes with tertian harmonies in the accompaniment, an inverted pedal point in the alto voice, and the remaining three parts chanting, as the composer indicates, very softly and tonelessly on the Latin text, "*et lux perpetua luceat eis*" (Example 46). This is a rather special moment, and this experience of prayer continues after the voices have ceased as the organ continues to sustain its sonority.

In the secular work, *Chamber Music: Six Joyce Songs*, word-painting is abundant. Example 47 illustrates Susa's expression of the "odorous winds," "weaving," "sighs," and "arise." The

Example 45: The Knell

22

23

Di-band-ed hu-mours, rows, troops—

Di-band-ed hu-mours, rows, troops—

24

25 *allargando* *piu ed espressive* Lord—

allargando *piu ed espressive* Lord—

allargando *piu ed espressive* Lord—

allargando *piu ed espressive* Lord—

allargando *piu ed espressive* Lord—

allargando *piu ed espressive* Lord—

of Sinn, Each with his rodd.

of Sinn, Each with his rodd.

26 *Meno mosso* ($\text{♩} = 64$)

27

— make thy Blood— Con - vert & col - our all—

— make thy Blood— Con - vert & col - our all—

— make thy Blood— Con - vert & col - our all—

— make thy Blood— Con - vert & col - our all—

28

Meno mosso ($\text{♩} = 64$)

29

30

— the oth - er flood And streama of

— the oth - er flood And streama of

— the oth - er flood And streama of

— the oth - er flood And streama of

31

Example 46: *The Knell*

34

Tempo 1^o tranquillo ed espressivo

rall. That — they may bee Ju — lips — & Cor *poco*

rall. That — they may bee Ju — lips — & Cor *poco*

(rall.) Ju — lips — & Cor *poco*

(rall.) Ju — lips — & Cor *poco*

Tempo 1^o tranquillo ed espressivo

rall. *mp*

37 *38*

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40

pp (*spoken fondly*) *ff* *2*

...et lux - per - pe - tu - a lu - ce - at e - ia.

some re - lied.

pp (*spoken fondly*) *2*

...et lux - per - pe - tu - a lu - ce - at e - ia.

pp (*spoken fondly*) *2*

...et lux - per - pe - tu - a lu - ce - at e - ia.

Example 47: My Dove, My Beautiful One (Joyce Songs)

12 13 14

The o - dor-ous

15 16 17

are weav - ing A mu-sic of sighs: A-
winds are weav - ing A mu-sic of sighs: A-

18 19 20

piu espressivo
rise, *piu espressivo* rise, My dove, my beau-ti-ful
rise, a - rise, My dove, my beau-ti-ful

f molto espr. *loco*

downward and upward movement in the bass line and the triplet rhythm (measure 14) helps to depict the winds. The two voices starting at different times on "are weaving" enhances the ideas of weaving. The descending lines, the triplet, and the brief melismatic writing portray "sighs," while the downward and upward disjunct motion and the reaching of the highest pitches in the line on the "rise" portion of "arise" by leap upward particularly illustrate this word.

"Alone," in Example 48, is depicted by movement downward in the parts. The soprano line (measures 43-45) moves upward, but the dominant movement, which includes the accompaniment, is down. One should notice the bass voice, which never sings "alone" until it reaches its lowest pitch, and also how the accompaniment stops.

In Example 49, one should note Susa's setting of "ripple" and "flying," and also how "the heart is heaviest" sinks lower as each additional voice adds to the descending lines with the lowest pitches reached on the last syllable of "heaviest."

In the final movement (Example 50), at "And fingers straying," the fingers wander in the accompaniment, but in the voices this motion is evidenced by the seemingly wrong chord on the second beat of measure 27.

Susa's setting of *Pretty Polly* illustrates how the accompaniment can help to enhance the text through figurative patterns, can respond to the mood of the text, and can react to a happening in the text.

Example 49: Lightly Come (Joyce Songs)

Eagerly (Jazz. 132)

Tenor
Light - ly come or light-ly go: Though thy heart
Light - ly come or light-ly go: Though thy heart

Baritone and Bass
pre-sage thee woe, Vales and man-y a wast-ed sun, Or - e - ed, —
pre-sage thee woe, Vales and man-y a wast-ed sun,

let — thy laugh - ter run, — Till the ir - rev - er - ent
Till the ir - rev - er - ent

run, Rip, ple,
moun-tain air Rip, ple,
moun-tain air Rip, ple,

13 rip . . . ple all thy fly . ing hair.
rip . . . ple all thy fly . ing hair.

15 Light - ly, light-ly - ev - er so: Clouds that wrap the
Light - ly, light-ly - ev - er so: Clouds that wrap the

19 vales be - low
vales be - low At the hour of e - ven-star Low - li - est at -

22 *Moderately slow*
legato
rit. Love, and laugh - ter song - con - fessed
rit. Love and laugh - ter song - con - fessed

25 *mp expressive*
When the heart is heavy i - est.
When the heart is heavy i - est.
When the heart is heavy i - est.
When the heart is heavy i - est.

Example 50: *Strings in the Earth and Air (Joyce Songs)*

26

And fin - gers stray - ing

And fin - gers stray - ing

And fin - gers stray - ing

fin gers stray - ing

loco m.f. m.d. m.f.

loco Ped. Ped.

Pretty Polly opens with the piano accompaniment declaring a driving *ostinato* in the bass. This *ostinato*, along with the chords in the right hand, tries to convey galloping hoofs (Example 51). The accompaniment responds to the stabbing of Polly with the figurative pattern in measure 71 as if to re-enact the fatal blows (Example 51), and in the final measures of the accompaniment, "away" is heightened by the accompaniment literally going away (Example 53).

In the *Hymns for the Amusement of Children*, Susa includes such descriptive words as "cheerfully," "really trashy," "zippy," "spaciously," "floating," and "expansive" in his directions to the performers. This, and the previous discussion, is clear evidence of Susa's attempts to bring about a particular sound, coloration, style,

Example 51: Pretty Polly

At a gallop ($\text{♩} = 138$)

GIRLS

BOYS

PIANO

At a gallop ($\text{♩} = 138$)

mf dim.

without pedal

5

court-ed pret-ty Pol-ly the live-long night.

mf sim.

10

11

1 court-ed pret-ty Pol-ly the live-long-

Example 52: Pretty Polly

68

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, He

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, He

72

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, He

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, He

76

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, and

stabbed her in the heart_ and the heart's blood did flow, and

Example 53: *Pretty Polly*

128

nin' a - way, a -

nin' a - way, a -

8va.....

133

way, a - way.

way, a - way.

dim. pp

dim. pp

8va.....

138

non rit.

8va.....

or attitude in his music, his endeavors to deal with the various emotions found within the text, the concern and respect he holds for the text, and his use of descriptive writing to convey it.

Other Stylistic Characteristics

1. Less use of functional harmonies after the folk-song phase
2. Increased use of polychords at the time of the folk-song phase
3. Tertian harmonies in the folk-song phase
4. The accompaniment is usually set for organ
5. The accompaniment is rather involved, containing many notes
6. The accompaniment functions independently of the choral parts or it may support the voice parts
7. Experimentation with different styles--calypso, tango, blues.

CHAPTER III

PERFORMING SUSA'S CHORAL MUSIC

From a study of the text Susa arrives at his selection of compositional techniques and the forms in which the texts are cast. He relates, "I like to have the feeling that the poet and I have somehow at least linked arms, and that he is speaking through me, but with a new coloration." And further, "The music is a prism that creates a new quality to the text, but preserves the text just as a master engraver preserves the grain of the wood while producing a new piece of sculpture. . . ." It is therefore crucial that preparation for the performance of any choral work by Susa begin with a thorough examination of the text, for such a scrutiny should result in an understanding of how he has dealt with the various concerns within the text.

Although Susa selects his texts in a somewhat random fashion, he often takes them from sources such as Hildebert of Lavardin (1055-1133), Adam de la Halle (c. 1230-1287), George Herbert (1593-1633), and Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953). The texts are personal in that they deal with the individual and usually from an introspective viewpoint. Often, the texts are critical of the human character as compared to that of Christ. They are hopeful; they are praiseful of the Lord. The texts consistently contain a variety of emotions, moods,

and feelings which the composer can enhance from a musical perspective.

The text of George Herbert's *Even-Song* sets an introspective mood, it has a prayerful quality, as well as hope of eternal existence with a greater power.

Example 1: Even-Song Text

The day is spent, and hath his will on me:
 I and the sun have run our races;
 I went the slower, yet more paces,
 For I decay, not he.

Lord make my losses up, and set me free:
 That I who cannot now by day
 Look on his daring brightness, may
 Shine then more bright than he.

If thou defer this light, then shadow me:
 Lest that the Night, earth's gloomy shade,
 Fouling her nest, may earth invade,
 As if shades knew not thee.

But thou art light and darkness both together:
 If that be dark we can not see,
 The sun is darker than a tree,
 And thou more dark than either.

Yet thou art not so dark, since I know this,
 But that my darkness may touch thine,
 And hope that may teach it to shine,
 Since light thy darkness is.

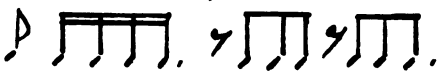
O let my soul, whose keys I must deliver
 Into the hands of senseless dreams
 Which know not thee, suck in thy beams
 And wake with thee forever.

-- George Herbert

The inward quality of this text never allows the person to be dealt with harshly because of his shortcomings. Susa chooses a moderate

tempo (♩ = ca. 56) to deliver the text, which he increases slightly to (♩ = ca. 60) at measure 33. Quite possibly this increase in tempo is to provide contrast and movement toward the climax in measure 46.

The idea of evening prayer or vespers is carried out in the accompaniment set for organ, especially in the treble which makes use of an inverted pedal point on E that perhaps suggests a tolling bell. After the introduction, we find the text of the first verse is delivered by the soprano voice, and beginning on the third beat of measure 4, this voice is accompanied by the lower three voice parts. The composer indicates that the soprano voice is to be medium soft, simple and direct, while the lower voices are marked a dynamic level below this. Susa enhances the importance of the soprano voice by allowing it to have independent movement from the lower three parts which move in a homophonic texture. The soprano voice is also separated from the accompanying voices by a different key center--E minor for the soprano, B minor for the lower voices.

In the accompaniment, the following rhythmic patterns are used: . The first pattern is found in the tenor voice and the second in the inverted pedal in the treble. The tenor voice of the accompaniment in measure 1 is given a melodic line with a solo marking; however, in measure 4, the solo indication is removed. The second, seventh, and ninth can be noted in the accompaniment. On the first sixteenth note of the fourth beat of measure 1, a major ninth occurs between the bass and tenor voices and a major second between the tenor and treble voices (Example 2).

Example 2: Even-Song

Moderately ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$) *mp simple, direct*

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

The Day is spent, — & hath his

Organ

Moderately ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$)

p Solo

p *mp* *M9* *M9* *m9* *M9* *M9*

4

S will on mee: I and the Sunn have run our ra - ces, I went the

A I and the Sunn have run our

T I and the Sunn have run our

B I and the Sunn have run our

non solo

m7 *p* *m7* *M9* *m2* *m2*

As the sixteenth-note figure in the solo part of measure 1 in Example 2 moves from D down to A, a major seventh occurs between the C in the bass and the B in the tenor. In measures 2 and 3, a major ninth occurs on the down-beat of each measure between the bass and tenor and likewise on the first sixteenth of beat four of measure 2; however, on the fourth beat of measure 3, the major ninth is formed between the bass and treble voices. While the major ninth can be found on the

last half of the second beat in measure 4, between the bass and tenor, in the latter part of this measure the interval of a minor seventh occurs on the first half of beat 3. On the last half of beat 4 the tenor and treble voice form a minor seventh displaced by an octave; however, the tenor quickly moves to the D to form a double octave. In measure 5, a minor ninth (displaced by an octave) and a major ninth occurs between the bass and treble voice on the last half of beat 1 and the first half of beat 2. Minor seconds occur on the first half of beat 3 and the first sixteenth of beat four while a major second occurs on the third sixteenth of beat 4 between the bass and tenor voices.

"Slower yet more paces," in measure 6, appears to describe the movement of human beings, a movement which is uncertain when compared to the sure course of the Son of God (Example 3). "For I decay" employs the drop of a major seventh in the soprano which may hint at a human breakdown. In Example 3, the sonority on the first two beats of measure 8 makes use of a major second between the alto and soprano voices on the word "hee," and a major second in the sonority which later takes up the first three beats of measure 16 to deliver "hee." This occurrence may imply some special aspects of "hee," the Son of God.

The accompaniment continues to make use of a major second, a major and minor seventh and ninth, and also the rhythmic patterns previously discussed with regard to Example 2. These rhythmic patterns as well as the continued use of the intervals as outlined above

Example 3: Even-Song

6

S *slow - er... yet more pa-ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.*

A *ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.*

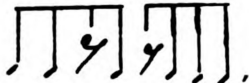
T *ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.*

B *ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.*

M7

can be observed also in measures 13-16. However, these formations now appear in the accompaniment within a four voice texture (Example 4).

The text moves to a prayerful attitude in measures 9-15, and Susa sets "Lord make my losses up and sett mee free" for the lower three voices using tertian harmonies centered in G major. The soprano voice remains in E minor with "sett mee free," expressed with brief melismatic writing (Example 4).

In measure 17, a repeated rhythmic pattern, , in the upper three voices of the accompaniment which lasts for six beats occurs over a bass pedal point on A and separates verse two from verse three. The tenor voice does not continue this pattern with the alto and soprano voices after measure 18, but it is given, as is the bass voice, a separate line. Although other intervals are used in the accompaniment, the major and minor second and seventh are

Example 4: Even-Song

6

S: slow - er - yet more pa-ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.
 A: ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.
 T: ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.
 B: ra - ces, ffor I de - cay, not hee.

9

S: *mp warmly* Lord make my loss - es vp & sett mee free: That I who
 A: *mp warmly* Lord make my loss - es vp & sett mee free: That I who
 T: *mp warmly* Lord make my loss - es vp & sett mee free:
 B: *mp warmly* Lord make my loss - es vp & sett mee free:

mp

buoyant

12

S: cannot now by day — Look on his dar - ing brightnes, may
 A: can - not by day Look on his dar - ing brightnes, may
 T: his dar - ing brightnes, may
 B: his dar - ing brightnes, may

15

S: *mp* Shine then more bright than hee.
 A: *mp* Shine then more bright than hee.
 T: *mp* Shine then more bright than hee.
 B: *mp* Shine then more bright than hee.

mp

frequently found between the alto and soprano voices. Major ninths occur between the bass and soprano voices in measures 17 and 18 on the last half of each beat of these measures. A major ninth can be noticed between the bass and tenor voices the first two beats of measure 20, and a minor seventh the last beat of measure 23 (Example 5).

Example 5: Even-Song

The musical score for 'Even-Song' is presented in four systems, each containing vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes the following lyrics and musical markings:

- System 1 (Measures 17-18):**
 - Vocal: *mp sempre, direct* / *If thou do -*
 - Piano: *p*
- System 2 (Measures 19-20):**
 - Vocal: *for this Light, — then shed — our men. —* / *Let that the*
 - Piano: *M7* (Major 7th), *mp*
- System 3 (Measures 21-22):**
 - Vocal: *Night, earth's gloomy shade, flou - ing her nest, — my earth in-rade, As if*
 - Piano: *M7* (Major 7th), *mp*
- System 4 (Measures 23-24):**
 - Vocal: *shades knew — not thee.* / *But —*
 - Piano: *mp*

The score illustrates various harmonic intervals, including major ninths and minor sevenths, as noted in the text.

In Example 5, the alto voice of the chorus introduces verse three in a manner similar to that with which the soprano voice opened the piece. One should note that this verse deals with shadow, gloom, and shade, and that Susa sets it only for the lower three voices.

The appearance of the word "light" in the text brings about the return of the soprano voice which now introduces verse four. This verse contains observations about the Son of God which are delivered at an increasing dynamic level through to measure 31. The lower three voices do not take an active part in the delivery of the fourth verse. Except for the alto voice which delivers with the soprano the text "The Sunn is darker than a Tree" (measure 28 into 29), the tenor and bass voices are limited to a repetition of the final portion of text, "And thou art more dark than either," which the soprano introduced.

In the final portion of measures 25, 26, 29, and 30 a rhythmic figure is employed in the alto and soprano voices which was used to accompany the third verse. In this figure, a major seventh appears between the tenor and alto voices and a minor seventh occurs between the alto and soprano voices on beat 4 of measure 25. A major ninth is found between the pedal of the organ and the left hand bass line on the second half of beats 3 and 4 of this same measure. In measure 26, a major ninth occurs on the first one and a half beats between the bass of the left hand and the alto voice of the accompaniment, on the last half of beat two between the bass pedal and the bass line of the left hand, and on the first half of the fourth beat between the alto and soprano voices in the accompaniment. During the first three and

a half beats of measure 27, we find the major second, the minor seventh, and the major ninth occurring between the treble voices in the accompaniment. The major and minor seventh and ninth continue to find expression in measures 28-32, but of special interest is measure 32. On the downbeat of this measure a double inflection occurs (C#/C~~4~~). One can also notice a major ninth between the alto voice, and a minor seventh between the top alto voice and the soprano. On the remaining beats and the final half of the fourth beat, minor sevenths occur between the top alto voice and the soprano in the accompaniment (Example 6).

A transitional measure (32) leads us to the fifth verse which is introduced by the bass voice. Here the setting is similar to the soprano opening, but now transposed down a perfect fourth and at a slightly faster tempo (♩ = ca. 60). To express the words: "But that my darkness may touch thine, And hope, that may teach it to shine, Since Light thy darkness is," Susa uses non-functional chords, and, for almost three full measures, deletes the organ accompaniment. After the bass introduces the text of the fifth verse in measure 33, it is joined by the alto and soprano voices in measure 34. From measure 35-38, the four voices move in a homophonic texture with some independence in the soprano (beat 4 of measure 36) and in the tenor (beat 2 of measure 37, see Example 7). Charted in Example 8 are sonorities other than pure tertian structures that are used in this passage: (a) quartal chord, (b) triads with an added note, (c) incomplete sonorities, and (d) sonorities constructed of seconds.

Example 6: Even-Song

23 *serenely*
S But —
A —
T know not thee.
B know not thee.
shades know not thee.
shades know not thee.
shades know not thee.

25 — thou art Light and dark - nes — both to - geth - er:
S —
A —
T —
B —
duoyant
mp

27 If that bee dark we can-not see,
S The Sunn is dark - er — than a
A The Sunn is dark - er — than a
T —
B —
mp

29 *intensely*
S Tree, And thou art more dark — than ei - ther.
A —
T —
B —
And —
And —
And thou art —
mp

31 *serenely*
S —
A —
T —
B —
thou art more dark — than ei - ther, —
thou art more dark — than ei - ther, —
more dark — than ei - ther, —
mp

Susa heightens the final verse by adding the accompaniment to the chorus in octaves. Both entrances are reminiscent of the opening soprano statement in measures 2-3. All the voices set forth in octaves this playful request, "O lett my Soule, whose keys I must deliver Into the hands of senceless dreams which know not thee, suck in thy beams and wake with thee forever." The chorus now moves with growing intensity to the climax on the downbeat of measure 46 where the voices are found at the extreme end of their upper range. The sopranos and tenors share a descending line in octaves as the dynamic level is reduced to piano, and the altos and basses then enter softly, the basses using falsetto and sounding above the tenors, filling out, along with the organ accompaniment, a chord made up of a mixture of a perfect 4th and perfect 5th (Example 9).

Susa's concern for the text can be observed in the secular work, *Chamber Music: Six Joyce Songs*. A few of the many examples in which Susa heightens the text follow.

Susa uses the accompaniment to set the mood for the third movement, "I hear an army." The movement is marked "massive, lunging," and a driving *ostinato* pattern in the piano opens the movement and carries through measure four. Over this pattern, the chorus sings, in octaves, the text, "I hear an army charging upon the land, And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees." Susa's predominately disjunct setting seems to give the impression of an army moving (Example 10). Brief imitative activity in measures 7-12 helps to magnify the descriptive text throughout this passage. Note, if you will, "behind them stand" where the male voices

Example 9: Even-Song

10
39

mf *richly* *mf* *richly*

Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B)

Lyrics: I must de- whose keys - I must de- O letti my Soule, er In - to the hands - of sence-les Dreams which know not thee, suck in thy beanes - And grow'ng intensify

41

mf *richly* *mf* *richly*

Lyrics: O letti mon Soule, er In - to the mains - de sence-les Rêves qui ne savent pas toi, sucent ta fève - Et croissent intensify

43

mf *richly* *mf* *richly*

Lyrics: O letti mon Soule, er In - to the mains - de sence-les Rêves qui ne savent pas toi, sucent ta fève - Et croissent intensify

[illegible]

Example 10: *I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)*

Massive, lunging ($\text{♩} = ca. 88$)

Soprano
I hear an ar-my charg-

Alto
I hear an ar-my charg-

Tenor
I hear an ar-my charg-

Bass
I hear an ar-my charg-

Piano
Massive, lunging ($\text{♩} = ca. 88$)

3

ing u-pon the land, And the

ing u-pon the land, And the

ing u-pon the land, And the

ing u-pon the land, And the

5

thun-der of horns plung-ing, foam a-bout their knees;

thun-der of horns plung-ing, foam a-bout their knees;

thun-der of horns plung-ing, foam a-bout their knees;

thun-der of horns plung-ing, foam a-bout their knees;

Ar-ro-gant, in black ar-mour, be-hind them stand,

Ar-ro-gant, in black ar-mour, be-hind them stand,

Ar-ro-gant, in black ar-mour, be-hind them

Ar-ro-gant, in black ar-mour, be-hind them

enter "behind" the ladies (Example 11). Also in Example 11, the treble voices leap a perfect octave on "arrogant," but the male voices move upwards only a minor seventh. In measure 10, the male voices begin their imitative pattern a second below the female voices--the tenor a major second lower than the soprano and the bass a minor second lower than the alto. In measure 11, the pattern is begun by both male voices a major second higher.

Example 11: I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)

The musical score for "I Hear an Army" (Joyce Songs) is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 7, 8, and 9. The second system contains measures 10 and 11. The score is for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ar - ro-gant, in black ar - mour, be-hind them stand, Dis - dain-ing the reins, with flut-ter-ing whips, stand, Dis - dain-ing the reins, with flut-ter-ing". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *mp* (mezzo-piano).

The word "shouting" which is contained in the line, "They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore," is provided a sonority on "shout" which is made up of minor seventh intervals between the male voices and the alto and the alto and soprano (Example 12). Example 12 also illustrates two measures (31 and 32) in which piano accompaniment supports the choral parts.

Example 12: I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)

The musical score for Example 12, 'I Hear an Army' (Joyce Songs), shows measures 31 and 32. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: '— out of the sea and run shout - ing by — the'. The piano part includes a 'gva' (grace) marking. The score illustrates the sonority on 'shout' created by minor seventh intervals between the male voices and the alto, and between the alto and soprano.

In measure 37, the tenor voices introduce the text, "My love," which they repeat five times using major and minor thirds. One can only speculate that the composer employs these thirds because of the word "love." In the alto voice (measure 39) a minor second is used against these thirds in the soprano voice while in measure 40 a major second is used and conceivably helps to convey the sadness one expresses from having been left alone. A major second between the alto and soprano voice, on the first part of "alone" in measures 42,

43, and 44 seems to transmit the mood of sadness as well as to embellish the word "alone" (Example 13).

