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THE CHORAL MUSIC OF RENÉ CLAUSEN:
A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY AND HISTORY

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By

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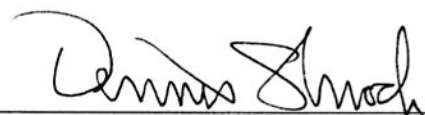
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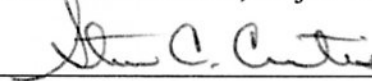
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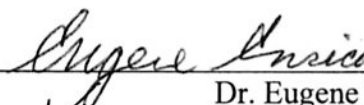
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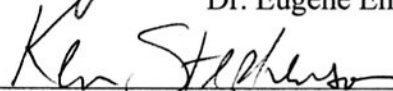
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I cannot express the depth of my gratitude to my sons, Michael and Wilson Aitken who, at very young ages have had to spend enormous amounts of time away from their dad, and have patiently been waiting for me to be done so that we can spend more quality time together. This entire document, however, I dedicate to my loving wife, Stephanie, without whom this project would have likely gone undone. The reality is that Steph believed in me when I no longer believed in myself and when I really wanted to forego the project entirely. She compassionately guided me through the darkest days of this mission. Moreover, she lovingly made certain that I never gave up on my dreams.

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ABSTRACT

THE CHORAL MUSIC OF RENÉ CLAUSEN: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY AND HISTORY

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MAJOR PROFESSOR: DENNIS R. SHROCK, D.M.

The purpose of this study is to chronologically investigate the published choral music of René King Clausen, a well-regarded contemporary American composer and conductor. This is realized through an in-depth study and a discussion of each of his choral compositions, and through a classification process of his works into one of several genres. The paper seeks to identify the relevance and the impact of this composer's work upon the field of choral music.

Chapter One reveals Clausen's relevance in the field of choral music by outlining his professional accomplishments as a conductor and pedagogue, discussing the breadth of his extensive choral repertoire, and identifying several of his major commissioned writings.

Chapter Two details each of Clausen's compositions known to have been published prior to the end of the year 2004, the only exception to this division being his most recent major work, *Memorial*. The chapter is divided into numerous sub-sections, each one individually discussing a single composition in the composer's repertoire. Historical, compositional, and formal characteristics are discussed, as well as other pertinent information and distinctions as suggested by the study. Common traits from

one work to another are considered; compositional trends, growth, and changes are also observed.

In Chapter Three, all of Clausen's compositions are divided into one of seven genres. Historical background is provided about each of the genre categories, and inherent characteristics discussed. Selected compositions in each genre are then reviewed in the context of its class, providing necessary information and observations about decisions made in the organizational process.

The final chapter summarizes the René Clausen choral music study, develops a series of conclusions about his compositions, and raises several recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Dr. René King Clausen (b. 1953) is a notable American composer and conductor whose ongoing celebrated career has spanned three decades and whose musical accomplishments are significant enough to demand critical study. Clausen, a graduate of both St. Olaf College and the University of Illinois, has an impressive and extensive list of professional accomplishments. As the first-ever Paul J. and Eleanor Christiansen Chair in Choral Music at Concordia College in Moorehead, Minnesota, Clausen, in conjunction with his choral direction of the highly praised Concordia Singers, has continued to develop an ever-expanding and critically acclaimed discography. Also, Clausen has become a highly coveted clinician, presenting workshops and clinics in over thirty-five states, and according to one of the world's largest music retailers, J.W. Pepper, Inc., Clausen has published an excess of sixty choral compositions primarily under two major publishers, Shawnee Music Press and Santa Barbara Music Publishing.¹

Clausen was first introduced to music as a young boy. His father was organist at his hometown church, where René often played and improvised on one of the church's pianos while his father prepared for worship. As a teenager excelling at numerous instruments, he played in and wrote some arrangements for the high school band. As he

¹ *JWPepper.com: World's Largest Sheet Music Retailer* [database on-line] (Paoli, Pennsylvania: J.W. Pepper & Son, Inc., 2004, first accessed 6 June 2004), <<http://www.jwpepper.com>>

grew and matured into a young man, his ever-expanding musical appetite paralleled his physical and mental development. However, it was at St. Olaf College, under the exceptional tutelage of Kenneth Jennings, where he fell completely in love with the choral arts.² Moreover, it was during a college conducting class when a representative from the Mark Foster Music Company heard one of his earliest compositions, an event that subsequently led to a lengthy publishing relationship and a professional bond that has lasted some thirty years.

Dr. Clausen's compositional style is varied and eclectic, ranging from works appropriate for advanced high school and church choirs to more technically demanding compositions for college and professional choirs.³ His numerous professional accolades have placed Clausen in the forefront of the choral compositional scene, as testified to by the many commissions he has received. An accounting of his output indicates that an excess of forty-five of his compositions have come about as the direct result of commissions. Although commissions had taken place previously, his first major one came in 1994, when the North Central Regional American Choral Directors Association requested an extended work based on Native American themes.⁴ The resulting

² Guy, Todd W., "The Compositional Process of René Clausen as Demonstrated in Selected Choral Works," (D.M.A. Dissertation, Ball State University, 1998), 176-181.

³ *René Clausen Biography, Published Arrangements & Compositions, and René Clausen Choral School Information* [database on-line] (Moorhead, MN., René Clausen Music Company, 1997-2004, first accessed 5 February 2004), <<http://www.reneclausen.com/bioninfo/biography.html>>

⁴ *Concordia College Faculty Biography* [database on-line] (Moorhead, MN., Concordia College, 1996-2004, first accessed 5 February 2004), <<http://www.cord.edu/dept/music/faculty/clausenrene.html>>

composition was entitled *Crying for a Dream*, a challenging three-movement work for multiple choirs, flute, and two pianos. Another notable major commission is “Canticle of Praise [which was] written for The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and The Kings Singers.”⁵

One of Clausen’s most recent major works is a landmark commission granted by the largest professional organization of choral musicians in America, the American Choral Directors Association. In September of 2002, the News Release Service of Concordia College at Moorhead, Minnesota, issued the following statement: “René Clausen has been commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) to write a piece commemorating the tragedies of Sept. 11, which will be performed at the ACDA national convention in New York City.”⁶ The work was commissioned as part of ACDA’s Raymond W. Brock Endowment Trust Commissioned Choral Composition Series. The Raymond W. Brock commission is an honor granted exclusively to those composers who have already made a significant contribution to the choral music repertory. Other select notables who share this honor include Theron Kirk, Daniel Gawthrop, Daniel Pinkham, James Mulholland, Stephen Paulus, Samuel Adler, Gwyneth Walker, and Adolphus Hailstork.

Throughout his thirty-year career, Clausen has published almost exclusively through Mark Foster Music, an advanced-level division of Shawnee Music Press Inc.

⁵ (*Concordia College Faculty Biography*
<http://www.cord.edu/dept/music/faculty/clausenrene.html>)

⁶ *Concordia College: News Release: Clausen Commissioned To Write 9-11 Commemorative Music*, (Moorhead, MN., Concordia College Office of Communications, September 4, 2002, first accessed 12 March 2004),
<<http://www.concordiacollege.edu/dept/news/releases/02182.html>>

“which is dedicated to serving choral conductors . . . with distinctive original repertoire, as well as auxiliary materials and services to facilitate their conducting and teaching endeavors.”⁷ Under the auspices of Shawnee Music Press, therefore, Clausen has had the benefit of being represented by one of America’s foremost publishers of collegiate choral repertoire. “Since 1939, the company [Shawnee Music Press] has led the way in providing music of the highest quality to schools, churches, bands and orchestras.”⁸

Shawnee Music Press itself is a subsidiary of Music Sales Group, a worldwide music-publishing conglomerate, based in London, England. Music Sales Group is highly respected throughout the world as a music publisher and certainly falls into a league of other reputable companies such as Boosey & Hawkes, Oxford, and Bärenreiter, to name a few. Under the umbrellas of Music Sales Group and Shawnee Music Press, René Clausen stands as a major compositional figure among his peers. According to Shawnee Music Press (Advanced Education and Sacred Choral Music), in each fiscal quarter there are usually at least six Clausen octavos listed on its top ten sellers list. In fact, more than fifty percent of his compositions exceed the industry-wide “excellent” sales marker of ten thousand copies sold annually. Of those, “O My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose” sells fifteen to twenty thousand copies, and “Set Me as A Seal” virtually always exceeds twenty-five thousand. Clausen’s sales are excellent in spite of the fact that he frequently writes using a broad, often university-level, compositional

⁷ *Shawnee Press, Inc. - A History Of Excellence* [database on-line] (Marshall’s Creek, PA., Shawnee Press, Inc., 2003-2004, first accessed 15 September 2004), <<http://www.shawneepress.com/history.asp>>

⁸ (*Shawnee Press, Inc. - A History Of Excellence* <http://www.shawneepress.com/history.asp>)

palette. Regardless of whether the composition is polyphonic, simplistic, aleatoric, whether multi-choir, choral-orchestral, or four-part treble, sales of Clausen's music remain high.

In addition to René Clausen's compositional activities, he is the conductor of the Concordia Singers at Concordia College, one of the foremost collegiate choral ensembles of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The third director of the Concordia Singers since 1920, he was hired for the position in 1986. The position at Concordia College has allowed him to flourish professionally, recording several critically acclaimed compact discs, presenting an annual Christmas program for National Public Radio, and developing the René Clausen Choral School (which is centered on summer workshops). As a professional conductor, he has become widely sought-after as a clinician, and as a guest conductor, he has directed major ensembles in both the choral and orchestral genres:

In addition to choral conducting, Dr. Clausen is becoming increasingly well-known as a guest conductor of the major choral/orchestral literature, in addition to orchestral conducting. At Carnegie Hall he has guest conducted the Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Mozart *Requiem* and *Mass in C minor*, together with the New York premiere of three of his own works, *Gloria* (in three movements), *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, with text by Walt Whitman, and *Communion*, with text by George MacDonald. Other major choral/orchestral works he has conducted include the Poulenc *Gloria*, Vaughan Williams *Hodie*, Beethoven *Mass in C major* and *Choral Fantasy*, and Fauré *Requiem*.⁹

⁹ (Clausen Biography <http://www.reneclausen.com/bioninfo/biography.html>)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to study René Clausen's published choral scores and to discuss the history of each composition chronologically. The history will focus on each composition's background (whether the piece was commissioned or non-commissioned, the occasion for which it was written, its place of premiere, noteworthy performances, stylistic elements, voicing, and other pertinent information provided through research). The study will also focus on form, with some harmonic analysis undoubtedly taking place in the context of the discussion. Moreover, it will be important to include discussion of Clausen's text selection, the sources of those texts, as well as methods concerning the way he uses these texts. It will then be important to divide the compositions into various choral genres, assigning them categories such as partsong, motet, cantata, oratorio, or other classification(s), as needed. Specific representative compositions will then be drawn from each of the respective categories and studied in more detail so that the reader may have a better holistic understanding of the significance of Clausen's entire choral output.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

At present, no comprehensive survey of the significant artistic choral output by René Clausen exists. At the present time, there are only two doctoral papers that study Clausen's choral compositions, one by Dr. John F. Warren and the other by Dr. Todd W. Guy. The latter is by far the more in depth study, but it still investigates only a few select compositions, discussing these only in the context of the composer's compositional technique. Since René Clausen routinely must turn away commissions

because of the sheer numbers of requests, and since he is frequently sought after as a clinician throughout the choral world, it is important for his entire compositional output to date to be researched and documented. It is also important to analyze the works, develop critical discussion, and seek Clausen's own input into the process.

No other study to date has discussed Clausen's entire choral output. Neither has a comprehensive history been compiled concerning his compositions. In addition, no researcher has made a formal attempt to classify his compositions into genres or to study his output within genres.

The expectation for this study is that it will provide students and music educators alike a definitive, one-stop resource from which valuable information regarding René Clausen and his choral music can be drawn. The anticipation is also that this document will also be a catalyst for other major documents and/or dissertations researching Clausen's choral output, as this study will likely raise as many pertinent questions as it answers.

RELATED LITERATURE

Only sporadic research has been done regarding Dr. Clausen and his choral works. Several reviews have been published in *The Choral Journal*, the official journal of the American Choral Directors Association, and several websites on the Internet discuss his creative output, although in minimal depth. The two doctoral papers previously mentioned delve into René Clausen's work in differing detail. The first is a doctoral essay by John F. Warren of the University of Miami (D.M.A. 1999) entitled "Four Twentieth-Century Choral Settings of Walt Whitman's Poems by American

Composers.”¹⁰ The second, a dissertation written by Todd W. Guy of Ball State University (D.M.A. 1998), is a more in-depth study of Clausen’s writing entitled “The Compositional Process of René Clausen as Demonstrated in Selected Choral Works.”¹¹ Of particular interest and importance are transcripts of seven personal interviews. However, Guy’s research still only utilizes four of the published choral compositions, studying their differences in writing procedures in regard to commissioned versus non-commissioned writings.

¹⁰ Warren, John F., “Four Twentieth-Century Choral Settings of Walt Whitman’s Poems by American Composers” (D.M.A. doctoral essay, University of Miami, 1999).

¹¹ Guy, 1.

CHAPTER TWO

A COMPREHENSIVE AND CHRONOLOGICAL DISCUSSION OF CLAUSEN CHORAL COMPOSITIONS TO DATE

This chapter will present background information about all of Clausen's known published choral compositions with a publication date that does not supersede the year 2004. The only exception to this division line will be Clausen's latest choral and orchestral work, *Memorial*, as it is a significant commission, premiered at the 2003 ACDA National Convention and published in 2005 by Lorenz Publishing. Not to include *Memorial* in this study would be a significant oversight.

Background information will chronologically document and briefly discuss each composition. The chronological presentation will help the reader to better understand the development of Clausen's writing technique over the course of his career.

The individual discussion of each of these many compositions will vary somewhat from piece to piece and may include the following information:

- date of composition
- date of publication
- voicing
- text source
- commissioned or non-commissioned status
- occasion of composition
- place of premiere
- other noteworthy performances

- basic formal organization
- stylistic elements of note
- other pertinent information, as suggested by the study

Inasmuch as all his published choral compositions will be discussed, there are some pieces that will be given more in-depth study, since not all of his works are of equal substance or significance. The expectation is that this study will be as objective as possible by factors of analysis and structure. The hope is to present a clear and direct analysis that will place each of Clausen's compositions in the most straightforward light possible.

“Thank the Lord”

Released by Fostco Music Press in 1976, the octavo “Thank the Lord” was the first work the twenty-three-year-old Clausen had published. The arrangement is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, with optional tambourine, and is based on an early American folk tune. According to the score (entire first page of octavo follows as figure 2.1), the text is drawn from *Contemporary Worship 2 – Services* and is reprinted with permission of the publishers, the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship.¹² The composition is a non-commissioned work and is included in the Mark Foster Anthem Book I.¹³ This simple arrangement is skillful when taking into consideration Clausen's young age and level of compositional training.

¹² René Clausen, “Thank the Lord” (Delaware Water Gap: Fostco Music Press, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1976), 2.

¹³ Clausen, “Thank the Lord,” 2.

Figure 2.1 René Clausen, "Thank the Lord," measures 1-23



Thank the Lord

Folk Tune
Arranged by RENE CLAUSEN

♩. = 70 With a lilting pulse
SOPRANO ONLY Text *

mf Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry one what He has done. Let
ev - 'ry man who loves the Lord re - jice and glad - ly bear His name.
He re - calls His prom - i - ses and leads His peo - ple forth in joy with
shouts of Thanks - giv - - ing Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - - ia!

SOPRANO
mp Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry one what He has done Let ev-'ry man who
ALTO
mp Thank the Lord and sing his praise Tell ev-'ry one what He has done Let ev-'ry man who
TENOR
mp O Tell ev-'ry one what He has done Let ev-'ry man who
BASS
mp Thank the

(For rehearsal only)

* Reprinted from *Contemporary Worship 2 - Services*, 1970, by permission of the publishers for the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, representing the co-operating churches, the copyright owners.
** Tambourine may be used at the discretion of the director.

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“Thank the Lord” has a strophic formal design that repeats an identical text three times. During each occurrence of this text, Clausen’s writing becomes ever more complex, ensuring that interest will increase with the level of dramatic action. Clausen employs three compositional textures—unison singing, homophonic writing, and canon—which directly correspond to the strophic nature of the composition. The first eighteen measures of the arrangement highlight the tune in unison. The next iteration (the first five measures of which is visible in figure 2.1) is textually homophonic but is made to be more interesting through an additive entrance process of the voice parts. The third section involves measures thirty-seven to the end, and displays canonic writing followed by a return to homophonic textures.

The arrangement is harmonically conservative; in fact, triadic and diatonic harmonies rarely extend beyond traditional part writing. The arrangement takes on somewhat more complexity in the third repetition of the “Thank the Lord” text. In this repetition, the chords that were employed are replaced with a series of seventh chords in a variety of inversions. This inventive and interesting series of chords lasts for only three measures (forty-five through forty-seven) but adds significant interest to the arrangement, an arrangement that never leaves the home key of G major.

“On the Mountain Top Blows the Wind Mild”

Published in 1980 by Fostco Music Press, this sacred English translation of a Silesian folk tune is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, in the key of G major. Clausen attributes the English translation of the first verse to Ella Hjertaas Roe, and the translation of the second verse to his wife, Frankie Clausen. The text of the piece is as follows:

On the mountaintop blows the wind mild,
There rocks sweet Mary her child.
With her angelic snow-white hand,
She has for the cradle no ribbon band.

Ah, Joseph dearest Joseph mine,
Come help me rock the baby divine.
My fingers are clumsy they hardly will bend,
But gladly and gently the baby I'll tend.

Shumshei, Shumshei, Shumshei.

How sweetly the baby lies,
God's love shines from his eyes.
His tiny hands reach out with love,
His heavenly peace descends from above.

Ah, baby Jesus babe of mine,
A wondrous gift the child divine,
His eyes gently closing so softly he sleeps,
And angels will guard thee, from danger they'll keep.

Shumshei, Shumshei, Shumshei.

A lilting arrangement in 6/8 time, this simple and elegant folk lullaby uses an uncomplicated, strophic form. The formal organization is comparable to the style used in his arrangement of "Thank the Lord." Clausen occasionally explores chords outside of the standard G major by employing the use of the E flat major chord (measures fifteen through eighteen and measures thirty-six through forty).

"All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord"

"All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord" was published in 1981 by Fostco Music Press. Clausen sets the composition for *a cappella* SATB voices, *divisi*, and soprano soloist. The text is drawn from two different sources—the Bible and a common Protestant hymn ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," otherwise referred to as

“Lobe den Herren”). Clausen dedicates the composition to the Wichita State University A Cappella Choir.¹⁴

Concerning its formal design, “All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord” follows ABA sonata-like form. The composition begins without introduction in lilting 6/8 time. The opening thematic material is creatively ambiguous, sometimes alluding to G major and other times to G Mixolydian. The opening A section is thirty-three measures long and is comprised of several repetitions of the opening melodic material. The repeated material in this section is rarely quoted identically; instead, the idea seems to grow organically throughout the section. By measure thirty, the opening thematic material has changed enough to be considered transitional, preparing for the B section that begins at measure thirty-four.

The B section is comprised of four parts: (1) a short, rhythmically ambiguous segment that highlights a soprano solo; (2) a short transitional segment that quotes the opening A material; (3) a longer section that highlights the hymn mentioned earlier; and (4) another transitional division that again utilizes the opening A material. Of these four sections, the final two elements are the most unique and necessitate discussion. In section three, Clausen assigns each voice part a one-measure-long motivic idea, each different from the others. The basses begin, followed by the tenors and then the altos. The sopranos have a different role, however. As the bottom three voice parts repeat their individual motives, the sopranos are assigned a melody: a direct quotation of the hymn tune, “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.” Interestingly, the hymn tune is placed

¹⁴ René Clausen, “All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord” (Delaware Water Gap: Fostco Music Press, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1981), 2.

in 5/4 time, very much outside the realm of the expected 3/4 time. The quotation of the hymn tune is a single stanza in length.

The fourth and final segment of the B section begins on the downbeat of measure fifty-five. In this part, Clausen employs aleatoric technique as his means of expression. As in several other sections of this piece, the bottom three voices are used to provide harmonic support to the sopranos. Clausen is very specific about how this segment is to be sung. Included in the score are two items: a timeline indicating that this transition is to be approximately thirty-five seconds in length, and performance instructions. The performance instructions read as follows: “Beginning with one soprano, then adding one by one in quickening succession until all have entered. Each singer repeats *ad lib* any combination of the three melodic themes. Melodies should be sung exuberantly, with rhythmic freedom.”¹⁵ This feature is important to note since it is the first time that aleatoric technique is used in one of his compositions.

The aleatoric soprano section, based on the opening A thematic material, provides a simple transition to a recapitulation of the A material. Unlike the way Clausen uses the A theme as a transitional device throughout the B section, this return is distinct, and assures the listener that the piece is ending. Five measures of Coda material round out the composition, adding an exclamation point to this early composition.

¹⁵ René Clausen, “All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord” (Delaware Water Gap: Fostco Music Press, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1981), 10.

“Cold December Flies Away”

“Cold December Flies Away” was published in 1983 by Fostco Music Press. The setting was created for SATB voices with little *divisi*, two solo flutes, and finger cymbals. The inspiration for this composition is a Catalonian Carol translated into English by Howard Hawhee.¹⁶

Clausen’s arrangement of this piece shares several aspects of his early folk arrangement of “Thank the Lord.” Both compositions begin simply and become more complex as they continue, adhering steadfastly to the home key and venturing only briefly outside that which is expected. As can be seen in figure 2.2, there seems to be a greater specificity to articulation, especially in the flutes. Clausen is much more deliberate about his artistic desires by requesting *stacatti* in the opening duet and legato articulation later on in the piece. In contrast to “Thank the Lord,” Clausen calls for a tambourine *ad libitum* and writes in detail for the finger cymbals.

One final difference of note between the two arrangements is the treatment of text. In the earlier arrangement, Clausen repeats the same text three times in an unsophisticated strophic manner; the latter arrangement features text painting, thus indicating a deepening sense of importance concerning the text. Regarding “Cold December Flies Away,” the lighthearted text is mirrored by the sprightly, playful flutes, and the mood changes dramatically in measure forty-eight as the flutes establish a slower, more mournful tempo.

¹⁶ René Clausen, “Cold December Flies Away” (Delaware Water Gap: Fostco Music Press, a Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1983), 2.

Figure 2.2 René Clausen, “Cold December Flies Away,” measures 1-5

Moderate ♩ = 92

FLUTE 1

mf

FLUTE 2

mf

SOPRANO

mf

Cold De-cem-ber flies a - way

ALTO

mf

O

TENOR

mf

BASS

Flies a - way

Now marked *espressivo*, the chorus enters at measure fifty-four with music that expresses the text: “In the hopeless time of sin shadows deep had fallen.” Later in that same stanza, the carol’s text speaks of “unending joy.” Clausen’s musical interpretation follows suit with a marked *accelerando*, ensuring that words and music continue to compliment each other to the best extent. This deliberate sense of text painting grows into one of the single-most important salient characteristics about Clausen’s ability to relate music to a larger-scale audience.

“Hymn of Praise”

“Hymn of Praise” was published by Fostco Music Press in 1984. The text is set for SATB voices and organ and has some *divisi* in all the voice parts. The vocal parts are independent of the organ part. Clausen paraphrases Psalms 90 and 150, and cites writing the composition for the Trinity United Methodist Choir of Hutchinson, Kansas.

Formally, “Hymn of Praise” is constructed like books on a shelf with matching bookends. The books (or various melodies in this case) may or may not have something to do with each other. However, the binding force that keeps the piece intact is the “matching bookends” (or in this case, the opening A material). The piece is therefore constructed in modified ABA form. Opening material is recapitulated later in the piece, and the intervening material is essentially through-composed, moving from thematic idea to thematic idea in an organic way. The seamless transitions between each section and the natural transitions are notable. The organic properties demonstrated in “Hymn of Praise” are a compositional device that Clausen will use often in future compositions.

Using table 2.1 as a reference, one can see the compositional “bookend” approach at work. The piece begins with opening A material in the key of F major. After these opening fourteen measures of music, Clausen begins to take each new thought in the text and develop it organically. These actions take place first in the home key of F major, and then in several other key areas. Seven different thematic ideas are presented in the B section (represented as Ba through Bg). Even though this B section is clearly divisible into sections, the form is through-composed. It is interesting to note how sections Be and Bf are inherently developmental in design and involve many more key areas than the previous subsections of B. The role of section Bg is transitional, bringing the composition back to the home key of F major. The composition concludes with its second “bookend,” a recapitulation of the opening A material, which is restated in the home key of F major.

Table 2.1 René Clausen, “Hymn of Praise”

Section / subsection	Measure numbers	Key area(s)	Applicable Text	Special feature(s)
A/a	1-14	F+	Alleluia! Praise God in His holy temple...	Unison voices with some <i>divisi</i>
B/a	15-26	F+	Praise Him with the sound of the ram's horn...	Unison voices with some <i>divisi</i>
B/b	27-38	g-	Praise Him with timbrel and dance...	Layered writing
B/c	39-46	A+	Praise Him with harp, strings, and violin...	Unison voices
B/d	47-53a	A+	With cymbal and pipe	Four-part men and three-part women
B/e	53b-60	D+ to V/F#+	We sing hosanna	Transitional
B/f	61-78	F#+, D+, b-, D+	For Thou hast been our dwelling place	Slightly developmental
B/g	79-84	g- to V/F	Amen [threefold]	Transitional
A/a ¹	85-end	F+	Alleluia! Praise God in His holy temple [reprise]	Recapitulatory

“Psalm 148”

“Psalm 148” was published in 1985 by Fostco Music Press. Set for SATB voices with occasional *divisi*, “Psalm 148” was composed for the seventy-fifth anniversary of Grace Presbyterian Church in Wichita, Kansas.

