

ALAN HOVHANESS

FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



Gloria Dei Cantores

Elizabeth C. Patterson, Director

Program

Cantate Domino, Psalm 98, Op. 385 (Hovhanness-Fujihara Music Co. Inc.)	7:26
Immortality, Op. 134 (C.F. Peters Corporation) Kathy Schuman, soprano	2:43
Unto Thee, O God, Op. 87, No. 2 (Associated Music Publishers, Inc.)	1:36
Triptych: Ave Maria, Op. 100, No. 1a (Associated Music Publishers, Inc.) Sr. Lydia Ingwersen, Oboe • Br. Stephen Velie, Oboe • Sr. Marianne Wierzbinski, Daniel Pfeiffer, French Horn • Sr. Seana Shannon, Harp	3:30
Simple Mass, Op. 282 (Associated Music Publishers, Inc.) Kathy Schuman, soprano • Sr. Phoenix Marcella Catlin, alto • Br. Richard Cragg, tenor • G. Luke Norman, bass	
Prelude	2:21
Lord, Have Mercy	1:56
Glory to God	3:24
We Believe in One God	7:26
Holy	2:50
Lamb of God	3:51

From the End of the Earth, Op. 187 (C.F. Peters Corporation)	4:49
Three Motets, Op. 259: Peace Be Multiplied (Broude International Editions)	2:58
Three Motets, Op. 259: God Be Merciful Unto Us (Broude International Editions) Sr. Phoenix Marcella Catlin, alto	5:27
Three Motets, Op. 259: Wisdom (Broude International Editions)	2:23
Psalm 143: Hear My Prayer, O Lord, Op. 149 (C.F. Peters Corporation)	3:47
I Will Rejoice in the Lord, Op. 42 (C.F. Peters Corporation)	6:32
Why Hast Thou Cast Us Off, Op. 87, No. 1	2:57
The God of Glory Thundereth, Op. 140 (C.F. Peters Corporation) Br. Richard Cragg, tenor	4:41
O Lord God of Hosts, Op. 27 (C.F. Peters Corporation)	4:51
Total Time:	75:33
David Chalmers, James E. Jordan Jr., Organists	



I propose to create a **heroic**, monumental style of composition simple enough to inspire all people, completely free from fads, artificial mannerisms and false sophistications, direct, forceful, **sincere**, always original but never unnatural. . . . There has been too much emphasis on small things while the great truths have been overlooked. . . . It is not my purpose to supply a few pseudo intellectual musicians and critics with more food for brilliant argumentation, but rather to **inspire** all mankind with new heroism and **spiritual nobility**. This may appear to be sentimental and impossible to some, but it must be remembered that Palestrina, Handel, and Beethoven would not consider it either sentimental or impossible. In fact, the worthiest creative art has been motivated consciously or unconsciously by the desire for the **regeneration of mankind**.

Alan Hovhaness

ALAN HOVHANESS (1911—2000) wrote this personal creed in 1940. He was 29 years old, and on the cusp of the most challenging (and potentially devastating) period of his career as a composer.



ovhaness would face harsh public disparagement and ruthless, seemingly destructive self-criticism. But his creed served as his lodestar, and the young, misunderstood Hovhaness eventually became one of twentieth-century America's most prolific and respected composers.

Hovhaness was born in Somerville, Massachusetts in 1911 to an Armenian father and a Scottish mother. His interest in music started when he was four years old. He became an excellent pianist and violinist; after high school graduation he entered the New England Conservatory and studied under Frederick Converse. Even at this young age, notable composers such as Roger Sessions took an interest in Hovhaness. In 1940

always original

Hovhaness took a position as organist for the Armenian Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. During this time he experienced a turbulent period of study at Tanglewood: while a recording of Hovhaness' *First Symphony* played during a seminar Aaron Copland conversed loudly in Spanish with some composers, and Leonard Bernstein proceeded to plunk out a modal scale on the piano at hand, remarking, "I can't stand this cheap ghetto music." (Bernstein made amends in 1960, admitting that "some of Hovhaness' music is very, very good.") Hovhaness left Tanglewood and returned to Boston. It

seems Hovhaness took this opportunity to evaluate his experiences, and the advice and criticism he had received, and to determine what kind of a composer he would be. After destroying much of his early work, Hovhaness devoted himself spiritually and musically to his Armenian heritage. The years 1943–1951 were known as Hovhaness's Armenian period. Support and attention to his work grew dramatically; Hovhaness enjoyed great success as he debuted his work first in



monumental style of composition

Boston and eventually in New York City, where he received his first critical encouragement from the press.