Example 13: I Hear an Army (Joyce Songs)

The image displays a musical score for the song "I Hear an Army" from the Joyce Songs. It consists of two systems of music, each with four staves. The top two staves in each system are for the vocal part, and the bottom two are for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are also some handwritten annotations, including "M2" and "mf", and a circled "13" in the top right system.

The musical text of the sixth movement, "Strings in the earth and air," is set with a piano accompaniment that is reminiscent of a Hanon study--No. 6.¹ In the choral parts of Example 14, triadic structures as well as an incomplete major-minor seventh chord are used.

¹C. L. Hanon, "Exercise No. 6," in *The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises for the Piano*. (New York: G. Shirmer, Inc., 1928), p. 7.

Example 14: *Strings in the Earth and Air (Joyce Songs)*

The musical score for 'Strings in the Earth and Air' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Broadly flowing (♩ = ca. 54)'. The piano part features a continuous sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, marked 'mp legato'. The second system shows the vocal staves with lyrics: 'Strings in the earth and air Make music sweet;...'. The piano part continues with the same sixteenth-note pattern.

It is suggested that in his folk song settings Susa uses accompaniment figurations, such as the sixteenth-note pattern as shown in Example 14, to illustrate or suggest "strings." *Pretty Polly*, a prime example of figural accompaniment, was discussed in Chapter II. One can also include *Serenade No. 2* where, in verse 4, the accompaniment responds to the text, "I wish I was some little sparrow, and I had wings could fly so high," with a rhythmic figuration that seems to suggest the presence and movement of a bird

(Example 15). Measure 56 of this example illustrates the use of a split-third (A $\widehat{C\sharp C}$ E) while measure 57 suggests the simultaneous use of the major and minor modes on A in the vocal line, and C major in the treble of the accompaniment.

Susa's intent of expressing the text influences the melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and color considerations. He most often uses a legato melodic line, and it is suggested that singers should conform to a smooth, legato style of singing. The phrases should be long, as in Example 16, and punctuation in the text should not break up the continuous outflowing of the melodic line. The text in Example 16 is being delivered by the chorus in octaves over a B flat pedal point. There are times when the text is expressed by a single voice part as in Example 17. Here, a recitative style is employed to deliver the text.

Example 15: Serenade No. 2 $C\sharp \rightarrow$ split third $C\flat$

56

VERSE 4.

F *dolciss.* *sub. ff*

line, I wish I was some lit-tle spar-row,

ff *dolciss.*

59

and I had wings could fly so high.

Example 16: *Let Us Gather Hand in Hand*

3

f Let us gath - er hand_ in hand And sing of bliss with - out_ an end: The

f Let us gath - er hand_ in hand And sing of bliss with - out_ an end: The

f Let us gath - er hand_ in hand And sing of bliss with - out_ an end: The

f Let us gath - er hand_ in hand And sing of bliss with - out_ an end: The

mf

5

Dev - il has fled_ from_ earth - ly land And Son of God is

Dev - il has fled_ from_ earth - ly land And Son of God is

Dev - il has fled_ from_ earth - ly land And Son of God is

Dev - il has fled_ from_ earth - ly land And Son of God is

The musical score is for a four-part vocal setting with piano accompaniment. It is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The first system (measures 1-4) features a vocal melody with lyrics 'Let us gath - er hand_ in hand And sing of bliss with - out_ an end: The'. The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. The second system (measures 5-8) features a vocal melody with lyrics 'Dev - il has fled_ from_ earth - ly land And Son of God is'. The piano accompaniment continues with a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. The score includes dynamic markings *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Example 17: *At Undressing in the Evening*
(Movement V, *Hymns for the Amusement of Children*)

37 *mp*
O let me meet Thee un - de - terr'd, By no foul stains de-fil'd!

(*acc.*)
p
(*tre corde*)

39 *tenderly*
pp *mf* *dim.*
Ac-cord-ing to Thy ho - ly word, Re - ceive me as a

41 (*dim.*) *pp*
Child.
p espr. *rit.*

Susa remarks, "I want all kinds of colors, I want to be able to express dark, bright, and ambiguous colors. Because the kinds of texts I pick are frequently so off-beat and personal, I want to make sure, at least, that I honestly believe in that text." Susa believes that there are levels of experiences in a text which simple harmonies cannot convey. The text about the Creation and such words as

"peace on earth good will toward men" are examples that he mentions where simple triadic harmonies are not appropriate. "You cannot deal with the six days of creation that naively. Those triadic formations just will not do it. There is too much involved, and that is the reason I left my original folk song explorations." Susa states that merely to give a poet's words a setting using simple triadic harmonies would totally betray his responsibility to investigate the meaning of the poems and their implications.

A genuine purpose guides Susa's harmonic usage. He readily admits: "What I am searching for is a style that does justice to all the lights, the shadows, and tries to incorporate those so that the range of emotion eventually gets dealt with." We have observed an abundant use of pedal point which the composer considers to be a stabilizing factor in his harmonic scheme. Over or under a given pedal tone or tones, he feels free to use a variety of vertical intervallic combinations, as well as melodic lines that are both consonant and dissonant with their surroundings. In his setting of *The Birds* at the point where the chorus reaches the words, *Tu creasti, Domine*, he has a rhythmic pedal in three voices that contains a minor 7th and major 9th, and two independent melodic lines, one in the tenor voice, the other in the organ, that go their separate ways (Example 18).

The mystery of the Christ Child creating a bird out of clay and having it fly away is so alien to rational understanding that it can only be given a harmonic setting that illustrates our inability to understand how anything but a God can do this. It is given a harmonic pocket that places it outside the stream of the tonality of the work; it is

expressive of the awe, and it moves into a remote area only to be yanked back. When it begins "Jesus Christ, Thou Child so wise," over a pedal point, it is done to totally stabilize one's belief. . . . I think all the sections of my music which retreat into remote areas mean that some kind of experience has been intensified until it has been moved beyond the normal bounds of where we experience these things.

Example 18: "The Birds"

20 *mf staccato, sotto voce ten.* *staccato, sotto voce ten.*
mf staccato sotto voce ten. *staccato, sotto voce ten.*
mf (br) *staccato, sotto voce ten.* *staccato, sotto voce ten.*
way. *staccato, sotto voce ten.* *staccato, sotto voce ten.*
(Solo) *mf*
mf

In an affective sense, the pedal point helps to solidify, control, and connect the experiences which have been highlighted in the text. Likewise, the use of cross relation and double inflection is also an attempt by the composer to achieve coloration for textual expression.

The eclecticism found in Susa's music results from a collection of various ways in which he can set and express the text. Susa relates, "I have done sort of a slow march through the musical

museums of the world, and I have acquired my own collection of things that have interested me and which I use from time to time."

If in his sacred music the text contains an upward vision, an abiding hope, or an inner joy, he uses a high *tessitura* for all parts and wide ranges.

Old forms and techniques have caught Susa's interest and are exemplified in the *Three Mystical Carols*. In *The Shepherds Sing* a palindrome is employed in the soprano voice (Example 19) using the text, *nova, nova ave fiit ex Eva*, and a refrain is used in each carol. This piece opens with a cluster of major seconds in the accompaniment, a sonority which later occurs in the treble voices an octave lower and in the accompaniment two octaves down on the third beat of measures 2 and 3. The two introductory measures of *Let Us Gather Hand in Hand* (Example 20) later become part of an instrumental refrain--measures 11-14 and 25-27 (Examples 21 and 22). In Example 21, the opening two measures return in the same key and at the same pitch level, while in Example 22, the return is made in the key of E minor and the pitches have been transposed down a perfect 4th.

Performing Susa's Sacred Music

The bulk of Susa's choral music is sacred. He wishes that it not be performed in a presentational manner, ". . . but I want the people who listen to feel as if they are praying along with the chorus and somehow expressing it more powerfully in an unexpected radiant way." He goes on to say,

Example 19: *The Shepherds Sing*

Brightly (♩=76) **palindrome**

SOPRANO
No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va. * No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va.

ALTO
No - va
No - va

TENOR

BASS

Manuals
Brightly (♩=76)
f

Pedal

No - va
No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va. No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va.

No - va,
No - va,

No - va,
No - va,

The musical score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Manuals, and Pedal. The tempo is marked 'Brightly (♩=76)' and the piece is a 'palindrome'. The Soprano part has lyrics: 'No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va. * No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va.' The Alto part has lyrics: 'No - va' and 'No - va'. The Tenor and Bass parts are empty. The Manuals part has a forte 'f' dynamic and a 'Brightly (♩=76)' tempo marking. The Pedal part is empty. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 4. The lyrics are repeated in the second system: 'No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va. No - va, no - va a - ve fiit ex E - va.' and 'No - va, No - va,'.

Example 20: *Let Us Gather Hand in Hand*

Rhythmically (♩.84-80)

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Manuals

Pedal

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains four vocal staves labeled SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR, and BASS. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The tempo/meter marking 'Rhythmically (♩.84-80)' is placed above the first staff. All four vocal staves contain whole rests for the first two measures. The second system contains three staves: a grand staff for 'Manuals' (treble and bass clefs) and a single staff for 'Pedal' (bass clef). The 'Manuals' staves begin with a forte dynamic 'f' and contain eighth-note and quarter-note patterns. The 'Pedal' staff also begins with a forte dynamic 'f' and features a long, sweeping slur over a sequence of notes, including a half note and a whole note.

Example 21: Let Us Gather Hand in Hand

Example 21: Let Us Gather Hand in Hand. The score is for a piano and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody is marked with *mf* and *Solo mf* dynamics. The bass line is marked with *mf* and *Solo mf* dynamics. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 13 measures.

Example 22: Let Us Gather Hand in Hand

Example 22: Let Us Gather Hand in Hand. The score is for a piano and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody is marked with *p*, *mp*, and *Solo mf* dynamics. The bass line is marked with *p*, *mp*, and *Solo mf* dynamics. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 28 measures.

The purpose of the music is to deepen the mood of prayer, meditation, understanding, religious sympathy, or deepen the religious experience of the congregation. . . . It seems to me that a lot of bad church music is merely devotional; it is also not good music. A lot of church music is not devotional. It is very popular and people like it, but it does not actually move them to any kind of what I call a religious experience. It is sometimes a very good musical experience, but to my thinking, the devotional aspect and the moving of the congregation to piety comes from the tremendous commitment in the chorus to the text and to the music.

The purpose of the singing is that the congregation, momentarily through the song, addresses God in this way. . . . There is merely something in the church that the people themselves cannot do. They are an aspect of the celebration, the service, or the rite that is being enacted so that something higher in everybody is being addressed, and this time it is being addressed through music by the chorus. The music gathers and focuses the impulses of the congregation.

Performing Susa's Secular Music

In Susa's secular catalog there are folk songs and chamber music. In the composition of his chamber music, Susa employs the madrigal technique. In this technique the composer says,

There is a particular treatment of the text. You tend to illustrate visuals by some symbolic counterpart in the music so that if something is running, the music is running. You look for . . . opportunities to make the text jump so that by hearing it you are looking at the thing the poet is talking about. The music is helping you to see the poem you are listening to. This is a totally different preoccupation, for you are not addressing it to a deity, but you are exploring your personal interest in the text and projecting it.

Because the James Joyce poems are so well known, Susa wanted to express in these songs something antique, but as romantically as he could. He originally envisioned a small chorus for these songs rather than one performer to a part.

The objective of the following section is to share with the reader some of the composer's specific comments on preparing a work and performance.

In the preparation of a work, Susa contends that the composer and a conductor have the same problems. Conductors tend to become immersed in the day-to-day concerns of rehearsal and are often not able to remove themselves from the expressive musical work to see a larger picture. They need to "step back" and look at the total expressive package. The conductor must, in Susa's words, "get out of the way" of the music "by immersing himself so completely in the work that it begins to pass through him. He then acts as a receptor, a teacher, a guide, and he embodies the truth of the work." Furthermore, Susa states,

If everybody then gets out of the way, including the chorus by solving all the technical problems and by being one with the vision of the director, then the piece moves into the people who listen with the same clarity and power that have struck me.

Susa concludes that a work which does not move you in some expected way is probably not a true experience. He goes on to say,

I think the truth is frequently so obvious you should have the feeling you are in the presence of something you do not need to understand, but you can experience as true. You do not have to hear inversions; you do not have to know what you are hearing. You only have to know that it is working on you, and it is moving you to something that you were not ready for when it began. Perhaps it fulfills something you might have been expecting where there are different ways of that happening.

A performance in which the music in Susa's words, "is working on you," comes about through a particular aspect of certain performers. According to Susa,

. . . all the powerful performers ultimately seem to be transparent, and all good singing groups or performing ensembles have a transparency both in their interpretive and their technical achievement which allows the original to shine through them like light through a stained glass window.

This, in Susa's opinion, is entertainment: ". . . when the audience is in the presence of that energy which fulfills, satisfies, and completes . . . we have to just let it beam through." According to Susa, ". . . when it smolders or strikes, you know that they have all moved into this other area. It takes over. You can see it in performances that are ecstatic."

In the preparation and performance of Susa's works, the director, the performer, and the listener will become aware of different ideas going on at the same time. Susa explains this occurrence:

Depending on the text and the purpose of the work, I like to have the feeling that the different strands are floating independently, but are related so that you have the feeling of simultaneous complementary statements, where the drama, being enacted in the work, is frequently from the collision of textures, from the way the strands evolve, or from the tension created from the fact that the strands are not meshing. One wants them to unite in some way, and the entire work is struggling to assemble itself. I very much like to have the feeling that the piece is creating itself for the listener as he hears it, and the drama and tension come in out of how [these various strands and textures are] manipulated.

For the majority of Susa's works, the accompaniment is set for organ. The accompaniment often acts as an "opulent subtext," according to Susa. It is a separate idea and often independent of the voices; however, on occasion it gives support to the voice parts. Also, the wide possibilities of coloration available through the various registrations on the organ are most helpful in the composer's efforts to express the text.

In conclusion, Susa's music, with the exception of the folk song settings, is difficult to prepare and perform. A director must know the ability of the ensemble, and the director must determine whether the ensemble can manage music which does not continuously move along common practice lines. The individual voice lines in Susa's choral music are not difficult to sing; however, the problems arise when these vocal lines are combined resulting in seconds, sevenths, and ninths between the voices. Also, Susa's harmonic idiom presents special problems. Because of these aspects in Susa's choral music, senior high school choirs and some community ensembles will not find many works in Susa's catalog readily accessible to them.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Susa is not an atonal composer nor does he employ twelve tone technique. He does employ tonal centers within his phrases, but they are difficult to determine. There is a strong tendency toward linear writing, and at times Susa combines lines to bring about sonorities which result in non-functional "color" chords.

His harmonic usage is characterized by the employment of bi-tonality and bi-modality. His penchant for the interval of a second, its inversion to the seventh, and expansion to the ninth is evident in the chordal structures contained in his works. Besides tertian sonorities, quartal and quintal sonorities, polychords, triads with an added note, clusters of seconds, and incomplete sonorities can be noted in his writing.

His music sometimes moves along common practice lines, but traditional cadence formulas are often avoided, and his works often close on an ambiguous tonality. In lieu of the traditional stabilizing and unifying factors, Susa makes much use of pedal point and *ostinato*. Often the *ostinato* becomes a repeated rhythmic pattern.

Although indeterminacy has only recently appeared in his writing, "The God of Love," Susa has collected a number of musical techniques, forms, and ideas which he uses from time to time in his

writing. This eclecticism does not make him an imitator *per se*, for he tries in his writing to incorporate the various aspects of our rich musical heritage into a complex musical whole which in essence becomes his musical style.

It is the composer's intent to express the text and to intensify the message and emotions contained therein. This goal and the composer's study of the text influence how he manipulates the various musical resources within his compositional technique. This manipulation brings about works that are musically descriptive and also that are at times unsettling, searching, transparent, intimate, and antique.

Susa is a conservative composer with regard to non-traditional uses of the voice. However, he is able to set the texts he selects with numerous colorations and shadings. Highlighting this word or that emotion, he is able to create a texture of music that ebbs and flows along a vast continuum of sounds.

A large portion of Susa's choral works is difficult to perform. With the exception of a few difficult intervals, the individual voice lines appear easy. However, the author believes that the difficulties arise when the vocal lines are combined, and along with Susa's penchant for conjunct motion result in seconds, sevenths and ninths between the various voices. These particular problems should not prevent one from getting to know and understand Susa's music. His music is worth the time and effort it takes to understand it, and after such an experience, the composer's music can become a part of our own personal musical growth.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH CONRAD SUSA*
March 24, 25, 1983
San Francisco, California

*This interview is being used with the permission of Conrad Susa.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH CONRAD SUSA

March 24, 25, 1983
San Francisco, California

INTERVIEWER: The Trinity Sunday my Chorale has read through about twice.

SUSA: Let's look at the poem first.

INTERVIEWER: You always seem to pick unusual texts.

SUSA: The first thing to notice about the poem is that there is a strange use of the word "thief" in the middle of the poem. The note I have in the commentary says that this is a reference to something by Milton in *Paradise Lost*. Milton called Satan "this first grand thief." The question is, what did he steal? Once I knew who he meant, it did not seem to matter what he stole.

First of all, it is the third poem of four that is not included in the usual canon of Herbert texts, and the idea that it is Trinity Sunday, the third poem and the Trinity having to go with three, it seems to me that it may be no accident.

The idea is that a person who is alone is nothing. "He that is one is none," but two reach you such as nature and Grace. It takes Glory, however, for them to attain God's face. The meaning is that two reaches in some degree, but three get there. "Steel and flint strike fire, Wit and desire Never to thee aspire," cannot get there because they are only two things. "Except life catch and hold those fast," it takes a third thing to make the flint and the fire live or to make wit and desire live. Life is required. He is talking about threes.

This particular thing was not held by that first thief who apparently thought that he alone could do something. Satan

in this case is the illustration of something that cannot work. "His fall can tell," and he falls through three things: "from heaven through earth to hell." The poet then says, "Let two of those alone to them that fall." Let those that fall have only two things. "Who God and Saints and Angels loose at last," let them go, because he that has one, namely God, at this point now has three; he has everything.

The poet comes to the conclusion that the first and last sentences are openly contradictory except that you understand that he means them as two totally different things. He that as One, namely himself, is nothing, but he that has the One, in other words if that One had been capitalized, then he would have three things or everything.

Herbert's texts frequently are highly symbolic.

Looking at the music, we find the proposition of "He that is one, is none," is stated and followed by a little fanfare. The bracketed portion in the organ is a small fanfare as if they were trumpets.

INTERVIEWER: Is that what you were thinking?

SUSA: Yes. The first part of the organ writing clearly follows and supports the chorus, but then immediately a little fanfare is proclaimed. The chorus continues, "Two reaches thee in some degree" and another fanfare so that you can digest that little piece of news. Then the phrase is further expanded with "Nature and Grace with Glory may attain thy Face." The line, which has been treated as a unit in basically a sort of chorale style, here in the steel and flint section breaks into a contrapuntal section illustrating the idea of two attempting to work and then catch. It is almost like a musical sound symbol of two things attempting to unite or make sparks. The important part of the statement, "Except life catch and hold us fast," is emphasized by being in bare octaves. That completely wipes away the whole contrapuntal section you just heard.

I was also attempting to get, in terms of emotion, something of the yearning to unite with God in that figure. It is reaching constantly upwards. It seems to always be falling back down, but it attempts to rise as if it is aspiring to God. It ends on a somewhat melancholy chord on the word "aspire" as something vaguely veiled in melancholy about that kind of minor chord in second inversion. Tonally what has happened so far is up until that point the piece has dropped a half-step.

There is a somewhat imitative passage going on in the organ. I used to have a mental picture for what was going on there, but I cannot say I remember anymore. It is just to further embody the notions of strife, struggle, yearning, or desiring to aspire, but included is the constant downward plunging nevertheless. The organ parts in measures 15 and 18 invert, and in measure 21 the figuration becomes invertible.

There is no actual illustration, for an example, of Satan falling to hell in this piece. It is not dealt with on that level. I think the thing the work is trying to do is through its development to finally achieve some sort of unity with God, and some kind of completion takes place at the end.

"Let two of those alone to them that fall," is clearly the beginning of both a recapitulation and some kind of coda. We have arrived at E flat in the bass; it is the home key; it is of course the three flat key. Actually it acts as a dominant to the very end so that the work ends in E flat with open fifths on either side of the E flat. They are the flats of E flat, B flat, and A flat. The chord to me had some sort of symbolic connection with the Trinity.

The scale figures which start in measure 18 cut across the texture of this sort of arpeggio-like melody. There is both a downward pull and an upward striving. I wanted some sort of tension within the harmony in order that you felt that it was moving in two different directions at once. It would not be dramatic in an ordinary sense, but it would be emotional because you would be feeling the melody pulling downward but the harmony rising. "He that has one has all" seems to end the voyage basically at home.

Frequently in my choral pieces there is a sense that the piece has to earn itself by the end. Even though the material is stated frequently and very confidently, nevertheless, it undergoes a metamorphosis so that it seems like the ending is earned or at least I like to think that, and it certainly is one of my motivations in constructing it.

I think the main mood of the piece is basically prayer and an expression of hope. I think that all of Herbert's poetry is fundamentally devotional; man could do very little without actually praying. His poetry seems to be an accumulation of prayers. Even when he is stating stories, homely, or little parables, underneath is this intense devotional feeling. This is one of the reasons I like his music.

I would like my church music to not be presentational in the sense that I want to say, "God, that was beautifully done," "It sounded splendid," "What a wonderful piece," or

anything of the kind, but I want the people who listen to it feel as if they are praying along with the chorus and somehow expressing it more powerfully in an unexpected radiant way.

The purpose of the music is to deepen the mood of prayer, meditation, understanding, religious sympathy, or deepen the religious experience of the congregation. It is not a momentary entertainment. Although it should nevertheless qualify; however, that should not excuse anything in the art.

It seems to me that a lot of bad church music is merely devotional; it is not also good music. A lot of church music is not devotional. It is very popular and people like it, but it does not actually move them to any kind of, what I call, a religious experience. It is sometimes a very good musical experience, but to my thinking, the devotional aspect and the moving of the congregation to piety comes from the tremendous commitment in the chorus to the text and to the music.

The purpose of the singing is that the congregation, momentarily through the song, addresses God in this way. I do not know how to say it more simply. There is merely something in the church that the people themselves cannot do. They are an aspect of the celebration, the service, or the rite that is being enacted so that something higher in everybody is being addressed, and this time it is being addressed through music by the chorus. The music gathers and focuses the impulses of the congregation. I suppose that is why choral directors go through a great deal of trouble to pick a certain text or a certain day that intensifies the meaning and significance of a particular day in the church year.

On the whole the symbolism of the Trinity is so obscure and complicated that I could not even begin to explain it. I do not know if anybody understands it, but you can only approach it by a non-rational attitude. There is nothing in this piece that is what I would call a rational explanation of the work. You either get the poem or you do not, and the particular mood and feeling that arises from the music I think comes from wishing to move closer to a mystery. The concept of God is a mystery.

I think aspire is the key word in the poem. "Two reacheth thee in some degree, to thee aspire . . .," the aspiring things cut across Satan's falling. The ultimate movement of the poem is upward; the fall only illustrates that you have to travel upward as far as he fell. If you are in hell with

yourself, then you have to deal with it. From that point of view, it is a very Catholic poem.