This 115-measure composition is composed using a three-part, ABA structure, and includes another example of Clausen’s published use of aleatoric features (chance elements) in his compositions. This compositional feature was previously employed in “All That Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord.” In this more recent composition, he utilizes aleatory exclusively to enhance the word *hallelujah* within the context of a striking V¹³ chord with the following instruction: “Entering on the proper beat and

pitch, each singer continuously and independently repeats the word *Hallelujah* ad lib., expressively [sic] and with a variety of textual accents.”¹⁷ He uses the feature seen in figure 2.3 sparingly, only three times: once in measures six through nine, once in measures twenty-four through twenty-seven, and lastly in measures 108-111.

Figure 2.3 René Clausen, “Psalm 148,” measures 108-111

These aleatoric elements function as introduction, transition, and conclusion materials.

In this piece, we see the continued use of liturgical church modes. Though firmly planted in the key of G major throughout, there are enough C sharps to indicate that Clausen was being decidedly intentional about his use of the transposed Lydian mode (measures sixteen through nineteen, for example). Elements of the Mixolydian mode are also peppered throughout the composition, and are especially apparent at major cadence points (see measures 113-115). Clausen’s ability to move freely

¹⁷ René Clausen, “Psalm 148” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1985), 2.

between major, minor, and the liturgical church modes will become increasingly apparent when studying later compositions.

“Sweet Was the Song”

”Sweet Was the Song” is an arrangement of a traditional lullaby, “Old English tune,”¹⁸ that was published by Fostco Music Press in 1985. Clausen arranges the piece for four-part, mixed SATB voices *a cappella*, and features a soprano and tenor solo. The traditional folk text is used for the first stanza, but Clausen’s wife, Frankie wrote the second stanza for their daughter Katie upon the occasion of her birth.¹⁹

Clausen takes an unfettered compositional approach to “Sweet was the Song”; that is, he starts with a simple tune and keeps it uncomplicated. Figure 2.4 demonstrates this simplicity by means of a treble-dominated texture over a wordless chorus. Formally, this piece is strictly strophic (two strophes), although there is variety through creative use of voice-leading, and solo versus full chorus work. As can also be seen in figure 2.4, there is a choral introduction comprising the first four measures, material that later functions as a transitional device between the strophes. The entire composition is in D minor.

¹⁸ René Clausen, “Sweet Was the Song” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a Division of Shawnee Press, 1985), 2.

¹⁹ Clausen, “Sweet Was the Song,” 2.

Figure 2.4 René Clausen, “Sweet Was the Song,” measures 1-8

Gently ♩ = 60

p

Oo

p

Oo

p

Oo

p

Oo

(For rehearsal only)

Solo or section espr.

Sweet was the song that Ma - ry__ sang, when she to Bethle-hem__ came, and was de-

"O Vos Omnes"

A landmark composition in René Clausen’s career, “O Vos Omnes,” at nine minutes in length, was one of his most expansive octavos composed to this point. Unlike the previous pieces, this particular composition takes on a much more scholarly

format and merits lengthier discussion. Clausen spent approximately six months writing this non-commissioned piece²⁰ for SATB, double choir. Published in 1986, the composition is based on several different texts and comes across as restless, rocky, moody, appropriately discordant, but somehow hopeful. As indicated on the score, Clausen combines texts from “the Holy Bible, Sacred Latin Poems, [the] Lutheran chorale “O Sacred Head Now Wounded,” [and] the Latin Mass.”²¹ Clausen also combines three different languages in this piece: Latin, Hebrew, and English. A recording of this composition is available through Concordia Recordings entitled *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

“O Vos Omnes” is similar in a couple of ways to Clausen’s previous pieces (specifically “All that Hath Life & Breath Praise Ye the Lord” and “Psalm 148”). Immediately identifiable is his use of aleatoric techniques. Another parallel is the incorporation of hymns into the context of an original composition. Also comparable is his use of a clearly identifiable formal design. “O Vos Omnes” has a larger-scale, four-part structure, with the opening A material followed by an aleatoric B section at measure forty-six. B material continues through measure fifty-three, when C material introduces the use of the Lutheran Chorale “O Sacred Head Now Wounded.” A retransition begins in measure seventy-three, and the recapitulation of A material begins in measure ninety-eight.

²⁰ Guy, 47.

²¹ René Clausen, “O Vos Omnes” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1986), 2.

What sets the piece apart from his other compositions is far more important. Clausen's use of harmonic language is unique when compared to previous works. Opening A material, for example, establishes a thorny, bi-tonal experience, with a half-diminished seventh on G, sung by Choir I, moving in parallel motion to a half-diminished seventh on A. Choir II immediately responds with the same text on a stridently different E major chord. The aleatoric B section is also different from the way it is used in "Psalm 148." As is verified in figure 2.5, Clausen combines aleatoric

Figure 2.5 René Clausen, "O Vos Omnes," measure 48

Soprano Solo esp.
senza misura
 How long, O Lord? Wilt thou for-get me for-ev-er? For-ev-er?
p
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
p
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
p
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
p
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
 *Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

**chant expressively on indicated pitch, each singer independently; repeat line of text as needed*

technique in most of the voices with the non-aleatoric melody from a soprano solo. Clausen later expands this idea, introducing a countermelody in the Choir II soprano line.

The B section also highlights the first example of language combinations. Clausen first uses the combination of Latin and English. This technique later changes

to the use of Hebrew and English languages. (Combining languages continues to be a common feature throughout his compositional career, and is featured in works as recent as his latest cantata, *Memorial*.) Inasmuch as Clausen had incorporated a hymn tune in a previous composition (“All that Hath Life & Breath”), this is the first example of such a setting in a bitonal context. He combines the Lutheran chorale “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” in the key of B flat with interjections in Latin—interjections that have a key center around the key of D minor. The effect of all these differences creates a musical landscape that is unlike any other composition through 1986.

“Psalm 100”

“Psalm 100,” published by Fostco Music Press in 1986, is scored for all treble (SSA) voices and provides a choice of two very different accompaniments. The first accompanimental choice is a two-piano setting; the second is an ensemble comprised of piano, flute, oboe, bassoon, marimba, high/low drums, and string bass. The “instrumental parts are available on rental from the publisher.”²² Clausen created “Psalm 100” for the Kansas Boys’ Choir, Billie Hegge, conductor.²³ Sigrid Johnson conducted the Manitou Singers of St. Olaf College on the recording *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

One of the things that sets “Psalm 100” apart from other previous compositions is how closely the inherent rhythmic qualities of this text are mirrored in the rhythms of

²² René Clausen, “Psalm 100” (Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press, a division of the Mark Foster Music Company, 1986), 2.

²³ Clausen, “Psalm 100,” 2.

the music. Clausen has made use of multi-meter in previous settings, but never to this extent. Clausen makes the “Psalm 100” text virtually dance off the page by means of constantly changing meters.

Set in the key of C major, “Psalm 100” is formally simple. The composition uses theme and variation technique, with one section of contrasting material between measures seventy-four and eighty-six functioning as modulatory material. Interesting features of the composition include jocular, exciting rhythms, memorable melodic lines, and the choice of text.

“Simple Gifts”

Published by Fostco Music Press in 1987, “Simple Gifts” was composed for Clausen’s own Concordia Choir. In contrast to the title, this *a cappella* SATB arrangement with multiple *divisi*, aleatoric writing, and challenging harmonies poses not a simple task for the average choir to prepare. Clausen arranged this Shaker folk hymn for his Concordia Choir as a non-commissioned work, creating a vocal hybrid of the theme and variation technique based upon the Shaker melody.

Regarding the use of theme and variation, Clausen breaks the hymn into two distinct themes. Theme A: “’Tis the gift to be simple, ’tis the gift to be free, ’tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right, ’twill be in the valley of love and delight”²⁴ is repeated six times. In addition, the contrasting theme B: “When true simplicity is gained, to bow and to bend we shan’t be ashamed, to turn, turn will be our delight ’till by turning, turning we come ’round

²⁴ Traditional Shaker tune.

right”²⁵ is repeated twice. With each repetition of the respective themes, Clausen changes the format of presentation. B theme, for example, is first introduced in measure eighteen as a simple soprano and alto duet. The same melody later in measure fifty-one is quite different: a more intricate tenor, baritone, and bass trio with a notably different harmonic structure.

“Seek the Lord”

“Seek the Lord,” published in 1988 by Fostco Music Press, is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, and requires two soprano soloists. The Biblical text is drawn from the book of Isaiah 55:6, 10-11.²⁶ The composition was composed “for the Bridgewater College Choir, Jesse Hopkins, conductor.”²⁷ Clausen himself conducts the Concordia Choir on its 1997 recording *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

“Seek the Lord” is a well-organized art anthem that is appropriate for a concert program as well as a church service. Clausen uses less text in this composition than in previous pieces, but expands it more thoroughly. In “Seek the Lord,” Clausen begins by presenting a block of text within the first eight measures. Unlike previous compositions, he then takes ideas from that opening statement and expounds upon them, developing them motivically. That which used to take simply eight measures is now developed more fully. In the case of “Seek the Lord,” a full twenty-four measures are

²⁵ Traditional Shaker tune.

²⁶ René Clausen, “Seek the Lord” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Music Press, Inc., 1988), 2.

²⁷ Clausen, “Seek the Lord,” 2.

devoted to the opening idea. Clausen's second idea begins in measure twenty-five and differs markedly from the first section. This contrasting section is an example of Clausen's skillful ability to write programmatically; for example, the two soprano solos depict the rain and snow falling from heaven. By measure thirty, the key area has moved from D major to E flat major. Also at measure thirty, Clausen uses the now-familiar "Seek the Lord" material as a method of transitioning from one section to another. Within three measures, he presents a new idea, and a new text begins to be crafted into song. During this third section, Clausen focuses upon the word *empty*, imitatively expanding the idea in all the voice parts for fourteen measures. The section continues with the inclusion of new text material beginning at measure forty-nine. Now back in the original key of D major, he focuses upon the word *prosper*, developing this idea in a comparable fashion. The third section ends in D major at measure fifty-five. Clausen ends the composition by returning in measure fifty-six to the original "Seek the Lord" material.

"Magnificat"

"Magnificat" was the next landmark commission in Clausen's professional career. Clausen was approached by the Texas Choral Directors Association (TCDA) to compose a new choral piece to be performed at the 1988 annual meeting of the TCDA. "Magnificat" was published in 1988, the same year as its premiere. "Magnificat" is composed for a *cappella* SSAATTBB choir with soprano solo. A recording of this work is available on *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*, Concordia Choir,

1997. This was the first-ever commission of its kind by the TCDA, which has maintained this tradition annually.²⁸

Clausen relies heavily upon Classical form, particularly sonata-like form, in the overall design of “Magnificat.” The composition opens in C major with the solo soprano singing an angular melodic line.

Figure 2.6 René Clausen, “Magnificat,” measure 1



The chorus then repeats the same melodic material through measure nine. This point marks the introduction of the A theme (and thus all the previous material, which could have been misconstrued as the A theme, has simply been introductory in nature). What makes this composition notably different from previous compositions is the way in which Clausen determines his themes and develops the melodies through other keys in a deliberate and organized manner. Therefore, when listening to the A section, one hears it in the key of A minor before it firmly returns to C major at measure thirty-two.

In true sonata-like form, the B section is developmental in the Classical sense. Clausen uses the common tone of C to quickly move the tonality to the secondary key area of A flat major, confirmed with a major cadence in measure forty-three. The new key area is short-lived, however, as the key of A flat major begins to move to B flat

²⁸ *Texas Choral Directors Association History* [database on-line] (Austin, TX, 2005, first accessed 11 March 2005), <<http://www.ensemble.org/tcda/history.htm>>

minor. Clausen develops and explores the key of B flat minor through measure eighty-six, when D flats give way to D naturals; the key of B flat major is confirmed at measure ninety. Furthermore, B flat major is not retained as Clausen maneuvers the thematic material through G minor on his way to F major by measure 105. With the onset of F major, Clausen fulfills the necessary element in classically based sonata-like form and recapitulates the opening material.

Clausen creates his own twentieth-century slant on the classic form, however. Rather than returning to the original key of C major, he closes “Magnificat” in the key of F major. Moreover, Clausen never returns to the A theme proper; instead, he completes his composition by returning to the introductory, solo soprano material.

“Clap Your Hands”

Clausen published “Clap Your Hands” in 1988 through Fostco Music Press. He voiced this *a cappella* setting for SATB choir using the 47th Psalm as his source of inspiration. According to the score, the composition is not a commissioned work, although it was specifically composed for the Bridgewater College Choir under the direction of Jesse Hopkins, conductor.²⁹

Clausen employs a variety of textures in “Clap Your Hands,” including imitation, homophony, and canon, as he develops this through-composed composition. In like fashion to “Magnificat,” the primary melody of “Clap Your Hands” is not fully realized and identifiable as such until measure twenty-two. Over the course of the

²⁹ René Clausen, “Clap Your Hands,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Music Press, Inc., 1986), 2.

preceding introduction, Clausen takes motivic components of the theme (using the words *clap your hands*) and experiments in several different rhythmic and mixed-meter contexts. The ensuing texture is yet another example of Clausen's use of imitative technique.

Four items of significance emerge within the composition's B section. First, the close harmonies and homophonic texture established in the transition of the previous section are maintained. In fact, they are carried over, generating a seamless switch from A material to B material. Second, the jocular melody of the A section has given way to an arching melody, with a challenging combination of leaps for the first and second sopranos. Third, this section of the piece is completely treble dominated, creating a paramount alteration from the imitative A section. And last, Clausen also experiments with text painting, by using many open fourths and fifths that paint a vivid picture of the "ram's horn" imagery that clearly recalls the imitative texture of the opening A section.

"Hosanna"

Clausen's "Hosanna" was published in 1988 by Fostco Music Press. This *a cappella* composition is set for SATB voices with multiple *divisi*. Written as the result of a co-commissioning by the Minnesota Music Educator's Association and the Minnesota Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association,³⁰ it is "dedicated to the 1988 Minnesota All-State Choir."³¹ Clausen's choice of text is rather interesting, as the word *Hosanna* often brings to mind the Gospel accountings of Jesus of Nazareth's

³⁰ René Clausen, "Hosanna," (Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press, 1988), 2.

³¹ Clausen, "Hosanna," 2.

entry into Jerusalem several days before his eventual crucifixion. Clausen instead uses the less common and prophetic Psalm 118:25-29, a psalm written by King David that foreshadows this significant event in the Christian faith.

Clausen uses a straightforward ABA approach to his writing of “Hosanna.” As is becoming more common, Clausen makes use of two parallel keys: D major and the non-transposed mode of D Dorian. This elasticity of basic tonality provides Clausen a broader color palette from which to draw his inspiration.

Text painting abounds in this composition. Clausen paints a sense of excitement and anticipation in the opening A section by starting the piece in a lilting 6/8 time, setting a scene of pomp and excitement. Melodic ideas are tossed back and forth between the treble and the lower voices, reinforcing this same sense of celebration between them. Furthermore, as is the case in measures thirty-nine through forty-two, Clausen uses fanfare-like parallel harmonies in order to establish a picture of festivity. The B section (beginning in measure fifty-one) provides a significant change in tempo and modal color as Clausen again follows the text directly, assimilating the mood of the Davidian text. All ancient modal aspects are gone until the return of A in measure sixty-six. This recapitulation of A, although slightly different from the opening A section, is comparable to the opening fifty measures. With comparable fanfares and tall major seventh chords, the same sense of anticipation and excitement is achieved.

“Laudamus Te”

René Clausen’s “Laudamus Te” was published in 1989 by Fostco Music Press. Voiced for three-part treble (SSA) voices with small instrumental ensemble, it was

commissioned by the Deer Park High School Women's Chorale of Deer Park, Texas. As his inspiration, Clausen uses the text from the Latin sacred mass.

Although a truly original Clausen composition, there are aspects of "Laudamus Te" that resemble some of his previous work. The scoring for three-part treble voices and the use of a small instrumental ensemble were combinations used in "Psalm 100," and Clausen's use of canonic counterpoint was used as recently as "Clap Your Hands."

Scored for an instrumental chamber ensemble that includes soprano, alto, and bass xylophone; string bass; triangle; and bells, this composition is a carefully crafted three-part canon. By definition, the canonic writing is inherently designed to be additive, and several other aspects of the composition are additive as well. Examining the instrumental writing, for instance, one can see that the composition opens with the solo bass xylophone. The alto xylophone enters at measure twenty-three along with the string bass. With the change of key at measure thirty-eight, the triangle enters the ensemble followed thereafter by the soprano xylophone and the bells at measure fifty-one. Clausen's unorthodox choice of keys is also additive in its design. In his previous compositions, Clausen kept main key centers based very much in line with traditional models. In contrast, "Laudamus Te" opens in the Mixolydian church mode, with the tonal center on F. At measure twenty-three, the piece modulates upwards by a major second to the key of G major. For the third section of the piece, the key again shifts up another major second, thus taking us to the key of A major where it remains through the end of the composition. Clausen's additive nature of "Laudamus Te" seems to be strongly alluding to the number three: three (SSA) voices, three instrumental additions, and three key areas in linear succession. Also alluding to the number three is his less

frequently used triple compound meter of 6/8 time. All of these allusions demonstrate Clausen's intention to highlight the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this sacred composition based upon the text "Laudamus Te, Benedicimus Te, Adoramus Te," yet another set of three.

"Set Me As A Seal"

One of René Clausen's best-selling octavos, "Set Me As a Seal" is actually a single movement excerpted from Clausen's cantata for chorus and orchestra, *a new Creation*. The piece has been sold as an octavo since 1989 by Fostco Music Press. Its original title was simply "Hymn," and was modified when the piece was released under separate title. "Set Me as a Seal" was originally scored for SATB *a cappella* with occasional *divisi* within each of the parts throughout, although TTBB and SSAA settings were published in 1996. With a biblically drawn text taken from the eighth chapter of the Song of Solomon, "Set Me as A Seal" was recorded by The Concordia Choir, under Clausen's direction, for the 1997 compact disc recording *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

The shortest Clausen composition published to date at a length of only thirty-six measures, this composition is extremely accessible for most choirs. Clausen again takes a very traditional approach to the layout of this composition, with a simple ABA design. The melody is almost exclusively treble dominated, and the clean antecedent/consequent relationship of the A section (measures one through seventeen) is virtually Mozartian. The melody also spans an extremely narrow range compared to previous compositions, covering only an octave from D to D. As is demonstrated in figure 2.7, the B section is extremely short, but dramatic, as Clausen again uses text

painting to evoke a vivid picture of drowning by using descending motivic material straight into the cadence at measure twenty-six. He then simply moves directly back into A section material through the close of the piece.

Figure 2.7 René Clausen, “Set Me As a Seal,” measures 21-26

The musical score for measures 21-26 of "Set Me As a Seal" by René Clausen is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 21-24) features SATB voices and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "drown it, nei-ther can the floods drown it, nei-ther can the floods drown it, can-not quench love, nei-ther can the floods". The second system (measures 25-26) continues the vocal lines with lyrics: "it, drown it, nei-ther can the floods drown it, nei-ther can they drown it, drown it, floods drown it." The score includes dynamic markings such as *decresc. poco a poco* and *rit.*, and articulation like *mp* and *p*.

a new Creation

René Clausen’s first major published work for choir and orchestra is his cantata, *a new Creation*, which was scored as a twelve-movement work for SATB soloists and SATB choir with occasional *divisi*. This cantata is the first published example of a Clausen work scored for a chamber-sized orchestra, enlisting “2 flutes, oboe, bassoon,

harp, timpani, strings, and organ.”³² The Senior Choir of the Union Congregational Church of Rockville, Connecticut, under the direction of Clifford Wood, commissioned the work in celebration of that church’s 100th anniversary. The publication is unusual, since Clausen, for the first time in one of his published works, notates some of his thoughts about sacred music and his own spirituality in the context of this work. The following is written in the foreword:

a new Creation is a piece of church music, not of any particular sect, synod, or denomination; however, the piece does express a Christian point of view. That the piece is written in praise of God, whomever he and/or she might be, and in whatever form that God takes for each individual, seems to be essential to the understanding of the work. On the other hand, it is not intended to be evangelistic or religiously pedagogical.³³

Clausen continues, regarding his musical intentions specific to *a new Creation*:

The various movements are attempts to characterize, through music, various aspects of the human/God, God/human relationship. Awe and wonder, unworthiness and doubt, mercy and forgiveness, love, joy, and peace, are all wrapped together in this piece, as indeed these elements are wrapped together in our daily lives. The thematic and artistic credo of this work, which serves both as the title overall and of the central movement – a new Creation – is representative of the composer’s belief that the unwrapping of all these elements in the progression of our lives – sometimes with joy, sometimes with pain – is worth the effort.

René Clausen, May 2, 1989³⁴

Aside from the above information, Clausen has written very little about his own musical compositions and the thought processes behind them. No other published

³² René Clausen, *a new Creation* (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1990), title page.

³³ Clausen, *a new Creation*, foreword.

³⁴ Clausen, *a new Creation*, foreword.

composition, with the exception of *Memorial* (2005), has included this type of insight into his introspection—personal, musical, spiritual, or otherwise.

With a piano/vocal score of seventy-seven pages, *a new Creation* is unquestionably Clausen’s longest composition thus far.³⁵ As illustrated in table 2.2, Clausen for the first time uses a number of time-honored writing techniques in his approach to this cantata. For example, Clausen composes accompanied recitative and aria for each of the solo voices involved.

Not surprisingly, choral textures prevail. One of the movements that has developed an identity of its own is the *a cappella* tenth movement, “Hymn,” now better known as his choral octavo, “Set Me As a Seal.” Of the twelve movements, eight feature the chorus, and five feature the chorus exclusively. Also noted in table 2.2 are two more items that make this work comparable to his previous compositions: Clausen’s choice of text and his manner of using keys and their relationship to one another. Concerning text, we again see that Clausen uses a wide variety of sources to defend his foreword that the composition is non-denominational. In comparable fashion to “O Vos Omnes,” which drew from Biblical and historical sources as well as the Latin Mass, Clausen uses similar source materials here. Notable is the text from the *Diary of an Old Soul* by George MacDonald (1824-1905), as well as George Herbert’s (1593-1633) “Come, my way, my truth, my life.”

³⁵ “O Vos Omnes,” previously his longest composition concerning time, is approximately nine minutes in length. But there is some controversy over the actual timing of *a new Creation*. The score indicates that the performance time of the composition is fifty minutes. The official recording, recorded by the Dale Warland Singers and conducted by Clausen himself, has *a new Creation* timing out at thirty-eight minutes and twenty-seven seconds.

Table 2.2 René Clausen, *a new Creation*

	Movement Name	Type of Movement	Source of Text	Key Areas
1.	Prologue	Accompanied recitative	John 1:1, 4-5, 14	D+
2.	All Flesh Is Grass	Chorus	1 Peter 1:24-25 Latin Mass text	a- to A+ (D)
3.	O Be Joyful	Chorus	Psalms 100:1-2	D+ through (F) to A+
4.	The Call	Chorus, with Tenor/Bass Duet	Isaiah 49:1, 5 and George Herbert (1593-1633)	f#- to E+
5.	Lament	Accompanied recitative	George MacDonald (1824-1905) from <i>Diary of an Old Soul</i>	Allusions to g- to F+
6.	Agnus Dei	Chorus S & A	Latin Mass text	f-
7.	I Am the Bread of Life	Soprano Aria	John 6:35, 51	G+
8.	A New Creation	Chorus	2 Corinthians 5:17	F+/- to G+/G Mixolydian) to A+
9.	The Greatest of These Is Love	Tenor Aria	1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 4-8	a- to A+ to f#- to F#+
10.	Hymn	Chorus, <i>a cappella</i>	Song of Songs 8:6-7	D+ to b- to D+
11.	The Spirit Helps Us	Bass Aria, then Aria Solo & Chorus	Romans 8:26-27 and Ezekiel 36:26, 28	d- (d Phrygian) to E+
12.	Praise the Lord	Chorus	Psalms 150, Luke 2:29-32, and Mass text	E+ to B+ to g#- to B+

Another trend comparable to previous works is Clausen's use of key choices and relationships. Although Clausen's harmonic language continues to expand, develop, and become more complex, most of his key relationships are rooted in classical forms. Tonic/Dominant relationships are common, as we can see in movements 3, 9, and 12, as are tonic/relative minor relationships (movements 9, 10, and 12). Very interesting is the way in which Clausen works outside of traditional norms, however. Movement 5, for example, is successful because of his allusion to a key centered around G minor, all the while under the key signature of either F major or D minor. The same movement eventually achieves its goal of F major, but only after a period of complete tonal indecision. Lastly, we must look at the key relationships in movement 8, the title movement of the piece. Here we see an allusion to the 1989 publication "Laudamus Te," using ascending, step-wise keys. The key centers used in this eighth movement are again the key centers of F, G, and A (the same used in "Laudamus Te"). As he did in "Laudamus Te," Clausen uses the key signature for the major mode, but makes extensive use of the Mixolydian church mode and the natural minor mode as well.