In 1951, Hovhaness moved to New York City, where his compositional career flourished even further: in just eight years, his opus catalog grew from eighty to two hundred. Always pursuing the spiritual along with the musical, Hovhaness traveled to India in 1959 on a Fulbright Fellowship and immersed himself in Indian music and culture. He made further travels to Hawaii, Japan, and South Korea to research the traditional music of those areas and to learn to play their native instruments, all the while receiving more commissions. He visited Russia and Europe, and finally his ancestral homeland of Armenia in 1965, where Hovhaness gave the people a set of handwritten manuscripts of harmonized Armenian sacred music.

In the early 1970s, Hovhaness moved permanently to Seattle to live near the mountains he so dearly loved. His settling out West in Seattle seemed to be mirrored in his writing style, as in his

later years Hovhaness moved away from the modal and adopted a more neo-Romantic style. The final three decades of his life brought great success in publishing; in the end, there were over four hundred opus numbers to his name. In 1996 Hovhaness's health began to decline, and he died on June 22, 2000. In the decade after his death, his reputation as a composer only increased among musicians and audiences.

True to the creed he penned, throughout his life Hovhaness created music that is immediate, deeply felt, and accessible to the general public. In numerous interviews, Hovhaness commented on the importance choral music held for him. Hovhaness used the lowered seventh degree of the scale, triadic harmonies, cantorial recitatives, naturally flowing melodies, ostinato rhythms, abundant counterpoint, and rhythmic and ornamental elements of Eastern music in his sacred choral music. His love for religious practices from both the East and West added to his wide expressive vocabulary.

Composed in 1984, the cantata on Psalm 98, *Cantate Domino*, exhibits the bold experimentation Hovhaness enjoyed throughout his career, and especially toward the end of his life. The trumpet from the organ provides an exciting rhythmic vehicle through this joyful musical journey, and the virtuoso choral writing includes rapid scales, sudden dynamic changes, and litanylike repetitions of the text. Hovhaness masterfully sets the text in a multimetered style and brings the work to an exciting conclusion.

*desire for the
regeneration of
mankind*

The critic Virgil Thomson said: “The high quality of [Hovhaness’s] music, the purity of its inspiration, is evidenced by the extreme beauty of its melodic material and in the perfect sweetness of taste that it leaves in the mouth. . . . For all its auditory complexity, it is utterly simple in feeling, pure in spirit, and high minded. And for Western ears it is thoroughly refreshing.”

The next two works reflect the elements of Hovhaness’ composing that Thomson so admired. For the Easter season comes *Immortality*, using a hymn-text from Christian Gellert.

Its unison writing,
striking

harmonies, chantlike

solos and excellent use of the organ are interestingly

similar to the motet *Unto Thee, O God*.

Although written ten years earlier than *Immortality*, it demonstrates the same simplicity and chant influence, creating an affecting atmosphere for the psalm text.

never unnatural





ovhaness's setting of *Ave Maria* for women's choir, harp, oboes, and horns dates from 1955. He exploits the various instruments' colors, weaving them together in such a way that they complement each other beautifully but retain all of their individual character, all the while supporting the lovely writing for the four women's parts. As the composer said, "Orchestration is so easy to make too thick and muddy. I want every note to be heard. And I love all of the instruments very much and want to do things that are natural. . . .

What's the soul of that instrument? That's what I'm interested in." This philosophy, combined with shifting harmonies and counterpoint, creates a transparent effect through which all the pain and compassion of this *Ave Maria* clearly shine.

spiritual nobility

Though he did not call himself religious, and his music has more often been described as "spiritual" than "liturgical," Hovhaness was able to immerse himself enough in the needs of the church to create genuine works for worship: the *Simple Mass* from 1975 reflects the liturgical changes in the Catholic Church mandated by Vatican II. And despite the fact that he never received payment for this particular commission, Hovhaness persevered in having the Mass published.

