
ABENDGEBET

for SATB choir (a cappella)

JACOB BERANEK

PROGRAM NOTE

Originally composed for the British men's vocal consort The Gesualdo Six, *Abendgebet* is presented here in an arrangement for SATB, commissioned by the Jubilate Chorale. Now, in this more standard format, it is my hope that *Abendgebet* will be even more accessible to the choral world at large, in addition to its conceived design for men's chamber singing.

While setting the text to this *Abendgebet* ("evening prayer") by German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), I realized that these words were not only a prayer for evening time, but also the prayer of one in the evening of his earthly life. Bonhoeffer, who had been imprisoned for plotting the assassination of Adolf Hitler, wrote this prayer in jail, only months before his execution. Therefore, I wanted to conclude my setting of the prayer in a manner that represented Bonhoeffer's own perspective on death and life. It occurred to me that a powerful yet peaceful "Amen" was necessary to complete this image, and the idea struck me one day to set the "Amen" to the tune of the Lutheran chorale *Ein 'feste Burg ist unser Gott* ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"). For me, this allusion would perfectly represent Bonhoeffer's hope amidst death and strength amidst evil. It was not until later that day that I happened to learn the circumstances preceding Bonhoeffer's death: the day before his execution, Bonhoeffer conducted his final Sunday service inside the Flossenbürg concentration camp. As the Gestapo entered to escort him to his "trial," Bonhoeffer concluded the service by leading the congregation in one last hymn: *Ein 'feste Burg ist unser Gott*.

PERFORMANCE NOTE

With artistic trust in performers and in respect of their musicality, I have chosen not to over-mark the score with nuanced tempo modifications. Instead, metronomic ranges are provided to represent the span of possible tempos within a given section. In other words, this piece should not be performed maintaining only one steady tempo per section, even if that section has only one "tempo marking." Rather, performers are free to let a number of tempos arise naturally, beyond what is *literally* denoted in the score, but what is hopefully expressively inherent in the music. It is my belief that performers' artistry is too often restricted by an over-notated, controlling score, and it is my fervent wish to release them from this perceived bondage and encourage a collaborative joy in the making of my music.

—Jacob Beranek

TEXT (with composer's translation)

Herr, mein Gott, ich danke dir, daß du diesen Tag zu Ende gebracht hast; ich danke dir, daß du Leib und Seele zur Ruhe kommen läßt. Deine Hand war über mir und hat mich behütet und bewahrt.

Vergib allen Kleinglauben und alles Unrecht dieses Tages und hilf, daß ich allen vergebe, die mir Unrecht getan haben.

Laß mich in Frieden unter deinem Schutz schlafen und bewahre mich vor den Anfechtungen der Finsternis.

Ich befehle dir die Meinen, ich befehle dir dieses Haus, ich befehle dir meinen Leib und meine Seele. Gott, dein heiliger Name sei gelobt.

Lord, my God, I thank you that you have brought this day to a close; I thank you that you have allowed my body and soul to come to rest. Your hand was over me and has protected and preserved me.

Forgive all the lack of faith and all the injustice of this day, and help me to forgive all who have done injustice towards me.

Allow me in peace to sleep beneath your protection, and defend me from the spiritual crises of darkness.

I commend to you all that is mine, I commend to you this house, I commend to you my body and my soul. God, your holy name be praised.

duration: c. 5' 00"

Commissioned by the Jubilate Chorale for their 2020 European Tour,
Vicki Taylor, Music Director

ABENDGEBET

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Jacob Beranek

Still, reverently (♩ = c. 50-60)*

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Baritone Solo

Bass

(rehearsal only)

mp Mein Gott, Herr, mein Gott, ich dan - ke dir, ich dan - ke

pp *div.* *pp* *cresc.* *pp* *div.* *n*

Still, reverently (♩ = c. 50-60)*

3 *pp* *mp* *p*

S daß du dies - en Tag zu En - de ge - bracht, zu En - de ge - bracht hast;

A *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

A daß du dies - en Tag zu En - de ge - bracht (h)ast;

T *unis. p* *mp* *p*

T daß du dies - en Tag zu En - de ge - bra' ge - bracht hast;

(end solo) (with Bass 1) *mp* *p*

Solo dir, daß du dies - en Tag } zu En - de ge - bracht (h)ast;

B *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

B dir, daß du die - sen Tag, En - de ge - bracht, ge - bracht hast;

3 *p*

* See performance note on opposite page.

7 *mp* *cresc.*

S ich dan - ke dir, daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,

A *mp* *cresc.*

A ich dan - ke dir, daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,

T *mp* *cresc.*

T daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,

B

7 *mp* *cresc.*

10 *mf* *p* rit. *Più mosso* (♩ = c. 60-66) *n* *mf*

S Leib und See - le zur Ru - he kom - men läßt. Dei - ne

A *mf* *p* *n*

A Leib und See - le zur Ru - he kom - men läßt.

T *mf* *p* div. *cresc.*

T Leib See - le zur Ru - he kom - men zur Ru - he kom - men, dei - ne

B *mp* *mf* *p* *n* *mp*

B Leib und See - le zur Ru - he kom - men läßt. Dei - ne

10 rit. *Più mosso* (♩ = c. 60-66) *mf*

cresc.