"Deep River"

"Deep River" was published in 1990 by Fostco Music Press for SATB voices *a cappella*, with *divisi* in all the voice parts. Strong basses and baritones are essential in an effective performance of this piece. Both the text and the melody come from the American spiritual by the same name. The arrangement was written for the Concordia

Choir³⁶ and recorded on its 1997 compact disc *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

Clausen's arrangement of "Deep River" is simple and succinct. The composition opens with a single repetition of the familiar text "Deep River, my home is over Jordan, deep river, Lord. I want to cross over into campground." The harmonies are all very tall and lush while remaining traditional. In the second recurrence, the same text is used with a slightly different harmonization—a technique reminiscent of the arrangement method used for "Simple Gifts." In both cases, the chords are more complex in subsequent instances but the air of simplicity is the same.

"At the Name of Jesus"

"At the Name of Jesus" was published in 1990 by Fostco Music Press. The composition is set for SATB voices, with organ accompaniment, although an organ and brass transcription is available for three trumpets, three trombones, and tuba.³⁷ Clausen himself adapted the Biblical portions of the text, drawing scripture from Philippians 2:5-11. As demonstrated in figure 2.8, Clausen also quotes the hymn "In Dir Ist Freude," the tune of which was composed by the Italian madrigalist Giovanni Giacomo

³⁶ René Clausen, "Deep River" (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1990), 2.

³⁷ René Clausen, "At the Name of Jesus" (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1990), 2.

Gastoldi circa 1593, the text written by Johann Lindemann circa 1598, and translated by Catherine Winkworth circa 1858.³⁸

Figure 2.8 René Clausen, “At the Name of Jesus,” measures 100-107

The musical score is for the hymn "At the Name of Jesus" by René Clausen, measures 100-107. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score includes four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "In thee is glad-ness a-mid all sad-ness, Je-sus. At the name of Je-sus ev-'ry knee shall bow, in heav'n and earth and un-der the earth. Al-le-'." The piano part consists of chords and a simple bass line.

This German hymn with Italian heritage came about in a tremendously interesting manner as discussed in the following:

³⁸ Carlton R Young, ed., *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, Tennessee: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 169.

Johannes Lindemann's particular significance as one of the first to marry the Italian madrigal with the chorale tradition of central Germany and Thuringia is thus brought into focus. An illustration is afforded by his chorale *In dir ist Freude*, a contrafactum of Gastoldi's *L'innamorate*; it became one of the best-known Protestant chorales.³⁹

A commissioned work, the piece was composed for the Central Lutheran Church Choir, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Charles Parsons, conductor.⁴⁰

Through-composed, "At the Name of Jesus" is divided into three basic parts: an extended introduction, a contrasting middle section, and a finale that quotes the well-known hymn. The opening introduction is in the key of D minor and functions as a preamble to what follows. This relatively thorny preamble highlights the text closely as it musically develops Jesus Christ's journey to the cross. Because this preamble encompasses the first forty-seven measures of the piece, the composition does not formally emerge until measure forty-eight, at which point Clausen adopts a completely divergent approach in the key of B flat major. In this new section, Clausen reveals the substance of the piece by using the text "At the name of Jesus" for the first time. Interestingly, these words enter in a relatively muted form, sung only by the alto voice, while the sopranos and tenors continue singing the text "Alleluia." The crux of the piece truly concludes at measure 100 where Clausen begins quoting the Gastoldian hymn "In Thee is Gladness." He uniquely combines the "In Dir Ist Freude" hymn material with the "At the Name of Jesus" melody and text from the previous section (see figure 2.8). This quoted hymn material hearkens back to Clausen's "All That Hath

³⁹ G. Kraft and Clytus Gottwald: "Lindemann, Johannes," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 12 April 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

⁴⁰ Clausen, "At the Name of Jesus," 2.

Life & Breath” as well as “O Vos Omnes” in the way in which a hymn is incorporated in the context of a more substantive composition. The entire piece concludes with a fanfare “alleluia” reminiscent of Clausen’s “Clap Your Hands.”

Clausen is making a faith statement in this piece by means of a pervasive spiritual musical metaphor. When considering the ambiguous opening section (measures one through forty-seven), the increasing clarity of the second section (measures forty-eight through ninety-six), and the celebratory nature of the Coda material (measures 100-end), there is a message in the music. The message is this: If one can see beyond all the trappings of secular life, there is clarity in the Divine.

“Peace I Leave With You”

At only thirty-four measures in length, “Peace I Leave with You” is one of Clausen’s most succinct compositions, shorter even than “Set Me as a Seal.” Published in 1991 by Fostco Music Press, the piece is set for *a cappella* SATB voices with some *divisi*, and was composed “for the 1991 Concordia Centennial Alumni Choir, Moorhead, Minnesota.”⁴¹ Even though the source of the text is not written on the score, research indicates that the entire text is drawn from the Bible, John 14:27.⁴²

Clausen treats the text for “Peace I Leave With You” differently from other compositions. In the opening twenty measures, the melody is atmospheric, highly fragmented, and dispersed among the voice parts. After measure twenty-one, the

⁴¹ René Clausen, “Peace I Leave With You” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1991), 2.

⁴² *Bible Resources*. [database on-line] (Bible.com Ministries; first accessed 01 December 2005), <<http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearch.php>>

melody is much more focused on single vocal lines, causing the latter half of the composition to have considerably more melodic direction. In fact, this latter half is virtually hymn-like, especially when compared to the melodic fragmentation featured earlier in the composition.

One of the most intriguing aspects of “Peace I Leave With You” is its tonal ambiguity; in the context of key areas, Clausen seems to be deliberately vague about the harmonic direction of this short composition. Regardless of the fact that the composition begins with a key signature of one flat (indicating either F major, D minor, or some other mode), the six E flats provide confirmation that the composition is actually in B flat major. It is not until measure nine that the key of D minor is confirmed as the key area. However, things quickly begin to change, and the second D minor cadence anticipated in measure fourteen switches instead to A minor. Between measures fourteen and twenty-one, functional, traditional harmony is not really used; instead, Clausen experiments with parallel harmonic function, oscillating between A minor, B flat major, and C major sonorities. At measure twenty-one, B flat major sonorities resolve into the key of F major, the key area in which the piece remains as confirmed by strong cadences in F major in both measures twenty-nine and thirty-seven.

“Communion”

“Communion” was published in 1991 by Fostco Music Press and is scored for horn in F, organ, harp (or optional piano), SATB voices *divisi*, and soprano and alto solos. The text is by George MacDonald and is drawn from *Diary of an Old Soul*. As stated prominently in the score, the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California,

commissioned “Communion,” premiering the work at the March 1991 ACDA National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.⁴³

Like “At the Name of Jesus,” “Communion” is a through-composed composition easily divisible into three definable sections. However, unlike the earlier work, Clausen uses a broader variety of key areas and thematic material within each of the three sections. Section B, for example, displays this variety well. The B section of “Communion” begins at measure forty with a strong cadence in D Lydian. The B section is developmental and explores several key areas in rather quick succession, with virtually every new musical phrase exploring a new key area. From D Lydian at measure forty, the key changes next to A Lydian (measures forty-three through forty-six). This new section in A Lydian is highly programmatic, as demonstrated by the flurry of sixteenth notes in the harp that paints the text “Thy birds but fly within thy airy sea” before coming to a cadence in C sharp major in measure forty-seven. The composition continues to gather momentum as it progresses through this new key area, coming again to a cadence in A major in measure fifty-five to establish the common tones necessary to achieve an F major chord in measure fifty-six. Due to the intense restlessness of the text (“Unworthy is my life . . .”), the key is obscure in this last part of the section. Only at measure sixty-eight does it become apparent that the key of B minor was Clausen’s intended target.

There is an abundance of text painting in this piece, with every phrase carefully crafted to suit the textual passage. For example, the opening text is, “I thought that I had lost thee, but behold though com’st to me from the horizon low.” Clausen pre-

⁴³ René Clausen, “Communion” (Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press, 1991), 2.

establishes the atmosphere necessary to set this text with a plaintive horn solo in the key of E Phrygian. This is followed by a short alto solo that thematically follows the mood established by the horn. In each case, the melody starts lower in the tessitura (horizon) and works its way higher. Quick changes of key area also play into this text painting and demonstrate the restlessness of the text. The three key areas used in this first section of the piece include the following: E Phrygian (measures one through ten), G Lydian (measures eleven through sixteen), and F sharp minor (measures seventeen through thirty-nine).

A final compositional feature of consequence is the solo horn cadenza that provides the transition into the final C section. This first-ever cadenza in Clausen's music will again be featured in later compositions, such as "Crying for a Dream." The cadenza is used entirely as a transitional device, although a case could be made that its purpose is dually served as a text painting device as well.

"Tonight Eternity Alone"

"Tonight Eternity Alone" is one of Clausen's gems. Published in 1991 by Postco Music Press, the composition is set for SATB *a cappella* chorus with multiple *divisi*, and is available on the Concordia Choir's 1997 compact disc entitled *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*. Clausen draws his inspiration for "Tonight Eternity Alone" from *Dusk at Sea* by Thomas S. Jones, Jr. Because the work is non-commissioned, Clausen's writing style is more advanced than it would probably be if he were composing within a preconceived set of parameters in a commissioned situation.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Guy, 127.

Formally, “Tonight Eternity Alone” exemplifies Clausen’s ability to extend standard musical forms. It might be possible, with some stretching, to fit this piece into an ABA mold; however, it is better to look at it as two expositions (sections) of the same theme, expanded with transitional material and cadential extensions. A contrasting B section is avoided by using transitional material and expanded use of motivic material from the A theme. Both A sections (A and A¹) begin with the same material (the first in B minor and the second in the relative key of D major, but nonetheless the same). Therefore, the first section is constructed as such:

Section I: Opening in B minor (measures one to seven A)

Transition and expansion of theme (measures seven B to nineteen)

Cadential extension using V/V (measures twenty to twenty-five)

Retransition back to opening idea (measures twenty-five to thirty-five)

In addition, Section II is developed in the following manner:

Section II: Opening in D major (measures thirty-six to forty-three A)

Coda, using new text (measures forty-three B to fifty)

The result is a formal design different from any previous composition, as it is his first published use of binary form. This application is intentional, according to Clausen, who has acknowledged in interview that he deliberately attempts to create new, inventive compositions each time he sits down to write.⁴⁵ In an interview with Dr. Todd Guy, Clausen was questioned about how he could keep his writing so varied. Clausen responded with the following statement:

⁴⁵ Guy, 190.

I think one of the ways that I can answer that question is that my primary income isn't from writing. I'm a full time choral conductor. As a result, I can stand back somewhat and say I will write with integrity. If it sells "ok," and if it doesn't sell "ok." . . . We're in a society when particularly American choral composers are almost encouraged by the users of choral music to write the same piece over and over again.⁴⁶

"The Water is Wide"

"The Water is Wide" was published by Fostco Music Press in 1991, and is set for SATB chorus with occasional *divisi* and piano. The scoring is enhanced by the addition of a small ensemble comprised of solo cello, horn, and clarinet. Even though the origin of most folk music is often unknown, there is some speculation about the origin of this English folk song. According to the creator of one of the most extensive folk music databases on the internet, Lesley Nelson-Burns, "The Water is Wide" likely has the following history:

The song was originally [sic] *Waly, Waly*, but in the 19th century came to be known as *The Water is Wide*. The song was published in 1724. *O Waly, Waly* is sometimes reported to be part of a longer ballad, *Lord Jamie Douglas*. However, *Douglas* was first published by Herd (1776) where it states it is to be sung to the tune of *Waly, Waly*, so it is fairly certain that *Waly, Waly* is the earlier tune.⁴⁷

Clausen's arrangement of the folksong was created for one of his own choirs, the Concordia Choir of Moorhead, Minnesota.

The basic formal organization of the piece is quite straightforward because, as is the formal construction in many of his arrangements, the tune is repeated four times strictly in the key of G major. In each repetition, the tune remains true to the original

⁴⁶ Guy, 190.

⁴⁷ *Folk Music of England*. [database on-line] (Lesley Nelson-Burns; first accessed 01 July, 2005), <<http://www.contemplator.com/england/>>

folk melody. Comparative to “Simple Gifts,” Clausen finds unique ways to address the subject in each of the four repetitions. For example, the first time the melody is presented, it is sung by sopranos and altos in unison with piano and cello; the second time, four-part men, piano, cello, clarinet, and horn are used; the third repetition uses the same instrumental compliment with unison men and women. Furthermore, in the final strophe, Clausen writes for full chorus, initially *a cappella*, later lending itself back to the four-instrument compliment used previously.

“The Prayer of Saint Francis”

“The Prayer of Saint Francis” was published in 1992 by Fostco Music Press and is scored for piano and SATB voices, with occasional soprano and alto *divisi*; neither the tenors nor basses divide. A setting of the renowned Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, the composition was “Commissioned by the Borger H.S. Varsity Choir, Johnny Miller, Director, for their performance at the Texas Music educators Association Convention, February 6, 1992.”⁴⁸

With a relatively simple setting, the composition is composed in the key of F major and has no reference to the use of the church modes, as has been prevalent in other compositions of this vintage. The piece is composed in ABA form, with a limited amount of “developmental” material in the B section. In this section, Clausen deviates from F major to explore the keys of D minor, C major, and B flat major.

⁴⁸ René Clausen, “Prayer of St. Francis” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1992), 2.

Another item of particular significance in the “Prayer of Saint Francis” is Clausen’s liberal use of text painting to exemplify the difference between good and evil through the key relationships F major and D minor. As shown in figure 2.9, in measure twenty-seven we also see an atypical use of a fully diminished seventh chord on the word *doubt*, also used as a heavy-handed form of text painting. In his previous compositions, Clausen is more subtle about his use of this compositional device.

Figure 2.9 René Clausen, “Prayer of St. Francis,” measures 25-29

The musical score for measures 25-29 of "Prayer of St. Francis" by René Clausen is presented for SATB voices and piano. The score is in F major, 4/4 time. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) are written in treble and bass staves. The piano accompaniment is written in grand staff (treble and bass staves). The lyrics are: "Where there is doubt, let me bring faith. Where of your peace. Where there is doubt, let me bring". The piano part features a fully diminished seventh chord on the word "doubt". The dynamic markings are *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the vocal parts and *p* (piano) for the piano accompaniment.

Three Whitman Settings: from Leaves of Grass

Clausen published his *Three Whitman Settings* in 1992 through Fostco Music Press and set it for SATB *a cappella*, *divisi*, with alto and baritone soloists. As implied by the title, the poetry that Clausen uses is drawn from *Leaves of Grass* by American

poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892).⁴⁹ The composition was commissioned “by the *Mu Xi* Chapter of *Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia* for the Steven F. Austin State University A Cappella Choir and funded in part through a matching gift from the Sinfonia Foundation of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity.”⁵⁰ The three pieces work together very well as a concert set, and compliment each other when sung together as a larger work. This set is featured on the compact disc, *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*, performed by the Concordia Choir.

I. “A Noiseless Patient Spider”

*A noiseless, patient spider,
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood, isolated;
Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself;
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding them.*

*And you, O my Soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,—seeking the spheres, to connect them;
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the ductile anchor hold;
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, O my Soul.*⁵¹

There is much text painting utilized in this through-composed movement, as Clausen weaves together a musical web of sound using a maze of running sixteenth notes in the key of A minor. This web effect, sung by the soprano and alto voices,

⁴⁹ René Clausen, *Three Whitman Settings: from Leaves of Grass* (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1992), 2.

⁵⁰ Clausen, *Three Whitman Settings*, 2.

⁵¹ *Leaves of Grass*. [database on-line] (Bartleby.com; first accessed 25 April 2006), <<http://www.bartleby.com>>

accompanies an alto soloist and develops a relentless texture through the unison A at measure sixteen.

The texture changes considerably at measure seventeen. Here, all the SATB voices begin on the perfect unison A after a long soprano/alto *fermata*. Instead of running sixteenth notes, the texture after measure seventeen is homophonic, primarily comprised of quarter and half notes, and encapsulates the image of a spider waiting patiently for its prey. The pitch center throughout this contrasting section is elusive, filled with close harmonies and cluster chords, and deliberately lacking directional clarity. Text painting comparably continues throughout the remainder of the movement.

II. “Quicksand Years”

*Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither,
Your schemes, politics, fail—lines give way—substances mock and elude me;
Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess’d Soul, eludes not;
One’s-self must never give way—that is the final substance—that out of all is sure;
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life—what at last finally remains?
When shows break up, what but One’s-Self is sure?*⁵²

One of Clausen’s most identifiable compositions because of its dramatic intensity, “Quicksand Years” begins on the F sharp where “A Noiseless Patient Spider” concludes. Composed in ABA form, Clausen builds this new composition in the modal key of F sharp Dorian. The whirling melody from which the canon is born is programmatically derived from the Walt Whitman text: “Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither.” Clausen brings the highly imitative texture into a unison texture at

⁵² *Leaves of Grass*.

measure eighteen, after which he breaks up the theme motivically and sets up the piece for a transition into a contrasting B section.

After a cadence on a unison F sharp at measure twenty-seven, the texture becomes markedly comparable to the texture at measure twenty-seven in “A Noiseless Patient Spider.” Close harmonies, careful dissonances, and a significantly slower harmonic rhythm set this section apart from the opening A material. With a tonal center of B major, there is a much clearer sense of key in section B of “Quicksand Years.” Another point of interest in this contrasting section is the baritone solo, derived from a dominant harmony in suspended animation, which has a remarkably similar transitional function to the horn cadenza in “Communion.”

The final section of the piece, although not an exact replication, is essentially a recapitulation of the opening A material. Clausen utilizes differing text, but draws motivic information from the “Quicksand Years” canon. In the opening A material, Clausen makes use of the modal key of F sharp Dorian in developing the canon. In the return of A, Clausen moves from the key of B major (from the B section) to the relative key of G sharp minor. It is interesting to note that the E is natural in this return to the A material, thus indicating his intention to use the minor mode rather than the Dorian church mode, as in the opening statement of A material.

III. “The Last Invocation”

*At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the pow’rful, fortress’d house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks—from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.*

*Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,*

Set ope the doors, O Soul!

Tenderly! be not impatient!
(Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh!
*Strong is your hold, O love.)*⁵³

Clausen's attention to the text continues to be apparent in this third movement as well. The tenors and basses begin this piece, outlining an F sharp major chord with an added fourth scale degree in the bass. This chord is dissonant, but also rather comforting and misty. When the sopranos enter a measure later, Clausen indicates that this passage should be sung expressively. This is not a surprise considering that the corresponding Whitman text is "At the last, tenderly . . ." Other examples of word painting soon follow: the accents on the words *pow'rful* and *fortress'd* at measures six and seven; the lightly imitative texture at measures nine to eleven, depicting knitting, which takes place between the soprano and alto voices; and the musical representation of *wafted* that is evident in all the voice parts from measures sixteen to twenty-seven.

Unlike the first two movements that have a specific formal design, this movement is through-composed, though divisible into three smaller sections. Within the first section, encompassing measures one to thirty-three, Clausen's use of chords is atmospheric and tends to fall outside traditional function. His use of sevenths, especially half-diminished seventh chords, is particularly effective. All this atmospheric, non-traditional material leads to a rather conventional subdominant cadence at measures thirty-two and thirty-three. After two measures of transitional material, the second section begins in the parallel key of D major. In contrast to the

⁵³ *Leaves of Grass.*

unsettled tonality of the opening section, these closing eleven measures are committed to this new key. Except for the tonic chord, this new division spends five measures expanding the subdominant before coming to a surprisingly strong final D major chord on the word *love*.

“Sigh No More Ladies”

“Sigh No More Ladies,” published in 1992 by Fostco Music Press, is scored for piano and SATB voices, *divisi*. Each of the parts divides, although there is much more *divisi* in the soprano and alto voices than in the men’s voices. Clausen’s setting of “Sigh No More Ladies” uses the provocative Shakespearean text from *Much Ado About Nothing*. The choirs of Robert E. Lee High School of San Antonio, Texas, and Westwood High School of Austin Texas, directed by Jim Sheppard and Morris Stevens respectively, commissioned the work.⁵⁴

“Sigh No More Ladies” is comparable to several of the formats discussed previously, smoothly fitting into the ABA formal organizational structure. It also makes modern use of the ancient church modes, developmentally utilizing Mixolydian, Phrygian, Aeolian, and Dorian in the B section before settling back into Mixolydian in the final A section. The dramatic conception of the composition makes it a truly interesting study. Clausen sets the Shakespearean text in an “operatic” manner. (This might be an odd claim if one did not already know from several sources that Clausen

⁵⁴ René Clausen, “Sigh No More Ladies” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1992), 2.

has more than a passing interest in composing music for film scores.⁵⁵) The setting of “Sigh No More Ladies” is easily perceived as a dialogue between the men’s and women’s voices. Sexual imagery and other dramatic events in the poetry are clearly identifiable in the music. Consider, for instance, the musical conversation between the men and women in measures forty-nine to fifty-one. While the men are harmonically unified in their quest to seduce, the women are outwardly fighting back against the opposing gender as demonstrated in the cascading figure highlighting the tri-tone. Or are they? Conversely, in the next moments, we see this opposing conversation come together in unity, soon lending itself over to a series of “Ah’s” in the entire latter portion of the B section (measures fifty-nine to ninety-four). Clausen maintains the sexual imagery throughout, using undulating, rocking melodic figures, rising in intensity through the pinnacle of the section, a pinnacle punctuated by a high B flat for the sopranos. The final section reaffirms the melodic and rhythmic figuration introduced in the A section, but rather than using it as a conversational figure, Clausen’s homophonic, *animato* setting indicates that the two genders have become “unified” as they sing “Hey nonny nonny hey!”

“Whispers of Heavenly Death”

“Whispers of Heavenly Death” was published in 1993 by Fostco Music Press, and is set for SSAATTBB voices and an orchestra comprised of “flute, oboe, Bb clarinet, bassoon, horn, harp, timpani, and strings. [The] Parts [are] available on rental

⁵⁵ Stephen Meintz, “FEATURES: Composing and Conducting,” *The Concordian* 16 February 2001 (First accessed 11 October 2004), <<http://www.cord.edu/dept/concord/issues/2001-02-16/features/features.html>>

directly from the publisher.”⁵⁶ Clausen draws his musical inspiration from the poetry of American poet Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman’s self-published series previously discussed under *Three Whitman Settings*. The composition was “Commissioned by the Foothill Master Chorale, Pasadena, CA [,] Thomas Miyake, director, and was premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York City, New York, under the direction of the composer.”⁵⁷

There are numerous similarities between this composition and the *Three Whitman Settings*, published one year earlier. Clausen has a profound connection with the poetry of Walt Whitman, and it is possible to identify nearly identical musical ideas that materialize in both compositions. Images such as the “ripples of unseen waters” being depicted through a triplet effect from measures eleven to twenty-five and “we float” clearly demonstrated through a rising series of eighth notes in measures eighty-three to eighty-six are evocative of the imagery employed in section A of “The Last Invocation.”

It is an arduous task to comprehend the formal organization of “Whispers of Heavenly Death,” and one might say that the complicated nature of the piece emerges from the multifaceted text of the Whitman poetry. Nonetheless, it is imperative to understand the structure of the piece in order to do it justice in a successful concert performance.

⁵⁶ René Clausen, “Whispers of Heavenly Death” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1993), 2.

⁵⁷ *René Clausen Biography, Published Arrangements & Compositions, and René Clausen Choral School Information* [database on-line] (Moorhead, MN., René Clausen Music Company, 1997-2005, first accessed 5 February 2004), <<http://www.reneclausen.com/bioninfo/biography.html>>

The composition is divided into two main components: a rather short A section, and then developmental B material. The B material is repeated and followed by Coda material. The opening A material is itself divided into three subsections and is well defined by key areas. Clausen starts “Whispers of Heavenly Death” in the key of B Dorian. The imagery from the Whitman text leads Clausen to keep this key relatively obscure; in fact, the harmonies lean toward the tonic, but seldom achieve it. The B minor chords that do take place are clouded with non-chord tones, as in measure seven, with the added second scale degree of C sharp. This obscure opening material leads into the cadence at measure eleven, where the aforementioned rippling effect takes over the texture. Even though Clausen has not changed the key signature, the tonal center of this second part of the A section has definitely changed to F sharp Dorian. The third part of A is reached at measure twenty-six, with a point of arrival in B minor.

The B section, which is much more developmental than the opening section, begins on the downbeat of measure thirty-seven in the key of D Lydian. Although the key center is in D, Clausen incorporates many other chords into the mixture, sometimes combining more than one chord at a time for more intense coloration and dramatic effect. This technique is definitely evident in measures fifty-four to sixty-nine, where Clausen establishes a C major chord as a “pedal” and experiments at length with augmented G flat harmony above it, creating an effect reminiscent of the French Impressionistic music of Claude Debussy or Maurice Ravel.

The return of D prepares the composition for the second half of the B section. The new section that begins at measure eighty-six is the only hint of recapitulation of any previous material. The repeated text is the “Walk out with me toward the unknown

region,” material originally stated beginning in measure thirty-nine. The reappearance begins in the key of C major and leads strongly to an aspect that is this time considerably different. At measure 111, the text changes to “Then we burst forth, equipt at last. O joy, O fruit of all!” Clausen uses this exciting and strong Whitman poetry to work his way into a very powerful cadential progression that leads to a significant C major chord at measure 117. From measure 117 through the end of the piece (Coda), Clausen uses the “O joy, O fruit of all” text to drive the point sturdily through to the end of the composition. The strength of this Coda is harmonically driven. In a somewhat comparable fashion to measures fifty-four to sixty-nine, he superimposes a B flat major chord on top of the tonic pedal on C. The composition ends on a huge, *fortissimo* C major chord, sharply contrasting the B Dorian material at the start of the composition.