He opens with an evocative organ prelude. Here no pedals are required in the organ part, and the choir's melodic lines are all in unison. With text set in English rather than Latin, the soloists lead each statement, with the choir (or



“congregation”) following in dialogue. The piquant melodic lines, the triadic harmonies for the soloists, and the varied colors of the organ part lend a simple yet effective illumination of the Mass that could be used by many congregations.

Hovhanness’s innovative, trademark melding of Eastern and Western sounds is particularly evident in the next four motets. In *From the End of the Earth* Hovhanness creates a memorable melody; expressive modal runs of eighth notes “cry” as the psalmist pleads with God, and a concluding “alleluia” uses these same elements. The *Three Motets* also exhibit Hovhanness’s combination of Occident and Orient, showing the spirit and technique of Renaissance polyphony

sincere





inspired by Palestrina and others, as well as a contemporary flavor resulting from his absorption of Eastern styles. The Biblical texts are set in distinctive ways. In *Peace Be Multiplied*, the music rises and falls in flowing notes, with emphasis on the text “grace unto you” at the conclusion. *God Be Merciful* alternates between four-part choir and a soloist, who acts like a cantor in the Jewish tradition. Finally, *Wisdom* has Eastern harmonies and closes with a personal statement: given that this work was written at the time of the Korean War, and considering Hovhaness’s pacifist leanings, the text “Wisdom is better than weapons of war” comes as no surprise. All four motets feature traditional polyphony as well as melodies that become altered by a half-step up or down, causing an effect on the ear like that of an Eastern cantillation.

H *new heroism*

ovhaness often expressed admiration for the King James translation of the Bible, and his musical inspiration always sprang from the text: “I think the text has to come first and then the music.” *Psalm 143: Hear My Prayer, O Lord* is a chantlike dialogue between men and women, with text strikingly illuminated by the harmony. Hovhaness’s motet *I Will Rejoice in the Lord* has a text from Habakkuk: in the verses preceding Hovhaness’s chosen portion the prophet Habakkuk cries out to God in grief over the violence and destruction of Judea; “Yet,” says the prophet, “I will rejoice in the Lord.” Similarly, the a cappella motet *Why Hast Thou Cast Us Off* seems to open in sorrow, beginning with the altos, who intone the work with its titular

question; but it closes with a joyful admonition to “let the poor and needy praise thy name.” In *The God of Glory Thundereth* Hovhaness makes his signature use of modal scales, homophony, solo sections reminiscent of a temple cantor, triadic harmony, and the organ to depict “the voice of the Lord” and its mighty effects. This anniversary tribute closes with Hovhaness’s stirring setting of verses from Psalm 89, *O Lord God of Hosts*. He introduces another new voice, joining the mixed choir with trumpets and trombones. In this anthem, as well as the “Prayer of Saint Gregory,” and several of his other orchestral and choral works, Hovhaness holds the sound of brass in a special place: “I use the trumpet like the voice of a priest. It has power and grandeur . . . as the cantor is supposed to be the voice of God, the trumpet can be that.” And regarding the trombone, “The trombone is the last survivor of the old civilizations . . . the only true primitive instrument.” Hovhaness opens with a dialogue between brass and choir, and then combines them for

a powerful final statement: the voices of the priests, the people, and God himself in a unified benediction.

Hovhaness said, “My purpose is to create music not for snobs, but for all people, music which is beautiful and healing.” With this album, featuring just a sampling of his musical achievements, *Gloriæ Dei Cantores* honors Hovhaness’s faithful following of his creed, and the rich choral legacy he left behind. It is our hope that through this introduction, many choirs will be inspired to explore Hovhaness’s work, and to lend their hearts and voices to his “noble desire for the regeneration of mankind.”

to inspire all people

Texts

1 Cantate Domino

Sing to the Lord a new song; for he has done marvelous things: with his right hand, and his holy arm, has he won for himself the victory. The Lord has made known his victory: his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations. He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel: and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands: lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing. Sing to the Lord with harp; and the voice of song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn, shout with joy before the King the Lord. Let the sea make a noise, and all that is in it; the land, and those that dwell therein. Let the rivers clap their hands: and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord when he comes to judge the earth.