INTERVIEWER: Was Herbert Catholic?

SUSA: He was a Church of England priest. I think the Church of England is quite Catholic in feeling. Probably somewhat like it is now again, but I think it went through an uncatholic phase.

INTERVIEWER: You were saying how the congregation would become closer to God, yet your music has to be performed by the choir. I do not think the congregation could perform your music.

SUSA: That is correct. I do not mean that the congregation would perform it, but I mean that when the congregation listens to the choir perform the choir focuses their own feelings into a meditation upon this mystery in such a way that the congregation sympathetically is experiencing this movement toward God through this music. The music has snagged them, and it moves them through an experience so that on the final chord they feel like they have come into the Presence.

INTERVIEWER: I like this idea of the recapitulation; it differs from how we normally look at a recapitulation.

SUSA: The piece seems to start three times, thus there are three main sections. The first section ending at the top of page 3 at the word "face," the next section in my way of thinking is clear up until about measure 26, and then the recapitulation begins.

The first part still deals with some earlier material that goes into a kind of development phase. The rhythm is doubled; "steel and flint" is twice as fast as "he that is one." It is the same material, but it is now moving faster.

INTERVIEWER: I was interested in that you said that E flat is the center, but that it acts more as the dominant to A flat, but you did not end in E flat.

SUSA: The idea is that the E flat is the center of the figure. You know the subdominant is called that because it is the lower fifth. In C the F is the dominant below the C and the G is the dominant because it dominates from above, but in this work, the E flat is your tonal center. Your lower dominant is the A flat and your upper dominant is B flat. Again, it is not thinking in terms of the triadic harmony so much as in terms of what a sonority is.

I would say basically in mood this piece is fundamentally quite romantic. I think most of my choral music is fundamentally romantic in expression. It always asks for warmth and involvement. It should be as personal as possible. It should sound as if the chorus is making it up, if it is working right or that the conductor is composing it on the spot and making everybody sing what is on his mind. The organist is this generous opulent subtext. It is amplifying the fundamental media, and this is true, I think, of all my music.

The piece is somewhat different stylistically from the others in that the harmonies are more along common practice lines.

INTERVIEWER: My altos would like to beat you across the head; you always write so high for them.

SUSA: Yes, there is a spot in the *Trinity Sunday* ("He that is one," page 7) where the altos if they want can perform their line down the octave.

INTERVIEWER: I think I let them do it anyway, especially my second altos.

SUSA: I think all my choral music has extremely wide ranges for a lot of the people.

INTERVIEWER: The bass for an example, the E flat above middle C. Bases who are not knowledgeable would have some difficulty in handling this pitch.

SUSA: I am aware that they cannot sing a certain way up there. Frequently, fortissimo dynamics in a part that is out of the range can only be interpreted as tension. It does not mean that I am asking someone to blow his voice. It is sometimes

the question of intensities and a lot of other factors, but the ones who can sing fortissimo up there will and the ones who cannot should not.

INTERVIEWER: That is one of the important things to remember in choral singing. Forte or double forte is not necessarily to be interpreted as loud. At the bottom of page six, you have the organ constantly providing a descending line.

SUSA: The organ is pulling down; the chorus is pulling up. It seemed to me that once satan was down in hell he wants you down there with him. There is no rising without a struggle and only after a certain amount of struggle can you fully let go and then float up. It is not going to automatically come to you without a desire. "Wit and desire never to thee aspire except life catch and hold them fast." The idea is that yearning for upward movement is what is being expressed in the work.

I like the final section "Let two of those." I mean musically it has always worked out very nicely.

INTERVIEWER: It gives me more insight just to see that and to know of the ideas of struggle and rising. Again, that is a part of life, the rising above what is here in this world to some mystery that you do not know anything about.

SUSA: That is right. It also points up that the overall form of the upward striving is instantly shown in the very first phrase of the work. So that the chorus actually strikes the confident attitude that it can be done, but then it has to be won, achieved, paid for, earned, and desired. It does not come freely, is one of the things the poet is saying.

INTERVIEWER: That is expressed in the inner struggle of going down and going up.

SUSA: Yes. Even in the accompaniment the lines are pulling against one another such as on the top of page 4 in measure 15. You should note also the closeness of the melody. I wanted to create an English atmosphere, a strong modal feeling, to hint plain chant, and also to capture something English and modal about the piece. What I mean is that there is in the harmonization of this section of the piece a modal feeling which I always associate with English music.

Frequently in my music, when I make a sudden modulation, there is a cloud which moves over the work momentarily. There is the danger of not succeeding. When you get to bar seventeen, you should have the feeling that there is something deep; another sound has invaded from which we have to come out of. From there to the end, we find something is suddenly threatening the work, but the work is not going to pause. It is like in the Psalm where it says, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." You have to absolutely experience this death, but you cannot pause there; you are not dead forever, but you must die.

INTERVIEWER: Are you saying that this is a threatening aspect?

SUSA: I am just saying that it is something I frequently put into my music. There is always some raven wing--goes against the sun, and the harmony deepens or darkens. There is nothing that explains it except that a deeper involvement takes place. It has been serious up until then, but from here on, I do not know. I cannot describe it any further.

INTERVIEWER: Here you go into the change of harmony in terms of a darker sound. Then you brighten it again right through here just this one measure.

SUSA: A relative lightening. The trick would be to find a dark color there. Even though the mood lightens, it is a relative lightening within the dark phrase. It is an emotional space. It is clearly a transition so that you are not sure where it is going to move. Once we have aspired but not made it, the work shifts around, shifts around, shifts around. It tries the section again, and then suddenly there is the first hint that we might make it. Again, a characteristically English sound at the top of page 5, measure 25. The work ends in E flat surrounded by two dominants.

What am I saying? Only that the brightness is so close, because a minute ago we were there, no, we were here. This seems to me somewhat brighter and so much more tension in this. It stays bright forever; it does not collapse. Also triadic endings frequently collapse unless they are very special. I try in my endings to keep the experience going on a bit after the piece has ended.

INTERVIEWER: In bar 36 you do not want the sound to diminish and I can feel the sense of lift, but with the organ going outward in bar 26, it is not complementary now, is it?

SUSA: This huge gesture is a stupendous amplification of this figure. We have now repeated our opening just as the poet has, but we have managed it in another key, with the same notes, and with the same figure. Everything about the figure now has some kind of amplified meaning all the way to the end.

INTERVIEWER: I have always looked to see the interval of a second in an ending chord, and I did not get one this time.

SUSA: No. Just sometimes I do that.

Here is a good example of what I consider a nice use of the seventh, "Nature and Grace" in bar 7; it is a very small thing.

INTERVIEWER: This is a small point, but an interpretive one. In bar 8, the crescendo begins on "Glo" of "Glory". Can I back off on the "ry" or "Glory"?

SUSA: The place you have to get to is the verb. Because you need the word "may," "May attain." It does not attain, but it may attain in the sense that it might attack. "I've got you!" "Nature and Glory may attain thy face" as opposed to "that he that is one is none." You have thence said in very clear octaves, "Two reaches thee in some degree," but "Nature and Grace with Glory may attain thy face." That is the difference and at that point, instantly and musically, the opening figure has inverted itself. The falling now, for the first time, is from the very top.

INTERVIEWER: Again, the need to throw out the common practice idea of repeating just notes, but also an idea. A falling idea is an invertible concept.

SUSA: That is right. Each piece is sort of like a multi-layered continuum where things can show up on and stand. If you think of these pieces as their own little worlds, things spin around them almost in a sort of symphonic kind of way.

There is also a feeling that comes over the end when the chorus begins "Let two of those alone to them that fall." It is like, they can have that; we do not need that; we are moving upward. The use of the word "let" is an interesting way to start a musical sentence. They are looking back from the pit, they are turning away from the pit, and they are moving upward toward light again. I wanted to start the sopranos and altos in the darkest possible place so that they come up from everything, and that is a comfortable register for both of them. The tenors and the baritones, they do not have to be particularly brilliant there so everybody starts on the A flat, and everything now is going to grow from the number three flat.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any special reason why you used the "L-e-t-t" or this particular writing of the word thief (thiefe)?

SUSA: It is only a sign pronounced like thief. I had a big running battle with my publisher about this. I wanted to print the poem spelt in George Herbert's way on the back page and just put this in the regular updated English, but this particular editor, to whom this is dedicated, did not feel this to be necessary. By the way, he is the man who brought me to E. C. Schirmers. He was the director of the Handel-Haydn Society in Boston, and he was the one who brought *The Three Mystical Carols* to Schirmers. They were the first E. C. Schirmer published, and then he took everything else. Hazel is his dog, a dachshund, now dead. I dedicated this work to them because I figured two reaches thee in some degree. It was a personal act of thanksgiving, and I actually got the idea for it at his house in Boston.

INTERVIEWER: It is a beautiful piece. I am surprised you have not heard it.

SUSA: Yes, and I do not know of anybody that has ever done it.

INTERVIEWER: It is not that difficult. How do you look at the bottom part? It says, "His fall can tell; from Heaven through Earth, to Hell." Is there any significance in any of those lines?

SUSA: The only possible meaning is that there I am trying to reconstruct what I might have been thinking of.

INTERVIEWER: The tenor line has this up and down movement.

SUSA: The devil did not fall gracefully. Note the irregularity of the other voices, and all this means something flapping on its way down. It cannot keep the altitude.

INTERVIEWER: The descent is disorganized.

SUSA: Yes, he is having a real bad time on the way down. I do not think there is any more to the work than that if there is that much.

INTERVIEWER: It is very expressive here at "Who God and Saints."

SUSA: The syncopation there is another intensification device so that there is no end to those lines. It just keeps going. It is very difficult to sing these kinds of phrases and to keep enough in reserve so that you have the feeling that the line is constantly being sapped forward rather than you having to push it. Of course, all the triads come back just as simple as anything. All the complications have been left behind.

COMMISSIONS

SUSA: Almost all of my works have been commissioned. Some church choirs do not pay for their commissions, but they give you the opportunity of writing the piece, rehearsing it with them, or conducting it with them.

When I was in Nashville, from 1961 to 1963, I was under a Ford Foundation Fellowship for two years. The second year half of the grant was paid by the City of Nashville, and the purpose of the grant was to provide music for the high schools throughout the city. This occasioned the "Lullaby Carol" and also the first two serenades. These were smaller works that need not concern us right now.

In Nashville at that time, one of the better churches was St. George's Episcopal Church and its choir director, Gregory Colson, was someone I got to know. He asked me if I would like to write some music for his church choir, and he invited me to come out and hear them. I did, and the choir was quite good.

It was for me an opportunity to write choral music in a religious context. The only other choral music I had written were the *Joyce Songs*, *Wait on the Lord*, and *The Song of Ruth*. *The Song of Ruth* was done at Carnegie Tech; the *Joyce Songs* and *Wait on the Lord* were done at Juilliard. Suddenly I had this opportunity to write more choral music, and I wrote *David's Kingly City* which was the first. At that time it was called a *Closing Anthem*, and it came at the end of a concert which featured a Bach Cantata.

The orchestra of the *Closing Anthem*, and *David's Kingly City*, was exactly the same for the Bach Cantata. The arrangement here for organ, I did later. It was originally written for a small orchestra. It was called a *Closing Anthem* because we needed something to close the church concert. All the Amens came after a long evening of music, and we wanted something spectacular that closed the event in some final way. That was the business about the ending.

One of the choir members, John Wagner, was one of the people caught up in my music. When I came back to Nashville, he was already dying of cancer. He was one of the first people I knew to suddenly be taken away like that. I have written a number of little memorial pieces for people that I have gotten to know somewhat and just watched them die; it is very painful.

But to get back to the idea of commissions, frequently I get the idea from the forces available, from the feast day, or from the kind of musical opportunity that is provided. The pieces I wrote for Greg were: *David's Kingly City*, *Three Mystical Carols*, *Two Marian Carols*. I wrote the first version of *The Knell*, which was for solo voice. I do not know where that is now. Then finally the first version of *Discovery and Praises*, which they also performed.

I always had to some extent their choral sound in mind. Since I had an opportunity to rehearse and try out the pieces, I could see what the kind of complications we were into. These were easier for me to show the chorus, but were sometimes hard for Greg, but that was only since I wrote the piece and know it better. The difference in our musical tastes was also largely responsible. The normal problems he dealt with, but my music presented him with a lot of new problems.

INTERVIEWER: *Do you compromise your musical tastes in terms of the commissions you have to meet?*

SUSA: I do not have any musical taste. You only get the idea from the limitations. You would not dream of thinking up a difficult piece for a group that cannot do it. It is not that it is a compromise.

INTERVIEWER: I was thinking in terms of your harmonic resources where it would be difficult for them to bring it alive or they have that kind of difficulty, and you would make it a little more along common practice lines.

SUSA: As I told you earlier, I am very surprised at what people find easy or hard to do. I never set out in advance to make it difficult. I do try to make every piece I write accessible. What some people find accessible other people do not; I have never discovered any formula. My own music does not move along common practice lines always, but on the other hand sometimes it does.

INTERVIEWER: I do not think I have seen a key signature in your music.

SUSA: I have discovered that they are extremely inconvenient and a lot of people forget that they are there. I think all my pieces have a tonal center, but whether they are in a key, I really do not say. .

INTERVIEWER: I can understand when you say that there are times when a cloud comes over your music, and you move to a deeper area. In the other masters, you would see a key change or other accidentals involved. You have this color that gets darker or you know you are going somewhere, but you are not certain in your aspect of writing.

SUSA: I think of keys much more along the idea of modal lines than actual 18th-century harmonic major and minor lines. This is one of the reasons I like Renaissance music a great deal. You get a happy piece in what to us would be a minor key; however, to them it would be a mode. You cannot tell me that because this is in d minor that it is sad (Bach *Italian Concerto* opening). What is that feeling? When you see one flat up there, that is a convenience, but to us nowadays, we tend to see one flat and d minor. We think of minor as meaning tragic or something. I found the only way around that is not to label them, but to leave it ambiguous.

As you have noticed, a lot of this music is Christmas music. Christmas is a very nostalgic festival and although I prefer Easter in terms of its significance, nevertheless Christmas is so full of rich associations that it is very difficult to escape from wanting to write some Christmas music. My happiest experiences were always hearing Christmas music. But at this time, I really did not know much about carols. I did not fully understand how burdens worked, and I did not understand at the time when I was writing the "Lullaby Carol" that a lot of what we sing at Christmas are really hymns and not carols. This is not a carol in the more learned sense of the word. It just means a piece appropriate to the Christmas season, but then I discovered that there were all kinds of carols: Mayday carols, New Year's carols, happy carols, sad carols, drinking carols, and so forth. I found carols to be more a form than merely a seasonal thing.

INTERVIEWER: English derivation.

SUSA: That is right. I got the idea that I would write as many different kinds of carols as I could think of and the list of music includes elegy carols, round carols, lullaby carols, mystical carols. I wanted to expand the Christmas range, if possible, by the kinds of texts that somehow have fallen out of favor these days.

INTERVIEWER: I think that people are not aware of this information.

SUSA: Probably not.

INTERVIEWER: I think that is a part of the elusiveness of your music. People are not knowledgeable of some of the things you are writing. This is what makes my job interesting because to understand your music is understanding those aspects.

SUSA: I think it would be a good thing to pinpoint the stylistic situations for you. We can begin with the earliest choral work and work up through the later ones. How would that be?

INTERVIEWER: Fine. Did you wish to tell me anymore about commissions or not?

SUSA: I only meant to say that commissions affect the material only insofar as they provide the limitations that are gradually imposed. My ideas for any piece of music always come out of the circumstance. I carry around a lot of unwritten pieces because I have not found a circumstance that fits them. It is too expensive and too time consuming to write a big work only to discover that no one is ever going to do it, but that requires a very special commitment which sometimes I cannot afford to make. So there are a lot of pieces I have not written because I cannot afford to write them.

The "Hymns for the Amusement of Children" were adapted from a solo song cycle that was written as a set of studies prior to my opera, *Transformations*. They were like sketches in styles of different singers, dealing with popular idioms which I began to incorporate into my music.

Basically, what I want to do is write it all. I want my music to contain as many elements as are necessary for the expression of my text or the need of the ensemble, and more and more there has come into my music the notion of entertainment, but in the best sense of the word. I want people to be glad they are listening to my music. I want singers and performers to be glad they are doing it, and to have fun doing it. I desire my music to have something that both challenges them, gratifies them, and expands them. So that once they have heard that, they now have an additional way of hearing an experience that helps them garble up more and more music. They can now contain more music in a sense.

I have also come to the realization that my work as a composer basically means that I have to fundamentally, in the initial process of composition, act as a receptor. When I have difficulty in composing, it is because my ego, other problems, or personal problems get in the way of reception. I have lots of pieces I hear simultaneously, but the great problem is to separate them.

The second difficulty then is making them sufficiently pure that they stand on their own, and that the music is polished and evolved to a degree that it has its own life without me. Everytime I look at the the piece and I pick it up, there it is, still doing the same thing. Then I close the page and pick it up again, and it is still doing the same thing. In other words, its tape is always going, and I am only satisfied with the piece when I can sneak up on it on my desk and look at it. If it does it to me, I know I am starting to move with this; however, I do not want for me to have to make my music work. There is a certain point where I am interested in separating it out from me and letting it develop

its own logic, its own life, and its own meaning. I just glide it along; I stay out of the way of my pieces if I can.

My pieces do not express anything about me in an autobiographical way and this includes the Christmas pieces. Although I talk about nostalgia, I am nostalgic about everything if it comes to that, but the Christmas mood involves a return to childlike simplicity which is difficult and frequently impossible to maintain and sometimes perhaps dangerous. You do not want to be walking around like a simple child when you are going to go down to the NEA and they want to know why so many students are failing. That is no time to act like a mere child. The movie, "Gandhi," provides an extremely good lesson in when it pays to be shrewd, wise as a serpent, and harmless as doves. This man was both a child and a brilliant man. All I am really trying to say is that I locate these different things in myself, but they are not merely about me.

I would love it if I could find a way of making my music obvious and strong so that people could feel they could relate to it. I never wanted to write anything in spite of somebody. On the other hand, when people have difficulties or if my music encounters confused looks, I do not despair about it because there is always someone who gets it in exactly the way I meant. I figure then, I am not making it up. What I said was true, and I want it to have the honesty of an obvious truth. What follows is that just as the composer must personally get out of the way to let the gift pass through him, his added responsibility is to put it in a form that those who will put it into performance understand their directions.

The conductor also gets out of the way by immersing himself so completely in the work that it begins to pass through him. He then acts as a receptor, a teacher, a guide, and he embodies the truth of the work. He counsels, he teaches, and he contains the vision that is ensemble. If everybody then gets out of the way, including the chorus, by solving all the technical problems and by being at one with the vision of the director, then the piece moves into the people that listen with the same clarity and power that had struck me. Everybody is getting out of the way, but meanwhile it is being refracted, multiplied, further made increasingly specific so that different ensembles can do the same piece totally differently and yet its true if it happened to them.

Pieces that do not happen either to the composer in the sense that it is not a true experience always have a phony shine to them or they do not stir you in some expected way. I think

the truth is frequently so obvious you should have the feeling you are in the presence of something you do not need to understand, but you can experience as true. You do not have to hear inversions; you do not have to know what you are hearing. You only have to know that it is working on you, and it is moving you to something that you were not ready for when it began. Perhaps it fulfills something you might have been expecting where there are different ways of that happening.

I really believe that all the powerful performers seem to ultimately be transparent, and all ultimately good singing groups or performing ensembles have a transparency both in their interpretive and their technical achievement which allows the original to shine through them like light through a stained glass window. That is what entertainment is. When the audience is in the presence of that energy which fulfills, satisfies, and completes.

I have heard recordings of my music that are real clean; everything is in place, but it did not happen. The performers did not get it themselves although they gave a performance. They presented something, but it did not ignite into a real happening.

The thing I liked about your group is that a good bit of the time that happened and not always consistently in the same piece. There were times, through one reason or another, there was a bum or a messed up entrance, but nevertheless, the authenticity of it was there and one eagerly listens for that.

I think most good music is moving on several levels at once. I think that in one's experience of a piece you can move up and down depending on how many details you can absorb and if you know more about music, it is going to give you more. You know the old phrase that if an ass looks into a mirror you cannot expect an apostle to look out is absolutely true for music. Very few people know nothing about music. They know if it has a tune, a melody, or harmony. They know if they like it. Therefore, they know something to like. Well, the more they know the better chance they have of liking something, and I think that my music contains a number of kinds of things they could know. They can pick any or all of them, but they have got to get some of it. I do not know how people hook into music, but it would be very difficult to sing something in which you know nothing about. You have to at some point give over to it, and say at least while I sing this piece I am going to sing it as if I liked it and like it while I am singing it. I am going to make

myself available to it. They have to give over that much and forget about themselves long enough to do the work.

A composer and a conductor have the exact same problems. I have to get out of the way. They have to get out of the way. You have to get out of the way. We have to just let it beam through, and when it smolders or strikes, you know that they have all moved into this other area. It takes over. You can see it in performances that are ecstatic and so forth.

How does one arrive at that except by some kind of identification. The better that is aligned, the more clearly the technical is aligned with the conception and with the intentions of the director, and the more they serve each other the better chance it has of coming through. It is amazing that anything gets through at all when you consider.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of objectivity, do you mean that Stravinsky is merely to be sung, and it just "happens?"

SUSA: I do not think that is true about Stravinsky's music. I think people have spent much too much time believing what he said. I do not think his music is remotely objective in spite of everything that he said. I think that he is objective in the sense that we are talking about because he was a receptor, *par excellence*, if there ever was one. Everything about his music shows that it burst in him.

"The Symphony of Psalms," now there is an amazing work. You have to be involved. You have to remember that Stravinsky's great antagonist artistically was Wagner and everything that Wagner stood for that sweating, perspiring, heaving, straining that is what Stravinsky would have meant by emotion.

INTERVIEWER: Yet you have Stravinsky bringing in the brass, the use of dotted rhythms, and this is symbolic of God.

SUSA: Stravinsky has to be seen against the context of late Romanticism to know what he means by being objective. He means not that, not Wagner, not that kind of emotion, not your personal feelings. No, do not bring your personal feelings to my music; however, I think they are finally starting to perform Stravinsky right. I hear a lot of groups that are doing it much hotter than he would do it, but suddenly make it sound much more musical than it has ever

sounded. I do not mean that Stravinsky was a bad conductor, but at least he did not let a lot of other kinds of bad habits get into his music. He let a few of his own get into it. I do not think he was a terribly good conductor, but he knew what he did not want his music to be. Now what it is, is yet to be found. I do not think anybody is really doing it yet, except in a few places, because they spend much too much time trying to do what he talks about and you will never do it.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, but do not heat it up, do not do this, take this off and reserve that. Very Classically approached.

SUSA: But Classical music is hot.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, but you know it is hard to tell people that. They do not really agree.

SUSA: I know that is what he did when he conducted and so far I have heard him give boring performances, but I cannot believe that is what he meant. I really don't.

INTERVIEWER: There is a beautiful a cappella section in the second movement.

SUSA: There is a good example of the seconds acting consonantly in that last movement; that clotted sonority that hangs like a starlit sky. You know the stars are not equal?