“A Jubilant Song”

“A Jubilant Song” was published in 1993 by Fostco Music Press, was set for SATB voices *a cappella*, and was commissioned for the Worlds of Fun Festivals of Music in Kansas City, Missouri.⁵⁸ Clausen uses Walt Whitman’s lengthy poem “A Song of Joys” as his inspiration for this piece, drawing both select quotations as well as

⁵⁸ René Clausen, “A Jubilant Song” (Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press, Sole Selling Agent: Mark Foster Music Company, 1993), 2.

paraphrased excerpts from the original 244 lines of the Whitman text.⁵⁹ The excerpted lines of the original Whitman text are as follows:

O to make the most jubilant song! (directly quoted)

O the joy of our spirit--it is uncaged--it darts like lightning! (paraphrased)

*To emerge and be of the sky, of the sun and moon and flying
 clouds, as one with them.* (paraphrased)

Knowist thou the excellent joys of youth? (paraphrased)

*Joy of the glad light-beaming day, joy of the wide-breath'd games?
 Joy of sweet music* (paraphrased)

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on! (paraphrased)⁶⁰

“A Jubilant Song” is written in a straightforward manner, with clear divisions between its sections, which are comprised of four different ideas. An A theme (measures sixteen to thirty-three), a B theme (measures forty-nine to sixty-eight), an aleatoric section (measure sixty-nine), and a C theme (measures seventy-nine to eighty-six) are all tied together with a transitional glue that binds the composition together into one cohesive group of ideas.

The composition opens with a jaunty, sixteen-measure introduction that expands Whitman’s text “O to make the most jubilant song.” Clausen’s choice of rhythmic organization as he tosses this text back and forth from voice part to voice part gives clear indication that text painting is his full intent. The A material, first sung by the

⁵⁹ *Walt Whitman: A Song of Joys*. [database on-line] (About.com; first accessed 25 November 2005), < <http://classiclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/wwhitman/bl-ww-joys.htm>>

⁶⁰ *Walt Whitman: A Song of Joys*

tenor voice, introduces new text to the audience: “The joy of our spirit is uncaged, it darts like lightning.” Clausen’s desire to compliment the text with near-madrigalistic figures is apparent. He uses dance-like meter changes in order to enhance the “it darts like lightning” text that alludes to the classical madrigal. As in the opening introduction, Clausen imitatively places the theme in each of the voice parts, thus adding to the excitement and interest.

One of the more interesting features to note is the return to aleatoric material, a compositional device that Clausen had not used in some time. This melodic and rhythmic freedom is reminiscent of previous compositions such as “O Vos Omnes,” and perhaps even more closely to his arrangement of “Simple Gifts.” The aleatoric section in “A Jubilant Song” is used much as it was previously, to highlight the crux of the text and create an atmospheric and memorable format to underscore important material.

“The Lord’s Prayer”

A simple yet pleasing piece, Clausen’s setting of “The Lord’s Prayer,” published by Fostco Music Press in 1994, is set for *a cappella* SATB voices, with *divisi* only in the final chord. At that final chord, Clausen allows the basses to open up, dividing into three parts in a manner that is redolent of many nineteenth-century Russian choral masters. The piece was composed “For Bruce Rogers and the Upland High School Madrigal Singers for their performance at the 1994 Western Division ACDA Conference.”⁶¹

⁶¹ René Clausen, “The Lord’s Prayer” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1994), 1.

“The Lord’s Prayer” is uniquely laid out, in that the entire composition seems to outline the traditional IV-I “Amen” cadence, opening in the key of G major and ending in the key of D major. Not a mere coincidence, the “Amen” effect is satisfying. Clausen’s setting of the text remains almost exclusively homophonic, and the text is set in a benedictory manner. Also remarkable is Clausen’s exclusive use of traditional major and minor key areas and the near-total lack of accidentals, an extremely straightforward text requiring little assistance from the composer.

“I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb”

“I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” was published in 1995 by Fostco Music Press and included in the Mark Foster Music Company’s “Music for Young Singers” Series. It is voiced for soprano and alto with piano and two flutes, and differs from some of Clausen’s other arrangements in his utilization of multiple sources for musical inspiration. Not only does he draw from the hymn written by Henrietta L. von Hayn (1724-1782) entitled *Weil Ich Jesu Schaflein Bin*,⁶² he also incorporates motives from an arrangement with the same name under the larger title of *Twelve Hymn Settings from the Tabernacle*, for Organ, by Robert Cundlick.⁶³

The formal organization of this arrangement is extremely simple and thus does not require in-depth discussion. The piece is arranged into three stanzas with an instrumental introduction, two transitions, and a Coda. All the stanzas listed in the

⁶² *Lutheran-hymnal.com*. [database on-line] (first accessed 27 December 2005), <http://www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lyrics/tlh648.htm>>

⁶³ René Clausen, “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1995), 1.

online Lutheran hymnal are represented in this arrangement, although the choral organization changes from stanza to stanza. The first stanza is scored for unison voices, the second for two-part homophony, and the third as an alto melody with soprano descant. The harmonies remain the same from stanza to stanza, although the accompaniment changes to provide increasing interest.

“I Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills”

“I Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills” was published in 1995 by Fostco Music Press, and is set for SATB voices, *divisi*, and piano or organ. According to the score, “I Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills” was composed “for the Holland Chorale, Cal Langejans, conductor.”⁶⁴

Clausen created “I Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills” in the classic ABA sonata-like form common in several of his previous compositions. A typical feature of sonata form compositions, the primary area of interest is the more developmental B section. Starting in measure twenty, this section features the exploration of several key areas, including forays into modal writing. The parallel keys of D minor, D Dorian, and D major are investigated before the music moves by common-tone into the key of F major at measure fifty-six, ultimately cadencing in C major by the end of the section.

The recapitulation of the A thematic material begins at measure seventy-three, delineated by a strong return to the opening key of F major. This recapitulation is relatively short, the piece officially ending at measure eighty with another forceful

⁶⁴ René Clausen, “I Lift Mine Eyes to the Hills” (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1995), 2.

cadence in F major. The subsequent section is an extended Coda, a cadential extension that outlines F major to the end of the piece.

“Psalm 67”

"Psalm 67" was published in 1995 by Fostco Music Press, and is composed for SATB voices *a cappella*. The extensive *divisi* is easily attributed to the fact that Clausen was composing for a college-aged choir, the Bridgewater College Choir of Bridgewater, Virginia.⁶⁵ The premiere was conducted by Dr. Jesse E. Hopkins, and the piece was composed in honor of Bridgewater College president, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, 1964-1994.⁶⁶

"Psalm 67" could be discussed as either through-composed or binary form, although for this study, the latter is more appropriate. Clausen developed four main ideas divisible into two larger arching ideas. The opening thematic material ("May God be gracious . . .") is set in the key of B flat major and ends in D Mixolydian. The second main idea opens in measure nineteen ("Let the nations be glad and sing") and corresponds to the change of tempo. In contrast to the opening predominantly homophonic material, the secondary idea is melodically imitative and joy-filled, an example of text painting that highlights the exuberance displayed in the Biblical passage. At measure twenty-six, Clausen quotes earlier material, with measures twenty-six to thirty-six clearly born out of measures thirteen to eighteen.

⁶⁵ René Clausen, "Psalm 67" (Champaign, IL: Fostco Music Press, 1995), 1.

⁶⁶ Clausen, "Psalm 67," 1.

Considering that section I and section III have many similarities in tempo and texture, one might assume that sections II and IV would also be similar. The opposite is true, however. The joy and exultation that was apparent in section II is contrasted by reflective, chant-like writing in section IV. Nevertheless, similarities are not completely misplaced, as section IV makes use of some imitative writing. Interestingly, the quoted material used in the first two sections never returns in either of the final two sections.

Gloria

Clausen's next major score after his first cantata, *a new Creation*, was *Gloria*. Published in 1996 by Fostco Music Press, the composition is scored for SATB voices with multiple *divisi* throughout. Clausen's notations in the preface of the score discuss the instrumentation in the following manner:

Gloria was originally scored for 4 trumpets, 2 French horns, 3 trombones, tuba, harp, and tympani. The full score and brass parts are available for purchase. . . . The full orchestra version (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, harp, tympani, and strings) is available on rental only from the publisher. . . .⁶⁷

Clausen derives his text and inspiration from two ancient sources: the "Gloria" section of the sacred Latin Mass, and the chorale, "*O Lamm gottes, unsculdig* (O Lamb of God, Most Holy)" by Nikolaus Decius (1513).⁶⁸ Arthur T. Russell translated the chorale from the original German language into English.⁶⁹ The Nebraska Choral Arts Society (NCAS) of Omaha, Nebraska, commissioned *Gloria* in the mid-1990s as part of its

⁶⁷ René Clausen, *Gloria* (Champaign, IL: Mark Foster Music Company, 1996), preface.

⁶⁸ Clausen, *Gloria*, preface.

⁶⁹ Clausen, *Gloria*, preface.

Festival of Christmas Brass and premiered it in Omaha, Nebraska, under the direction of Z. Randall Stroope.⁷⁰ “The full orchestra version was premiered at Carnegie Hall, June 9, 1996, conducted by the composer.”⁷¹

Clausen created *Gloria* within the neoclassic framework of a large-scale sonata form. Divided into three succinct sections, the first movement, “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” can be described as a fast movement characterized by pointed rhythms and quasi-imitative textures. The second movement, “Domine Deus/Lamb of God Most Holy,” is slower, maintains a static quality throughout, and combines both Latin and English. The final movement, “Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,” recapitulates the restless quality captured in the opening movement. Independent part writing, imitative textures, and angular rhythms again prevail as Clausen recaptures the essence of the opening movement, rounding out the sonata-like form.

“Gloria in excelsis Deo”

The opening movement of Clausen’s *Gloria* also adheres to a classical sonata framework with nearly identical opening and closing thematic material. The B section of the movement is interesting because of its developmental nature and the number of keys employed. The B section begins in measure fifty-nine in the relative key of D, although the absence of C sharps indicates that D Mixolydian is as prominent as the major mode. After a strong D Mixolydian cadence in measure seventy-four, Clausen changes key to explore F Phrygian, staying only long enough to deceptively cadence in

⁷⁰ Clausen, *Gloria*, 1.

⁷¹ Clausen, *Gloria*, 1.

E Phrygian in measure eighty-one. Clausen explores E Phrygian for quite some time. By the end of the section at measure 118, the expected cadence of A major is thwarted with an unexpected change into the key of C sharp major. Clausen also experiments with the keys of B flat and E major before recapitulating opening motivic material. The recapitulation returns at measure 140 with a significant cadence in the opening key of G Mixolydian. Also notable in this opening movement of the *Gloria* is the final cadence: a striking chord with the unison voices singing the raised fourth scale degree of C sharp in the context of a G chord with a missing third scale degree. The C sharp gives indication of the importance of the Lydian mode so prominently investigated in this piece.

“Domine Deus/Lamb of God Most Holy”

The second movement of *Gloria* is a dramatic contrast to the first. Whereas the first movement has sharp, angular melody and rhythm, the second is static, controlled, and highly sustained. The texture is treble-dominated, highlighting the chorale “*O Lamm gottes, unschuldig* (O Lamb of God, Most Holy)” by Nikolaus Decius, and translated by Arthur T. Russell (1806-1874).⁷² The men’s voices respond to the chorale subject with interjections in Latin.

Another major contrast to the second movement is the accompaniment. In Movement I, the orchestral texture is quite thick. In the second movement, however, the accompaniment is thinly scored over a lengthy bass pedal on E, providing

⁷² *Cyberhymnal.com*. [database on-line] (first accessed 19 January 2006), <<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/o/l/olambgod.htm>>

occasional exclamation in response to the nearly *a cappella* chorus. The tonic pedal in this movement is very much like the “All Flesh is Grass” movement of Clausen’s *a new Creation*. Finally, unlike the first movement that has developmental tonal elements, the second section remains entirely in the key of E major, with only occasional A sharps that allude to the parallel Phrygian church mode.

“Quoniam tu solus Sanctus”

The third movement of *Gloria* has many similar features to the opening “Gloria in excelsis” in its return to the driving rhythmic energy with the angular melody, the markedly imitative choral texture, and an orchestral texture that is now a flourish of running eighth and sixteenth notes as opposed to its bare and virtually non-existent nature in the second movement. The third movement harmonically opens with an extended V-IV-I in the key of F that slips dramatically into the opening A material in the key of D major at measure thirteen. Unlike the first movement, but similar to the second, there is no significant use of the ancient church modes in this opening A material. The B section begins at measure forty-one with a cadence in the key of E major. Because it does not undergo a maze of key areas in a developmental manner, this section is not similar to the B section of the opening movement. Instead, Clausen takes this time to set up carefully a recapitulation.

The third movement recapitulation is quite interesting. The expectation is that the opening material of the third movement will return, highlighting the Latin text “*Quoniam tu solus sanctus.*” Instead, Clausen toys with the listener’s sense of musical expectation by paraphrasing material from the first movement. In fact, the third movement material at measure fifty-five is a nearly exact duplicate of measure 118 of

the first movement. Their function is identical: to move harmony from the key of C sharp major to G major so that the text “Gloria in excelsis” can return. The A and B material of the third movement is neither lost nor forgotten, however, as Clausen brings it back into the mixture at measures sixty-six to seventy-two, combining material from all three movements in the third movement finale. Clausen closes with Coda material strongly outlining both tonic and dominant functions in the key of G major. The closing measures of the *Gloria* revisit the same striking chord that Clausen used to close the first movement: a G major chord with a raised fourth scale degree and a missing third scale degree. Clausen almost closes with this chord, but chooses to rectify the ambiguity of the chord in the final measure (measure eighty-five) by resolving the raised fourth down to the third scale degree.

“Salutation of the Dawn”

Another composition from Clausen’s prolific mid-1990s is “Salutation of the Dawn,” published by Mark Foster Music Company in 1996 and composed for the 1997 Florida All-State Chorus. The piece, scored for SATB voices, *divisi*, with piano accompaniment, is a setting of text extracted from *The Sanskrit*.

Clausen’s musical language in “Salutation of the Dawn” is extremely descriptive. Melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically ambiguous at the onset of the composition, this piece becomes increasingly more programmatic as it progresses through its sixty-four measures. In fact, regardless of the actuality that Clausen himself once said that he was not a good enough composer to write absolute music without the

assistance of a great text,⁷³ “Salutation of the Dawn” simply does not support that statement. Without the text, the music itself could still effectively describe the scene of a rising sun breaking forth through the mist to find the morning.

Unlike “Psalm 67,” where binary form took preference, the programmatic nature of “Salutation of the Dawn” lends itself to be discussed as through-composed. The piece can be divided into three distinct sections, the first of which depicts the quiet of pre-dawn via a series of open ninth chords in both the piano and voices. The opening section has a key center of D, incorporates Phrygian modal elements that add to the sense of hushed anticipation, and programmatically depicts the stillness just before morning. Section II begins in measure twenty-two, the harmonic rhythm slowing dramatically from 120 beats per minute to a very specific seventy-six. It begins in the key of D but soon makes its way to F major. Comparable to section I, the second section displays both homophonic and imitative textures as Clausen develops his programmatic idea. It differs from the first, however, because of Clausen’s developmental use of additional key areas. The opening section is based almost exclusively on the key center of D, while the second visits the keys of D, F, and C major.

In the third and final section, the key slips securely into the key of B flat major at measure forty-eight. This final section musically depicts the rising of the sun; consequently, the last section increases in its intensity dramatically. The vocal ranges also are extended here as the soprano and tenor dimensions are stretched into much higher *tessiturae*. At measure fifty-four, the slower tempo established in the second

⁷³ Guy, appendix.

section begins to accelerate, as the sun, nearly breaching the horizon, is text painted by means of increasing tempo and altered rhythmic figurations. At measure fifty-six, the opening tempo of the piece (quarter note equals 120) is again reached. The piece concludes in a flurry of sharply accentuated dotted rhythms from both the chorus and the piano, as well as a high B flat from the sopranos, clearly indicating that sunrise has been realized.

“Bless the Lord, O My Soul”

“Bless the Lord, O My Soul,” published by Fostco Music Press in 1997, is scored for SATB choir, *divisi*, with organ accompaniment. With text drawn from Psalm 104, the piece was commissioned by and written “For the Choir of Grace Church in New York [,] Bruce G. McIness, Organist, and Master of the Choristers on the Occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the Consecration of the Church.”⁷⁴

“Bless the Lord, O My Soul” follows a compositional pattern comparable to both “Psalm 67” and “Salutation of the Dawn.” In each of these compositions, the basic framework pursues a three-part formal design. This composition is more sophisticated than previous pieces because of Clausen’s considerable use of common-tone voice leading in the developmental B section, which expands upon the listener’s sense of traditional musical expectation.

This developmental section begins at measure twenty-two, subsequent to a well established A section outlining the key of E major. Following transitional material,

⁷⁴ René Clausen, “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1997), 2.

Clausen leads the listener to expect the distantly related key of A flat major. However, he resolves it differently, as the expectation for A major resolves into the key of F minor in measure twenty-six. The key does not remain in F minor very long. Following a series of rarely employed half-diminished seventh chords, the key changes abruptly to B flat minor at measure thirty-two. Clausen remains in B flat for only eleven measures, during which he motivically reflects for a moment on the opening material in measures thirty-five to thirty-six (the “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” theme). Approaching measure forty-three, Clausen prepares the listener for a significant point of arrival in B flat major. The cadence instead is a weak G major cadence in second inversion. The developmental material continues by means of an extended dominant pedal tone in G major. B flat major harmonies intermingle with the G pedal in measure forty-eight, causing the listener to begin questioning the probable resolution to G major. The instability continues in measure fifty-two, as Clausen resolves the dominant pedal tone to an F sharp major chord rather than to the well-prepared key of G major. This preparation/irresolution cycle is repeated once more as Clausen re-establishes the previous dominant on D for an anticipated cadence in G major, resolving by common-tone in measure fifty-eight to an E major chord in second inversion. The shift to E major indicates a move into the C section of the piece, a section that carries on this tumultuous, developmental existence between listener expectation and actual resolution. Clausen’s use of common-tone cadential progression takes his writing to a more sophisticated level. Future compositions make frequent use of this preparation/irresolution device in order to alter the listener’s sense of traditional musical aesthetic.

Two Songs of Parting

Composed at two different times for two different occasions, *Two Songs of Parting* was published as a set in 1997 by Fostco Music Press. The two songs, “There is an Old Belief” and “An Irish Blessing,” will be discussed individually; however, the fact that Clausen published the two pieces under the single title *Two Songs of Parting* is noteworthy, since this is one of few octavos of its kind in the Clausen repertory. Textually, there are no common features between the two compositions, and they were written by two different authors. The thematic idea of “parting” is investigated on two very different levels. By looking at the score, it is not possible to determine whether Clausen intended the compositions to be sung as a concert set, or whether he or the publisher bound the two compositions together for purely business or economic reasons. In any case, each composition has several interesting characteristics that merit discussion in individual detail.

I. “There is an Old Belief”

“There is an Old Belief” was composed for the Twentieth Alumni Reunion Celebration of the College Singers of the State University of New York, July 14-16, 1995.⁷⁵ The premiere, which was performed by Guy B. Webb,⁷⁶ is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, with multiple *divisi*, and draws inspiration from a text written by John

⁷⁵ René Clausen, *Two Songs of Parting* (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, a division of Shawnee Press, Inc., 1997), 3.

⁷⁶ Clausen, *Two Songs of Parting*, 3.

Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854).⁷⁷ This piece begins and ends in the key of E major, and Clausen develops this key area throughout the work. In fact, the composition's developmental nature is one of its most interesting features. The Lockhart text is deep and dramatic, and Clausen writes moody music to accompany these words. Here Clausen uncharacteristically uses harmonic language such as half and fully diminished chords, along with the more usual major sevenths and minor ninths, giving a sense of slow, churning drama. Perhaps one of the most interesting features of this piece is the way it builds to the word *sleep* in measure forty-three. At measure thirty-six, Clausen begins to expand the text "Eternal be the sleep" outlining an F major chord with an added second. By measure thirty-eight, he begins to outline C major under a rising melodic line. By measure forty, he uses a minor seventh chord on D, which he intensifies in measure forty-one when he changes the A natural to an A flat, thus turning it into a half diminished seventh chord on D. He continues to expand this same half-diminished chord through measure forty-two, drawing the listener toward a probable resolution to a C major chord (likely in second inversion). He, however, does the unexpected at measure forty-three on the word *sleep*. Quite unpredictably, he retains the A flat from the previous chord, enharmonically turns it into a G sharp, and builds an exciting return to an E major chord around it.

II. "An Irish Blessing"

"An Irish Blessing" was composed for the retirement of Carroll W. Barnes, the Director of Fine Arts of the Garland Independent School District of Garland, Texas, in

⁷⁷ Clausen, *Two Songs of Parting*, 3.

May 1997.⁷⁸ Any questions about whether the *Two Songs of Parting* could be done as a set are quickly confirmed, as “An Irish Blessing” directly compliments the first and could easily be sung straightforwardly following the previous composition. There are two important ideas necessitating discussion: 1) Clausen’s depiction of the opening lines of the text, and 2) the benedictory quality of this second piece.

It is interesting how Clausen introduces the anonymous text in this composition, first bringing it into the soprano voice while the other voices continue the eerie quality of the introduction. The altos and basses join in singing the text at measure eighteen while the tenors sing an “oo” vowel sound through the middle of the texture. Only at measure twenty-three do all the voices sing as a homophonic unit, bringing a depth of clarity to the text “May the sun shine warm on your face.” The composition winds quite gently through a series of chords expanding the tonic of E minor.

Overall, however, this piece feels very much like a benedictory response and has a deep sense of being cadential, somewhat as if it is concluding something bigger than itself. The final cadence at measure forty-four seems to confirm this sense of the spiritual as Clausen chooses to conclude with a satisfying IV-I (Amen) cadence in the parallel key of E major, thus recalling the key expanded in “There Is an Old Belief.”

“In Pace”

“In Pace,” published by Fostco Music Press in 1997, is scored for SSAATTBB choir *a cappella*, and is inspired by a text written by John Sheppard (c. 1515 – c.

⁷⁸ Clausen, *Two Songs of Parting*, 9.

1560).⁷⁹ A commissioned work, “In Pace” was composed for the University of Miami Chorale, Jo-Michael Schiebe conductor, and in memory of Cantor Stuart Pittle of the Temple Judea of Coral Gables, Florida.⁸⁰ It is included on the Concordia Choir recording, *In the New Moon*.

When compared to other Clausen SSAATTBB *a cappella* works such as “O Vos Omnes,” “In Pace” is much simpler in its design. Even though it is still a vocally challenging piece, the composition is formally less complicated, divisible into two distinct parts or sections defined by Clausen’s use of keys and key relationships and text. Within the first section in C major, Clausen incorporates both Phrygian and Mixolydian elements for added harmonic and melodic ambiguity. As demonstrated in figure 2.10, the melody is simple, almost chant-like, undoubtedly alluding to the idea that the piece is composed in honor of Cantor Pittle. Section II begins at measure fifty-three and retains the chant-like elements evident in the opening section. Regardless of the few key changes, developmental properties apparent in other compositions are few. Forays through C major into D major, A flat major, and E flat major all seem to assist in the forward motion of the piece.

⁷⁹ René Clausen, “In Pace” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1997), 2.

⁸⁰ Clausen, “In Pace,” 2.

Figure 2.10 René Clausen, “In Pace,” measures 1-7

Sostenuto $\text{♩} = c. 64$

The musical score for measures 1-7 of "In Pace" by René Clausen is presented for eight voices: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. The tempo is marked "Sostenuto" with a quarter note equal to approximately 64 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score illustrates a polyphonic texture where voices enter in imitation. Tenor 1 and Bass 1 begin in measure 1 with the lyrics "In pa - ce, in i - dip - sum dor - mi - am, in". By measure 7, all voices have entered, creating a thick choral sound. The lyrics for the other voices in measure 7 are "In pa - ce".

One of the most intriguing aspects of “In Pace” is the polyphonic texture that pervades throughout. Figure 2.10 also demonstrates the opening point of imitation that rises from the tenor I and bass voices through the alto and subsequently the soprano voice parts. The result is that by measure seven, all the voices have entered and have created a thick band of choral sound that slowly churns toward the first intermediate point of arrival at measure fifteen. Referring to figure 2.11, Clausen builds his second point of imitation exactly like the first, starting with the tenor voices, although the inherent rhythmic qualities of this point of imitation are based upon triplet figuration rather than the quarter note/half note traits prevalent in the first. As he often does, Clausen incorporates motivic elements of the first point of imitation into the second thematic area.

Figure 2.11 René Clausen, “In Pace,” measures 14-19

The musical score for measures 14-19 of René Clausen's "In Pace" is written for an eight-part choir. The parts are Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), Bass 1 (B1), and Bass 2 (B2). The lyrics are: "In pa - ce. Si de - de - ro som - num o - cu - lis me - is et pal - pe - bris". The score includes dynamic markings (mp, mf, dolce) and articulation (accents, slurs, triplets). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is in Phrygian mode, as evidenced by the use of G sharps.