In righteousness shall he judge the world, and the peoples with equity. Sing to the Lord a new song!

2 Immortality

Jesus lives! No longer now can thy terrors, death, appall us;
Jesus lives! By this we know thou,
O grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia!

Jesus lives! Henceforth is death but the gate of life immortal;
this shall calm our trembling breath when we pass the gloomy portal.
Alleluia!

Jesus lives! To him the throne over all the world is given:
may we go where he has gone, rest and reign with him in heaven.
Alleluia!

3 Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

4 Ave Maria

Ave Maria.
Hail Mary.

Simple Mass

5 Organ Prelude

6 Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

forceful

7 Glory to God in the highest

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

8 We believe in one God

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

free from fads



We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

9 Holy

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

10 Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

A person stands in the foreground of a vast, dry, hilly landscape. The person is wearing a bright blue long-sleeved shirt and red pants. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills with sparse vegetation and some small structures in the distance. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and expansive.

great truths

11 From the end of the earth

Hear my cry, O God. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

12 Peace be multiplied

According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

13 God be merciful

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

14 Wisdom

A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine. The words of wise men are heard in quiet. Wisdom is better than weapons of war.

15 Psalm 143: Hear My Prayer, O Lord

Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. Hear my prayer, O Lord.

16 I Will Rejoice in the Lord

I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

17 Why hast thou cast us off

O God, why hast thou cast us off forever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

18 The God of Glory Thundereth

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the

wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King forever. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace. O praise the Lord, all ye nations. Praise ye the Lord.

19 O Lord God of Hosts

O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them. Blessed be the Lord forevermore. Amen.

*the worthiest
creative art*

Gloriæ Dei Cantores, an internationally acclaimed choir of over forty voices, ranging in age from 20–70, and directed by Elizabeth C. Patterson, is dedicated to preserving, performing, and recording great choral music from the eleventh to the twenty-first centuries. Founded in 1988, Gloriæ Dei Cantores has touched the hearts of audiences in twenty-three countries in Europe, Asia, and North America. They sing in eighteen languages and have a discography of more than thirty-five recordings. For more information, please visit www.gdcchoir.org

The Church of the Transfiguration is a contemporary expression of early Christian architecture that draws upon a fourth-century architectural heritage shared by Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox. Constructed of Minnesota limestone the color of Cape Cod sand, it stands 55 feet high, 72 feet wide, and 182 feet long. Its architectural style is basilican and features a long, rectangular nave, a rounded apse at the east end, narrow side aisles, a peaked timber roof, and interior columns and arches along the side aisles. It was designed by William Rawn Associates of Boston and was dedicated June, 2000. The art program for the Church of the Transfiguration combines fresco, mosaics, stone and bronze sculpture, and stained glass to present a cohesive narrative based on biblical history and church tradition. The organ is a restoration and expansion of pipework from twelve organs built by the E.M. Skinner Organ Company early in the twentieth century.

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First Sopranos

Rachel McKendree
Sr. Anneliese Minster
Sr. Amanda D. Ortolani
Mary Virginia Smith

Second Sopranos

Sr. Paula Irving
Kathy Schuman
Kathryn Shannon
Sr. Lucia Smith

First Altos

Sr. Melody Edmonson
Lillian Miao
Wendy Saran
Blair Tingley

Second Alto

Sarah Andre
Sr. Phoenix M. Catlin
Sr. Estelle Cole
Sr. Seana Shannon

First Tenor

Br. Patrick Clark
Br. Richard Cragg
James E. Jordan
Br. Nathanael Reese

Second Tenor

David Chalmers
Br. Peter Logan
Br. Anthony Kanaga
Br. Jacob Witter

Baritone

Michael Hale
Br. Philip MacNeill
G. Luke Norman
David Ortolani
Br. Joel Sweet
Paul Tingley

Bass

Br. John Henderson
N. Andrew Mitchell
Br. Paul Norman
Richard K. Pugsley
Br. Timothy Pehta
Wayne Schuman
Martin Shannon

ALan HOvhaness

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