INTERVIEWER: So true.

SUSA: But that pattern is how he hears the dissonances also. The fact that some of them are near has nothing to do with disorder. A starry sky is a beautiful and gorgeously ordered sight.

When you do Stravinsky do not go for the cold and anemic sound. If by cold you mean hot, yes! By cold you mean uninvolved, cold, blank, no! There are all kinds of ways of doing it. I, like any great artist, can be performed a number of ways and you hear something different about it, but I think only time will tell what really will come out of this.

DAVID'S KINGLY CITY

SUSA: It has to sound remote, ancient, and sort of cryptic.

INTERVIEWER: Why impersonal? Why not personal?

SUSA: I wanted the contrast in the two languages. I wanted the English to be immediate. No one understands Latin anyway so all I wanted was for the syllables to come over, but then the chorus translates them instantly. You can see embodied in these funny little noises are in fact beautiful sentences.

INTERVIEWER: In looking at this work, I notice how the Latin comes very rapidly and the English is drawn out.

SUSA: That is right. They are moving almost at two different speeds. The English comes in like a kind of hymn, and then gradually the reverse happens. Then the English starts to warm up, the Latin slows down, and the speeds come together. We then get to this section about the word "light" then is the big key shift. The remaining Latin sentences or rather the Latin sentences which will be the second part, I then pile in all at once so we can get rid of that problem, and you never have to deal with the Latin again. The rest of it is completely in English except for the Alleluias.

This piece is interesting structurally in many ways. It is just a way of composing that I do not compose in anymore. Everytime I look at it I think that it is an extremely odd piece.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean by not a way of composing anymore?

SUSA: I would never write a piece like that anymore. It would never occur to me.

It does not have melodies, but motifs. The motifs are juggled around. For one thing, there is always this sort of arching phrase, three up and three down, which gets reflected in the choral part.

There is a little fanfare figure. There are always mirrors, overlapping fanfares, and this little line that always sounds to me like a fanfare from the way it is written in the orchestra part. The movement of seconds appears very curious.

An antique feeling occurs here on page two, measures 4 and 5. You can locate everybody's music very clearly. You hear the horns. It is almost like a montage rather than anything blending. They are not growing as such, but combining and re-combining always. What happens at the end is that you get piles of *stretti*.

INTERVIEWER: In a sense you are talking about a non-developmental type of composition.

SUSA: Yes. It is almost like constant declamation. I mean it is very Baroque from that point of view. The drama is related too, if everything is going to mesh right. There are strands of things floating around. It is a beautiful text, but I have never been able to find the rest of the poem. It is a real early one; I got it from *The Limits of Art: Poetry and Prose Chosen by Ancient and Modern Critics*.

I was raised Catholic, and although I was no longer practicing, I did not know what it would mean to start actually writing for an Episcopal situation. I did not know what the sensibility of this was. I also did not want, in myself, to pretend I was making a religious commitment because I was writing a religious work. I did want it to be spiritually honest.

It is an interesting transition piece, plus the fact that it was done on a piece of the Epiphany. It just seemed like a wonderful amplification of the whole Christmas idea. It is actually a kind of Christmas work from that point of view, but I wanted something that was universal in meaning, and I thought it was sort of daring of me to pick that piece that Episcopalians do not normally deal with and the Trinity idea. It is certainly not mentioned too much. Again, it was that feeling I have that a lot of churches do not know their own heritage, and this man is an Episcopalian poet and yet no one ever deals with it.

INTERVIEWER: All these things are universal, and they are unusual because people do not know about this material.

SUSA: The piece itself is very straightforward, and I do not think that it creates any kind of particular problems in terms of performance questions. I think that it is vaguely a kind of theatre piece again because of the off-stage chorus of the alleluias. I originally wanted the carillon aspects or bells to start ringing throughout the whole last part; I wanted it to be a big celebration.

The amens should sound like ceaseless amens. All the ways you can say amen and do them. As if they would go on forever and underneath it is this colossal thing in the organ that is working itself out. All these imitations and all the different motives seem like a tight *stretto*. It is the most architectural sort of writing I think I did.

INTERVIEWER: Therefore, you are not as architectural now?

SUSA: Not to think in that way. I do not know if I could ever locate that anymore. It was just a sort of fluke. You never know which way you are going to write a piece; the materials dictate the method.

INTERVIEWER: Does your publisher give you specific instructions regarding a work?

SUSA: He never actually gives me specific directives as to what my work should be; he is only constantly urging me to remember that it would be nice if I wrote a hit.

INTERVIEWER: I can understand that; he is in this for the money.

SUSA: He is, and he also wants me to do it for myself, too. He also would like me to have an income and all those sorts of things I never think about. I am sort of appallingly uncommercial in many ways, and I never really think about being commercial. It does not mean that I am against it; it is just not like a primary concern.

I view myself as a receptor, that is true. When you are getting the ideas, the working out of the ideas, and the kind of ideas you are likely to receive depend of course on your personality and unquestionably on your knowledge and so forth. I have always loved all music. After my first couple of years of college when I thought that Grieg was beneath

contempt and all those kinds of things, I have come to realize how wonderful it is that anybody writes a good piece no matter what kind it is. That there are only two kinds of pieces, good ones and bad ones. There are some dreadful Bach works and there are some wonderful pieces by lesser and unknowns; nevertheless, in terms of the genuineness and happiness of the idea, its execution, and so forth, that the piece is admirable for what it is. One has to stop comparing unlike things or seek only the greatest.

In my own mind, I have always liked it all. I have always wanted to just weave it into a new rich kind of strand, if I could, rather than all those things flying apart in my music or being merely eclectic. I would like to weave them in so that you would see just how many rich levels I could bring to a work. When I get into some of my later pieces, I think I have brought that off.

I always like a piece of music to be more than one thing. If it is an anthem, it is also a concerto, it is also the drama, it is also the working out of something depending on the nature of the work. A couple of concept things at least must be present. All somehow improbably mixed together so that some new fluke sonic flavor rises.

INTERVIEWER: When you said that you wrote in common practice style, did you ever publish any of that music?

SUSA: The *Two Serenades* are common practice.

The history of my music is varied, and the thrust of my harmonic ideas are very simple to understand, if I could tell you that the earliest music I really liked was Gregorian chant. I loved extremely modern music. I loved Debussy, Bartok, and Schoenberg. I moved right into the 20th century without any problems. The most difficult music presented no real problems for me. I liked some composers better than others, let's say, but basically it was all trying to do the same thing. It was trying to be good.

The whole mid-ground of the 19th century was very uncongenial to me for some reason. I like Mozart and Beethoven, but I did not like Mendelssohn. Wagner I did not understand or care about at all, and then, I suddenly liked Brahms. With Brahms there was sufficient intellectual content in the music, and I could find his emotions because of the way in which he constructed his pieces. I realized then

that I had over-simplified my own experience. Brahms then led me into deeper ways of thinking about music and now the 19th century poses no problems, but on the other hand, I became completely uninterested in the 20th century. I could not think of anything more boring than having to listen to those contemporary compositions, quite frankly, even though I contributed my share to the junk heap.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that a lot of the 20th-century music is chorally oriented? Is it vocally written?

SUSA: It seems written against everything. It is written against the voice, against the instrument, against the people, and I think frequently, it is written against the composers themselves.

Most of the contemporary composers I know are so neurotic and their music is such a clear expression of their problems that I cannot imagine why they would want anyone to buy a ticket to listen to that therapy. It is in the realm of therapy to me, and I think that it has become hideously derailed.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anyone writing anything that you feel is worthwhile?

SUSA: Yes. We live in an exciting time for there are a lot of people writing good music; however, it is not the music which was predicted to happen. There is a composer in England, John McCabe, whose music I like very much. I even like the music of John Tavener. Do you know his pieces, *Celtic Requiem* or *The Whale*?

There is a lot of music I like, but there is a lot I just wonder why anybody bothers with it. Although I am not saying those people are fakes or anything like that, I am just saying that their problems do not interest me. I am not interested in problems. I am not interested in the scientific approach to music. I am not interested in having to add up the notes, count, listen to whether they are going backwards, and all those things. I could not think of anything more boring.

INTERVIEWER: That sounds like Xenakis.

SUSA: I would never think of putting on a Xenakis record. I understand he has his place, it is necessary to the development of music, and he is discovering a lot of wonderful things. Fine, but I would not put it on for fun in the way that I put on the *St. Matthew Passion* for fun and to have a moving and human experience. I also find that so much of contemporary music deals with strife, agony, anxiety, neurosis, the dreadful times in which we live, and all that stuff. That is the last thing I want to think about when I put on music. I do not want to have to deal with whether the bombs are going to drop or the neurotic problems of contemporary man and his alienation from this or that. Those things do not interest me.

INTERVIEWER: The music does not seem vocal. What about a soprano holding a high B flat at a dynamic level of very, very soft while a lot of other things are going on around her?

SUSA: It does not come from having to actually hear yourself sing that note in your mind. It comes from hearing the pitch in the sopranos, true, but it does not come from the actual realistic experience of hearing that B flat there. I do not believe those composers really hear those things. I find that music very dishonest.

I think a composer constructs a lot of things he does not hear in the sense he knows they are possible and will create a certain effect. In a certain sense of construction, like the sound tapestry at the opening of the *Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky was challenged as to whether he heard all of that. Well, not in a certain way, but in another way he knew an effect he wanted to hear, and to get it in the world, you would have to do things you have not heard of until now. It is something one only hears in some sort of idealistic imaginary other sound scope. In that sense, every composer attempts to compose, to create something that no one has ever heard, even himself. From another point of view, to write something no one can do, particularly in the case of voices where you are dealing with a human limitation, where people must be in a state of relaxation and support, it would be like asking someone to sing under water. Yes, it is possible, but they would drown. Yes, it is possible to be on that high B flat but why? It is bad for your voice. It is bad to want to do that to a voice. I think that all good music and Gregorian chant teaches you this is good for what does it. Gregorian chant makes you a good singer if you sing it because it took the instrument into account when it was designed. It flatters the instrument and vice

versa so the voice can then give the music something. But if the music is taking from the voice and not giving it anything, then it is dishonest. It means that the composer knows better, and he is doing it anyway. That is dishonest.

Stravinsky knew that was going to work. So he was not being dishonest. He was not making something. Everything that Stravinsky wrote is possible. He did not write anything impossible; he wrote difficult things, but a high note is not merely difficult, it is unlikely. So that to me is what I mean by dishonest.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that some pieces do not have a climax?

SUSA: Hymns do not have a climax. There is no part of a hymn that is more important. It is only delivering a text.

INTERVIEWER: What must be present in order for you to write or compose?

SUSA: I like to be warm; I cannot write if I am cold. I can compose best either in the mornings, in the evenings, or during the night; I have a hard time in the afternoons.

I like a few familiar things with me when I compose. I would not feel comfortable if someone gave me a sheet of paper, a pencil, and a piano; I would feel more comfortable if I had my mug with my pencils in it. I do not know. There are certain magic talismen I just need around; that is very inconsistent. I cannot compose in a room that someone has just used. It is very hard for me to share a work space because I have to enter a place where I leave certain kinds of concerns behind. I find it difficult to compose if I have to overcome some kind of presence in the room or somebody else's preoccupations. I find it hard to share a work space except under very special conditions, but I cannot use a room that somebody has just had a meeting in, and I deeply resent other people coming into the room while I am working and moving anything around.

I work at the Globe Theatre in a crummy little dressing room really, and one time the producer of the show was in there when I came. He was having a meeting with his secretary; I threw them out. I said, "I am sorry, you cannot work here." I rarely do that kind of thing because I do not believe in being merely rude, but I did not have the time to overcome those people having been in the room. I had too much work to do.

I had enormous blocks when I was working on the opera, *Transformations*. It was something I desperately wanted to write, and I was practically on my hands and knees begging for a way to start the second act. I had pages and pages and pages where I could not get it going right. Then snap! It was there; it was all there; all I had to do was take it down; I did not have to think of a thing. My problems occur when I try too hard, when I have too many pre-concepts about what a piece should be, or when I am personally in the way. By turning off a certain part of my mind, I can let another part of it take over. Sometimes just beginning an activity will do it.

JOYCE SONGS

SUSA: In the case of the *Joyce Songs*, they are called "chamber music" by the poet, and chamber music is instantly different from church music in that it is music that is also for the performers as much as it is for the listeners which church music rarely is. It is fundamentally for the listener to address God in his behalf. Chamber music is also vocal chamber music; the only other example I can think of or comes to mind, and there must be other kinds, are madrigals. In madrigal technique there is particular treatment of the text. You tend to illustrate visuals by some symbolic counterpart in the music so that if something is running, the music is running. You look for as many opportunities to make the text jump so that by hearing it you are looking at the thing the poet is talking about. The music is helping you see the poem you are listening to. This is a totally different preoccupation for you are not addressing it to a deity, but you are exploring your personal interest in the text and projecting it.

INTERVIEWER: *Is your music as spontaneous as you were saying you wanted your music to be?*

SUSA: Oh yes! You always try and make it spontaneous whatever method you choose or whatever your particular assignment, but you have a different function line for a different kind of audience. They are going to be listening for the cleverness of the text and for the relationship of the music and the text. Particularly in these *Joyce Songs*, because they are so well known, and since there are so many different kinds of settings, I wanted to do something in many ways antique, but as romantic as I could. I wanted to write a romantic madrigal.

INTERVIEWER: Would you ever do the Joyce Songs with four performers?

SUSA: I do not know; I have never tried it. It would be interesting. I think you would need at least eight people because of the divisi. Originally, I think I heard a chorus on this, a small good chorus.

INTERVIEWER: What is small?

SUSA: Well, anything under twenty. Again, it just depends again on the sound of it. When I am talking about a large chorus, I am not clear. I do not know if I can talk in terms of numbers. I only mean that a big choral sound is fundamentally impersonal. A moderate or small chorus would be adequate.

INTERVIEWER: I was questioning whether you could do the work with soloists as you can the Brahms Liebeslieder waltzes.

SUSA: I do not think these pieces are written as neatly as the Brahms. I did not have that kind of technique. This was only the second choral work I ever wrote.

INTERVIEWER: It won a prize.

SUSA: No one was more surprised than I. I did not know the prize existed until I received it.

In these pieces there is the idea that someone is waiting. We have the gasping figure and always someone panting. There is always a pulsating feeling in the piece so that in the middle you feel like it is a heartbeat. It places the accent just that much off the voice that it sounds like the vocal line is coasting over a beat.

INTERVIEWER: I was surprised to find this work accompanied by piano rather than organ.

SUSA: The "Lullaby Carol" is also for piano.

In this piece, I just developed this motif for a while, but I wanted to turn it into a sort of march and here is a little fife and drum thing. You are feeling that this guy is marching to his own drum, but nobody else is. The piece is linked by certain intervals.

In the third one is the sound of an army relentlessly moving; I added this. There were originally just five pieces; I added this ten years later. The others were written in 1959 and I wrote this one in 1969, but I had always wanted to add it. I had the idea, I even sketched out a couple of lines, and then I put it away. Ten years later, oh, there is that piece. This is my favorite. I think it is a really good one, and it has a wonderful piano part.

INTERVIEWER: How accurate are your metronomic markings?

SUSA: They are pretty good.

Here the echoes are becoming confused. Create little landscapes of these; they are like genre pieces.

INTERVIEWER: They stand on their own, yet you have also connected them musically.

SUSA: Well, there is a little story here, actually. The lover is waiting, we get some idea of what he is like, and then he begins to imagine the worst. I wonder why you have left me alone? Suddenly the accompaniment vanishes, and there are two middle pieces about valleys and running around. It has totally retreated into a fantasy world so at the end, love comes, but it is obviously like a mythological event.

In the last movement, the poet hears the five finger exercises which are completely unconcerned with what is going on above. At this point, bottom of page 27, measure 9, it turns into little fanfares and a river. At page 28, measure 12, it is just in that other zone. Note the bass line moving down in the accompaniment starting in measure 12. Then the five finger exercise is back and it is tremendous, page 30, measure 20. The fingers stray on page 31, at measure 26.

The picture has moved from obviously a real situation in some ways; someone is expecting something. It retreats into an area of fulfillment through a sort of fantasy. You know the feeling? That it is dangerous to be out there; you can get hurt when you are that delicate.

It is a cycle. The horse piece would have been maybe the climax of the cycle, but then what proceeds from that is also a turning point.

INTERVIEWER: I thought this accompaniment was terribly interesting. I mean to start off in this manner, very simply.

SUSA: Like a child.

INTERVIEWER: Then it becomes quite legitimate.

SUSA: I did another set of James Joyce songs, and this time I called them *Six Madrigals with Piano Obbligato*. I think I even simplified further my harmonic system.

I love chamber music, but you are not going to find much easy chamber music nor is the experience of chamber music accessible to most people. It is like esoteric music. Not that it is intellectual music particularly, but it has a somewhat rarefied musical sophistication. It is a little special; its intimacy is frequently a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Your music is intimate.

SUSA: I think my music is intimate.

INTERVIEWER: To a certain extent, I think your music is intellectual.

SUSA: Well, I would be surprised.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of your craftsmanship, you must have a certain musical sophistication to do your work.

SUSA: I never felt that my music was meant to be thought about as you listen to it. You have to come from a certain place to get it.

I like to think of my music as in fact being rather old-fashioned.

INTERVIEWER: I know you have said that, but I am not certain that it is old-fashioned, yet it is refreshing.

SUSA: I think myself that it is new old-fashioned music. It is not attempting to break the frontiers of music. It is not new music in the sense of, I am going to teach other composers how to compose suddenly. There are some composers who can do that; they suddenly show you new ways of writing music. I do not think that is what I am into at all.

INTERVIEWER: I have not seen any tone row in your music.

SUSA: No, you are not likely to either.

INTERVIEWER: That is what everybody is doing.

SUSA: I do not think modern music has to get like pills, ever more unpleasant, escalate in difficulty, or anything. The fact that my music is difficult is not because I want it to be; it must be to sound the way it does. I am simply not writing community choir music. A lot of my music is too difficult for average choirs, which I admit, but I think that enterprising people would seek it.

I want to write simpler music, but I do not have the technique to do it some ways at the moment. I do not have my style to where when I take away all those notes and leave just these few that it will still be there. That takes a lot of control.

INTERVIEWER: You are very truthful to yourself; at least, I get that impression.

SUSA: Now this is in 4/4 and I think that is pretty dead. Look how many pieces are in 4/4. There is only one 3/4 piece in here. The pianist is having a field day.

INTERVIEWER: I have noticed you always write involved accompaniments.

SUSA: I used to be able to play well, and if I practice this I could play it, believe me.

INTERVIEWER: How do you select your texts? You have all these books.

SUSA: I have all these books, but I select my texts by opening pages at random and whatever ones jump out at me . . .

There are a lot of poems I would like to set.

INTERVIEWER: You mean you cannot get the copyright for them?

SUSA: I either cannot get the copyright or the music does not speak to me yet. I know I like the text, but I am not ready to do it. I probably have quite a few unready pieces here.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have a lot of pieces you do and then come back to?

SUSA: I put all my pieces away and then come back to them. I am a great ruminator; I work things over a long time. I am very slow, but I work very quickly when I get the idea. Then I rework it for a long time until everything is just right as it should be. I have become fussier actually in the last five to six years.

INTERVIEWER: Fussy in what ways?

SUSA: I want more tonal purity in the music; I want the sonorities to be cleaner. I am refining the style, and I am trying to remove unnecessary notes. Basically, I am trying, unlikely as it may seem, to work towards an extremely simple style if I can. I do not care how rich it is, but I want it to be fundamentally simple.

INTERVIEWER: Simple in that it does not lack complexity?

SUSA: I find Handel a fine example of the kind of composer I mean. He can give you torrents of notes or just a few, and they are all good ones. I have a great love for Handel, and I feel particularly close to him. He visits me in dreams and gives me secrets. I have kept a dream book. I have gotten secrets from him, Verdi, and from other composers. Only Wagner has not spoken to me.

INTERVIEWER: What is this Wagner problem with you?

SUSA: Oh, I like him now; I think he was absolutely right. It is just that I was not ready for him. In one's arrogant little ego, one thinks you are always ready for everything. You are not ready at age twenty-five for what you are going to be ready for at age forty and vice versa. You are a different person, you have different needs, and your awareness suddenly encompasses totally different preoccupations. There were years I did not bother listening to Mozart. It had nothing to give me for a while. Now I am back to it; after a while, I drop it. I rarely listen to Debussy although he is one of my favorite composers, and then I have a period in which I start listening to him again and so on. It does not make any sense; there is no preorganized pattern to it.

INTERVIEWER: Are you saying that there is a time you need that re-listening?

SUSA: Yes. You just go back and see if any thing has changed and usually you can measure what you are getting out of the composer or from the music you are listening to. You easily can locate some big changes yourself. You are not picking up on: the dark side of Vivaldi, the tragic element in Telemann, and so forth. You suddenly are now here or think you are here. I am suddenly liking, for an example, the liturgical music of Haydn and Mozart which I have never liked. Now I see a very important thing happening there.

INTERVIEWER: For an example?

SUSA: With the Haydn Masses, in particular, I see some of his best music in those Masses, but I never liked it. Here is all this great music waiting for me; there is tons always.

One of the other great composers I do not listen to very much, whose music I like, but ultimately find boring, is Schubert. I just love Schubert when I listen to it, however briefly, but I always hesitate to put it on again because I do not know. I am not terribly fond of Schubert; it does not make any sense, but I know he is a great composer.

INTERVIEWER: How do you determine the length of transitions between sections of the text?

SUSA: It depends on what kind of a time frame you are working in for the work altogether. If you are writing a big work or if you have large forces, your time scale is different for a large work than for an anthem. You have to decide what purpose the text is serving. Whether it is part of a larger work, whether you are expanding something in the text so that the length of transitions and the main ideas are always balanced. Do you think my style differs from text to text?

INTERVIEWER: You answered that when I asked you about writing for a liturgical text or a secular one. You said, "Yes, it changes."

SUSA: My approach changes, but your question is does my style of composing differ?

INTERVIEWER: No. I do not think the harmonic resources change. I see the seconds, the thirds, there is no key signature, you still may center around a particular note, or something like that. I do not think that changes, at least, I have not seen it change.

SUSA: Later on I can give you what I think are some of my stylistic characteristics. I am not sure I can give them all, but I know some of them. William Burkson used to say, "Today's preoccupation is tomorrow's technique." The things that you find yourself involved with automatically pass through your technique after a while.

There are a lot of things to reconcile. When I think you are a tonal composer, you are automatically going to sound like a certain kind of a thing, and that is true if you are not a tonal composer. There is no way you can escape sounding like somebody up to a point; you would be a rare individual

if you could totally demonstrate to sound like no one you have ever heard before. There are a few of those people, but they become very tiresome, like Penderecki. When you first hear Penderecki's music, it is astonishing that anybody would be so original, but the minute you have heard it, you want to listen to the music and find something else in it, but you can only hear the first thing you heard and it is not as interesting the second time. So, I do not see any advantage in being original if the price of it is that you are boring on the third hearing. I do not think there is any more in the music than the sound and once you have heard the sound it is like tasting salt. You forget what it was like to be a virgin when you did not taste salt.

INTERVIEWER: What about Crumb?

SUSA: Crumb's music I find interesting, but I do not listen to a lot of it either. I think that it is very special and unique music. Crumb, I think, is more important than Penderecki.