Section II has many common features to the first, although Clausen builds the first point of imitation of section II in a different fashion than the two discussed previously. Over the predominantly homophonic bass and baritone voices, Clausen constructs a point of imitation using the text “Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto” starting with the altos, spreading outward to the soprano and tenor voices. Figure 2.12 displays not only the interplay of this new point of imitation (shown most clearly in the alto and tenor voices), but also highlights two other interesting features of this section. First, Clausen’s use of Phrygian mode, as proven through his use of numerous G sharps, colors this section with the shroud of mystery appropriate to the subject matter of the Holy Spirit. Second, it is interesting to note that the final point of imitation is foreshadowed early in this section. Note the eighth note/quarter note figuration associated with the word *amen*. This idea prefigured early in the section later grows into a subject of its own and becomes a point of imitation at measure eighty-six.

Figure 2.12 René Clausen, “In Pace,” measures 60-64

[illegible]

“The Road Not Taken”

One of the more accessible Clausen compositions of the mid-1990s, “The Road Not Taken” was published in 1997 by Fostco Music Press, and was set for piano and *divisi* SATB voices. Using the poetry (included below) by American poet Robert Frost (1874-1963), “The Road Not Taken” was written for the James Martin High School Chorale and its director, Randy Jordon.⁸¹

⁸¹ Clausen, “The Road Not Taken,” 1.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Clausen sets “The Road Not Taken” within a through-composed formal design comparable to “At the Name of Jesus” and “Communion.” Even though the piece is through-composed, there are elements throughout the composition that recall former ideas. Melodic and harmonic similarities exist between each of the sections, although exact replication does not take place. The only exception to this idea takes place at measure forty, where Clausen quotes the melody from measure three in its entirety. Quoted in four-part unison voices for emphasis, this is the only textual repetition in the poem, with Clausen retaining the melody from one place to another to reflect Frost’s writing. It is important to note how closely Clausen’s formal organization of his composition mirrors the Frost poetry. As in the example above, Frost himself divided the text into four “stanzas” of text. Clausen emulates this exactly by writing four

differing sections of through-composed music. The first stanza concludes with a G major cadence at measure ten; the second, an E minor cadence at measure 21; the third stanza of the Frost poetry is set in E major with a cadence in measure thirty; and the final stanza returns to the original key of G major.

“Psalm 150”

Clausen makes a return visit to the “Psalm 150” text with this mid-1990s version published by Fostco Music Press in 1997. The original setting was included in his first cantata, *a new Creation*, published in 1990. In the original setting, Clausen sets the text for choir and chamber orchestra; in this version, Clausen uses organ and SATB voices, *divisi*. “Psalm 150” was “Commissioned by the Chancel Choir in honor of Kerry Barnett, in recognition of his tenth year as Minister of Music at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, OK.”⁸²

In Clausen’s 1997 setting of “Psalm 150,” the composition seems somewhat odd. The psalm text itself is exuberant, “Praise God in His Sanctuary, Praise God for His Mighty Acts . . .” and Clausen’s version begins with a “Hallelujah,” which is not at all surprising considering the text; however, Clausen’s “Psalm 150” is set in the minor mode. Having been written in the mid 1990s for a church in Oklahoma City, one can only conclude that the composition was composed, in part at least, in memory of those who lost their lives in the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995.

⁸² René Clausen, “Psalm 150” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1997), 2.

Throughout this paper, there has been discussion about the developmental process used in many of Clausen's later compositions, where he uses expansion techniques to amplify the dramatic effect of the text. In virtually every case, Clausen firmly establishes a single key area in an opening A section and then moves to a more developmental B section. "Psalm 150" is the first example of a piece that is developmental throughout. During the A section, for example, Clausen uses no fewer than eight key areas, including E minor, C sharp minor, A flat major, F major, C major, A major, F sharp major, and finally D major, to heighten the dramatic intensity.

The B section begins at measure sixty-six in the key of D major. The mood changes considerably with the change of tempo indication. The *sostenuto* of the opening section is now replaced with an *allegro* marking, nearly doubling the speed of the quarter note. "Praise Him with timbrel and dance" is a complete counterpoint to the opening section. The dirge-like qualities present before have now given way to jocular dance-like rhythms. The B section is no less developmental than the first, moving from the aforementioned D major through G major to an unprepared B flat major section beginning at measure ninety-seven. Clausen returns to D major at the *Maestoso* C section that begins at measure 120. Comparative to the organ and choral introduction, the C section also highlights the word *Hallelujah*. In the latter case, however, the mood is joyous and exuberant rather than somber and filled with pain. Also in contrast to the opening E minor, Clausen completes his thoughts with an extended Coda beginning at measure 138. The Coda is in E flat major and shouts out the words *Hallelujah, Amen* with increasing fervor and joy for the next eighteen measures through the end of the piece.

Crying for a Dream

In Clausen's developing career, the 431 measure-long *Crying for a Dream* is one of his landmark compositions. Published in 1998 by Fostco Music Press, the three-movement work is scored for a large choral compliment comprised of three SATB choirs, a children's choir, flute, two pianos, and narrator. Clausen also calls for the use of triangle in the composition's second movement, and for both a rainstick and an ocean drum in the third movement. The text from which Clausen extracts musical inspiration comes from Native American antiquity, movements I and II being drawn from "Teton Sioux Music" by Frances Densmore (Bulletin 61 of Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1918).⁸³ The titles of these Sioux songs include "Song of the Final Visit to the Vapor Lodge," "Wakan'tanka Hears Me," "Lakota Pipe Song," "At the Wind Center I Stand," "A Wolf I Considered Myself," "The Earth Only Endures," "Even the Eagle Dies," and "Song of the Sitting Bull."⁸⁴ Chief Seattle (1790-1866) wrote the text for the third movement, entitled, "How Can You Buy the Sky?"⁸⁵

Crying for a Dream was composed for the 1994 North Central Division American Choral Directors Convention in Rapid City, South Dakota, and was premiered on March 5, 1994, by the following ensembles and directors: "The Des Moines Children's Choir (Eugene Wilson, director), the Clarion Chamber Choir (Stanley Schmidt, director), Grinnell Concert Choir (John Stuhr Rommerheim,

⁸³ René Clausen, *Crying for a Dream*. (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1998), preface.

⁸⁴ Clausen, *Crying For a Dream*, preface.

⁸⁵ Clausen, *Crying For a Dream*, preface.

director), and the Valley Singers (Ray Salucka, director).”⁸⁶ *Crying for a Dream* is recorded by the Concordia Choir on its Compact Disc entitled *The Choral Music of René Clausen, Volume I*.

I. “Hear Me, I Will Live!”

The text for the first movement of *Crying for a Dream* is drawn from the first three Sioux Songs mentioned above. Interestingly, Clausen’s recording of this composition differs from the score. In the original score, only one flute presents the opening idea. In the recorded version conducted by Clausen himself, two flutes provide additional measures of music before the entrance of the piano. The amended version creates the aural sensation of being surrounded by nature and having two birds calling out for one another.

It is quickly apparent that each of the movements is skillfully crafted as Clausen creates motivic material that acts as binding matter throughout each movement, a technique also used in other compositions but raised to new levels in this more complex work. The “a voice” and “I will live” fragments are worth noting as important motivic ideas crucial to the creation of the movement. In fact, at measure twenty-nine, it becomes apparent that all the previous musical and motivic material was simply an “antecedent” introduction to the “consequent” material following measure twenty-nine. Clausen uses the “I will live” fragments from the introduction within the “Wakan’tanka” texture to develop continuity throughout the piece. In the next major sections of the movement, Clausen creates and develops two new melodic/motivic ideas

⁸⁶ Clausen, *Crying For a Dream*, 1.

based upon “Wakan’tanka,” “Friend of the Eagle” and “A-ja-ja” in much the same manner as took place in the introduction. Clausen brings all five of these motivic ideas together in the Coda as a means of bringing a deep sense of unity from one area of the piece to the next. This heightened sense of motivic development and co-integration has not been nearly as pronounced in any other composition to date.

The final measures of this first movement are also fascinating in that there is no final cadence of any traditional nature. From the point at which the key changes to A major at measure ninety-five, there are very few other chords present in the mixture. The listener experiences a subdominant to tonic relationship at measures 109-110, but there is little impression that this is a cadence. The final fifteen measures are simply an extension of the tonic chord. Furthermore, in comparable fashion to measures fifty-two to sixty-two, this tonic chord is again void of the third, replaced instead with the second scale degree of B natural.

II. “War Song”

Clausen draws from the remaining Sioux Songs for the second movement. It is quickly apparent that Clausen’s choice of chords was a very deliberate attempt to tie this second movement to the end of the first movement. In the previous movement, the final chord was an extended A chord based upon the root, the second, and the fifth. The third of the chord is conspicuously absent. In this contrasting second movement, Clausen again uses root, second, and fifth; however, a new tonal center is in place—the key of C. Since there is some intentional ambiguity about the key of the movement, Clausen takes his time establishing the mode of C. He reveals his intention in measure eight when numerous sharps indicate the use of a rarely utilized whole tone scale

centered around C. This whole-tone key center is specifically chosen to pictorially develop the text “At the center of the Earth I stand” by depicting the idea of being “centered” by not only being devoid of semitones but also by evolving from middle C, that is, the traditional “center” of a standard piano keyboard.

At measure 112, the flute, which has been silent for the entirety of this movement, enters and begins a flute cadenza/soliloquy. (In fact, the flute part seems to be inserted into the context as an afterthought. The soliloquy is fourteen measures in length, but the choral score ends in measure 112 and resumes in measure 113.) The flute part, an extension of the previous D minor idea, is quite musically descriptive and is a positive contribution to the score, as it provides a needed break after the tension of the “Soldier, you fled” dialogue. The flute soliloquy ends as quickly as it began, not to return until the third movement. This cadenza material is very much reminiscent of the horn cadenza in “Communion.”

III. “How Can You Buy the Sky?”

Regardless of the length of this final movement, “How Can You Buy the Sky?” is formally the simplest to understand. Clausen takes a large quantity of text and sets it for all the musical forces listed above, less the triangle. The last movement can be thematically divided into two parts: the first 115 measures and a closing hymn.

In stark contrast to the opening movement, this entire opening section is monothematic: “How can you buy the sky? How can you sell the wind and rain?” is virtually all that the choir sings. Clausen also makes use of only two different keys in this lengthy section, F major and G major. As is the case in all of Clausen’s work, the most important factor is accentuating the text. The narration is almost sermon-like and

is punctuated by the return of the children's choir. The tune differs from the opening material and is stated in an almost hymn-like way: "Brother Eagle, Sister Sky, give your children wings to fly. Soar above our Mother Earth. Keep her safe, who keeps us birth." Steadfast in the key of G major, this profound message continues with the entrance of the entire choir *a cappella*: "Hold us ever in your mind, To each other help us bind. Teach us, help us, let us see how to dwell in unity. Brother Eagle, Sister Sky, give your children wings to fly. Gently as a morning dove, move our hearts to dwell in love."

In the first movement, Clausen opened in the key of G Lydian. In a very analogous way, he closes the third movement with G Lydian. In a sense, Clausen takes the Biblical idea of "from dust we are raised and to dust we shall return" and infers this musically. He does so with a musical question. The final chord could have been a restful G major chord. In the case of *Crying for a Dream*, he closes this major work on the dominant harmony. In an analogous way, Clausen is spiritually referring to the inflection of the question: "How Can You Buy the Sky?" and referring to the idea of an afterlife—an afterlife to which he is subtly stating that we may all someday return to the Sky.

"Oh My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose"

A beautifully simple and evocative composition, "Oh My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose" was published in 1998 by Fostco Music Press. It is set for SATB voices, piano, violin, and cello, and is a combination of voices and instruments not previously

used. The text for this composition was penned by Robert Burns (1759-1796)⁸⁷ and has been set innumerable times throughout the centuries by countless composers. Clausen's version of this love-poetry, though extremely simple, is worthwhile and satisfying, and comes out of the fact that, like a deep-seated love, there is no need to impress. Clausen composed this piece for his wife, Frankie.

Figure 2.13 René Clausen, "Oh My Luve's Like a Red, Red Rose," measures 1-8

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$ with a supple rhythm

Violin *mf*

Cello *mf*

Piano *mf*
pedal freely throughout

Soprano (S) *mf*

Alto (A) *mf*
O my Luve's like a red, red rose,

Tenor (T)

Bass (B) *mf*
O my Luve's like a red, red rose,

Violin (Vn)

Cello (Vc)

Piano (P)

⁸⁷ *Poemhunter.com*. [database on-line] (first accessed 27 December 2005),
<<http://www.poemhunter.com/p/m/poem.asp?poet=3039&poem=13422>>

As featured in Figure 2.13, the harmonic movement in this composition is as straightforward as the melody is simple, the rollicking violin and cello duet adding a colorful counterpoint to the ease of the vocal lines. The composition begins in G major and remains rooted in G for the first forty-nine measures. In measure fifty, Clausen switches to the key of E minor, remaining in this relative minor key for eleven measures before returning to the home key of G major. The composition stays in this key for the rest of the piece. Instead of being esoteric, this composition is harmonically simple, banking completely on the depth of its melody. Overall, regardless of its effortlessness, the piece is satisfying and undoubtedly leaves any audience with a deep sense of awe at the piece's conclusion.

“Ave Maria”

“Ave Maria”⁸⁸ was published in 1998 by Fostco Music Press and is the only Clausen composition that is available only as an “Archive Copy” from the publisher, implying that sales of this composition are not high enough to warrant the stockpiling of the work; rather, the composition, as needed, is printed only on-demand. Clausen sets “Ave Maria” for SATB voices *a cappella, divisi*, and its Latin text comes from the sacred texts of the Roman Catholic liturgy. Clausen composed the piece “For the Cherry Creek High School Meistersingers [,] Bill Erikson, conductor.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Translation: *Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. And blessed is Jesus, the fruit of thy womb. Holy Mary, Mother of God: pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death. Amen.*

⁸⁹ René Clausen, “Ave Maria,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1998), 2.

“Ave Maria” is through-composed, although there are a few distinct points of arrival and other matters pertaining to Clausen’s use of harmonic language that show advancement in writing style and development. His opening harmonic language is largely ambiguous, a D major chord with an added second scale degree in the bass; the resulting effect is that the listener is initially oblivious about where the piece is headed. After several measures of ambiguity, the harmonic language starts to become more distinct, and the chords become somewhat less indefinite. A confirmation of D major is then found in measure seventeen with a very clear D major chord coinciding with the word *Jesus*. This is the composition’s first point of arrival. At this measure, the piece has clearly changed, and what follows should be considered a B section. The next major point of arrival takes place at measure twenty-seven, is a strong cadence in C major, and is comparable in design and execution to the previous cadence in D. This C major section defines the developmental section C. The composition tonally meanders through this final subdivision, finding no particular place to rest, with only occasional points of reference in D and C major. By measure forty-four, the harmonic progression moves to an A flat major chord, a chord that eventually prepares the listener for a D flat major chord in measure fifty. Within four measures of the downbeat of measure fifty, the composition concludes after a brief Coda and a reaffirmation of the key of D flat major.

“Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord”

Clausen’s “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord,” which paraphrases Psalm 95, was published in 1999 by Fostco Music Press. It is available in two published versions: one for SATB and brass (two C trumpets, two trombones, and tuba) and the other for SATB

voices and organ. Clausen wrote the original version for brass instruments, while the organ reduction, although published in the same year, was transcribed by David Bohn.⁹⁰ The piece came about by means of a commission from the First Presbyterian Church of Wichita, Kansas, and the Kansas Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.⁹¹ It was also written “for Harold Decker, in loving memory of Peg Decker and her friend Mona Corrin Pike.”⁹²

Comparative to recent compositions, “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord” is structurally less complex in formal design. In reflecting on the evolutionary process thus far, it is notable that Clausen has become more adventurous with not only the number of different key areas used throughout his compositions, but also with the B sections becoming prominently more developmental. In the case of “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord,” a different structure has taken place in that the A section has also taken on a developmental role. This can be observed in table 2.3.

Table 2.3 René Clausen, “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord”

No.	Measure Numbers	Text	Function	Key Areas ⁹³
1.	1-8	Come, let us sing to the Lord . . .	Introduction	G+ to D+

⁹⁰ The scores are virtually identical with these few exceptions: 1) there are modifications to the organ score in m. 5, and in mm. 69 & 70; 2) in m. 77 and in m. 87 the organ part has been altered to fit the range of a contemporary organ; and 3) an errata is needed in m. 40 as there is a missing G natural omitted from the organ score.

⁹¹ René Clausen, “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1999), 2.

⁹² Clausen, “Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord,” 2.

2.	9-14	Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving . . .	A section	D+ to d-
3.	15-18	And a great King above all Gods . . .	A section, continued	d- to F+
4.	19-25	In God's hands are the deep places . . .	A section, continued	F+ to C+
5.	26-31	The sea is his . . .	A section, continued	C+ (with G flat + transitional material)
6.	32-46	Come, let us bow down . . .	B section	D flat (over G flat pedal tone)
7.	37-57	For he is our God . . .	B section, continued	D flat +
8.	57-77	Glory Be to the Father . . .	B section, continued	D flat +
9.	78-87	Amen	<i>Coda</i>	Surprise move to B flat +

Clausen creates a situation whereby the opening A section explores many more key areas than the B section. In fact, the comparison in table 2.3 shows that after the G major introduction, the A section actually has developmental exploration and points of arrival in four different key areas: D major, D minor, F major, and C major. The developmental nature of the A section is strikingly reminiscent of Clausen's setting of "Psalm 150;" however, in the case of "Come Let Us Sing to the Lord," the B section explores only the key of D flat major. In studying the text, however, it is notable that the developmental nature of the A section and the less tumultuous nature of the B section reflect the Psalm text explicitly. Referring again to table 2.3, one can see that the wording set in the B section is considerably more prayerful than the playful nature

⁹³ Key to Table: major (+), minor (-)

of the previous A section, and is yet another excellent example of Clausen’s ability to set music closely resembling the Psalm passage.

“Softly and Tenderly”

A rather unusual composition in the context of his other recent compositions, Clausen’s arrangement of “Softly and Tenderly” is as simple as “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” is complex. Published in 1999 by Fostco Music Press, “Softly and Tenderly” is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, and features words and music composed by William L. Thomson.⁹⁴ There is no indication in the score that this piece was a commissioned work.

As mentioned, “Softly and Tenderly” is a non-complex arrangement of Thompson’s work. Because of its simple treatment of the melody (see figure 2.4), it is reminiscent of some of his early works, namely “Simple Gifts,” although comparative to “Simple Gifts” this particular arrangement is significantly more accessible.

Figure 2.14 René Clausen, “Softly and Tenderly,” measures 1-10

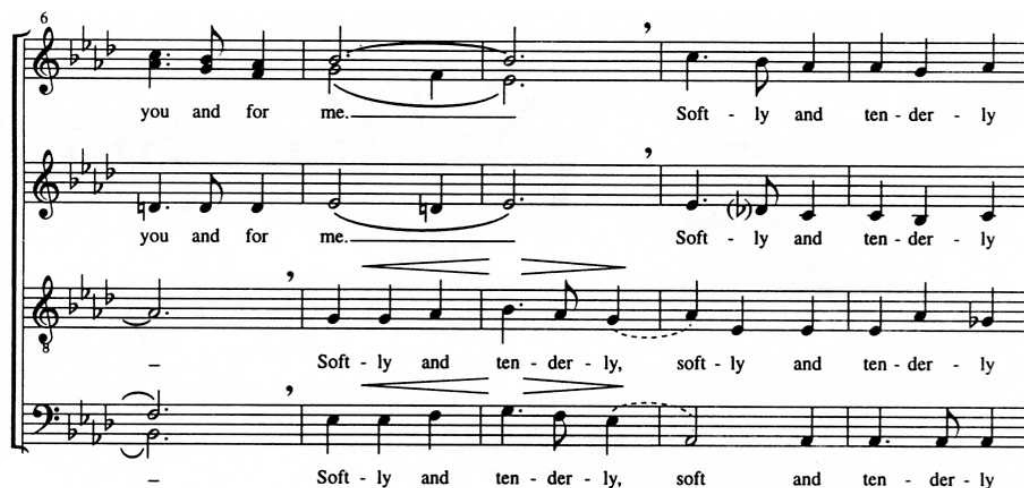
S
Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for

A
Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for

T
Oo

B
Oo

⁹⁴ René Clausen, “Softly and Tenderly.” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1999), 2.



Straightforwardness does not necessarily indicate that the composition does not merit study or performance, however. For an arrangement in a single key developing a single thought, this little arrangement is quite successful.

“All This Night”

“All This Night” was published in 1999 in the *René Clausen Choral Series* by Fostco Music Press, and is written for SATB voices (although several places in the piece divide into SSAATTBB eight-line scoring). The composition also features piano accompaniment or “. . . is also available in a version for choir and chamber orchestra (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn in F, harp, and strings).⁹⁵ Clausen’s musical inspiration is taken from the text of two poets: William Austin (1587-1634) and Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894). With the exception of Clausen’s cantata works, “All This Night” is the only composition in which Clausen draws from more than a single poet, the score providing welcome information regarding them both. A commissioned

⁹⁵ René Clausen, “All This Night.” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 1999), 2.

work, the score also provides information about the composition's origin and bears the following inscription: "'All This Night' was commissioned by the Peter Dyck family through the Rochester Area Foundation in honor of Isabelle Dyck. The first performance was given on December 18, 1998, by the Choral Arts Ensemble, Rick Kvam, conductor."

Rather than thinking about this as a single composition, "All This Night" can be considered two compositions under a single title. Considering the fact that there are two poems involved, that there are twelve lengthy measures of piano transition that link the two poems, and that there are no significant melodic or motivic similarities between the two "halves," the idea of two compositions under one title is logical. The binding force that brings the two halves together is the texts (both of which focus more upon the sun than upon the night). In the meantime, the whole octavo functions well as a through-composed piece of music. This stems from Clausen's historical ability to string together multiple ideas over the context of an extended period without the need for motivic or melodic recapitulation.

Regardless of the fact that the overall composition is through-composed, there are many interesting features in the composition. Moreover, it is interesting how the two halves are brought together. Clausen begins with the Austin poetry, "All this Night, shrill Chauntecleere (Dayes-proclaiming Trumpeter) Claps his wings, and lowdly cries . . .," setting it in binary form, and employing neo-Impressionistic writing in several key areas (including G Lydian, A minor, and D major) in order to motivically develop the opening ideas. Notable is the dance-like, 5/4 meter (with other mixed-meter additions) that adequately addresses the rollicking Austin text: "Wake, oh Earth,

wake ev'rything! Wake, and heare the joy I bring . . . ,” markedly different from the lilting opening A section.

Figure 2.15 René Clausen, “All This Night,” measures 187-190

107

S1
truth to make us free, _____

S2
truth to make us free, _____ Till

A1
Thy truth to make

A2
Thy truth to make us free, _____

T1
mf
And kind - - - ling

T2
mf
Grant us Thy truth to make us

B1
mf
And kind-ling hearts that burn for

B2
mf
And kind-ling hearts that burn for

Piano accompaniment

189

S1 Till all Thy liv-ing al-tars claim,

S2 all Thy liv-ing al-tars claim,

A1 us free,

A2 One

T1 hearts that burn for

T2 free,

B1 Thee, Till all Thy liv-ing al-tars claim,

B2 Thee, Till all Thy liv-ing al-tars claim,

The second half of “All this Night” focuses on the poetry of Oliver Wendell Holmes and differs a bit from the first half of the composition. In the second half, Clausen takes a different compositional approach by setting “Lord of all being, throned afar, Thy glory flames from sun and star; Center and soul of every sphere, Yet to each loving heart how near” minimalistically, writing a single melodic line, and repeating it

in five different key areas in a near-strophic formal design. In the final statement of the melody (shown above in figure 2.15), Clausen seems to organically expand the canonic idea from the previous repetition of the theme. In the final section, only the second sopranos and second tenors have the melody in its previous form of quarter notes. The other voices enter in a well organized, but random-sounding, fashion. The melody in these other voices is virtually the same as the previous sections of the half. Clausen employs two compositional techniques: augmentation and diminution. In many ways, the effect of this final section is much like the aleatoric technique he used, for example, in his arrangement of “Simple Gifts.” In that particular case, Clausen requested that the performers sing the melody at their own pace, coming together after a certain length of time. In the case of “All This Night,” Clausen creates a comparable-sounding situation but retains a much higher level of control over the outcome.

“Ubi Caritas”

“Ubi Caritas,”⁹⁶ published in 2000 by Fostco Music Press, is set for SATB voices *a cappella*, with multiple *divisi* throughout. The composition was

⁹⁶ A translation of the Latin text is provided at the end of the score and provided here by permission of the publisher: *Where charity and love are, God is there. The Christ's love has gathered us into one. Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him. Let us fear and let us love the living God, And let us love Him with a sincere heart[.] Where charity and love are, God is there. As we are gathered into one body, Beware, lest we be divided in mind. Let evil impulses stop, let controversy cease, An [sic] may Christ be in our midst. Where charity and love are God is there. And may we also with the saints, Gloriously see Thy face, O Christ. The joy that is immense and good, Unto the ages through infinite ages. Amen.*

“Commissioned by the Oklahoma Choral Directors Association for the 2000 All-OMEA Choir.”⁹⁷

“Ubi Caritas” is interesting to the music scholar in that it never leaves the home key of E major. In fact, this five to six minute composition does little more than expand the tonic. Unlike any composition before it, the composition begins with the sopranos singing the opening “incipit” in the style of standard liturgy, the entire chorus soon joining the chant melody in full homophony. Similar to the sections before it, the fourth and final section of the piece outlines the key of E, although a new chant-like idea is developed in the bass voice at measure sixty-two and is soon organized into a point of imitation. As demonstrated in figure 2.16, following the bass entrance at measure sixty-two, the tenors enter the texture a third higher at measure sixty-eight, followed by the altos an octave higher at measure seventy-four, and then the sopranos a tenth higher at measure eighty. This final motivic idea ends with a cadence in E major at

Figure 2.16 René Clausen, “Ubi Caritas,” measures 60-82

B

mp esp.