Penderecki has also written some powerful music. The opera, *The Devils*, is fabulous, at least the Prologue. I have a lot of Penderecki's scores. I like listening to his music, but I do not like the place it puts me. I am afraid of roller coasters, too, so I do not deliberately get on one on a rainy day in a lightning storm. You can talk me on to one every once in a while, but I would never do it if I had my choice.

It seems to me like some pieces that are similar in their problems could be grouped under a certain kind of heading. I mean, there are some that are more common practice than others.

INTERVIEWER: That is what I have been trying to look out for, a way to categorize these pieces.

SUSA: I could suggest some categories later on and we shall look at that.

INTERVIEWER: I need to get a different perspective than that coming from the common practice situation. We cannot look at your music in terms of major and minor. We have to look at it in terms that you invert ideas, not just the music. You may not invert the music note for note. When you bring in a recapitulation, it may be down a whole step. It is not at the

level at which it began, and I must see your music in that light rather than using my training from the common practice. I need to bring my own thinking into the 20th century, and you have helped me a lot just today to do that.

I really do not need a theoretical analysis, I could talk about that, but I think that should come as a recommendation as a way of not to look at your music. That method to me is a dead end. If you only take the theoretical view, I do not think that is very musically enlightening. So many seventh chords, inversions, etc., I do not see your music that way. I do not think your music is organized that way. It is tonal music, but it is not common practice; you have moved past that stage, and I have to bring my thinking into what I am seeing here.

SUSA: I wish that I had names for some of the things I have done. I only work it out by how it sounds best primarily.

(Listening to a recording of the Stravinsky Mass)

The setting is not beautiful, but truthful. The harmonies are extremely expressive of sin and contrition, totally unlike the *Gloria* harmonies. It has another kind of truth in it, and it is an intensely devotional and prayerful work.

INTERVIEWER: *The interval of a second is used a great deal in the Agnus Dei. Is that the kind of Gloria you would set?*

SUSA: I do not know. I do not have one in mind.

INTERVIEWER: *Is there an overall philosophy that pervades all your writing?*

SUSA: I always try to do my best and most honest work, but I think that is a moral commitment. If you are talking about a philosophy of composing, I feel myself in constant process. I once long ago had the idea that I would like to produce music like a rosebush produces roses; it is nothing the rosebush has to do, but it is a natural outgrowth of where it is with itself. It blooms because it must, it should, and it is a natural function. It is nothing that it does in addition to being a rosebush.

I do not even think of myself as a composer. I like to feel that when the music is ready to be plucked, I go in for it. I am always working on musical ideas in the sense that I allow them to play upon me, but I would like the music I produce to be a natural function of myself. On the other hand, I must say in places where I have had to force; due to deadlines or assignments, the music is absolutely indistinguishable.

The *Chanticleer's Carol* was written extremely swiftly and yet it contains extremely complex elements. All I can gather from that is that some of my pieces come easier than others. On the other hand, the pieces at which I labor and struggle to bring into some sort of balance, they seem also more spontaneous.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe that is your nature; hurrying does not change your nature.

SUSA: There are a lot of pieces I would like to write, but when I actually sit down to write something else starts to come. In many ways, I have a hard time writing the piece I actually want to write, but I have to begin to deal with the piece that starts to be born. I constantly have to stop wanting something that is not actually happening. In a way it is like a parent that has a child. He cannot still want the child he wishes he had, but he must learn to deal with the one that is given to him. Composing is not wishing something and making it happen, but frequently I find the piece I thought I was going to write actually never shapes up.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had this occur with a commissioned work?

SUSA: Yes. It did not come out the way it was really intended. I think that is a great problem with commissioned music.

One of the things Stravinsky told us is that you should always get the work you have always wanted to write commissioned so that the work is already coming into being.

So heeding his advice, I have actually turned down commissions. Also because I did not wish to write another of that kind, the commission does not give me enough latitude to be truly imaginative, or I have another kind of piece coming that I have to attend to.

INTERVIEWER: What about counterpoint from a stylistic point of view?

SUSA: You will hear what I mean by the triadic feeling, and it may sound at times like Copland. You will also hear the kind of counterpoint that I developed very early.

The accompaniment and vocal line there are moving in a real duet or chamber music fashion rather than strictly speaking accompaniment here and the frequency seems to be a recurring approach. I feel that in this case that part, although basically harmonic, you feel that the harmonizing line takes on almost independent feeling.

Here is the actual first folk song setting that I did. I shall play you the accompaniment first so that you can see that even the harmony has a feeling of sort of an underlying melodic meaning

Another one of my ostinato feeling for something that is coming up.

Real simple stuff, but there are two different melodies in the right hand alone.

It is just that I have purified the harmony and over this is the simple line of the two voices and it stays wanting it.

There is a wedding march at the end.

It keeps pointing until the second that we heard clashes. So there is pain being expressed there, pain and loss. A very good example. You will find in the early works that the accompaniment sometimes illustrates something in the text. The river in this case, the little stream, and here we hear hoof beats.

INTERVIEWER: What is this?

SUSA: *Pretty Polly*, this is a murder ballad. Some dreadful scene has been acting up over there and the piano has just kept up. So that against this, this energy feeding, and the voice rides over it. We have the feeling of different things in the text being illustrated. This was done in Nashville.

The *Second Serenade* is also using the folk song of *Fair and Tender Ladies*. The Appalachian ballads all have the sense of wistfulness, lawlessness. There was nothing more for me to do in terms of simpler harmonies any more.

These two chanties are a capella arrangements which Schirmers is bringing out. Here is the first one, *Blood Red Roses*.

The setting of *Shenandoah*, I particularly like in that it has some things that I can find very typical of my music still. It is modal, yet open, and these harmonies are moving in what I would call basically contrapuntal lines with definite harmonies.

INTERVIEWER: These are not published yet, are they?

SUSA: They are published, but they have now been taken over by Schirmers.

Again, the melody undergoes a subtle metamorphosis here, page 10, bottom, measure 3 to letter C. It is definitely in the common practice style, and it is already moving in that direction we spoke of earlier and this is 1956, a few years before I had any idea I would be dealing with folk songs. You see I just sense that my inner development was going to move me that way.

INTERVIEWER: Why have you not done more folk songs in the manner of Shenandoah?

SUSA: Because there was no occasion to do so. I sort of lost my interest in that sort of harmony. The deliberate crudeness of it beginning with the lydian mode (mm. 5-7).

This was the very first piece I ever had published. Elkan-Vogel took this over, but they never took anything else. So just in the last couple of years, I got it back from Elkan-Vogel. Schirmers' has taken it, but they have not brought it out yet. During the time Elkan-Vogel had this, it did not move very much because it was the only work they had, and there were no other works around. It is obviously one that should have some kind of market value and was obviously written to be accessible.

Serenade #2 is a case where I basically wanted to set a folk song and create an accompaniment that was like the choral prelude in the Bach style. Instead of using a hymn in the *cantus*, I used a folk song; therefore, the little composition evolves. It was just meant to be a small little piece for high school band. They performed it extremely well, and I got to hear this one.

INTERVIEWER: *Is this orchestrated?*

SUSA: Well, no. This is for a few brasses, some clarinets, and girls or boys voices obligato.

You can feel how I have developed the tune (page 4, letter B). It opens with a second; it is developed thus at letter E on page 6; I concentrate on that second. One of the first pieces where I felt I was moving in on folk material in quite that way.

The *Lullaby Carol* was a labor of great love. It was difficult for me to do, but it took a lot of work. It is one of my favorites, but again no one does it. It has no difficulties in it because the high school chorus down in Nashville did it and had weak problems. It has a lot of features that again are still in my music. An accompaniment that features fifths and ninths and there is that shadow (playing page 7).

INTERVIEWER: *I wish I had been aware of these; I would have given them to my chorale as an introduction to Susa.*

SUSA: Yes, I think that is almost the best way to serve a person with my music. To begin with the obviously easy things, you can frequently see how the later things are just extensions or where I veer off into new directions. These things are clearly built from very simple things, and these things were written for school which obviously take into account the vocal ranges. The trickiest part is maybe a rhythmic pattern, but after they learn one rhythm, they have got it.

Notice these dancy figures that occur in the piano (mm. 50-58).

I would say that another feature of this early music or at least that which begins to blend modal and somewhat medieval styles is this feeling of the cross relation that occasionally finds expression in my music (page 13, mm. 71-72). It is derived from the Elizabethan folk song.

You can see in a way what a stylistic departure the *Closing Anthem* is; it moves along a totally different principle from the folk song.

INTERVIEWER: *I wanted to have you replay this section so that I could get a feel of that "shadow."*

SUSA: Notice that it seems to have immediately moved from that to establish this area. It is like it is pushing offshore. The shadow for me always means the piece is about to dig into something a little more serious. There always seems to be a chord that heralds that (mm. 30-31) and I stay there for a while. It is not in any key; it just moved one step more. What I call the "shadow" actually is when the work undertakes an expansion.

This style I think is very much related then to the *Even-Song* which comes many years later.

This, of course, begins in the accompaniment with a tolling bell. Then complexing its way to something simpler and against that it has a very contrapuntal accompaniment. Each one of these voices in the piece starts in reverse and they all pile in at last when the basses have it. At the end we have a nice three-part canon on top of that.

They have come a long way having moved up two octaves, and that whole thing has just been one tremendous act of faith and affirmation. The soul invariably wins. It is meant to show the struggle and that temptation surrounds us. It is working through us, the complexity, these themes piling, and it just stays until the climax. When there is a climax in my pieces, it is bang! Of course, every line has to have its shape. This is a piece that has climaxes; you can hear it in its odd shapes.

In addition, constantly being developed is the very opening line which does not look as if it is going to be anything. In fact, the chorus does not deal with it for quite a while.

DISCOVERY AND PRAISES

SUSA: The chorus acts as a combination of bells and alleluias, and there is a little Easter drama about asking the three Marys where they are going. This is my favorite; it is also in the memory of a good friend.

[Second of Elegy pieces]. . . Opens low in the bass of the organ. It moves through all these dark colors.

Third movement--all instrumental, no choral sounds, note the tender romantic mood in this one.

Last movement--kids come in at the "Alleluia;" instruments and chorus in.

The first thing of that size I ever tried, and I was yanking so many sources together, Stravinsky, Mahler, and the various kinds of Americanisms. Although it has a wonderful kind of sincerity to it, it is sort of a stylistic mess; I was not able to get it all together. I attempted a revision of it later that in some ways was more successful, but I still did not feel I had the instrumental forces under control where I wanted them. The first three movements went fine; the last movement starts to fall apart formally and structurally.

INTERVIEWER: Was this a commissioned work also?

SUSA: Yes, Greg commissioned this, and it was also the last. After this I wrote the mystical carols which come out of this large serious mood, but then that gets compressed into a small work. I think the three mystical carols were extremely serious pieces although they are fundamentally joyful. They are serious in the sense that I wanted to tighten my style. *Discovery and Praises* in a way marks what I would call the end of the first phase of my music. Everything up until then can be classified by reacting against my very busy style I was developing at Carnegie Tech (Carnegie Institute of Technology).

I had written at Carnegie Tech: a clarinet sonata, three dances for chamber orchestra, theatre scores, and a number of songs. My music in those days sounded like early Shostakovich, that kind of busy violent energetic style. However, I did not feel that I had any control over my harmonic resources and in the middle of this was a neo-classic phase that was going on in the 50's. I then wrote two songs on Walt Whitman texts, and they were to me my first actual breakthrough of a style. When I go back and look at those songs, although they are very crude, I recognize that as the actual beginning of what I would call my music. I am very fond of them, but I have not published them. They are student works, but I shall play them for you and you will see what I mean.

By the last movement of the clarinet sonata, I was beginning to do something none of my other student friends were doing--to incorporate older forms. The last movement of the clarinet sonata is a passacaglia. I was the first student at Carnegie Tech to begin to deal with the old big technical problems. Everyone was writing contemporary music, but not bringing along the old forms. I wanted to bring as much of that into my music as I could; I wanted to master all the

forms, preludes, fugues, passacalias, the works. Mostly because I wanted my music to have a firmer layer apart from my own emotional whatever. I thought that was a very in thing to do. I want structure as well. The final movement of the clarinet sonata actually prepared the way for what was beginning in the songs I was telling you about earlier.

The last thing I wrote at Carnegie Tech was actually my first choral piece, *The Song of Ruth*. I would say that if it showed any influences, it would show the influence of Ernest Bloch. *The Sacred Service* is one of my very favorite choral works. I think it is one of the greatest choral works in the 20th century next to the *Symphony of Psalms*. In its emotion I like it; his emotionality is evocative coloration. I love the sort of powerful romantic atmosphere that Bloch is able to do, and I think in that first piece, *The Song of Ruth* had a Biblical text, of course, I sort of indulged my Bloch fantasies. I would say that Bloch has been in some ways a continuing influence in my choral music besides the orientation of the vocal style which comes out of the combination of Jewish, Hebraic, stylistic mannerisms that he uses. Small or large melismas I later incorporated into my madrigal style, but basically it came out of an interest in Jewish music and the music of Ernest Bloch.

When I went to Juilliard my music underwent a great simplification from my Carnegie Tech days in terms of melody and harmony, but in terms of the actual technical thing it expanded hugely. My first work at Juilliard was with triple string orchestra. Obviously to some extent under the influence of Vaughan Williams. That which is called the *Pastoral* won my first prize. I am still extremely fond of the work; it is a very lush and gorgeous romantic work. I have a tape of that and it is full of interesting colorations. It tells a kind of story; it is actually a programmatic pastoral.

Next I wrote the *Joyce Songs*. They came out of my step backwards from my motoric complicated busy, busy style at Carnegie Tech. My early work at Juilliard was an attempt to simplify my style. Oddly enough, the *Joyce Songs* are simpler than the music I had written at Tech, but it was advanced harmonically in another way. I felt I was in control of those harmonies; I knew the kinds of harmonies I wanted. They had their roots in an American style, but in a much more romantic American style than anybody had actually written or was writing at that time. There are features of Brahms in the accompaniment and so forth. None of that ever bothered me; I was a good enough pianist, and I loved romantic music.

The big thing in those days was austerity and unromanticism plus all the watch words of so-called modernism, but I wanted my music to be romantic, accessible and warm no matter what the rhythmic complexity and so forth. I wanted it all to sound as if it were natural to the music. I did not want it to call attention to itself as any kind of stylistic peculiarities like some of Stravinsky's music; I did not want it to become a mere mannerism. I wanted it to be just a part of the rhythmic vitality of the music, and that it would incorporate the latest contemporary facets.

The second piece after the *Joyce Songs* was an even further simplification. The *Wait on the Lord* was, in some ways, I might call, a step backwards because I felt that I had still not achieved a satisfactory, if I may say, American sound in my music. There are features of that piece, particularly the end where there is a long pedal point where I felt I had begun to play with the major-minor blues feeling that pervades a great deal of American harmony. Although the piece was not entirely successful structurally in every other way, I had begun to break through into a harmonic area that pleased me.

My other pieces at Juilliard were a large work for organ called a *Canzona*, which was also in a simple, direct style. Almost common practice, but the piece had begun to incorporate features of the Baroque *ricercari* and fugal forms which I had begun to investigate. Finally, I closed my work at Juilliard with a symphony which I got commissioned from the San Diego Symphony. I conducted the premier of it, but at that time they wanted a work to celebrate Shakespeare. I therefore worked out that over certain sections of the work. Four sonnets were read by Victor Buono. There is no tape of that symphony, although I have a score.

When I look back on it, I am very touched that there is all this kind of youthful intensity in the work. It was still in the style of the *Joyce Songs* and to some extent those early songs I was writing at Carnegie Tech. There is a definite strong romantic push, but this time I began to incorporate further elements from Stravinsky in terms of the orchestration and so forth. I did not feel American models in themselves were sufficiently rich for what I was attempting.

Then I was appointed to Nashville. Once again, I reaffirmed by folk song roots; therefore, my early work with the school was based on folk song music. The first two *Serenades* incorporated folk songs. I harmonized two other folk songs, *Pretty Polly* and *Blood Red Roses* at that time. I was just experimenting with whatever that phase meant in terms of

melodic shape, folk song rhythms, a kind of directness, a deliberate lack of sophistication in the material, but a high degree of sophistication in the actual treatment and presentation of the material. I wanted to explore what folk song meant for me. You might call that whole earlier phase up until *Discovery and Praises* really a sort of my dabbling in folk song.

I was also interested in other techniques at this time, and the work I began to do for Greg Colson which spurred me in the direction of church music got me thinking about other kinds of forms that I might consider such as the carol, the problems of Latin text and religious text, religious music, and the thrust of religious music.

By this time, I was back in New York City, and I wrote for Greg the *Three Mystical Carols* which I felt were the most successful church pieces I had written up until that time. They crystalized my interest in medieval music more satisfactorily than anything. I was relieved that I had achieved that music.

The next two pieces, *Adam Lay in Bondage*, which I sometimes thought of as the first sado-masochistic Christmas carol, *I Sing of a Maiden*, two truly beautiful medieval poems. They just came out without any effort at all; I felt very proud of them. I also had gotten the organ to where it was working together. These were originally solo songs I had written earlier -- I believe down in Nashville. I then arranged them for chorus, and I think the choral setting is most satisfactory.

In New York City I had no direct connection with the chorus anymore. I had to deal long distance with Greg who was down in Nashville. It was a little harder to write music under those conditions; I could not go to rehearsals. I felt slightly out of touch. My own spiritual development was going in another direction from any kind of organized religion, but I still felt like I was an intensely spiritual person. I continued to turn out choral pieces, but by this time I was aware of popular music in a new way. Particularly rock was at its height in the mid-60's, and among my favorites was Elton John. I think that *Even-Song* begins to show the influence of some modal harmonies derived from the Elton John style. However, the two rock carols, *An Elegy Carol*, and *Man is Born* were more an attempt to incorporate as much of and synthesize as much of the music around me. I was still trying to incorporate the popular aspects. I felt that this medieval interest of mine might make my music seem remote and precious. I was really trying to find a stronger popular element myself, but I am still experimenting.

I think *Even-Song* was probably the most meticulously worked out of all my pieces up until that time. It was carefully constructed. I spent more time on it just polishing it and trying to get away from unnecessary complications of harmony. *The Birds* comes somewhere in that phase; it probably harked more to my kind of medieval music by way of romanticism. By the early 70's when I got my opera commission for *Transformations*, I wrote the solo version for *Hymns for the Amusement of Children*.

In a way, *Transformations* gave me a chance to sum up my experiments in theatre music which I was conducting along with all these choral works I was talking about. I had been writing in all kinds of styles and I had begun to ask myself, "Is there a style of my own?" *Transformations* was a deliberate attempt to begin to locate what that style might be. In some ways, it is my first truly mature work-- where I felt that all these various eclectic elements had come into a definite stylistic unity.

After *Transformations*, almost as a hymn of thanksgiving, I wrote *God is Alive, Magic is A-foot*. The text was lifted from Leonard Cohen *The Beautiful Losers*. It was one of those pieces I could not get the rights to. It was written for organ duet, three trumpets, and chorus. I began to experiment with achieving a sort of ecstatic music. Where it did not move much harmonically, but ecstasy was achieved through a sense of elevation in the music and a broader time scale where there were not so many climaxes or improvisation style basically derived from my *Transformations*. Each piece was an attempt to incorporate the previous work no matter how illogical the elements that might come together might seem.

Finally, I would say that in *Black River* I was able to move into a more deliberate fantasy world and strike a large tragic note. I was able to deal with other elements in my style, romantic elements plus large forms, and it gave me an opportunity to adjust my harmonic technique even further. I now could control large stretches of time in an almost Wagnerian sense, where the floating tonality occupied larger and larger stretches of time, where the movement was on one hand more spontaneous, and on the other hand, the organization was more strict.

Black River occupied so much of my time that a lot of the works that came after it were expressions of relief at being out of this intense mood. The works you heard, *The Fantasy Tango*, *The Entrata for Queen Elizabeth*, the choral version of the *Hymns for the Amusement of Children*, all the

music that I was writing at the time I was working on *Black River* together with revisions and so forth, occupied about four or five years. All the other music is cheerful and spontaneous. I wanted to show as little labor in my other music as if almost to make up for this colossal effort I was putting forth.

The point I wish to make about *Black River* is that it taught me all the things about my technique that I could not do in a work such as *Discovery and Praises* where I was attempting to find in my technique things I needed to do but did not assimilate as well as I did in *Black River*. I just could not get as many things out of my orchestra in "my own style" and so I was looking for models I could turn to and works that I admired and wanted to not imitate but emulate. *Black River* finally gave me a chance to break through and teach myself many of the kinds of techniques I just simply did not have at my command. There are still some things I feel I cannot do, but God willing there will be time for me to do all this.

I suppose *Black River* is the second point in my life that I can call a phase. *Transformations* sums up theatrically everything I was able to do before and *Black River* sums up and marks the end of another phase probably.

The smaller works that surround all these things are still attempts to widen my technique, loosen it up, free it from influences, but at the same time incorporate more kinds of stylistic elements into it. I think there has been a definite change in the nature of the style from the early folk song music to almost writing my own folk songs in *Black River* which contains many Americanisms, but no actual folk songs.

A lot of things in the opera that sound like folk songs are new tunes I wrote. I seem to be a very late bloomer, and I look forward to my old age when I hope like Verdi and Haydn that I shall be finally on top of my own technique in a way that I begin producing characteristic work. I feel that it is going to take me a long time to get the particular thing I am attempting solved.

A lot of other composers arrive at their styles very early, but I seem to have a number of ways I like to write. I think they are all me, and I think that the so-called eclectic atmosphere will be less important in later years as people will see whether the works themselves contain any unity within themselves. I think when you recognize the influence of say, Bernstein or Mahler, people always say that Mahler sounded like Bruckner or Wagner. Nowadays, when you hear Mahler, you cannot understand why they

ever thought such a thing. I think that there is something that begins to drop away, if the work contains any artistic truth the unity becomes more important than the influences. Any early Beethoven sounds like Haydn, but because it has its own integrity, and we realize it is a phase of Beethoven's development, we nowadays call it Beethoven. However, I am sure the thing that was characteristic of a composer like Beethoven was the more mood he struck rather than his actual techniques. Everybody talks about his melancholy, and nowadays early Beethoven does not strike us as particularly melancholy, but it was. They did hear that he sounded like other composers; they heard the fresh note he was striking in terms of his mood.

I think much too much is made of style, quite frankly. I think a work has to be done for what it needs, and I think the rest is theory. Nevertheless, I think there are certain things that emerge in my music if not stylistic traits, they might at least be classed as preoccupations. Several of the preoccupations of the group of works that deal in the folk song phase are a basically triadic centered harmony, a strong modal feeling, together with the usual syncopated American rhythms. I think there is also a keen awareness of the text and a desire to set the poet's words as simply as possible.

I do not think I use a poet's text as a mere point of departure for a work as, say, in a Boulez sense. Where I assume you are going to know the text, therefore, I am going to take it apart and use it in any old way. I like to have the feeling that the poet and I have somehow at least linked arms, and that he is speaking through me, but with a new coloration. The music is a prism that creates a new quality to the text, but preserves the text just as a master carver preserves the grain of the wood while producing a new piece of sculpture. He respects the grain.

I have attempted in notation not to pay so much attention to the first beat of the bar as the strong beat only. Frequently the text rides over the rhythm so that it sounds as natural as possible. This accounts for the peculiarities in notation occasionally. If you actually hear the sense of the text as if you were beating every beat equally in the vocal part, at least that phrases the text.

The bar line is actually for the convenience of the accompanist and the conductor. You should never have the feeling in my music that it is going one-two-three-four, except that there is the underlying pulse, but the vocal line should never be stressed that metrically. My music should always sound as if it were a free agent moving over the accompaniment, and that the stresses follow the stresses of the sentence and the

grammatical structure. I would say that is a definite mark in my music.

Although my pieces begin very tonally, they end on an ambiguous final cadence which points up the fact that my harmonies are to me fundamentally sonorities rather than functional harmonies as in the common practice. After my so-called folk song phase, I used harmonies less and less as having tonal logic, but stressing more and more their relationship and sonorities. There is an increased use of polychords about that time; major, minor, and other chords together which are almost always approached in the vocal line melodically, but where the separate notes nevertheless combine to produce richer harmonies than sometimes you might expect.

It would be a mistake for an alto to think of her part as part of the moving harmony. Generally, it should be brought out as when you do Bach chorales as actual melodies that stream along, but which sometimes produce harmonies or sonorities depending on the need. Their ear has to teach them to arrive at their situation melodically rather than to seek to know where they are in the harmonic part of the chord only.

There is a strong horizontal aspect to my music. I would say also that in most of my choral music there is a tendency toward contrapuntal writing. As a result, very little of my music is purely harmonic and to be heard in terms of block harmonies.

I think that the experimentation with different styles is actually a stylistic feature of my music. I have done sort of a slow march through the musical museums of the world, and I have acquired my own collection of things that have interested me and which I use from time to time. I think that if you examine my work as a unit, you will discover that although I approach each piece in a new way, there is actually an overall similarity of result. The unities in the works all come from the preoccupation with the modal sonorities and polychords in general.

There is a use of the second as a consonance rather than as a dissonance, and I think that that points up again that dissonance for me does not exist so much as a concept, but rather my chords move in various degrees of tension and that I am never really attracted actually to dissonant music.

There are some pieces I might call spikier than others, but then it is the difference between curry and French cooking. Some pieces just have more harmonic spice, and there are other palates you can deal with. In that sense, I would say

that harmonically speaking, I sort of take a cuisine approach. I think we are living in an extremely rich time, and because all the music of the past is now available to us through recordings and so forth, the lineage of musical development is obviously totally tossed.

There is no reason why Gregorian chant, Carl Orff, and Bartok cannot live side by side in the same piece nowadays. That music is available to us, and influences in our music arise from our appetites and preoccupations. I have never attempted to keep influences out of my music or to make it sound like no one else other than mine. I think a work will sound like mine because I made it.

Nevertheless, I have always sought to simplify, simplify, and simplify. Some pieces I am able to get down to where I want them. They seem as if you have known them from the minute you start. In this sense a work like the *Chanticleer's Carol* is successful because of its directness, its simplicity, and its lack of fuzziness put it in a category of pieces that you get right away.

Other works of mine are obviously meant to be listened to over and over again before they reveal where their preoccupation is. My music would naturally appeal to groups that tend to be more sophisticated or at least have been trained. Very little of my music, except probably some of the folk song arrangements, can be assimilated by relatively unsophisticated groups. There is just no way I have been able to manage that. I just frankly cannot loosen up my music; it is full of difficulties. The prerequisite to my music would be familiarity with the music of Stravinsky, and other contemporary works where the harmonic structure is based on a sonority concept.

I think there is also a peculiarity in many of my pieces. They seem to end a minor third up or down from the starting pitch, and I have never been able to figure out why that is so. It is nothing I have actually planned, but somehow they do, and I have just noticed that over the years there is some adjustment that takes place. If you examine the endings of my works, there is frequently what I would call a peroration or final statement that is usually the summing up of the entire work. Sometimes this takes place over a pedal point. The musical materials in the chorus come almost entirely from something in the opening statement and constitutes a final and elaborate flowering. The intensification in the choral pieces generally takes place toward the end, the final statement of which seems to be a summing up of everything that has preceded.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that in terms of sonorities you are trying for a variety of colors?

SUSA: Yes! I want all kinds of colors; I want to be able to express dark, bright, and ambiguous colors. Because the kinds of text I pick are frequently so off-beat and personal, I want to make sure at least that I honestly believe in that text. It is impossible for me to set a text I do not believe in. I think it is possible to set a text you do not believe in, but I think something would show in the music. There would be a swallow relationship between the music and the text. I do not think you actually deceive yourself that way for too long. It is possible to adopt a momentary psychology while you at least temporarily believe the text for the purpose of setting it. Any piece is a kind of temporary psychology which must be true as long as the piece lasts, but you cannot stay there. You go on, and frequently composing a piece changes you. Having written it, you are on the other side of something, and the piece has changed something in your nature. You are ready to move on to something different and to some further development in yourself.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned something about simultaneously existing realities; different things going on at the same time.

SUSA: Yes, depending on the text and the purpose of the work, I like to have the feeling that the different strands are floating independently, but are related so that you have the feeling of simultaneous complimentary statements. Where the drama, being enacted in the work, is frequently from the collision of textures, from the way the strands evolve, or from the tension created from the fact that the strands are not meshing. One wants them to unite in some way, and the entire work is struggling to assemble itself. I very much like to have the feeling that the piece is creating itself for the listener as he hears it, and the drama and tension come out of how that is manipulated.

INTERVIEWER: How do you use rhythm?

SUSA: Well, as I said in folk song pieces the rhythm follows simple folk song rhythms, whatever that is. That means they come from a certain kind of text, and you recognize them as folk song types.

I think that in the main my rhythm is an attempt to follow the vowel lengths of the text and the underlying metric structure of the text. I deal with the setting of the text in a straightforward manner, but nevertheless, in a spontaneous way so that it does not sound too studied.

I cannot say that I just sat down and tried to do anything particular with my pieces in terms of rhythm. I never decided this one is going to have more rhythm in it than any other piece.

I have never felt that Stravinsky's rhythms were for me to borrow because they sound too much like Stravinsky, but his harmonic practices are very full of possibilities. One of the troubles with *Discovery and Praises* is that it sounds frequently like unassimilated Stravinsky rhythms and I think they just come from a totally different relationship of the eighth note to the pulse and that way of accent. I think that in European music, changing meters represent shifting accents, but in American music we achieve that by accents over a basic pulse. They tend to feel a dislocation of the pulse; our basic pulse is constant, but the accents occur over the basic pulse. I think a lot of it comes from the influence of Negro music and jazz on our music. We in America just automatically play off-beats differently. I freely acknowledge that that is more interesting to me than attempting to imitate anything in European music. I have never tried to do that particularly.

INTERVIEWER: How does your choice of harmonic resources differ from that busy period in terms of clearing it up?

SUSA: My harmonic use that began in the folk song phase actually grew out of an exploration of triadic harmonies, and I wanted to preserve the strong tonal center in all my works. Whenever the chorus, or whoever would arrive in an extremely remote area, then you could feel that they had moved away at a tremendous distance from the original harmonic center. Therefore, the yanking back would be dramatically significant.

A moment of that kind occurs, for an example, in *The Birds* where the chorus has "*Tu creasti, Domine.*" The mystery of the Christ Child creating a bird out of clay and having it fly away is so alien to rational understanding that it can only be given a harmonic setting that illustrates our inability to understand how anything but a God can do this. It is given a harmonic pocket that places it outside the stream of the tonality of the work; it is expressive of the awe, and it

moves into a remote area only to be yanked back. When it begins "*Jesus Christ, Thou Child so wise*," over a pedal point, it is done to totally stabilize one's belief after having witnessed this disquieting scene

A child on your street, who has been your playmate, suddenly humming to himself models birds out of mud, breathes on them, and they fly away. Unless you are an extremely dated child, you are going to experience a severe dislocation of your understanding momentarily, and my moving into remote harmonic areas is meant to indicate what happens to us when we are confronted by the unknowns. We lose our balance, and we find ourselves in an alien area of experience sometimes. I symbolize this in my music by in fact moving to remote areas and arriving at harmonies that are deliberately strange because the effect they produce is of strangeness; something is happening there that is not in the ordinary run of things. I think all the sections of my music which retreat into remote areas means that some kind of experience has been intensified until it has been moved beyond the normal bounds of where we experience these things.

The thing that bothers me about a lot of music that is perhaps more popular and successful than mine is that there is no intensification of the experience. I could mention without detracting from it, the Rutter *Gloria*. I think it works fine and it is a wonderful work, but it does not move beyond its initial statement. The composer very successfully explores beautiful harmonies, particularly in the second movement, but in terms of experiencing a song of the angels, "peace on earth, good will toward men," it does not take into account what a stupendous statement that is, and I do not feel the cosmic power of it as I would, say, in Bach's setting of the *Gloria* in the *B Minor Mass*. Bach's setting of the *Gloria* is intensely aware of the shock value of such and such a message and the far-reaching implication of it. That is what makes his music great.

The great composers are aware of how much must be encompassed into the words "good will toward men." Men! They who do it in that sort of flip style and to find a style that is so glossy to me sounds like calendar art or Norman Rockwell in music. It is making a very complicated thing much too simple. That is only my taste.

I am not saying Rutter has not written a good piece, but if I were to do a *Gloria* I would try to find a way that when you heard my *Gloria* you would hear something of the implications of the music and the text itself. Instead of a mere successful setting of the text, if you know what I am trying to show. I think there is a level of this that simple

harmonies cannot convey. They sound naive. Copland's setting of *In the Beginning* to me is a good example of a nice try, but it just will not work. You just cannot deal with the six days of creation that naively. Those triadic formations just will not do it, there is too much involved, and that is the reason I left my original folk song explorations. It is that the triadic harmonies, while I wanted them to underlie my music, are too simple for what needs to be said. The truths the poets themselves are trying to make intelligible, but their truths are not that simple, and for me to give a mere setting would totally betray my responsibility to investigate the meaning of the poems and their implications. I do not claim always to be successful, but what I am searching for is a style that does justice to all the lights, the shadows, and tries to incorporate those so that the range of emotion eventually gets dealt with.

INTERVIEWER: I would be interested in hearing or comparing something like a Gloria of yours with another composer.

SUSA: Well, my original attempt at composing was actually a Mass and I wrote a number of *Kyries*. I did not seem to be able to rise to the exaltations of a *Gloria* in my early days, but we did have the penitential mood then and there is one *Kyrie* of which only a fragment exists. It is so complicated harmonically, I do not see how I did it. This would have been about 8th or 9th grade. I do not know how I was dealing with something so harmonically complex. Obviously that kind of music is just a part of my whatever and whatever it is has never caused me any problems.

Although I have no difficulty with a lot of music that I consider dissonant such as the many works of Schoenberg and Xenakis and so forth, I just simply do not like what they are saying; how they are saying it is not interesting enough to me. It is something slung on the wall as the ash can school of composing. I am glad it has a place and there is room for everybody; it is just not for me and I am not very interested in it. Maybe someday?

Probably among contemporary composers, the one that most nearly resembles many of the things I do is Benjamin Britten. I would say his approach harmonically, the way he allows his melodies to collide, the way he uses triadic harmonies, are quite similar. Not that I think my music sounds like Benjamin Britten, but I will tell you about the principles. I feel that there are very many similarities to what I do, and I do not ever remember actually trying to imitate him.

The Rutter *Gloria* recalled for me a tremendous amount of the Britten *War Requiem*, in terms of like exploration and so forth.

INTERVIEWER: *Rutter is English.*

SUSA: I see. It would be natural that he would inherit a certain amount of Britten's style, but I think in some ways, Britten's preoccupations are very similar to mine.

INTERVIEWER: *What do normal commissions run?*

SUSA: Two hundred and fifty dollars a minute. That is about the going rate for a big work, a work with instrumentalists. A ten minute work may take you a month. Therefore, you are talking about whatever it costs to keep a composer alive for a month; you are not talking about the value of the work. You can only talk about how much time it would take, over what sort of period, and the labor involved as the only things you could hope to pay for.

INTERVIEWER: *How are you on deadlines?*

SUSA: I am extremely good about deadlines if I understand the actual commission. If there is not too much fooling around. I tend to work best with deadlines. *Transformations* was written in four months. *Black River* took a long time, but then it was full of unexpected problems. Things like choral works are not as problematic to me because the text is a big help in getting one's ideas going. I had an awful time with the *Tango* because I just did not know how to get down the notes, but I am very good at producing instrumental pieces and my next phase is obviously going to be the chamber music phase. I am not sure how much choral music I really want to write for a while, but I have a big interest in doing chamber music.

INTERVIEWER: *Is this just something you have decided to do?*

SUSA: I want to round out my catalogue. I have works for the theatre, choral works, a number of small instrumental compositions, but I do not have any really large orchestral works in my catalogue. I also do not have any chamber

music. When you say that I am unknown in the choral field, I am extremely well known in the theatre and opera field. In chamber music, I am not known at all. I want to round out my catalog, not so much to be known, but because I want to write that kind of music. Also, I like that sort of music, and there are a lot of those kinds of things I want to do.

Choral music frequently arises in myself because I find a text I cannot resist setting. The last choral piece I wrote, *The Twenty-Third Psalm*, I am particularly happy with. I feel like I have come closest to combining all the previous stylistic elements in one work; plus some innovations in my technique.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me something about Colossians?

SUSA: Phil Burnel asked me to set this text and the text contains a hidden sentence. "My life is hid in Him that is my Treasure." The tenor acts as a *cantus firmus* and as the text moves along it holds the word and contains the hidden message. This is a motet with a *cantus firmus*. It is meant to sound like a motet by William Byrd or somebody.

INTERVIEWER: Does this go back to your interest in old music?

SUSA: No. It is just one of those things to try. *The Knell* is clearly a funeral scene with the tolling of the bells.

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CHORAL WORKS

CHORAL WORKS

1.	Magnificat	1956	unpublished
2.	The Song of Ruth	1958	unpublished
3.	Chamber Music: Six Joyce Songs	1959	
4.	Wait on the Lord	1959	unpublished
5.	A Lullaby Carol	1961	
6.	Serenade No. 1	1962	
7.	Serenade No. 2	1962	
8.	David's Kingly City	1962	
9.	Two Chanties:		
	a) Blood Red Roses	1962	
	b) Shenandoah	1962	
10.	Children's Begging Song	1962	
11.	Two Ballades:		
	a) Red Rosey Bush	1963	
	b) Pretty Polly	1963	
12.	Discovery and Praises	1966	unpublished
13.	Three Mystical Carols:		
	a) The shepherds sing	1966	
	b) This endrys night	1966	
	c) Let us gather hand-in-hand	1966	
14.	The Birds	1967	
15.	The Knell	1968	
16.	Two Marian Carols:		
	a) I sing of a maiden	1968	
	b) Adam lay in bondage	1968	
17.	Two Rock Carols:		
	a) Man is born	1969	
	b) An Elegy Carol	1969	
18.	Discovery and Praises (rev.)	1970	unpublished
19.	Trinity Sunday	1970	
20.	Even-Song	1972	
21.	Our life is hid	1972	
22.	God is alive	1974	unpublished
23.	Class Song	1975	
24.	Dawn greeting	1976	unpublished
25.	Hymns for the Amusement of Children	1976	
26.	Ode of Reconciliation	1976	unpublished
27.	Twenty-Third Psalm		unpublished
28.	Chamber Music, Vol. II, SSA	1979	unpublished
29.	Chamber Music, Vol. II, TTBB	1981	unpublished
30.	Chanticleer's Carol	1981	
31.	The God of Love	1982	

APPENDIX C

GENERAL INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL WORKS

Chamber Music: Six Joyce Songs SATB Conrad Susa
(March, 1959; revised January, 1969)

Publisher: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1973

Author of Text: James Joyce

1. "My dove, my beautiful one"

Voice Ranges:



Tenor

Bass

Accompaniment: Piano

Length:
46 Measures
2:14 Minutes (Approx.)

Text:

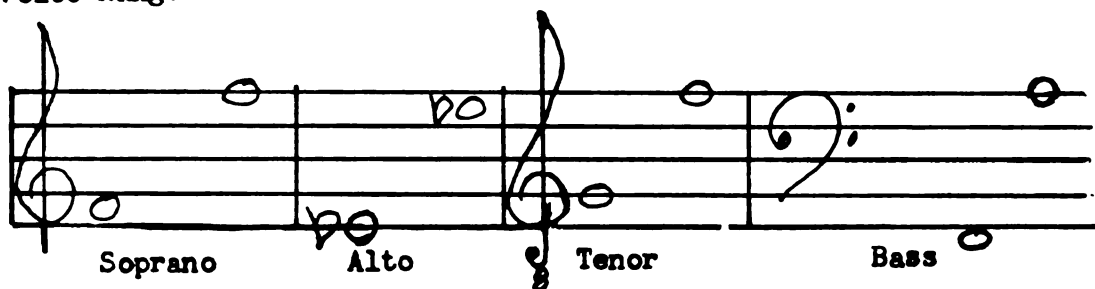
My dove, my beautiful one, Arise, arise!
The night dew lies Upon my lips and eyes.
The odorous winds are weaving A music of sighs:
Arise, arise, My dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree, My sister, my love.
White breast of the dove, My breast shall be your bed.
The pale dew lies Like a veil on my head.
My fair one, my fair dove, Arise, arise!

-James Joyce-

2. "He who hath glory lost"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

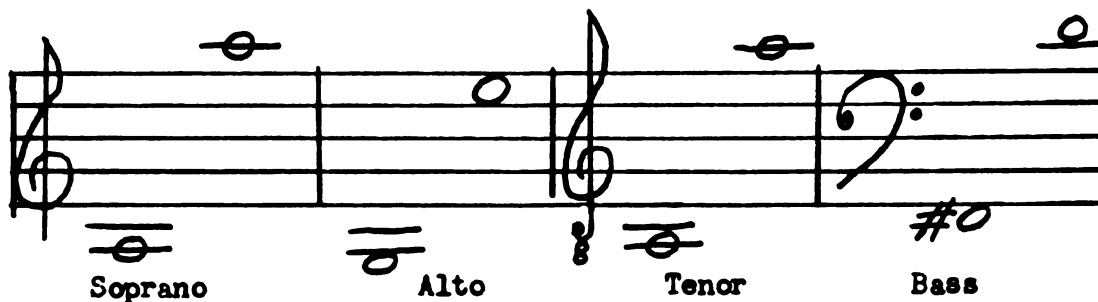
22 Measures
:32 seconds (approx.)

Text:

He who hath glory lost, nor hath Found any soul to fellow
his, Among his foes in scorn and wrath Holding to ancient
nobleness,
That high unconsortable one- His love is his companion.

3. "I hear an army"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

46 Measures
1:58 Minutes (Approx.)

Text:

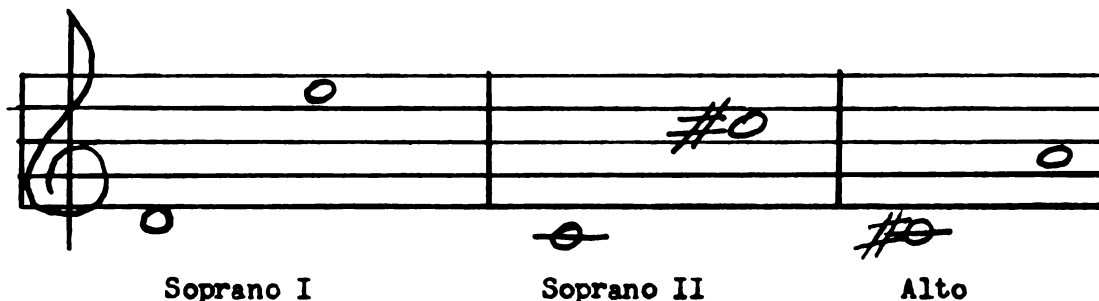
I hear an army charging upon the land,
 And the thunder of horses plunging,
 foam about their knees: Arrogant, in black armour,
 behind them stand, Disdaining the reins,
 with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night: their battle-name:
 I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter,
 They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
 Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.
 They come shaking in triumph their long green hair:
 They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
 My heart. have you no wisdom thus to despair?

My love, why have you left me alone?

4. "O cool is the valley"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length:

23 Measures
 1:27 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

O cool is the valley now
 And there, love, will we go.
 For many a choir is singing now
 Where Love did sometime go.
 And hear you not the thrushes calling,
 Calling us away?

O cool and pleasant is the valley,
 And there, and there, love,
 will we stay, will stay.

5. "Lightly come"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length:

27 Measures

:50 seconds (approx.)

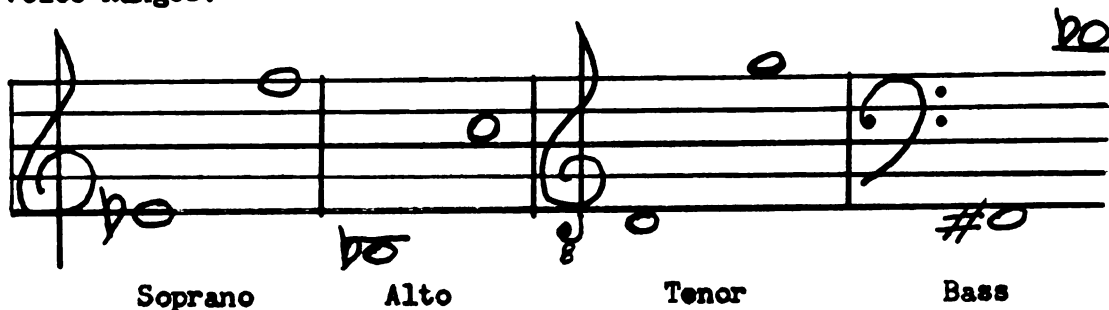
Text:

Lightly come or lightly go: Though thy heart presage thee woe,
 Vales and many a wasted sun, Oread, let thy laughter run,
 Till the irreverent mountain air Ripple, ripple all thy flying
 hair.

Lightly, lightly ever so: Clouds that wrap the vales below
 At the hour of even-star Lowliest attendants are
 Love and laughter song confessed
 When the heart is heaviest.

6. "Strings in the earth and air"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

33 Measures

2:10 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Strings in the earth and air Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where The willows meet.
There's music along the river For love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle, Dark leaves on his hair.
All softly playing, With head to the music bent,
And fingers straying Upon an instrument.

A Lullaby Carol

(November, 1961)

Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1972

Author of Text:

Anonymous
XV Century English

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

96 Measures
4:56 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Lullay.
I saw a fair maiden sit and sing;
Lullay.
She lull'd a little child, a sweet lording.
Lullay.
Lullay, my liking, my dear son, mine sweeting,
my dear heart, mine sweeting, my dear heart,
mine own dear darling.

That very lord is that that madeth all things;
Of all lords he is Lord, of all kings King.
Lullay.

They made merry melody at that child's birth,
All those in heaven's bliss they made merry mirth,
Merry mirth, they made merry melody, at that child's birth.

Angels bright, they sang that night and said unto that child,
"Blessed be thou, and she that is both meek and mild,"
Lullay.

Pray we unto that child, and to his mother dear,
Grant them his blessing who now maketh cheer,
Lullay.