Si - mul quo-que cum be -

P

⁹⁷ René Clausen, “Ubi Caritas.” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2000), 3.

63

B

a - tis vi - de - a - mus. Glo - ri - an - ter vul - tum tu - um, Christe

67

T

mp esp.

Si - mul quo - que cum be - a - tis vi - de - a - mus.

B

De - us. Gau - di - um quod est im -

71

A

mp esp.

Si - mul quo - que cum be -

T

Glo - ri - an - ter vul - tum tu - um, Chris - te De - us. Gau - di -

B

men - sum, at - que pro - - - bum:

75

S

A

T

B

a - tis vi - de - a - mus. Glo - ri - an - ter vul - tum tu - um, Chris - te

um quod est im - men - - - sum, im -

Sæ - cu - la per in - fi - ni - ta sæ - cu - lo - rum,

79

S

A

T

B

mp esp. Si - mul quo - que cum be - a - tis vi - de - a - mus.

De - us. Gau - di - um quod est im -

men - - - sum, at - que pro - bum quod est im -

sæ - cu - lo - rum, quod est im -

measure eighty-six, followed by twenty more measures of E major material restating the opening chant material from the beginning of the piece. Although the composition does not venture far from the context of key areas, it is profound and has a distinct sense of direction about it.

“Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us”

Based upon the hymn tune *Weisse Flaggen* (see figure 2.17), “Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us” is one of relatively few hymn arrangements in Clausen’s repertory. Published by Fostco Music Press in the year 2000, the arrangement is set for SATB voices and organ, incorporating a text by Thomas H. Troeger, “the Ralph E. and Norma E. Peck Professor of Preaching and Communications at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado.”⁹⁸

Figure 2.17 Hymntune *Weisse Flaggen*



⁹⁸ René Clausen, “Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2000), 12.

*Through our beating hearts remind us that the source of all our powers
Is, O God, your vital Spirit that is animating ours.
Ev'ry pulse beat is revealing while we work and while we rest,
That your care for us is constant and to live is to be blest.*

*Yet, we act as if our living were our own accomplishment,
And the purpose of creation is whatever we invent.
We ignore the truth repeated ev'ry second by our hearts:
That our thanks should be unending for the life your life imparts.*

*Brood and breathe on us, your creatures,
Just as you did upon the sea,
When you split apart the darkness and you called all things to be.*

*Brood and breathe and recreate us,
Till in Christ we are made new,
And your never-ending giving is returned through us to you.*

*Amen, amen.*⁹⁹

The arrangement was commissioned “by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians for the 10th Anniversary of the Westminster Conference on Worship and Music, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, July 1998.”¹⁰⁰

“Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us” is written using a standard format common for traditional sacred choral literature of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The arrangement employs only two keys: two stanzas of the hymn in B flat major and the final stanza in C major, although on its own this arrangement is well conceived. Comparative to all his previous output, this particular arrangement is somewhat disappointing since it is simplistic and systematically written. For instance, the first stanza is composed for unison voices and organ. The second stanza is SATB *a*

⁹⁹ Ibid., 4-11.

¹⁰⁰ Clausen, “Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us,” 3.

cappella. After a twelve-measure organ transition in order to change keys, the third stanza is a standardized unison voices, organ, with soprano descant.

“La Lumière”

For the choral scholar, “La Lumière”¹⁰¹ ranks alongside “O Vos Omnes,” “Tonight Eternity Alone,” and *Crying for a Dream*. A well-crafted work that sets the poetry of Yves Bonnefoy, this composition was published in 2001 by Fostco Music Press. Set for SATB *a cappella* voices, it often divides into more than eight parts. At times, both the men’s and women’s voices divide into five (and sometimes six) parts, and require three very confident soprano soloists. The reason for the complexity is that Clausen created this composition for his own Concordia Choir, the same choir that recorded the work on its 2003 compact disc release entitled *Echoes*.

“La Lumière” is different in many ways from all Clausen’s other compositions. Throughout this entire study, his harmonic language has been categorized as “extended diatonicism.”¹⁰² “La Lumière” stretches these parameters. In a neo-Impressionistic way, Clausen uses chords more for their color rather than for their traditional harmonic

¹⁰¹ A translation of the French text is provided at the end of the score, translated by John T. Naughton, and provided here by permission of the publisher: *We no longer see each other in the same light, We no longer have the same eyes or the same hands. The tree is closer and the water’s voice more lively, Our steps go deeper now, among the dead. God who are not, put your hand on our shoulder, Rough-cast our body with the weight of your return, Finish blending our souls with these stars, These woods, these bird cries, these shadows, and these days. Give yourself up in the way fruit falls apart, Have us disappear in you. Reveal to us The mysterious meaning in what is only simple And would have fallen without fire in words without love.*

¹⁰² Guy, appendix.

function. This style of harmonic writing was implied in “All This Night,” but is solidified in this latest work.

The composition begins atmospherically, with the sopranos and altos outlining an E major seventh chord with an added second and a missing third. From here, the women’s voices move upward by means of parallel minor chords where the tenors join them, in head voice, in the alto register, the highest tenor note in Clausen’s entire repertoire. Musically, all this signifies light. Then, while the tenors float an “alto” high B, the basses, altos, and sopranos now sing material in the lowest parts of their registers reflecting upon the text: *Nous n’avons plus le memes yeux*. (We no longer have the same eyes). Such is the case throughout this composition, as Clausen’s attention to the words is fundamental to the effective nature of this piece.

Like many of his other compositions, the structure follows a three-part formal design. Thematically, material from one section does not return in any other; however, it can be asserted that the music grows organically from one section to another. The opening A section involves everything up to and including the cadence in F major at measure twenty-nine. This is all one thought and coincides directly with the first stanza of the text. There is an intermediate cadence at measure thirteen, but the thematic idea continues through measure twenty-nine.

The B section, as discussed, grows organically out of the first section, encompassing measures thirty to forty-eight, and concludes with a cadence in F. Again, the cadence coincides with the end of a stanza of the Bonnefoy text and terminates with an intermediate point of arrival. In this case, the intermediate point of arrival is a stronger cadence in D major, but the harmonic motion moves through it indicating that

it is not a significant stopping point. The C section begins in measure forty-nine in C Mixolydian and proceeds through the end of the piece. Section C is the most tonal section of the piece and is likely so because of the amount of clarity provided in Bonnefoy's text. Unlike the previous sections, it does not have an intermediate cadence, although special care should be taken with the effect of "suspended animation" at measure fifty-seven.

"Psalm 23"

"Psalm 23," published in 2001 by Fostco Music Press, is set for SATB voices and organ, with occasional *divisi* in each of the vocal lines. The piece was a commissioned work, "Dedicated to the honor of Dr. Robert Andrew Reid, given by the First United Methodist Church members and Chancel Choir, Lawrence, Kansas,"¹⁰³ and created to be accessible for the average church choir. Other than some infrequent duple against triple meter and the occasional high G for the sopranos, "Psalm 23" could easily be performed by most church choirs.

In keeping with its accessible nature, "Psalm 23" is not formally complex. It follows a basic three-part ABA sonata-like form similar to some of his earliest works. Comparable to "Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us," the writing is relatively simple. The entire A section, for example, is entirely in F major with the exception of cadences utilizing Mixolydian modal elements for additional color. The main theme is repeated twice within the opening A section, although the repetition is somewhat

¹⁰³ René Clausen, "Psalm 23." (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2001), 3.

differently arranged the second time. After a strong cadence in F at measure twenty-one, Clausen writes a transition that highlights the organ and functionally facilitates a modulation to the B section of the piece. Clausen follows the text implicitly, writing in the minor mode for the text “Yea though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death.” He directly follows this with an immediate switch to D major, which prepares the listener for the text “For you are with me.” With the exception of the single phrase in D minor, the B section remains steadfastly in D major throughout the section.

Clausen’s use of sonata form in “Psalm 23” is a significant shift from many of his recent compositions, most of which follow a much more ambiguous, often through-composed formal design. Concerning “Psalm 23,” this change means that he recapitulates the entire A section of the piece as a method of concluding the composition. Unlike true sonata form, however, the recapitulated theme is repeated in the key of D major, the same key that dominated most of the B section.

“Morning Has Broken”

“Morning Has Broken: from *Earth’s Prayers*” was published in 2003 by Fostco Music Press, and is set for SSA voices and piano, using the familiar “Morning Has Broken” text by Eleanor Farjeon. Another commissioned work, this piece was created for “the Miami Choral Society: A Children’s Choir, Timothy A. Sharp, conductor.”¹⁰⁴

For an original composition based upon the words known by an already-famous Gaelic melody, Clausen’s version of “Morning Has Broken” is successful, although one

¹⁰⁴ René Clausen, “Morning Has Broken: from Earth’s Prayers” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2003), 3.

cannot avoid hearing common ground between Clausen’s melody and the melody most often associated with this text. Figure 2.18 places these two tunes alongside each other to illustrate their similarities as well as differences. It is interesting to note that the two melodies, with few exceptions, could easily accompany each other.

In the Clausen setting, the three stanzas of text are virtually strophic. The final stanza is slightly more harmonically complex than the first two, and hearkens back to “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” in that it is written for SSA voices, the third voice only occasionally breaking away from the duet texture. It would be well worth the effort to work this piece into the repertoire of an average children’s choir, as it certainly would have audience appeal.

Figure 2.18 Side by Side Comparison of “Morning Has Broken (first stanza),” René Clausen Melody to the Traditional Gaelic Melody

The figure displays a side-by-side comparison of two musical settings of the hymn "Morning Has Broken" in G major, 3/4 time. The score is organized into three systems, each comparing the "Original Gaelic Melody" (top staff) with the "Clausen, 2003" melody (bottom staff). The lyrics are written below the notes.

System 1:

- Original Gaelic Melody:** Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black - bird has spo - ken
- Clausen, 2003:** Mor - ning has bro - ken like the first morn - ing black - bird has spok - ken

System 2 (Measures 7-12):

- O.G. M.:** like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
- Clausen:** like the first bird. Priase for the sing - ing, praise for the morn - ing!

System 3 (Measures 13-18):

- O.G. M.:** Praise for them, spring - - - ing fresh from the Word.
- Clausen:** Praise for them spring - ing fresh from the Word.

“Laudate”

A striking and flamboyant composition, “Laudate” (translated, *Praise*) was published by Fostco Music Press in 2003. Clausen sets the “Laudate” text for SATB voices *a cappella*. In comparable fashion to “O Vos Omnes,” “Crying for a Dream,” and “Gloria,” Clausen combines more than a single language into the network of the composition, paraphrasing Psalm 117 in both Latin and English. Clausen prepared this commissioned work for “The Floyd Central High School A Cappella Choir, Angela Hampton, conductor.”¹⁰⁵

Even though the key structure of “Laudate” is mundane, formally this composition is a rather interesting study because of Clausen’s employment of a structure he has not previously used: the alternations of two different thematic ideas throughout the piece. He seems almost to have created his own hybrid of ritornello form, whereby the “Laudate” text is the ritornello, and everything in English is a single musical idea that organically develops throughout the piece.

The composition opens with the ritornello, a *forte* “Laudate, Laudate Dominum” from the full chorus. The ritornello (measures one to twenty) is predominantly homophonic with some imitative exchanges between the lower and upper voices. The first soprano introduction of the A theme begins in measure twenty. In fact the opening A theme is short, blending back into the “Laudate” texture at measure twenty-eight. The return of A is more substantial, coming back in measure thirty-three at the close of the second ritornello. Here, Clausen takes the A theme and organically expands the

¹⁰⁵ René Clausen, “Laudate” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2003), 3.

idea for twenty-four measures. Instead of reintroducing the “Laudate” at measure fifty-five, Clausen develops another version of the A theme, extending it from the major cadence in C major at measure fifty-eight to the downbeat of measure seventy-three. The final measures of the piece should be discussed as a Coda. However, it is a hybrid Coda which combines the ritornello idea with that of the A theme, alternating between the two from measure seventy-three through the end of the piece.

“To Everything There is a Season”

“To Everything There is a Season,” published in 2003 by Fostco Music Press, is composed for *a cappella* SATB voices and solo oboe. Clausen uses a text from the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, as his inspiration:

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to reap;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

The composition was commissioned by the South Dakota ACDA in memory of Donald Peterson.¹⁰⁶

Four main components are used in the construction of “To Everything There is a Season.” First, the introductory material functions as a “musical narrator,” which returns in measures fifty to fifty-two in the soprano and tenor voices, and which is also

¹⁰⁶ René Clausen, “To Everything There is a Season,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2003), 3.

used in the final ten measures as Coda material. Second, “accompanimental glue” is used in a ritornello fashion, not unlike “Laudate,” and first found beginning in measure twenty. This off-beat rhythmic accompaniment sets up the first entrance of melodic material in the bass voice in measure twenty-two. Third, through-composed melodic material is used to musically depict the longer Ecclesiastes text, often employing “Clausenian” text painting techniques. The melody organically grows and develops over the course of seventy-nine measures, absent of any noticeable thematic repetition. The melody is passed from voice part to voice part, punctuated periodically by the non-accentuated offbeat ritornello material described in point two above. The fourth item of note is the two oboe cadenzas, which, although similar to the solo flute cadenza in *Crying for a Dream* and the solo horn cadenza in “Communion,” does not seem to serve the same soliloquizing function.

“Kyrie” (from *Memorial*)

“Kyrie,” in comparable fashion to his best-selling “Set Me As a Seal,” is extracted from a larger work for chorus and orchestra and sold as an individual octavo. The larger work in this case is Clausen’s most recent cantata, *Memorial*, published in 2005 by Roger Dean Publishing. Published in 2004 by Fostco Music Press, the “Kyrie” octavo is set for SATB voices and a piano reduction of the orchestral score.

“Kyrie” was the result of a commission from the American Choral Directors Association as part of its Raymond W. Brock Composer Series. Based upon the tragic

events that took place on September 11, 2001,¹⁰⁷ it premiered at the February 2003 ACDA National Convention in New York City.

From the outset, the composition features the use of language combinations, a device not used since “Crying for a Dream.” Clausen principally uses English and Latin, skillfully weaving the two languages together with the melody. The Hebrew word for *God* (Adonai), is interjected above the English/Latin texture in several sections in order to signify the global sympathy which emerged as the result of the 9/11 attacks.

Clausen’s choice of keys is predominantly in the major mode, the F sharp minor cadence at measure thirty-seven being the only darker-colored point of arrival used in the composition. This choice of mode is perhaps meant to highlight the text, “Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, grant us peace.” Many of Clausen’s compositions include an underlying religious tone that tends to accentuate grace, hope, and everlasting life, rather than tragedy, guilt, and grief.

The formal design of “Kyrie” is similar to the strophic formats used in several of Clausen’s arrangements, although the intricacy of this use is quite striking. In figure 2.19, it is possible to see that there are two points of imitation at the opening of the composition. The first is the theme initially outlined by the altos and tenors between measures five and nine. The second point of imitation can be viewed in the soprano voice at measure nine. The two thematic ideas alternate back and forth until the F

¹⁰⁷ This is the day when three American jet-liners were successfully hijacked by terrorists; two jets brought down the World Trade Center in New York City and another crashed in rural Pennsylvania. The occasion that Clausen was to commemorate in music was the loss of over two thousand souls.

Figure 2.19 René Clausen, “Kyrie” from *Memorial*, measures 5-24

5

mp

Chri - ste e

mp

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

mp

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

5

10

lei - son, Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e

Chri - ste e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, e - lei - son,

mp

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son,

10

15

lei - son, e - lei - son, Chri-ste e - lei - son, e -

Chri-ste e - lei - son, *mf* Ky - rie e - lei - son, Chri - ste e -

Chri - ste e - lei - son,

20

lei - son, Chri-ste e - lei - son, Ky - ri -

le - i - son, Ky - ri - e e - lei - son,

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ

mf Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e e -

minor cadence at measure thirty-seven. The second statement of A begins at measure forty-four, and the halves are virtually identical except for more passing eighth notes in the accompaniment and the presence of a soprano/alto duet highlighting “Adonai” interjections. The formal design concludes with Coda material.

“O Holy Night”

“O Holy Night,” published in 2004 by Fostco Music Press, is set for SATB voices and piano and is available in a version for choir and orchestra. It is based on the original French text for “O Holy Night” written by Placide Clappeau (d.1847) and is translated into English by John Sullivan Dwight (1812-1893), with original music composed by Adolphe Adam (1803-1856).¹⁰⁸ This arrangement came about because of the Concordia Christmas Concert, an annual event often broadcast by National Public Radio. A recording of this arrangement is found on the compact disc, *O Holy Night*, as produced by Concordia Recordings.

The arrangement that Clausen published follows conventional expectations for the piece, containing nothing out of the ordinary regarding melody or accompanying harmonies. Without a doubt, Clausen, by creating this arrangement, simply wanted to have more artistic control over the version sung at the Concordia Christmas Concert. By creating his own version, he was able to develop an arrangement that fully complimented the choral as well as the orchestral forces at hand.

¹⁰⁸ René Clausen, “O Holy Night,” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2003), 3.

“Alleluia”

“Alleluia” follows in the tradition of Randall Thompson, Ralph Manuel, and others, of creating a work based solely upon the single word of inspiration, *Alleluia*. Published in 2004 by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., Clausen’s version is set for SSAATTBB voices *a cappella*. A piano reduction is available in the score, although there are a few minor discrepancies between the two (measures sixty-six to sixty-seven, soprano 1, for example). The composition was commissioned by the Chancel Choir of Palms Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, and was dedicated to Dr. Merrill J. Palmer, for twenty-seven years of service as its choir director.¹⁰⁹

Because of the minimal amount of text, the Clausen “Alleluia” is more a study of chordal progressions indicative of absolute music. Entirely through-composed, the composition uses many diverse key areas, including E minor and transposed E Dorian, two keys that are used interchangeably. As demonstrated in measures fourteen to fifteen, “Alleluia” also features strings of ninth chord progressions used for additional color and texture. Several common tone modulations, one of which takes place at measure thirty-eight in the key of B flat major, maintain the listener’s interest by continually avoiding the listener’s sense of expected musical aesthetic.

“There is No Rose”

“There is No Rose” was published in 2004 by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc. It is scored for SATB choir, *divisi*, with cello and harp (or optional piano) and uses

¹⁰⁹ René Clausen, “Alleluia,” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 3.

an anonymously written text from the fifteenth century.¹¹⁰ This original is a memorial composition commemorating the life of Mary Joyce Frantz by the Choral Arts Ensemble of Rochester Minnesota, Michael Culloton, conductor.¹¹¹

“There is No Rose” is one of the few compositions in Clausen’s more recent creations that can be classified as sonata form; in fact, unlike several of his ABA forms in which the return of A is stated in a different key, the recapitulation in “There is No Rose” is in the home key of G major. The B section is divisible into multiple sections, identifiable by three different points of arrival, and explores several more key areas than does the opening exposition. One item of note in the opening choral melody at measure twenty-two is the use of three awkward, yet effective, jumps of more than a major sixth that require a high level of corporate pitch accuracy by the singers.

“The Stairs Behind the Sky”

Perhaps one of the simplest compositions Clausen has written in this new century is “The Stairs Behind the Sky.” Published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc. in 2004, the composition is set for *a cappella* SATB chorus, *divisi*, and requires a competent men’s section to accomplish the four-part passage between measures thirty

¹¹⁰ René Clausen, “There is No Rose” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 3.

¹¹¹ Clausen, “There is No Rose,” 3.

to thirty-eight. In this piece, Clausen incorporates his own poetry (included below), writing both the words and the music “for the 2004 North Carolina Honors Chorus.”¹¹²

*I know a place where the staircase goes,
and ends behind the sky.
Beyond the realm of earth and sea,
beyond the hills I cannot see,
beyond the forest's high mountain tree.*

*To heaven where the staircase goes.
Come with me to the place behind the sky,
Where the air is sweet and clear,
Where the sun and the moonlight softly glow.*

*Come with me to a place that is far, far away;
To dance where the angels sing and play;
To the sky where the staircase goes.*

*Come with me to a place that is far, far away;
To dance where the angels sing and play;
To the place up above,
to the place filled with love,
to heav'n, just behind the sky.*

To say that this composition is simple is not at all to say that it is easy, since it contains aspects that do pose some challenge for the high school choir. The simplicity comes about because of the facility this composition seems to portray, perhaps because of Clausen’s use of his own poetry. In any case, the sense of ease emerges in several ways. First, as seen in figure 2.20, the opening melody is almost folk-like in its execution. With few awkward leaps, it is completely diatonic and without accidentals.

¹¹² René Clausen, “The Stairs Behind the Sky” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 3.

Figure 2.20 René Clausen, “The Stairs Behind the Sky,” m. 1-20 (soprano)

Second, the harmonies are simple, and there is little that is developmental at all; in fact, the composition on a larger scale seems to be written around a Dominant to Tonic relationship, whereby the opening thirty-eight measures are V (D major) and the final thirty measures are I (G major). Perhaps one of the most intriguing compositional aspects of the piece is the final five measures. In these measures, Clausen concludes the piece in six-part harmony and then has one or two of the voice parts cut off at a time. This instance is the only time in his repertoire that Clausen uses this stock technique.

“i thank You God”

Published in 2004 by Fostco Music Press, “i thank You God” was created for SATB *divisi* voices *a cappella*. Clausen’s inspiration for this octavo was drawn from the work of e. e. cummings and seems to be as esoteric and yet as deeply meaningful as the text itself. The piece is dedicated to Roger Dehn, Executive Director of the Michigan School Vocal Music Association, 1989-1999.¹¹³

¹¹³ René Clausen, “i thank You God” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2004), 2.

In “i thank You God,” Clausen employs an intriguing motivic technique beginning in measure forty-one (see figure 2.21). Here he takes the “i thank You God” motive established in the opening measures of the piece, rearranges it, changes the text, and applies one note of the melody to either the four upper or the four lower voice parts in a pointillistic manner. This device is not common in the Clausen repertory, and its use as a transitional device is masterful.

Figure 2.21 René Clausen, “i thank you God,” measures 41-44

Also worthy of note is the highly effective text painting that emanates throughout the composition, not only in the rhythmic, melodic, and textural information, but also in Clausen’s choice of keys. For example, Clausen begins the composition very simply, with all the voices singing a D in absolute unison in the key of D major, indicating a meditative and prayerful state. By measure eighteen, text

painting is truly apparent as he uses a predominantly 7/8 meter to demonstrate “for the leaping greenly of the trees.” When the text changes to “a blue true dream of sky,” Clausen returns to the original taller chords indicative of the opening measures. By measure fifty-four, the piece moves by common-tone modulation to the bright key of E major, a key perfectly suited for the next part of the text: “and this is the sun’s birthday.”

“Song at Dusk”

“Song at Dusk” was published in 2004 by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc. It is set for *a cappella* SATB chorus and draws musical imagery from poetry by Leigh Haynes (1894-1967), the 1949 Poet Laureate of Virginia.¹¹⁴ The piece was created for the Bentonville High School Chamber Choir of Bentonville, Arkansas, Terry Hicks, conductor.¹¹⁵ Although this piece was composed for a high school choir, an accomplished one would be required to perform this piece well.

“Song at Dusk” is filled with elements of text painting in much the same manner as are “Tonight Eternity Alone” and “i thank You God.” The composition begins with each of the voice parts entering at different intervals on a neutral “oo” vowel sound, quickly establishing the sense of dusk through music. Clausen intensifies this effect by using the Dorian mode, focusing on the pitch of A. After a longer-than-usual

¹¹⁴ René Clausen, “Song at Dusk” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 8.

¹¹⁵ Clausen, “Song at Dusk,” 2.

introduction of ten measures, the sopranos and altos enter with the first text of the piece, while the tenors and basses continue singing neutral vowel sounds.

This composition includes very few sectional breaks; in fact, as a through-composed piece, the first significant break occurs at measure forty-eight, with a “lift” marking noted in the score. Otherwise, traditional cadential points of arrival do not exist. Alternatively, Clausen motivically develops each nugget of text within itself before continuing to the next. The musical thought which follows, in almost every case, begins before the previous one is complete, achieving a seamless continuity from section to section.

“Barter”

“Barter,” set for SSA voices with piano accompaniment and written “for the Singing Sons Boychoir [of] Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, David R. White, director,”¹¹⁶ was published in 2004 by Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc. The text was written by poet Sara Teasdale (1884-1933), who won the Columbia University Poetry Society Prize in 1918.¹¹⁷

It is easy to begin to dismiss “Barter” as a very simple composition; however, its formal structure is more complex than is first apparent. In a comparable fashion to “To Everything There is a Season,” Clausen establishes a three-measure motive that acts as the “glue” that keeps this through-composed piece together. In figure 2.22, the motive

¹¹⁶ René Clausen, “Barter” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 2.

¹¹⁷ Clausen, “Barter,” 3.