Serenade No. 1 (1962) Men's voices in unison Conrad Susa

Publisher: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1972

Author of Text: Italian text: Canzone xvii-
Petrarch

Voice Range:

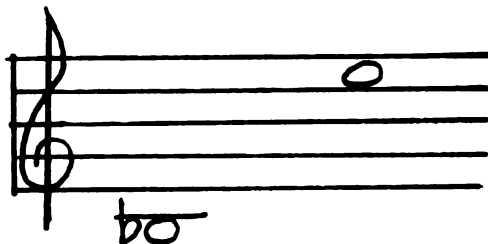


Accompaniment: Six flutes or three flutes
and three clarinets and
string orchestra

Length: 104 Measures
7:35 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

(English)
Go, Thou, My Song, Beyond That Alpine Bound,
Where The Pure Smiling Heav'ns Are Most Serene,
There By A Murm'ring Stream May I Be Found,
Whose Gentle Airs Around Waft Odors From The Laurel Greens
Nought But My Empty Form Roams Here Unblest
There Dwells My Heart with her, Who Steals It
From My Breast.

Serenade No. 2 (1962)**Unison Voices Conrad Susa****Publisher:****E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111****Copyright:****E. C. Schirmer Music Company****Voice Range:****Accompaniment:****Concert Band****Length: 97 Measures****7:10 minutes (approx.)****Text: Appalachian Folksong—Come all you fair and tender ladies**

Come all you fair and tender ladies.
 Be careful how you court young men.
 They're like a star of a summer's morning,
 first appear and then they're gone.

They'll tell you some loving story,
 and make you think they love you true.
 Straightway they'll go and court another,
 and for that other one, pass you by.

If I had known before I courted
 that love had been so hard on me.
 I'd have locked my heart in a box of golden,
 and tied it up with a silver line.

I wish I was some little sparrow,
 and I had wings could fly so high.
 I'd fly away to my false true lover
 and when he's talkin' I would deny.

But as I am no little sparrow,
 nor none of those that fly so high;
 I'll go away to some lonesome valley,
 and weep and pass all my troubles by.

David's Kingly City

SATB Conrad Susa

(November 21, 1962; revised 1967)

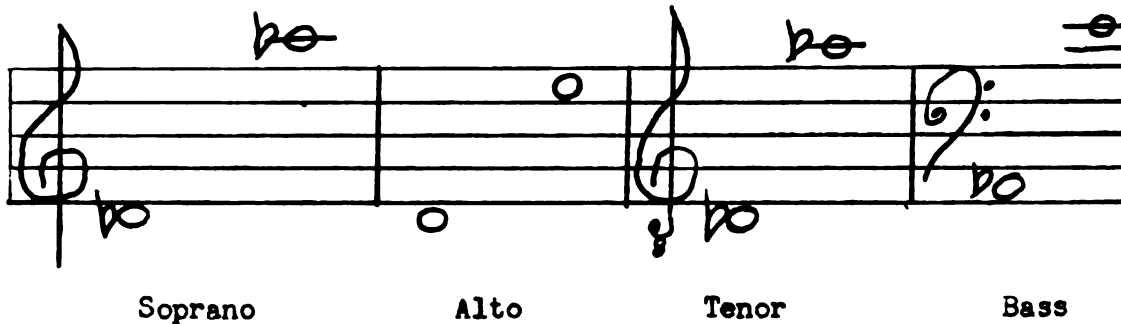
Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1980

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

75 Measures
3:50 Minutes (approx.)

Author of Text:

Hildebert of Lavardin
(1055-1133)
Translation:
William Crashaw
(1572-1626)

Text:

Me receptet Sion illa, Sion. David urbs tranquilla,
Cuius faber auctor lucis, Cuius portae lignum crucis,
Cuius claves lingua Petri, Cuius cives semper laeti,
Cuius muri lapis vivus, Cuius custos rex festivus.
Vera aeternum pax perennis: In hac urbe lux sollemnis,
In hac odor implens caelos, In hac semper festum melos.
Non est ibi corruptela, Non defectus, non querela,
Non minuti, non deformes, Omnes Christo sunt conformes.

In Sion lodge me, Lord, for pity, Sion, David's kingly city,
Built by him that's only good, Whose gates are of the cross's
wood, Whose keys are Christ's undoubted Word, Whose dwellers
fear none but the Lord, Whose walls are stone, strong, quick
and bright, Whose keeper is the Lord of Light.

Here the light doth never cease, Endless spring, and
endless peace. Here is music heaven filling, Sweetness
evermore distilling. Here is neither spot nor taint, No
defect, nor no complaint, No man crooked, great nor small,
But to Christ conformed all. Amen

Two Chanties:

SATB Conrad Susa

1. "Blood Red Roses"
2. "Shenandoah" (1962; revised 1967)

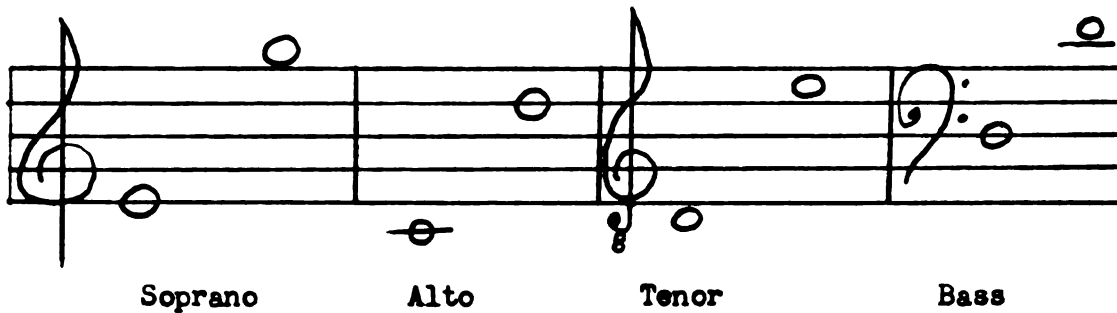
Publisher:

Elkan-Vogel Inc.
 Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
 Theodore Presser Co.
 Sole Representative

Copyright:

Elkan-Vogel Inc.
 1964

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length:

68 Measures
 2:00 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

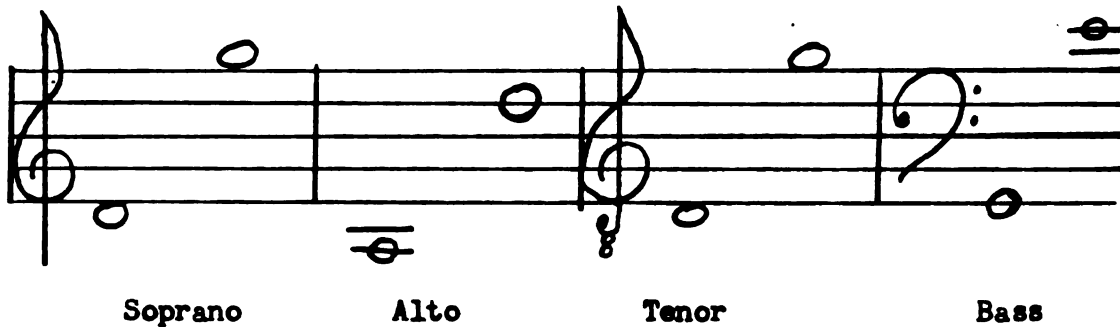
From "Folk Songs of North
 America" by Alan Lomax.
 Adapted by Conrad Susa

As I was goin' round Cape Horn,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 I wish to the Lord I'd never been born,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 O you pinks and posies,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 Around that cape in heavy gales,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 And it's all for the sake of that sperm whale,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 Around Cape Horn in frost and snow,
 Go down, go down, around that Cape we all must go,
 Go down, go down, O yes, my lads, we're all alee,
 we'll soon be far away from sea, O you pinks and
 posies, O Go down, go down, O you pinks and posies,

Go down you blood red roses, go down, go down.
 Just one more pull and that'll do,
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.
 And we're the boys to pull her through,
 Go down, O you pinks and posies, God down, you
 blood red roses, Go down.

2. "Shenandoah"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length:

47 Measures
 3:00 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

From "Folk Songs of North
 America" by Alan Lomax.
 Adapted by Conrad Susa

O Shenandoah, I love your daughter, Away, you rolling river,
 For her I've cross'd the wide Missouri. I've gone away
 Across the wide Missouri. O 'tis seven long years since
 last I saw thee, Away, you rolling river, I long to see
 your smiling valley, Away, I've gone away across the wide
 Missouri, Away, you rolling river, O Shenandoah, I'll not
 deceive you, Away, away. O Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
 Away, you rolling river, O Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
 Away, I've gone away, across the wide Missouri.

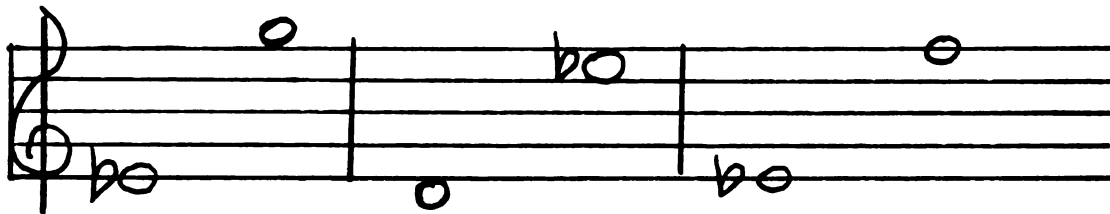
Children's Begging Song (SSA or TTB or SSATTB) Conrad Susa
(November, 1962)

Publisher: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1979

Author of Text: Adam de la Halle
(c. 1230-1287)
Arranged by Conrad Susa

Voice Ranges:



Soprano,
Tenor

Soprano,
Tenor

Alto,
Bass

Accompaniment: Percussion: Finger cymbals
(or Triangles) Tambourines
Drums (High)
Drums (Low)

Length:
36 Measures
1:35 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

- 1,3,5. May God dwell in this house, and my there be joy a-plenty
2. Our dear newborn Lord now sends us forth in his stead
To his joyful friends, to the loving and gently bred,
To beg new Christmas pray'rs all bright with holy joy.
4. Our Lord rich in grace might well beg without this grace,
But to gen'rous men He has sent us in His place,
His own children whom he made strong with holy joy.

Two Ballades:

Two-part Chorus Conrad Susa

1. "Red Rosey Bush" (January 7, 1963)
2. "Pretty Polly" (January 20, 1963)

Publisher:

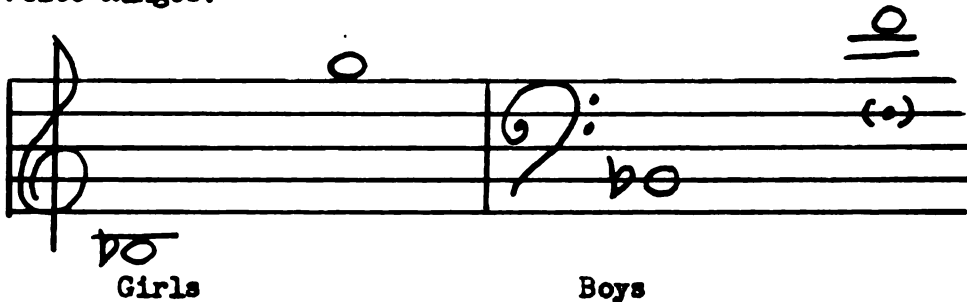
E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1972

1. "Red Rosey Bush"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

48 Measures
2:03 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Appalachian Folk-song
Arranged by Conrad Susa

Wish I was a red rosey bush, on the bank of a stream,
Ev'rytime my true lover passed, She'd take a rose from me.

Wish I lived in a long lonesome valley, where the sun
don't never shine, If your heart belong to another, then it
never shall be mine.

Wish I was a red rosey bush, on the bank of a stream,
Ev'rytime my true lover passed, She'd take a rose from me.

Wish I had a long golden box For to put my true love in
I'd take her out, and kiss her twice, And then I'd put her
back again.

Wish I was a red rosey bush, On the bank of a stream,
Ev'rytime my true lover pass'd, She'd take a rose from me.

2. "Pretty Polly"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano

Length:

142 Measures
2:03 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Appalachian Folk-song
Arranged by Conrad Susa

I courted pretty Polly the live-long night.
and run away and left her before it was light.

Pretty Polly, pretty Polly, come go along with me,
before we are married some pleasures to see.

She got on behind and away we did go
'Way over the mountains and Valley below.
They rode a little further and what did they spy?
But a new-found grave with spade lyin' by.
He stabbed her in the heart and the heart's blood did flow,
and into the grave pretty Polly did go.

He threw a little dirt on and started for home,
leavin' pretty Polly and the wild birds to roam.

A debt to the devil lil' Willy must pay,
for killin' pretty Polly and runnin' away.

Three Mystical Carols:

SATB Conrad Susa

1. "The shepherds sing" (November 12, 1966)
2. "This endrys night" (November 6, 1966)
3. "Let us gather hand in hand" (December 6, 1966)

Publisher:

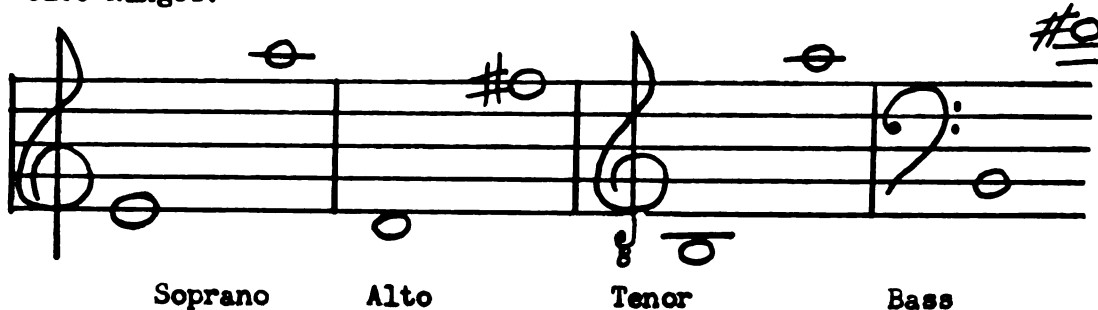
E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1969

1. "The shepherds sing"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

55 Measures
2:50 Minutes (approx.)

Author of Text:

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Text:

Nova, nova, ave fiit ex Eva. (Born from the new Eve.)

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be? My God, no hymn
for thee?

Nova, nova, ave fiit ex Eva.

My soul's a shepherd too: a flock it feeds Of thoughts, and
words, and deeds. The pasture is thy word; the streams thy
grace Enriching all the place.

Nova, nova, ave fiit ex Eva.

Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my pow'rs Out sing
the daylight hours. Then we will chide the sun for letting

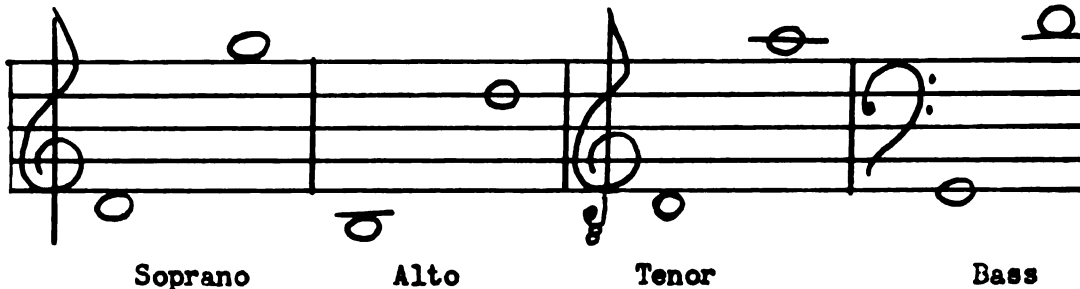
night Take up his place and right: We sing one common Lord;
wherefore he should Himself the candle hold. I will go
searching, till I find a sun Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly As frostnipt
suns look sadly.

Then we will sing, and shine all our own day, And one
another pay: His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so
twine, Till ev'n his beams sing, and my music shine.

Nova, nova ave fiit ex Eva.

2. "This endrys night"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

67 Measures

4:58 Minutes

Author of Text:

Anonymous XV century
Bodleian ms.

Text:

This endrys night I saw, I saw a sight,
A maid, a cradle keep, And ever she sung
And said among, "Lullay, my child, and sleep,"
Lullay, lullay, lullay.

Lullay my child, and weep no more, Sleep and be now still
The King of bliss they Father is, As it was his will."

This endrys night etc.

I may not sleep, But I may weep; I am so woe be gone;
Sleep I would, but I am cold And clothys I have none."

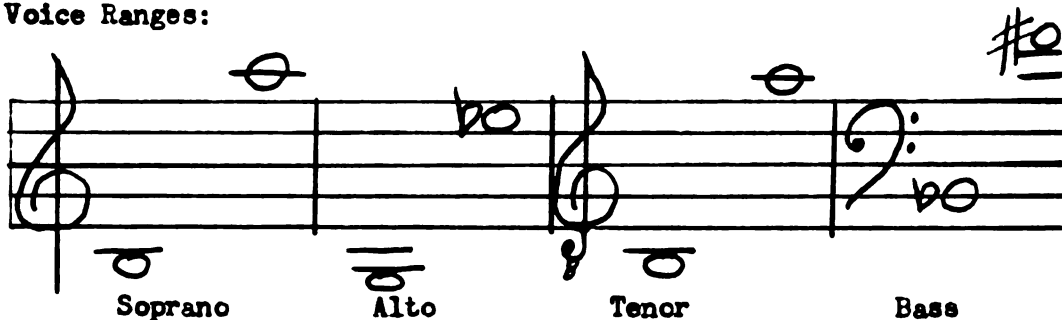
Lullay, lullay, lullay.

"Here shall I be hang'd on a tree, And die, as it is skill;
That I have bought less will I nought, It is my Father's
will."

This endrys night etc.

3. "Let us gather hand in hand"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

60 Measures
2:40 Minutes

Author of Text:

Anonymous XIV century

Text:

Let us gather hand in hand And sing of bliss without an end:
The Devil has fled from earthly land And Son of God is made
our friend.

Alleluia, alleluia.

A child is born in man's abode, And in that child no blemish
show'd.
That child was God, that child was man, And in that child our
life began.

Let us gather hand in hand And sing of bliss without an end.
The Devil has fled from earthly land.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Be blithe and merry, sinful man, For your marriage peace began
When Christ was born. Come to Christ; your peace is due
Because he shed his blood for you Who were forlorn.

Let us gather hand in hand And sing of bliss without an end:
The Devil has fled from earthly land, And Son of God is made
our friend.

Sinful man, be blithe and bold, For heaven is both bought and
sold Through and through.
Come to Christ and peace foretold: His life he gave a hundred-
fold To succor you.

So let us gather hand in hand And sing of bliss without an end:
The Devil has fled from earthly land, And Son of God is made
our friend.

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Birds (November 29, 1967)

SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 0211

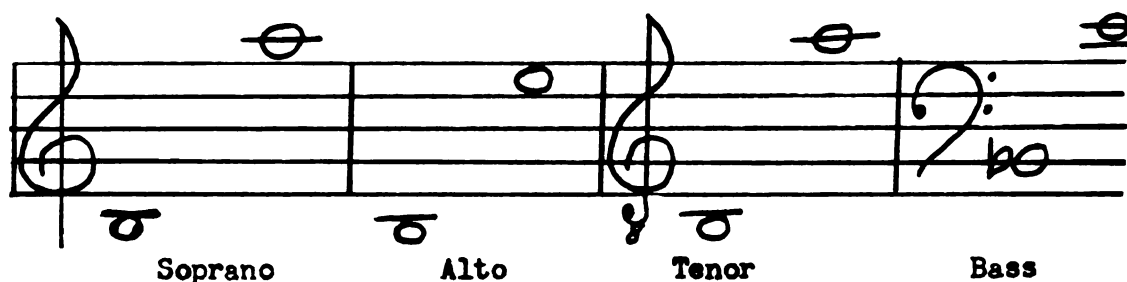
Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1971

Author of Text:

Hilaire Belloc

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

36 Measures
2:00 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

When Jesus Christ was four years old,
The angels brought Him toys of gold,
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play,
He made Him small fowl out of clay,
And bless'd them till they flew away.

Tu creasti, Domine, Tu creasti, Domine.

Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise.

The Knell (August 29, 1968)

SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 0211

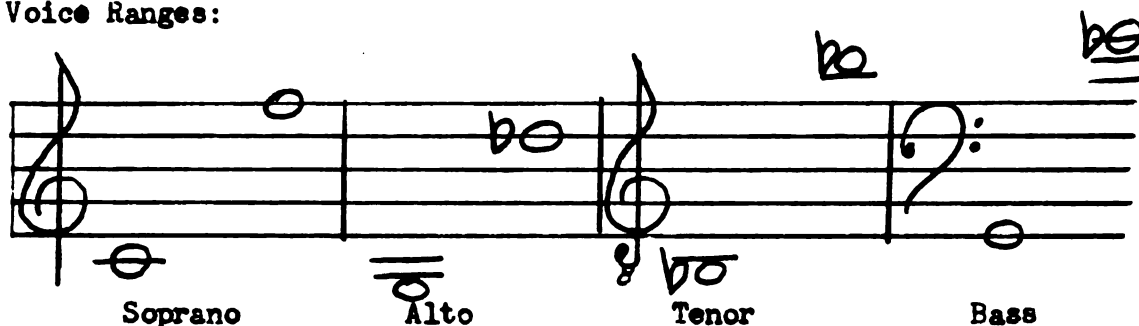
Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1971

Author of Text:

George Herbert
and
Psalm 129:1-2

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

42 Measures
2:02 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

The Bell doth tolle: Lord, help thy servant whose perplexed
Soule Doth wishly look On either hand And sometimes offers,
sometimes makes a stand, Struggling on th'hook.

Now is the season, Now the great combat of our flesh & reason:
O help my God! See, they breake in, Disbanded humours,
sorrows, troops of Sinn, Each with his rodd.
Lord make thy Blood Convert & colour all the other flood
And streams of grief, That they may bee Julips & Cordials
When we call on thee ffor some relief.

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine: exaudi vocem me
Fiant aures tuas intendentes in vocem deprecationis meae.

et lux perpetua luceat eis. (Final Latin statement at the
end of work)

De profundis (Protestant Bible: Psalm 130)

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice
of my supplications.

Two Marian Carols

SATB Conrad Susa

1. "I sing of a maiden" (September 3, 1968)
2. "Adam lay in bondage" (October 28, 1968)

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1971

Author of Text:

Sloane ms.
XV Century Anonymous

1. "I sing of a maiden"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

53 Measures
2:06 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

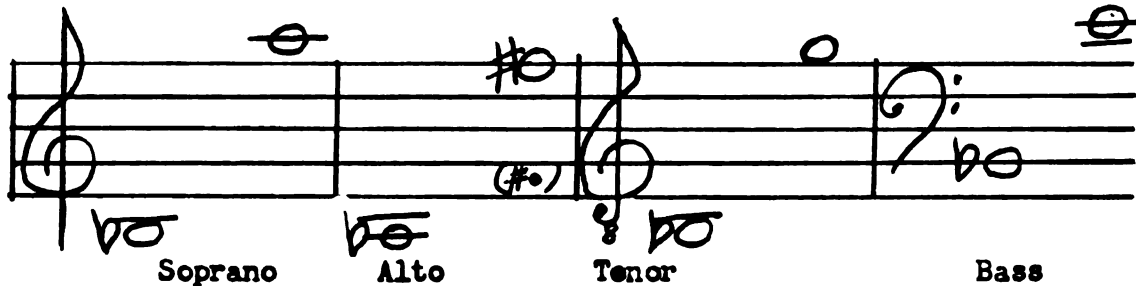
I sing of a maiden That is makèless,
King of all kings To her son she ches.

He came all so still Where his mother was,
As dew in April That falleth on the grass.
He came all so still to his mother's bow'r
As dew in April That falleth on the flow'r.
He came all so still, he came all so still
Where his mother lay, As dew in April That
falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden Was never none but She;
Well may such a lady Godes mother be.

2. "Adam lay in bondage"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

36 Measures
1:40 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Adam lay in bondage, Bounded in a bond;
Four thousand winters Thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, An apple that he took,
As holy men find written In their book.

Had not the apple taken been, The apple taken been.
Then never would our lady Been heaven's queen.
Blessed be the time That apple taken was,
Therefore may we sing it,

Deo gratias, Deo gratias, Deo gratias, Deo gratias.

Two Rock Carols

SATB Conrad Susa

1. "An Elegy Carol" (November 5, 1969)
2. "Man is Born" (December 31, 1969)

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

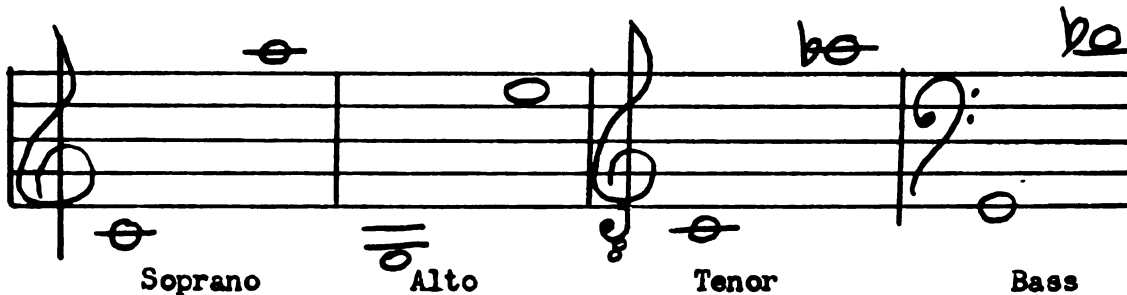
E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1972

Author of Text:

Jon L. Peterson

1. "An Elegy Carol"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

92 Measures
4:20 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Why must I always be alone? Why must I always try?
Why dream crystal dreams that I never may own?
Why was I born if to die?

Hush now, you're safe in your mother's arms for another fine day.
Hush now, tomorrow will come and soon pass away.

My little child, so perfect and true, there can be no miracle
that's greater than you.

Hush now. Sleep child, bad dreams
will soon disappear with the bright morning sun.
Sleep child, do what you must get done.

Why have I been so forsaken? Why is there no reply?
Why love when the truth of love is mistaken?
Why was I born if only to die, to die?

Softly moonbeams will rain upon your stardusted face.
Softly heavenly music will sing of your grace.

My child of sighs, The seeds of all truth and love, are
found in your eyes. Softly.

Why is the cycle without an end? Why must all hearts deny?
Why me, why me my bleeding heart again to rend?
Why was I born if only to die?

2. "Man is Born"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

97 Measures
3:35 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

World, arise, sing out, rejoice Man is born.
Man, rise up, sing out, rejoice.
See the glorious child that Man is,
Learn the glorious joy that man is,
Know the glorious love that man is,
Love the glorious gift that Man is.
Hear my words! Man is born through love.

Man has hopes wrapp'd up in Christmas paper dreams,
Man can laugh the sound that makes the heavens sing,
Man can love and make his love a living prayer.

Learn the wondrous joy that man is,
Know the wondrous love that man is,
Love the wondrous gift that man is.

Man has dreams to keep him safe from his despair,
Man has faith that there is need for him to care
Man can love, and make his love a living prayer.

World, arise, arise, sing out with love, rejoice,
rejoice, rejoice!
Man, sing out with love rejoice, Man is born,
Man is born again.

All of heaven's hope is Man, is All of grace and love
is Man, is All of faith and need is Man, is All is hope
and Faith in Man as God is Man is Love.

Trinity Sunday (November 16, 1970, New York City) SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

1973

Author of Text:

George Herbert

Voice Ranges:

Soprano I Soprano II Alto I Alto II

Tenor I Tenor II Bass I Bass II

Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

38 Measures
2:00 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

He that is one, Is none.
Two reacheth thee In some degree.
Nature & Grace With Glory may attaine thy Face.
Steele & a flint strike fire,
Witt & desire Never to thee aspire,
Except Life catch & hold those fast.
That which beleefe did not confess in the first Theefe.
His fall can tell, ffrom Heaven, through Earth, to Hell.
Lett two of those alone to them that fall,
Who God & Saints and Angels loose at Last.
He that has one, Has all.

Even-Song (1972)

SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1975

Author of Text:

George Herbert

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

50 Measures
3:38 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

The Day is spent, & hath his will on mee:
I and the Sunn have run our races,
I went the slower yet more paces, for I decay, not hee.

Lord make my losses vp & sett mee free:
That I who cannot now by day Look on his daring brightness,
may Shine then more bright than hee.

If thou defer this Light, then shadow mee:
Lest that the Night, earth's gloomy shade, ffouling her nest,
my earth invade,
As if shades knew not thee.

But thou art Light and darknes both together:
If that bee dark we cannot see,
The Sunn is darker than a Tree,
And thou art more dark than either.
Thou art not so dark since I know this,
But that my darkness may touch thine, And hope that may
teach it to shine, Since Light they Darknes is.

O lett my Soule, whose keys I must deliver,
Into the hands of senceles Dreams which know not thee,
suck in thy beames And wake with thee forever

Coloss. 3.3. Our life is hid with Christ in God
(SSAATBBB)

Conrad Susa
(December 10, 1972)

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1976

Author of Text:

George Herbert

Voices Ranges:

Soprano I Soprano II Alto I Alto II

Tenor Bass I & II Bass III

Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length: 37 Measures

1:55 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

MY words and thoughts do both express this notion,
That LIFE hath with the sun a double motion.
The first IS straight, and our diurnal friend,
The other HID, and doth obliquely bend.
One life is wrapt IN flesh, and tends to earth:
The other winds towards HIM, whose happy birth
Taught me to live here so, THAT still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which IS on high:
 Quitting with daily labour all MY pleasure,
 To gain at harvest an eternal TREASURE.

Class Song (From Black River)
(August, 1975)

SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

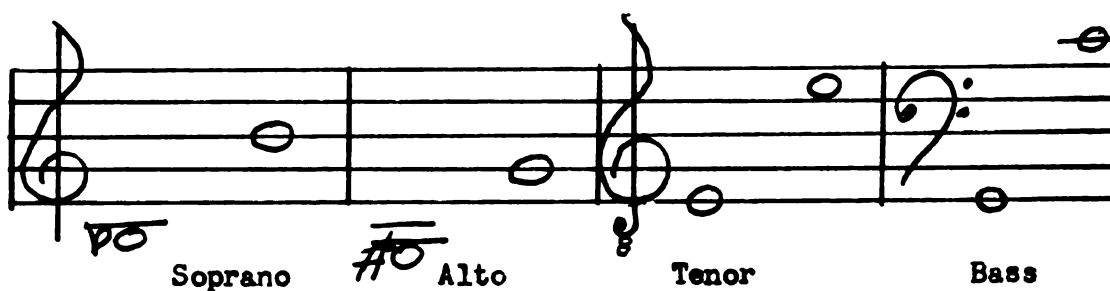
Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1979

Author of Text:

Richard Street and Conrad Susa
Adapted from "Shadows"
Anonymous, circa 1888

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

A cappella

Length:

36 Measures
2:18 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

The knowledge that my youth is gone
Broods darkly on my mind;
I look as some poor hapless one,
For what he needs but cannot find.

I long in vain for peace and rest,
And mourn each lost and faded scene,
Like some poor bird that finds its nest
All vacant where its young had been.
Pain waits on pleasure evermore,
To blanch its blush, to dim its light;
To mock it when its dreams are o'er,
When all its charms have taken flight.
And thus it is we cannot sing
Or long be joyous when we're old;
When summer hours have taken wing,
The flowers perish in the cold.

Hymns for the Amusement of Children
(February 24, 1976)

1. "For Sunday"
2. "At Dressing in the Morning"
3. "Against Despair"
4. "For Saturday"
5. "At Undressing in the Evening"
6. "The Conclusion of the Matter"

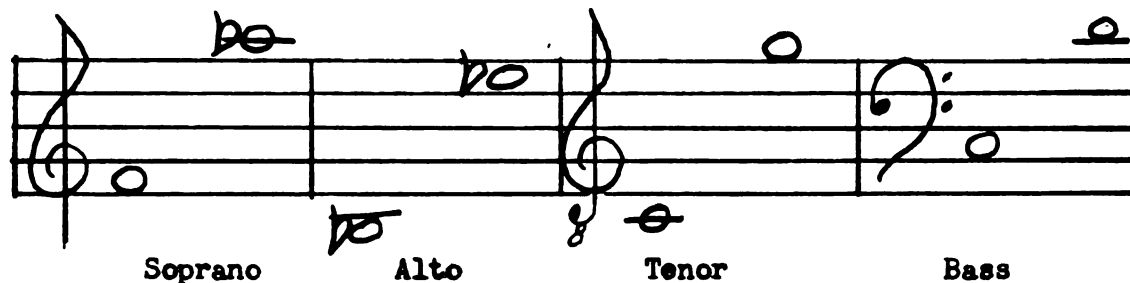
Publisher: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright: E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1980

Author of Text: Christopher Smart
(1722-1771)

1. "For Sunday"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment: Piano four-hand

Length: 27 Measures
1:22 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Arise, Arise, the Lord arose
On this triumphant day, the Lord arose
On this triumphant day; Arise, Arise!

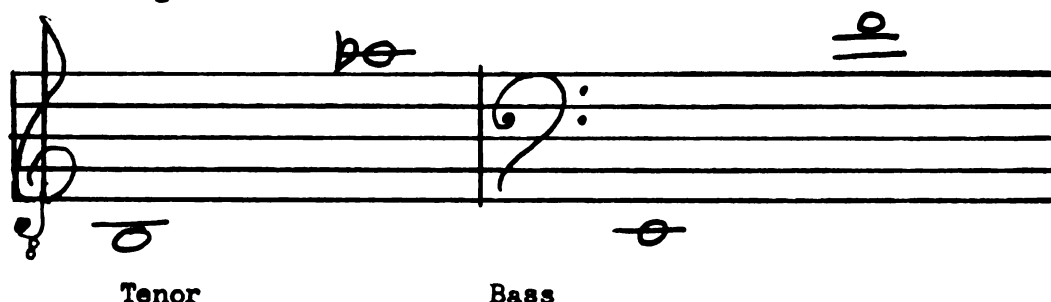
Your souls to piety dispose,
Arise to bless and pray.
Arise, Arise, Arise!

Ev'n rustics do adorn them now,
 Themselves in roses dress;
 And to the clergyman they bow,
 When he begins to bless.

Their best apparel now arrays
 The little girls and boys;
 And better then the preacher prays
 For heav'n's eternal joys.

2. "At Dressing in the Morning"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano four-hand

Length:

45 Measures
 2:18 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Now I arise, empow'r'd by Thee,
 The glorious Sun to face;
 O clothe me with humility,
 Adorn me with thy grace.

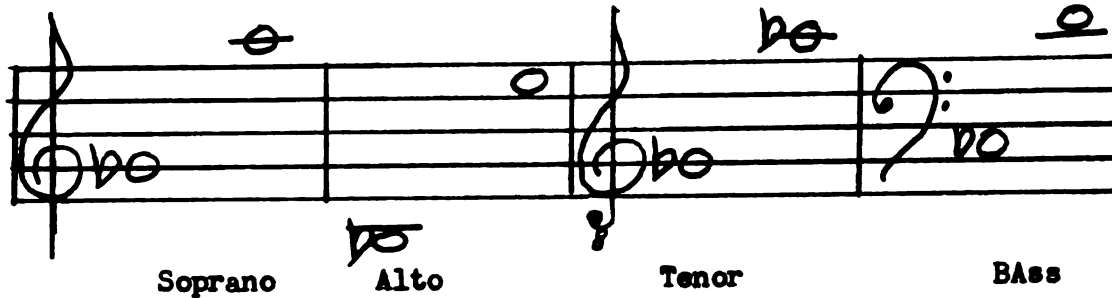
All evil of the day fore-send,
 Prevent the tempter's snare;
 Thine angel on my steps attend,
 And give me fruit to pray'r.

O make me useful as I go
 My pilgrimage along;
 And sweetly sooth this vale of woe,
 By charity and song.

Let me from Christ obedience learn,
 To Christ obedience pay;
 Each parent dutious love return,
 And consecrate the day.

3. "Against Despair"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano four-hand

Length:

55 Measures
2:10 Minutes (approx.)

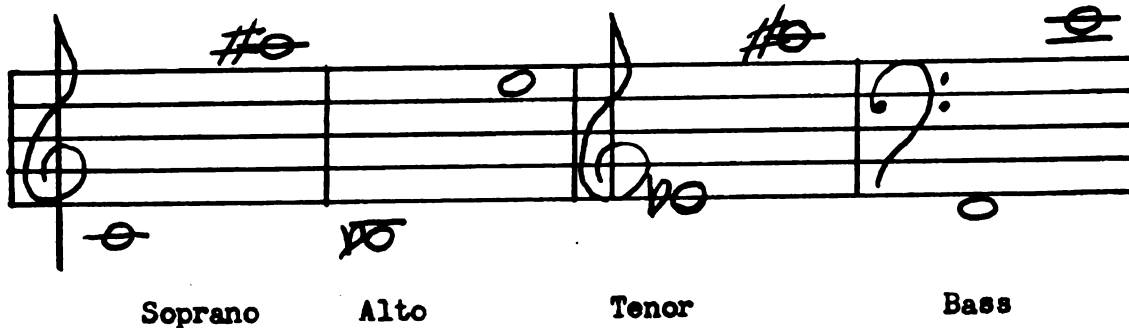
Text:

A raven once an Acorn took
From Bashan's tallest stoutest tree;
He hid it by a limpid brook,
And liv'd another oak to see.

Thus Melancholy buries Hope,
Which Providence keeps still alive,
and bids us with afflictions cope,
And all anxiety survive.

4. "For Saturday"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano four-hand

Length:

22 Measures
1:10 Minutes (approx.)

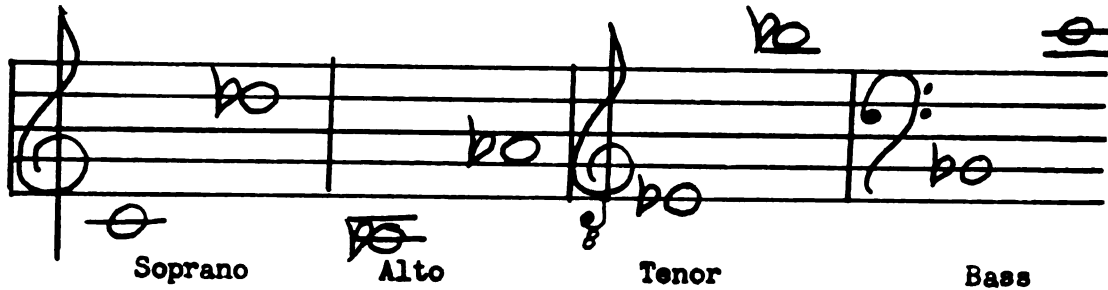
Text:

Now's the time for mirth and play,
 Saturday's an holiday;
 Praise to heav'n unceasing yield,
 I've found a lark's nest in the field.

A lark's nest, then your playmate begs
 You'd spare herself and speckled eggs;
 Soon she shall ascend and sing
 Your praises to the 'eternal King.

5. "At Undressing in the Evening"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano four-hand

Length:

43 Measures
 1:28 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

These cloaths, of which I now divest
 Myself, ALL SEEING EYE,
 Must be one day, that day be blest
 Relinquish'd and laid by.

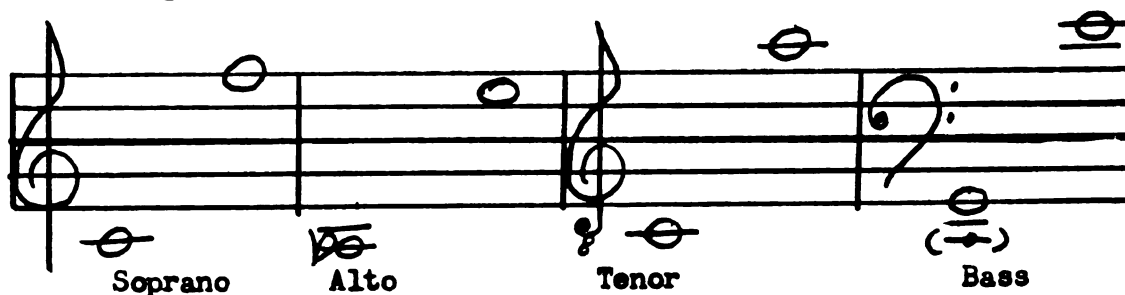
Thou cordial sleep, to death skin,
 I court thee on my knee;
 O let me exit, free from sin,
 Be little more than Thee.

But if much agonizing pain
 My dying hour await,
 The Lord be with me to sustain,
 To help and to abate.

O let me meet Thee undeterr'd
 By no foul stains defil'd!
 According to thy holy word,
 Receive me as a Child.

6. "The Conclusion of the Matter"

Voice Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Piano four-hand

Length:

26 Measures
 2:29 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

Fear God obey his just decrees,
 And do it hand, and heart, and knees;
 For after all our utmost care
 There's nought like penitence and pray'r

Then weigh the balance in your mind,
 Look forward, not one glance behind;
 Let no foul fiend retard your pace,
 Hosannah! Thou hast won the race.

The Chanticleer's Carol
(1981)

Double Male Chorus Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1981

Voice Ranges:

Chorus I

Tenor I Tenor II Baritone Bass

Chorus II

Tenor I Tenor II Baritone Bass

Accompaniment:

Three Trumpets, Two Horns,
Three Trombones

Length:

69 Measures
3:17 Minutes

Text:

Author of Text: William Austin
(1587-1634)

Awake!

All this night shrill chanticleer, Day's proclaiming trumpeter,
Claps his wings and loudly cries: Mortals, mortals, wake and
rise!

See a wonder Heav'n is under. From the earth is ris'n a Sun,
Shines all night, Though day be done. Awake! Awake! Awake!
Wake, O earth, wake ev'rything! Wake and hear the joy I bring.

Wake and hear the joy, O hear, O wake and joy, for all this
night Heav'n and ev'ry twinkling light, All amazing, Still
stand gazing. Angels, pow'rs, and all that be, Wake, and joy
this Sun to see.

Hail, O Sun, O blessed Light, Sent into this world by night!
Let thy rays and heav'nly pow'rs Shine in these dark souls of
ours. For most duly Thou art truly God and man we do confess.
Hail, O Sun of Righteousness!

The God of Love My Shepherd Is
(April 24, 1982)

SATB Conrad Susa

Publisher:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
112 South Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Copyright:

E. C. Schirmer Music Company
1982

Author of Text:

George Herbert
(The 23rd Psalme)

Voices Ranges:



Accompaniment:

Organ

Length:

76 Measures
5:54 Minutes (approx.)

Text:

The God of Love my Shepherd is, And he that doth me feed:
while he is mine, and I am his, What can I want or heed?
He leads me to the tender grasse where I both feed and rest;
Then to the streams that gently passe: In both have I the
best. Or if I stray, he doth convert and keep my minde in
frame: And all This not for my desert, But for his holy name.
Yea, in death's shadie black abode Well may I walk, not fear:
For thou art with me; and thy rod to guide, thy staff to bear.
Nay, Thou dost make me sit and dine Ev'n in my enemies sight:
My head with oyl, my cup with wine Runnes over day and night.
Surely, surely thy sweet and wondrous love shall measure all
my dayes, And as it never shall remove, So neither shall my
praise.

APPENDIX D

HYMNS FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF CHILDREN

NOTES BY CONRAD SUSA

HYMNS FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF CHILDREN

Notes by Conrad Susa

Christopher Smart wrote his Hymns for the Amusement of Children in 1771, the last year of his life, while he was in debtor's prison. No stranger to prisons and mental institutions, he seems to have been afflicted with a sort of religious mania which some of his detractors considered to be madness. Boswell records Dr. Johnson as saying, "Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind by falling on his knees and saying his prayers in the street, or any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called into question."

Smart's collection consists of thirty-six hymns, together with three unnumbered hymns as a tailpiece. The poems are dedicated to His Highness Prince Frederick, the second son of George III, and "composed for his amusement. . .with all due submission and respect, (and) humbly ascribed to him as the best of Bishops." The frontispiece to the collection shows the Prince as a bishop, aged seven, having held his See since he was six months old.

Lighter and more accessible than Smart's best poems (Jubilate Agno and Hymn to David, familiar in the settings by Benjamin Britten), the Hymns for the Amusement of Children were meant to

instruct through entertainment.

Having decided that the Hymns were already sufficiently instructive, I took them up for their potential as entertainment. I was about to compose my first opera, Transformations, based on the book of poems by Anne Sexton, and I felt the need to re-investigate the world of congas and tangos, ballads and blues which the opera would require. The Hymns provided a wonderful opportunity to locate the contemporary equivalent of Smart's sensibility within American popular music styles. The result was a song-cycle for medium voice and piano.

I approached my "studies" with the hope of transforming a few of the hymns into vehicles for popular singers I admired, as follows:

1. For Sunday (Hymn XXXIV), in calypso style, for Harry Belafonte;
2. At Dressing in the Morning (Hymn XXXV), modelled after (and for) Elton John;
3. Against Despair (Old Ralph in the Wood) (Hymn XXXII), in a flowing folk-song style (with a tango thrown in) for Judy Collins; a brief piano cadenza leads directly to
4. For Saturday (Hymn XXXIII), a sort of "Carnival in Rio," for Louis Armstrong;
5. At Undressing in the Evening (Hymn XXXVI), moody blues suitable for Al Green or Johnny Mathis;
6. The Conclusion of the Matter (the last of the unnumbered Hymns), for Roberta Flack or Barbara Streisand.

The songs are not really in the ranges of my ideal cast and, alas, one of them is now dead, but substituting, say, Carole Channing for Louis Armstrong, I think it would be a treat to hear them do the songs.

In addition to the toying with singing styles and dance forms, the hymns in the cycle are arranged to form a rudimentary "plot": the first and last hymns are sung by the parent, or parents, while the inner group is sung by the child. The whole set, like the classical sets of six (which commemorate the six days of Creation) spans a week in the child's life, or perhaps his whole life.

The version for solo voice was begun in Provincetown in August, 1972, dabbled at in Minneapolis during late September, and completed in San Diego that November. The present choral version, with the piano part expanded to piano four-hands, was commissioned in the fall of 1975 by the Concert Chorale of the University of Texas at Austin and premiered there in February of 1976. The Hymns for the Amusement of Children is dedicated to the Concert Chorale and its then director, Charles K. Smith.

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION LETTERS

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March 21, 1984

Gilbert Jackson
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