Figure 2.22 René Clausen, “Life Has Loveliness to Sell,” measures 1-14

Gently flowing, espressivo ♩ = c. 120

Piano

mf

pedal freely throughout

11

S1 *mf* Life has love-li-ness to sell, all

S2 *mf* Life has love-li-ness to sell, all

A *mf* Life has love-li-ness to sell, all

that first appears in the piano and repeated soon thereafter by the voices in measures eleven to thirteen can be seen. In measure thirty-seven, this “Life has loveliness to sell” motive is again presented in the voice parts. The composition continues in a through-composed fashion, the material between measures forty-one and seventy-five having nothing melodically or motivically to do with the material that preceded it. In measure seventy-six, Clausen reintroduces the “Life” motive again in the key of D major. The third of the through-composed sections begins immediately afterward, in measure eighty, and continues through the D major chord at measure 101. This cadence begins to establish the only true contrasting section of the piece, a slower choral section that

includes measures 108-117. This contrasting section seems to form the message that Clausen wants us to know and remember, inasmuch as he follows it with the “Life” motive, expressed one last time in the piano, before coming to rest on one final D major chord. Reminiscent of “Ubi Caritas,” it is of interest that all the points of arrival are in D major.

“The Sun Has Climbed the Hill”

“The Sun Has Climbed the Hill,” published in 2004 by Fostco Music Press, is one of the most recent compositions in this study. Set for SSA voices and piano, it uses poetry included in D. H. Lawrence’s “Earth Prayers,”¹¹⁸ and was “Commissioned by the Miami Choral Society: A Children’s Choir, Timothy A Sharp, conductor.”¹¹⁹

“The Sun Has Climbed the Hill” has several similarities to the previous composition discussed, “Barter.” Both have piano accompaniment, are through-composed, are written for SSA voices, and are written in the key of D major with few deviations from the home key. “The Sun Has Climbed the Hill,” however, has a clearer formal design than “Barter,” giving this latter piece a better sense of formal direction. Although through-composed, it can essentially be divided into two unequal “halves.” The first half takes the listener from the opening measures of the introduction to the D major cadence at measure twenty-two. This opening section features traditional diatonic harmony and melody, except for measures eighteen to twenty, which highlight

¹¹⁸ René Clausen, “The Sun Has Climbed the Hill” (Delaware Water Gap, PA: Fostco Music Press, 2004), 2.

¹¹⁹ Clausen, “The Sun Has Climbed the Hill,” 2.

parallel harmonic function as the harmony slips downward from an F major chord to an E flat major chord to D major. This is followed by a lowered seventh cadence in D that adds to the slipperiness of the harmonic function.

The second “half” of this composition is similar to the first, for it too is solidly placed in the key of D major. However, the major difference between the two halves is that the second is more harmonically adventurous than the first and ventures farther away from the home key before coming back. For example, in measures thirty to forty-three, the bass line of the piano matches up exactly with measures eighteen to twenty, with the exception of an intrusive E minor chord. Clausen modifies the work, however, and composes a right-hand accompaniment that changes the intrinsic qualities of the chords. In measure thirty, the F major chord is enhanced with the inclusion of an E, thus changing it into a major seventh chord. In measure thirty-one, the E minor triad in the bass also includes a seventh, making it an A minor/minor seventh chord. In measures thirty-two and thirty-three, tonal ambiguity occurs when the E flat major chord in the bass is accompanied by a series of other chords, making Clausen’s resolution to D major all the more fulfilling at measure thirty-four.

“Jabberwocky”

As musically fascinating as the poetry itself, “Jabberwocky” was published in 2004 by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., and is set for SATB and piano. A superior feature of SBMP publications is the often-included information about the poet and poetry. In this case, one learns that the poem “Jabberwocky” was written by

mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgeson, who is better known as Lewis Carroll.¹²⁰ Unfortunately for this publication, the birth and death dates of 1832-1858 printed on page two of the score are incorrect and should actually read 1832-1898.¹²¹ The composition was “Commissioned by the Detroit Country Day School Concert Choir, Ronald R. Weiler II, Director, to commemorate the choir’s performance at the 2004 Michigan Music Educator’s Inservice Conference and the Michigan School Vocal Music Association’s High School Choral Hour.”¹²²

“Jabberwocky” is the perfect poem for the film-composer nature in René Clausen. The poetry is descriptive, evocative, and dramatic, and Clausen’s writing wrings out every ounce of drama found in the poetry. He composes as if writing for the stage, dividing the poem into five different sections, with the last recapitulating the opening material. Except for the final section, all are through-composed and contain motivic information on the word *Jabberwocky*, recalling previous portions of the piece and giving the composition stability and continuity.

“Jabberwocky” begins in the key of D minor in spite of the key signature of one sharp, not an uncommon occurrence in Clausen’s music. By measure twenty, the piece has fit into its key signature by finding the key of E minor. Clausen adds to the dramatic effect of the poetry by incorporating nine measures of “ah” vowel sounds

¹²⁰ René Clausen, “Jabberwocky” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 2.

¹²¹ Karoline Leach, *Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll): A Brief Biography*. [database on-line] (accessed 29 December, 2005), <<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/carroll/bio1.html>>

¹²² Clausen, “Jabberwocky,” 3.

meant to emulate the sound of wind through the trees. In measures thirty-nine and forty, B naturals combine with the B flats to foreshadow the approaching thorny text: “The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!” The key remains steadfast to E minor throughout this section; consecutive parallel harmonies are common. Clausen uses a common-tone voice leading to transition to the next section of the piece, beginning at measure fifty-three.

The second section has features common to the opening one, as the key does not match the key signature until seven measures into the division. When achieved, the key is F minor, a major second higher than the previous key. This second phase of the piece brings a new item of interest at measure seventy-one when Clausen begins to use a whole-tone scale on F flat to begin moving into a new key and into the next section of the piece. The application of the whole-tone scale works well with the text, “And stood a while in thought,” as there is a sense of pensiveness, a dream-like quality, in the corresponding music.

The third part of “Jabberwocky” is the “fight scene” during which the “Jabberwocky” is supposedly defeated. At measure seventy-six, the key of G minor emerges from the previous section’s whole-tone scale. In his writing, Clausen is usually very careful about how he sets up a new key. In his later works, he often employs common-tone voice leading. In this instance, however, he seems to slide into the key change by step rather than preparing it. Unlike the previous sections of this piece, G minor takes root from the beginning and locks itself in straight through to the key change to C minor at measure 103. This change of key establishes a new mood in the composition, one that is less frantic and intense now that the Jabberwocky is dead.

An *a cappella* section from measures 113-118 is the transition that prepares the listener for the fourth section of the piece. Measure 119 opens in F major, the first major key of the piece. At measure 123, he “muddies the water” somewhat by involving B naturals, thus making a switch to F Lydian. Nonetheless, a festive, lilting mood is achieved. One of the more striking features of this section is the abundance of parallel harmonies used, giving a fanfare-like quality to the section without being literal. However, what takes place next is perhaps the most interesting of all. In like fashion to the “bookend” formal approach discussed in “Hymn of Praise,” in measure 137, after all the celebration of the previous section, Clausen chooses to return to the identical material used at the beginning.

“Turn Around”

“Turn Around” was published in 2004 by Alan Greene Songs (ASCAP), Clara Music Publishing Corp. (ASCAP), and in the United States by Santa Barbara Music Publishing. This SSA and piano setting is an arrangement of the song first published in 1958 by Alan Greene, Malvina Reynolds, and Harry Belafonte,¹²³ and is dedicated to Clausen’s wife, Frankie, his “daughters Katie and Rachel . . . and for mothers and daughters everywhere.”¹²⁴ The dedication is important, as the arrangement comes across as unusually sentimental in the context of the rest of Clausen’s output. The piece is a strophic setting of the original song and, apart from a few color chords and a half-

¹²³ René Clausen, “Turn Around” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 2.

¹²⁴ Clausen, “Turn Around,” 2.

step modulation from D major into E flat, there is little to discuss from an analytical point of view. Regardless, this arrangement would be appropriate for a wedding or other comparable occasion.

“Psalm 108”

One of Clausen’s longer octavos, “Psalm 108” was published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc. in 2004. It is set for SATB, *divisi*, and organ, and is available in a choral/orchestral format. The piece was commissioned by the Bach Society of Saint Louis in honor of Gaylene LaBore’s fiftieth year in the Saint Louis Bach Society Chorus.¹²⁵ The conductor and music director at the time of the commission was A. Dennis Sparger.¹²⁶

“Psalm 108” has two primary themes with two additional motivic ideas employed as transitional devices. This unique and developing new component to Clausen’s compositional palette necessitates study under this title. The first three measures of theme A is demonstrated in figure 2.23a and is exemplified by the text “My heart is steadfast, O God.” Figure 2.23b displays the second theme of the composition introduced at measure fifty-seven in conjunction with the text “I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations.” Both themes are very clearly identifiable from the transitional sections.

¹²⁵ René Clausen, “Psalm 108” (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2004), 3.

¹²⁶ Clausen, “Psalm 108,” 3.

Figure 2.23a René Clausen, “Psalm 108,” Theme A, measures 12-14

Figure 2.23a shows the musical score for Theme A, measures 12-14, of René Clausen's "Psalm 108." The score is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "My heart is stead-fast, O God; My heart is". The tempo is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and the dynamics are *mp* and *f* (forte). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The piano accompaniment features a simple harmonic structure with a bass line and a treble line.

Figure 2.23b René Clausen, “Psalm 108,” Theme B, measures 57-60

Figure 2.23b shows the musical score for Theme B, measures 57-60, of René Clausen's "Psalm 108." The score is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "I will praise you, O Lord, a-mong the na-tions;". The tempo is marked *f* (forte) and the dynamics are *f* and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The piano accompaniment features a simple harmonic structure with a bass line and a treble line.

Figure 2.24a René Clausen, “Psalm 108,” Transitional device I, measures 40-43

To add additional interest to this pattern, Clausen writes a soprano descant that floats above the tangle of sound below, thus infusing new and memorable melodic material into a transitional device. The only text used other than the word *awake* is this single

thought sung by the sopranos: “I will awaken the dawn.” These twenty-eight measures facilitate the modulation from C major of the A section to the next key.

As demonstrated in figure 2.24b, a second transitional section extends from measures eighty-two to 102a. Although the need to move the music from one key or one idea to another is the same, the two transitional sections are dramatically different. In the second, Clausen again uses a single word, *alleluia*, to support the music. However, rather than creating a motivic device using cluster chords, he uses the melody as a point of imitation. When the transitional material concludes in measure 102, Clausen has brought the key back to D major.

Figure 2.24b René Clausen, “Psalm 108,” Transitional device II, measures 87-90

“Psalm 108” concludes with a compositional device reminiscent of the final section of “Laudate.” In “Laudate,” Clausen combines the ritornello idea with one of

the main themes, thus bringing the piece to a satisfactory and exciting, close. He uses a similar effect in “Psalm 108” by creatively placing portions of the B theme (last seen in measures fifty-seven through eighty-one) adjacent to and in collaboration with the imitative material used in the second transition, subsequently ending the composition.

“Plenty Good Room”

Arranged for his Concordia Choir, “Plenty Good Room” is one of the most inimitable pieces in Clausen’s repertoire. Published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing in 2004, the piece is composed for *a cappella* SATB voices with multiple *divisi* throughout. In fact, within the course of the arrangement, it is common for a single voice part to divide simultaneously into two, three, or even four different parts. The result is a very thick choral sound unsurpassed by any other composition to date.

Clausen’s knowledge of vocal jazz comes forth clearly. This is the only composition to date that comes with the instruction “Swing the 8th notes and requires “scat singing.”

“Plenty Good Room” can be divided into one of three component parts: chorus, verse, or transition. Because the lengths of the first two components are a relatively short part of this spiritual, Clausen relies heavily on his writing ability to develop each transition in a manner comparable to transitional sections in “Psalm 108.”

“Plenty Good Room” begins with the choir singing the spiritual’s chorus in unison. A second repetition of the chorus plus a singing of the first verse in SATB harmony follows. The first transitional material begins at measure twenty-five and continues through measure forty, functioning well as “highly-organized improvisation” while facilitating the modulation from G major to A major. At measure forty, Clausen

arranges the second verse of the spiritual, establishing a jocular duet between the women's and the men's voices. Measure forty-nine is the beginning of the longest transition in the piece, seventeen measures of thick choral writing with a very lofty soprano solo. Clausen returns to the chorus for a repetition in B flat major and another in C major before concluding with a strong cadence complete with a soprano high C.

Memorial

Composed in 2002-2003, Clausen's cantata *Memorial* was published in 2005 by the Roger Dean Publishing Company. Clausen has stated numerous times that he considers *Memorial* to be one of the most important compositions of his musical career. The composition is scored for both choir and orchestra and prominently features a baritone soloist; choral *divisi* is common. When compared to other choral/orchestral works in his repertoire, the orchestral scoring for *Memorial* is quite complex and commands the broadest use of the orchestra to date. These forces are comprised of the following: Piccolo; Flute I and II; Oboe I and II; English Horn; Clarinet I and II; Bass Clarinet; Bassoon I and II; Horn I, II, III, and IV; Trumpet I, II, and III; Trombone I and II, Bass Trombone; Tuba; Tympani; Cymbals; Mallets; Snare Drum; Percussion; Harp; Piano; Violin I and II; Viola; Cello; and Double Bass.¹²⁷ The orchestral score is available for purchase only through Roger Dean. The choral rehearsal score includes only a portion of the orchestral reduction, making it very clear that the piece is not meant to be performed without instrumental forces.

¹²⁷ René Clausen, *Memorial*, (Dayton, OH: Roger Dean Publishing Company, a division of The Lorenz Corporation, 2005), 3.

Clausen's inspiration to write this major work, as discussed previously under the subheading of "Kyrie" and as clearly mentioned in the inscription above the Title Bar, came about because of the tragic events that took place in New York City on September 11, 2001. The texts are drawn from several sources and make use of different languages in the quest to exhibit the far-reaching cosmopolitan effect that 9/11 had not only on the United States but on all nations. Aside from English, Clausen uses Hebrew, Arabic, and sacred Latin Mass texts, drawing from the Bible as well as traditional Buddhist meditations. Clausen credits Dr. Olin Storvick and Dr. Mona Ibrahim, both professors at Concordia College, for providing the Latin and Arabic translations of the primary text used in the final section of the work.¹²⁸ Intercessory prayers written by Roy Hammerling of the Concordia College Religion Department also comprise an extended portion of the work.¹²⁹

The American Choral Directors Association commissioned Clausen in 2002 to write *Memorial* as part of its Raymond W. Brock Composer Series, placing Clausen in an elite society of composers. Clausen, the Concordia Choir, and the Concordia Orchestra traveled to the ACDA National Convention in New York City to premiere the work in February 2003.¹³⁰ *Memorial* was recorded at Riverside Church in New York City on February 15, 2003, and was performed by the same performers as listed above, as well as Peter Halverson, baritone.¹³¹ Clausen sums up his own thoughts about being

¹²⁸ Clausen, *Memorial*, 2.

¹²⁹ Clausen, *Memorial*, 8.

¹³⁰ Clausen, *Memorial*, 8.

¹³¹ Clausen, *Memorial*, 2.

an ACDA Raymond W. Brock composer: “This opportunity is, without a doubt, the highest compositional honor of my life.”¹³² Because of the significance of this new cantata, the following discussion will be comparably extensive.

Unlike any other of his published compositions, Clausen discusses the formal design for *Memorial* within two pages of performance notes, found on pages four and five of the choral score. Considering Clausen’s hesitance to annotate his own work, these well-written notes are tremendously important and have been cited liberally in the following discussion.

As discussed in Clausen’s own program notes, “though presented as one continuous movement, [*Memorial*] follows a program that comprises four subsections: ‘September Morning,’ ‘The Attack,’ ‘Prayers,’ and ‘Petitions.’”¹³³ Other than in the performance notes, there are no indications in the score about these subsection delineations. Without those notes, therefore, the performer would not necessarily know Clausen’s intentions or understand what he was depicting. In fact, there is so much thematic information in common between subsections three and four, one might not realize the difference between them.

According to the composer, the opening section “‘September Morning’ paints the picture of a beautiful sunlit morning in New York City.”¹³⁴ He chooses to open the

¹³² *Concordia College: Concordia Choir News Release* [database on-line] (Moorhead, MN, Concordia College Music Department, first accessed 09 January, 2006), <<http://www.cord.edu/dept/music/ensemble/NYACDA03.html>>

¹³³ Clausen, *Memorial*, 4.

¹³⁴ Clausen, *Memorial*, 4.

composition in D major. There is a quick venture into B minor, but overall, the section remains in D. Clausen's choice of chords and harmonic progression are decidedly conservative because of his need to depict the normalcy of that Tuesday morning.

The first choral point of arrival takes place at measure forty-five with a grand D major chord. Clausen then begins to include G sharps (raised fourth scale degree), thus changing the mode to D Lydian. In this context, there is now a sense of forewarning about the key area. That sense of D major "innocence" from the opening forty-five measures is lost slightly with the alteration to this mode. Throughout this entire opening section, no text has been used at all. Contextually, he uses the chorus as an instrumental extension of the orchestra, with only neutral "ah" vowel sounds to illustrate the scene. Clausen describes his use of the chorus as "intoning wordless vocalises in a Debussy-like texture."¹³⁵ The use of neutral vowel sounds is extremely effective because it does not allow text to get in the way of the music.

The G sharps of D Lydian that seemed to foreshadow the attack come into full view during the transition that follows (measures fifty-eight to sixty-eight). While the choral forces continue to hold their D major chord from the previous cadence, a G sharp pedal tone is established. This G sharp pedal prepares the listener for the next section, "The Attack." Unlike "September Morning," which was monothematic, "The Attack" is divisible into two very distinct subsections. Rather than focusing upon any one key area, Clausen utilizes chord clusters to vividly portray the dramatic events as they unfolded that day.

¹³⁵ Clausen, *Memorial*, 4.

The first subsection includes measures sixty-nine to seventy-eight and exposes the panic aboard the airliners. A single word, *Adonai* (which translated means *God*), is uttered in all the voices in a cluster chord before all the voice parts sing or scream into the highest parts of their *tessiturae*. The second subsection of “The Attack” begins at measure seventy-nine. Three jetliners were successfully hijacked on September 11, 2001, and two of them hit the World Trade Center towers. Clausen paints a very vivid image of these acts in measures seventy-nine to eighty-one with six tympani low Cs divided into three percussive points of reference. During the second section of “The Attack,” Clausen’s orchestration becomes dramatic and vivid, resembling a cross between techniques of Igor Stravinsky and John Williams. Clausen’s complex and highly dramatic use of percussion and brass elements between measures seventy-nine and 142 is unlike anything written to date. Conversely, his intentionality toward painting the most striking musical picture is akin to most of his former writing. A new aspect of Clausen’s choral writing comes forth in measures 125-131, where he uses aleatoric choral writing; although he has used this technique in the past, the style is different from anything written previously. Meant to be a wailing effect, it is described by Clausen in the following manner:

At p. 22, measure 125, an indication of “wailing” is given to the chorus. This should be a non-singing tone, covering as much “timbre-space” as possible within every section. The effect should be very tense and dramatic, reflecting the personal terror of a victim of the attacks.¹³⁶

The choral “wailing,” in conjunction with the percussive writing in the orchestral voices, firmly demonstrates the chaotic nature of the hours following the terrorist attack

¹³⁶ Clausen, *Memorial*, 7.

on America. The only text used in measures 119-124 of this second section is “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” These last words of Jesus, spoken in his own darkest hours in the final moments of his life, seem poignantly well suited to be the first words sung at this point in the composition.

As mentioned, the third and fourth sections, “Prayers” and “Petitions,” are interconnected, joined as a single idea even in Clausen’s performance notes. Nevertheless, the beginning of the division between subsections two and three is decidedly at measure 143. Unlike the previous section, which was less dependent upon a clearly defined key area, the third section begins in E Lydian. Clausen calls upon another new aleatoric technique with which to create a sonorous new musical environment. Unlike the procedure used in measures 125-132, this second aleatoric section (measures 151-206) is meant to be calming and peaceful, representing inarticulate prayers mumbled in the background. Here again, Clausen’s rehearsal notes are very helpful in describing the musical action:

Beginning at p. 24, m. 151, the chorus forms an aleatoric backdrop to the baritone solo. The structure of the section is based upon the form of the Buddhist *Metta meditation* in which the circle of inclusiveness expands with each phrase – “may **I** be peaceful, may **you** be peaceful, may **they** be peaceful.” In these segments, the members of each section (S1, S2, etc.) enter at the moment indicated in the score; however each singer is encouraged to sing the theme with rhythmic freedom, independence, and expressive shape, repeating the phrase as necessary. The effect should be of a large number of people in a trance-like state, deep in personal prayer and meditation – random and unmeasured.¹³⁷

The choice of key becomes a more important aspect of this third section, in which three prayers are presented over the course of ninety ethereal, text painted measures. The first prayer begins in E Lydian. While the baritone soloist sings, the

¹³⁷ Clausen, *Memorial*, 7.

chorus sings as described above. All the orchestral and choral activity takes place in the context of a single chord. There are no intermediate cadences in this subsection, and all the musical dramatic action leads only toward the next successive prayer—a prayer that begins in measure 169. Clausen repeats the same aleatoric idea in the key of D Flat Lydian for the next subsection of the piece.

The third and final prayer is similar as well, for all the same reasons. Clausen concludes the section with another modulation down a minor third to the key of G Lydian. Here, Clausen continues using the choral “May I be peaceful” motive in order to begin heading toward the final subsection, “Petitions.” This transitional section incorporates new and hope-filled text: “May I live with ease of heart, may we live in joy!” These final measures of “Prayers” (measures 216-221) are reminiscent of, and seem to paraphrase, measures forty-four and forty-five, recalling the sense of innocence established in “September Morning.”

Clausen’s final subsection, “Petitions,” begins in measure 234 in the key of D major. Just as in “September Morning,” the first text used in “Petitions” is the word *Adonai*. In this section, however, the word *Adonai* inspires a melody that will be used repeatedly and judiciously throughout the rest of the piece (see figure 2.25).

Figure 2.25 René Clausen, *Memorial*, “Adonai theme,” measures 234-243

The image displays a musical score for measures 234-243 of René Clausen's *Memorial*, titled "Adonai theme." The score is written for a solo voice (S Solo) and piano (p). The key signature is G major (one sharp), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo/mood is marked "Espressivo" with a metronome marking of ♩ = c. 72. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 234-238) shows the vocal line with the lyrics "A - do -" and the piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 239-243) shows the vocal line with the lyrics "nai, a - do - nai, a - do - nai," and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings for "p" (piano) and "sim." (simile).

An imitative and prayerful section follows, employing text from Psalm 80. Clausen uses this Old Testament text in a very deliberate manner, having it translated into Hebrew, English, Arabic, and Latin, for reasons explained below in more of his commentary. This imitative section continues, melting into the key of F sharp minor at measure 289. It is here that Clausen recalls thematic content from the previous section by reintroducing the same baritone solo melody used in the previous subsection. The choral counterpoint, however, is reflective of the more recent “Petitions” material, and Clausen uses this final section to developmentally explore a few different key areas: G sharp minor at measure 297, E flat Lydian at measure 304, and C Lydian at measure 313. In measures 238-249, he follows this tonally unstable writing with a solo horn cadenza reminiscent of the flute cadenza featured in the second section of *Crying for a Dream*. The solo baritone makes one more statement following the horn cadenza. In this last prayer of invocation (measures 350-370), Clausen makes a very poignant, but

subtle, commentary upon recent world events: “Gracious and loving God, pour forth your mercy upon us all. If there be any grain of hatred in us, wash us and cleanse us all.” In fact, the entire final section seems to be a social commentary upon the terrorist attack and national and international reaction to it. Clausen describes “Petitions” and his social thoughts about it in the following manner:

The final section, “Petitions,” is an elegiac and introspective musical prayer for mercy, mutual understanding, and hope for the future. The primary text is one verse from Psalm 80, “O God, shine your light on us, and we shall be saved.” This phrase is presented, first sequentially and then simultaneously, in English, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic. In juxtaposing these languages, some of which are the languages of the cultures at war with one another, it is the hope of the composer that in so doing we may be able to find common ground of higher being, and be called away from darkness into light. The piece ends with a quiet Kyrie – a plea for God’s mercy on this world.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Clausen, *Memorial*, 5.

CHAPTER THREE

DEFINING CLAUSEN'S CHORAL OUTPUT BY GENRE

Most choral repertoire, including all of Rene Clausen's compositions, can be assigned a particular genre classification that defines its role in choral music history.¹³⁹ Choral compositions often fall into one of several categories: anthem, mass, motet, oratorio, cantata, chanson, madrigal, partsong, and arrangement (for example, folk, hymn, spiritual, carol). Only those areas of classification into which Clausen's music can be attributed are discussed here, each with three subsections: (1) A definition of each genre (with special emphasis on the intrinsic attributes particular to that genre in the twentieth century), (2) a table of René Clausen's representative works within each particular choral genre where each table includes the title of the various composition(s) and the attributes that qualify it as a member of the genre classification, and (3) a short discussion about one of the select compositions and why it is representative of the genre.

¹³⁹ Some of the information provided throughout this chapter comes from lectures taught by Dr. Dennis Shrock, University of Oklahoma, 1997-2000.

Anthem

Anthem Defined: Clausen's Representative Anthems

Anthem is a broad term used to describe music of a sacred nature for use in a Protestant liturgical or church worship setting.¹⁴⁰ Because of its sacred origins, the anthem shares many common characteristics with its cousin, the motet, which has traditionally been used in Roman Catholic settings. The motet, however, is a more complex composition used more frequently in concert settings. The anthem can be accompanied or *a cappella*, is predominantly more homophonic than imitative, and is most often in English. Because there are higher financial gains in writing for the modern church than for the concert stage, many present-day American composers have chosen this genre. Ralph T. Daniel and John K. Ogasapian have the following to say about the evolution of the anthem in the United States in the twentieth century:

A number of composers did write distinctive and original anthems during the first half of the 20th century, among them Everett Titcomb, F. Melius Christiansen, Leo Sowerby, Clarence Dickinson, and two British immigrants, Tertius Noble and the naturalized Canadian Healey Willan. The anthems of both Noble and Willan are typically English, with strong diatonic harmonies, full-textured organ accompaniments, and the use of choral unison for contrast. Many of Willan's most effective anthems are based on hymn tunes.¹⁴¹

Daniel and Ogasapian continue with the following:

In the late 20th century, the flow of anthems from numerous publishers continued unabated. As in earlier times, most of the pieces were of indifferent quality. During the 1960s and 70s popular musical idioms made distinct inroads in American as well as English church music, and numerous anthems with elements

¹⁴⁰ John Harper "Anthem," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 January 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁴¹ Ralph T. Daniel and John K. Ogasapian "Anthem," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 January 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

of folk, country and even rock style continue to be issued. Few if any of these have established themselves as staples of the choral repertory. Rather, the prevailing style in the century's last decades, to be seen in the anthems of such major figures as Daniel Pinkham, Alan Hovhaness, Lee Hoiby, David Hurd and Alec Wyton, each with his own distinctive idiom, can be characterized as clear textual declamation combined with expressive pictorialism.¹⁴²

Clausen's anthem-writing falls into the second description, his writing being distinctive and filled with the "expressive pictorialism" described. Clausen's anthems eschew anything that could be described as insipid, and he is making marked strides at furthering the anthem as an art form.

Table 3.1 René Clausen Anthem Output

Name of Composition	Publication Date	Inherent Anthem Characteristics
"All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord"	1981	- predominantly homophonic, less complex, with Biblical text
"Hymn of Praise"	1984	- predominantly homophonic, less complex, with Biblical text
"Psalm 148"	1985	- predominantly homophonic, more complex, with Biblical text
"Psalm 100"	1986	- predominantly homophonic, less complex, with Biblical text
"Hosanna"	1988	- predominantly homophonic, more complex, with Biblical text
"At the Name of Jesus"	1990	- more complex with a variety of textures. Sacred text. Composed for a church choir
"The Prayer of Saint Francis"	1992	- homophonic, less complex, with moralistic text
"The Lord's Prayer"	1994	- homophonic, less complex, with Biblical text
"Psalm 150"	1997	- a challenging anthem with polyphonic properties, sacred English text
"Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord"	1999	- homophonic, less complex, with Biblical text. Brass accompaniment.

¹⁴² Daniel and Ogasapian, "Anthem."

“Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us”	2000	- homophonic, less complex Moralistic text, quotes anonymous German hymn tune
“Psalm 23”	2001	- homophonic and song-like, Biblical text
“Morning Has Broken”	2003	- homophonic and song-like with moralistic text
“Laudate”	2003	- predominantly homophonic and largely in the English language, Biblical text
“To Everything There is a Season”	2003	- combination of homophonic and polyphonic writing. Biblical text
“There is No Rose”	2004	- predominantly homophonic, more complex, with sacred text

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Anthem

In the table above, “Psalm 150” is described as a challenging anthem with polyphonic properties. By definition, compositions with polyphonic textures more often fall into the category of motet. There are many more factors, however, that categorize “Psalm 150” much more appropriately as an anthem, and this discussion serves to prove that it is better suited for anthem classification.

The basis of “Psalm 150” on a sacred text immediately indicates it to be either a motet or an anthem, but its often-imitative nature causes the lines to be blurred. There are a few examples throughout the piece where Clausen’s independent voice writing might cause one to think that a motet classification is more appropriate, such as the material between measures sixty-seven through ninety-six. Clausen introduces the “Praise Him with timbrel and dance” theme one voice part at a time in a quasi-imitative format. This same style of writing is used in measures 111-119 and again in measures 148-155.

Regardless of the occasionally imitative texture, “Psalm 150” is still, for many reasons, best classified as an anthem. First, the text is in English, a language much more prevalent in the anthem than in the motet. Because of this choice, “Psalm 150” would have to be almost exclusively imitative to be considered a motet, something that it is not. Secondly, the composition is scored for choir and organ. Accompanied scoring is more commonly used in anthems than in the predominantly *a cappella* sacred motet. Moreover, even though the composition would be a challenge for the average church choir, the piece is not overtly complex. Composed for the Chancel Choir of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, this composition is simply not designed to be simply “art music”—it was written to be a Sunday anthem. Clausen compositions that are clearly definable as motets are generally complex and often written in SSAATTBB formats, as opposed to the much simpler design and execution of “Psalm 150.” When compared to Clausen’s compositions that are decidedly in a much more complicated motet style (such as “Ubi Caritas” and “In Pace”), the classification as an anthem is apparent.

Motet

Motet Defined: Clausen’s Representative Motets

One of the most ancient genres in choral music repertoire is the motet, best defined as a short, sacred, multi-voiced choral composition featuring imitative voice leading. It is customarily in Latin, but is not founded in Roman Catholic liturgy. Consequently, the motet is part of neither the Mass Proper nor the Ordinary. Motets are virtually always *a cappella*, although there are historical accounts of motets being sung

with instruments, *colla parte*. Even though the motet dates back to Medieval times, its peak occurred during the Renaissance era through the work of composers such as Josquin des Pres, Giovanni Palestrina, and William Byrd.

There have been variations in the motet's characteristics throughout the ages; however, the common denominators characterizing a motet from other sacred compositions have remained the same. Motets in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continue to be primarily single-movement, *a cappella* compositions written in Latin, linearly conceived, and often imitative. The determining factor in motets written in other languages is a pervasive imitative texture. Like much of the writing during this past century, the forms associated with the motet are varied. René Clausen has written several notable compositions in this genre, with the writing style falling clearly into the delineations above. Each challenging composition provides a distinctive addition to modern motet literature.

Table 3.2 René Clausen Motet Output

Name of Composition	Date of Publication	Inherent Motet Characteristics
"O Vos Omnes"	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>a cappella</i> - Latin language - linearly conceived in many areas of the composition
"Clap Your Hands"	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>a cappella</i> - larger sections of imitative texture - sacred text
"Magnificat"	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>a cappella</i> - Latin language - even more linear writing with imitative textures
"Seek the Lord"	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>a cappella</i> - quite linearly conceived - sacred text

“Laudamus Te”	1989	- highly imitative composition in Latin - accompanied by percussion instruments
“Peace I Leave With You”	1991	- <i>a cappella</i> - linearly conceived - sacred text
“I Lift Mine Eyes Unto the Hills”	1995	- imitative texture - quite linearly conceived - sacred text
“In Pace”	1997	- imitative texture - <i>a cappella</i> - sacred Latin text
“Bless the Lord, O My Soul”	1997	- imitative texture - quite linearly conceived
“Ubi Caritas”	2000	- <i>a cappella</i> - sacred Latin text - complex composition that is clearly linearly conceived
“Kyrie” from <i>Memorial</i>	2004	- primarily in the Latin language - linearly conceived - often imitative
“i thank You God”	2004	- linearly conceived - <i>a cappella</i> - areas of higher complexity
“Alleluia”	2004	- <i>a cappella</i> - independent voice lines - sacred text

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Motet

Some of Clausen’s most convincing and complex writing takes place in the genre of motet. There is a special relationship between the sacred texts that Clausen chooses and the music to which he sets them. Most of Clausen’s motets are complex and require larger, more sophisticated choirs in order to present a convincing performance of the work. This heightened level of complexity is one of the factors determining whether a motet is actually a motet or simply an anthem. The latter form is not typically well suited for the concert stage, whereas the motet finds a comfortable

place in the concert repertory. “In Pace” and “O Vos Omnes” are shining examples of motets that are perfectly suited for the concert hall.

Another example of Clausen’s motet writing is “Seek the Lord.” In this piece, imitative or independent vocal lines are apparent from the outset, with the first three measures emphasizing this motet-like quality. Independent vocal writing is also used in measures nine through twelve. In this case, the soprano and alto lines are quasi-imitative, although Clausen’s writing does not strictly adhere to classical examples. The strictest example of imitative writing takes place in measures thirty-three through thirty-eight. In this instance, Clausen begins by establishing a point of imitation in the soprano voice. This point of imitation is then strictly repeated in all of the remaining voices (altos begin in measure thirty-four, tenors in measure thirty-five, and basses in measure thirty-seven). In each of these repetitions, both the intervallic relationships between the pitches and the text are identical.

Cantata

Cantata Defined: Clausen’s Representative Cantatas

The cantata is a multi-movement work for chorus and multiple instruments that began as a secular form in the Baroque era, but which has largely been sacred in later eras. It separates itself from Mass works by not making holistic use of the Catholic Mass Ordinary of Kyrie, Credo, Sanctus and so forth. Cantata can, however, encompass multi-movement works for chorus and instruments comprised of a smaller portion of the Mass liturgy. The Vivaldi and Rutter *Glorias*, both of which use the

Gloria portion of the Mass, fall into this category. Colin Timms describes how varied the cantata is in form, composition, and development:

[Cantata is] a work for one or more voices with instrumental accompaniment. The cantata was the most important form of vocal music of the Baroque period outside opera and oratorio, and by far the most ubiquitous. At first, from the 1620s in Italy, it was a modest form, but at its most typical it consists (notably in Italy in the later 17th century) of a succession of contrasting sections which by the early 18th century became independent movements, normally two arias, each preceded by a recitative. Most Italian cantatas of this period are for a solo voice, but some were written for two or more voices. Up to the late 17th century the cantata was predominantly a secular form, but the church cantata, which included choral movements ranging from simple chorale harmonizations to complex, extended structures, was a major feature of Lutheran music in early 18th-century Germany. The standard form of accompaniment gradually expanded from continuo alone in the mid-17th century to an orchestra, including obbligato instruments, in the 18th. Cantatas, mainly secular, were also fairly widely cultivated elsewhere, especially in France and Spain and to a lesser extent in England. Both the secular and the sacred cantata sharply declined in importance after the middle of the 18th century. In contrast to the previous 100 years and more, the cantata has enjoyed no consistent independent existence since then, and the term has been applied, somewhat haphazardly, to a wide variety of works which generally have in common only that they are for chorus and orchestra.¹⁴³

Cantata is a tremendously interesting yet ambiguous form, encompassing an extensive breadth of repertoire. Clarity however, comes from the knowledge that modern American cantatas are most directly influenced by the work of composers of the German Baroque such as Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) and J.S. Bach (1685-1750). Moreover, “in modern usage the German word *Kantate* refers both to the secular Baroque type and to the form of Protestant church music that reached its highest point of development and attainment in the cantatas of Bach.”¹⁴⁴ The four Clausen cantatas listed below are classified as such because they are extended multi-movement

¹⁴³ Colin Timms “Cantata,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 21 January 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁴⁴ Colin Timms, “Cantata.”

compositions for chorus and extended performing forces following in the long-standing German tradition.

Table 3.3 René Clausen Cantata Output

Name of Composition	Date of Publication	Inherent Cantata Characteristics
<i>a new Creation</i>	1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multi-movement work divided into twelve subsections - texts are derived from a variety of sources: Mass, Bible, and secular poetry
<i>Gloria</i>	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three movements comprised of contrasting sections - text is drawn from Mass liturgy, Gloria portion only - performing forces include chorus and brass ensemble
<i>Crying for a Dream</i>	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three-movement work - larger scale performing forces including three SATB choirs, children's choir, and small instrumental ensemble - Native American texts
<i>Memorial</i>	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - large-scale work for chorus and orchestra - single movement known to be conceived as four major divisions - text drawn from both Mass liturgy as well as from sacred and secular sources

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Cantata

Clausen has composed four cantatas over the course of his career. Each work is unique from the others and each demonstrates the diversity of his work in this genre. Each cantata in his repertory makes use of choral forces, some variety of orchestration, and, with the exception of *Gloria*, solo voices as well.

His most recent cantata, *Memorial*, is a work that Clausen considers to be one of his highest achievements. Composed for the American Choral Directors Association, Clausen scored the cantata for chorus, soloist, and a sizeable fifty-piece orchestra. Clausen draws the text for this cantata from multiple sources, including the Bible, the Latin Mass, liturgical prayers, and words and phrases from languages and religious sects and organizations outside the Christian faith. He combines all these texts into a twenty-five-long minute multi-movement work. The titles of the four main subdivisions of the work are as follows: “September Morning,” “The Attack,” “Prayers,” and “Petitions.” Unlike any of his previous cantatas where the sectional divisions are clearly defined, the subsections in *Memorial* are, as Clausen himself describes it, to be presented “as one continuous movement.”¹⁴⁵

It is of interest to note some of the ways in which Clausen’s cantatas have matured, from his earliest to his most recent. In comparing *Memorial* to *a new Creation*, for example, much more thematic development within each movement is evident. *A new Creation* is comprised of twelve shorter movements with very little shared material between them, whereas *Memorial* is comprised of four significantly longer movements, all of which share thematic material. Consequently, there is a deeper sense of thematic continuity tying the latter work together. In addition, Clausen’s use of orchestral forces has also become more enriched as he has grown as a composer. In his cantata *Gloria*, Clausen utilizes small divisions of woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion to bolster the choral forces. When compared to *Memorial*, which makes use of much larger woodwind and percussion forces, it is obvious that Clausen’s

¹⁴⁵ Clausen, *Memorial*, 4.

use of orchestral forces, employed as a tool to achieve a wider variety of musical coloration, has matured dramatically in this most recent composition.

Chanson

Chanson Defined: Clausen's Representative Chansons

The chanson, as the name implies, comes from the French choral tradition. The composition is secular, written in French, *a cappella*, and often polyphonic. The musical rhythms are often dictated by the text through mirroring the rhythm of the language; in addition, the rhythms have historically been heavily influenced by dance forms. One of the most important features of a chanson is its programmatic nature, making it a close cousin of the madrigal. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* describes chanson in this appropriately broad manner:

The term [chanson] has been in use since the Middle Ages and has referred to a very wide range of both poetry and music cultivated by all classes of society, including the medieval epic (chanson de geste), the troubadour and trouvère repertoires, secular polyphony and the related poetry of the 14th through the 16th centuries . . . the air de cour of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the *brunette* of the 17th and 18th centuries, the vaudeville originating in the 16th century and spawning a tradition lasting into the 19th, the art song of the 19th and 20th centuries . . . and folk and popular song of all periods up to the present.¹⁴⁶

Present-day composers follow fifteenth and sixteenth-century models, their music demonstrating traits as described in the following:

Later 15th- and early 16th-century figures in the genre included Johannes Ockeghem and Josquin Desprez, whose works cease to be constrained by *formes fixes* and begin to feature a similar pervading imitation to that found in contemporary motets and liturgical music. At mid-century, Claudin de Sermisy

¹⁴⁶ Don Michael Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1986), 148.

and Clément Janequin were composers of so-called *Parisian* chansons, which also abandoned the *formes fixes* and were in a simpler, more homophonic style, sometimes featuring music that was meant to be evocative of certain imagery.¹⁴⁷

Consequently, all the specific sub-categorizations within the definition of chanson are broadly termed under the same umbrella classification. Clausen's "La Lumière," having been written in French, certainly qualifies as a chanson. Modern examples of chanson model historical ones and are characterized by the use of secular French texts, text painting, and musical rhythm that follows the text explicitly. Clausen's "La Lumière" follows along the lines of other twentieth century composers such as Claude Debussy (*Trois Chansons*), Oliver Messiaen (*Cinq Rechants*), and Morten Lauridsen (*Chansons des Roses*).

Table 3.4 René Clausen's Chanson Output

Name of Composition	Date of Publication	Inherent Chanson Characteristics
"La Lumière"	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - text in the French language - musical rhythm is borne out of the textual rhythms - independent vocal lines - highly programmatic

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Chanson

There is strong indication that Clausen wrote "La Lumière" based upon historical models of French art music. In addition to the use of French, several examples of two other chanson-like characteristics are present in "La Lumière": (1) musical rhythm closely related to the rhythm of the language, and (2) programmatic

¹⁴⁷ "Chanson," *Wikipedia* (first accessed 27 June 2006), < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanson> >

composition. Regarding the musical rhythm, the first example can be seen in the soprano voice in the second measure. When pronouncing the word *voyons*, the first syllable is much shorter than the second. In measure two, Clausen sets these two syllables in quick succession using a sixteenth note followed by a half note. This sixteenth/half note combination is particularly striking in contrast to the longer, sustained notes in the alto voices below. Other rhythmic examples appear as well: the word *lumière* for instance. *Lumière* is comprised of three syllables, with the longer stress on the third. Clausen positions this word in measures fourteen and fifteen and again in measures sixteen and seventeen, in both cases making the third syllable the most protracted.

There are three clear-cut instances of the programmatic nature of “La Lumière,” with the first occurring between measures eighteen and twenty-eight. In this example, Clausen draws inspiration from the text *L’arbe est plus proche, et la sources plus vive* (The tree is closer and the water’s voice more lively). The programmatic writing occurs in the soprano and alto voices as Clausen musically depicts the sound of wind blowing through the trees (*L’arbe*) by means of a series of eighth and quarter notes combined with the “ah” vowel sound. The second example takes place soon after in measures twenty-eight and twenty-nine, where Clausen passes the programmatic writing to the tenors and basses. In this example, the Bonnefoy text is *parmi les mort* (among the dead) with Clausen musically depicting the idea of death by using close harmonies deep in both the tenor and bass *tessiturae*. A final example of programmatic writing is found in the soprano voices in measures thirty-nine through forty-two. Here Clausen is depicting *les cris d’oiseaux* (the cry of birds). Three solo voices emerge from the

soprano texture, singing quite high in their *tessitura*, clearly illustrating birdcalls on a neutral vowel sound.

Madrigal

Madrigal Defined: Clausen's Representative Madrigals

American madrigals are born of the Italian and English traditions of the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Early Italian forms were lighthearted, more closely resembling the *frottola* than the more serious forms we now associate with the term.

Madrigals of today have become defined by the following compositional characteristics:

(1) they are a secular form of choral music; (2) they are in either Italian or English; and (3) they follow an imitative texture with a serious text. As with the French chanson, programmatic writing is common.

The madrigal is an important part of secular choral composition, detailed here by Kurt von Fischer and Gianluca D'Agostino:

A poetic and musical form of 14th-century Italy; more importantly, a term in general use during the 16th century and much of the 17th for settings of various types and forms of secular verse. There is no connection between the 14th- and the 16th-century madrigal other than that of name; the former passed out of fashion a century before the term was revived. The later madrigal became the most popular form of secular polyphony in the second half of the 16th century, serving as a model for madrigals and madrigal-like compositions in languages other than Italian throughout Europe. It set the pace for stylistic developments that culminated in the Baroque period, particularly those involving the expressive relationship between text and music, and must be regarded as the most important genre of the late Renaissance.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Kurt von Fischer and Gianluca D'Agostino "Madrigal," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 21 January 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

The madrigal, which generally adheres to the description above, was reintroduced in the twentieth century and is represented in the output of many composers. Other composers such as Ross Lee Finney (*Spherical Madrigals*), Morton Lauridsen (*Madrigali*), Ned Rorum (*Four Madrigals*), and Elliot Carter (“Musicians Wrestle Everywhere”) follow the programmatic and imitative parameters established by early madrigal writers.

Table 3.5 René Clausen's Madrigal Output

Name of Composition	Date of Publication	Inherent Madrigal Characteristics
“Communion”	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less imitative, but with independent voice leading - secular text - much programmatic writing
<i>Three Whitman Settings</i>	1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - serious madrigal following classical models - highly programmatic - quite imitative, especially in “Quicksand Years”
“Sigh No More Ladies”	1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imitative vocal textures - programmatic writing - secular text - follows frottola model more so than madrigal
“A Jubilant Song”	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programmatic - secular text - lighthearted, reminiscent of the frottola/early madrigal
“Salutation of the Dawn”	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secular text - frequently imitative - programmatic
“Song at Dusk”	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highly atmospheric - independent voice writing throughout the predominantly homophonic setting - programmatic middle section
“Jabberwocky”	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intensely programmatic - imitative writing - secular text

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Madrigal

Clausen has composed several compositions that can be regarded as madrigal because they clearly illustrate characteristics of the genre: (1) secular text, (2) imitative texture/independent voice leading, and (3) programmatic writing.

One of the compositions classified as a madrigal is “Jabberwocky,” which can be labeled madrigal because of its text, its texture, and its abundance of text painting. The first and most basic madrigal characteristic of “Jabberwocky,” based upon Lewis Carroll’s gibberish-laden poem, is its secular text. The second factor, having either an imitative texture or independent voice leading, is proven by its passages of imitative and independent vocal writing. The first example begins in measure twenty and ends in measure twenty-eight. Here it is possible to see not only independent voice leading, but also imitative qualities between bass and alto voice parts as well as contrasting imitative material between the tenor and soprano lines. This same imitative material is later seen between measures 146 and 154 during the recapitulation.

Other independent vocal writing is evident as well. One example arises between measures sixty-one and sixty-four. Not exactly imitative, Clausen’s intentional use of independent vocal lines remains readily apparent. Comparably, a third example occurs in measures seventy-two through seventy-four, where the basses and tenors sing homophonically while the sopranos and altos sing independent vocal material above this homophonic texture. This soprano/alto independent texture features much voice crossing, something that is common in polyphonic writing.

The most convincing argument for placing this dramatic composition into the genre of madrigal is the level of programmatic writing involved. There are dozens of examples, three of which are enumerated here. The first example is found between

measures forty-one and forty-four and accompanies the Carroll text “The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!” Clausen musically articulates this text by changing the standard 4/4 time of 2+2+2+2 into a mixed meter context of 3+3+2. He also places agogic accents on the downbeats of each measure, and *staccati* on both the words *bite* and *catch* in order to better illustrate the “biting” nature of the text.

More programmatic writing can be found in measures eighty-seven and eighty-eight. Here, the Carroll text is “Came whiffling through the tulgey wood.” Regardless of the fact that the words *whiffling* and *tulgey* are both nonsense words, Clausen sets the text melismatically (first in unison and then in parts), the first instance of this kind of writing in the piece thus far. The result is that Clausen provides his own programmatic interpretation of the words. Both *whiffling* and *tulgey* become dark, intense, and foreboding terms, at least through Clausen’s musical definition.

The final example of programmatic writing can be found during the slaying of the Jabberwock between measures ninety-two and 102. Clausen sets this portion of the text quite descriptively, here again making use of agogic accents and *staccati* in order to paint a more vivid picture of the slaying. In fact, Clausen often repeats the word *snickersnack* in order to depict the hero’s *vorpal blade* repeatedly being thrust into the Jabberwock. Clausen’s use of rests in this same place also shows how the hero stops to see whether the Jabberwock is no longer alive, later stabbing it again in order to ensure its death. Clausen even depicts the fatal blow in measures 101-102. This final *snickersnack* is marked both *mezzo-forte* and *ritard*, and brings the fight-scene of this madrigal to a dramatic and programmatic finish.

Partsong

Partsong Defined: Clausen's Representative Partsongs

The term *partsong* encompasses a broad band of repertoire that is quite diverse. By definition, partsong includes any secular choral composition that is neither a madrigal nor a French chanson, is relatively short in length, and is either accompanied or *a cappella*. In the early stages of their development, partsongs were predominately homophonic, and resembled a simple solo song in which treble-dominated textures prevail. Later, this texture gave way to a variety of others, such as choral *a cappella* works and choral works accompanied by piano.

The history of the partsong exists in three nationalistic schools: the German, the English, and the American. The German composer Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) wrote some of the earliest compositions that can be classified as partsongs. Prior to this, most music of a secular nature had been imported from France and Italy, and many of these secular compositions were either madrigals or French chansons, not partsongs. Regardless, Hassler's output was limited, but included such representative partsongs as "Das Herz Tut Mir Aufspringen" and "Ich brinn und bin enhzündt gen dir."

Little secular music was written during the Baroque era. However, with the inception of "singing clubs" during the time of Joseph Haydn, the German partsong began to re-emerge. This tradition continued to grow and flourish because of the extensive work of Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf, and Hugo Distler, all of whom made considerable contributions and advancements to this secular German form.

The partsongs of Haydn were quite popular in England during the Classical Era, preparing for an emergence of an English school of partsong writing. Composers such as C. Hubert Parry and Charles Stanford made early additions to this new field of writing, with Stanford's "The Bluebird" being one of the most famous examples written during the Victorian Era. Other notable composers began to follow suit, with Sir Edward Elgar, Frederick Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gerald Finzi, and Benjamin Britten making substantial contributions.

The American partsong tradition to which Clausen now contributes was first imported from both Germany and England, with William Billings providing many of the earliest examples of American partsong. Comparative to the partsongs of England and Germany, however, the Billings examples are quite primitive. Significant advances were made in the twentieth century as American composers began to develop their unique styles. Composers such as Samuel Barber, Randall Thompson, Irving Fine, Michael Hennagin, and Elliot Carter have all paved the way for more contemporary composers to write partsongs. Aside from René Clausen, other composers who have made respectable contributions to this art form in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries include Morten Lauridsen (*MidWinter Songs*), Paul Sjölund ("Love Lost"), and Stephen Chapman.

Table 3.6 René Clausen Partsong Output

Name of Composition	Date of Publication	Inherent Partsong Characteristics
"Set Me as A Seal"	1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biblical text from Song of Solomon but which has no significant spiritual or moralistic underpinnings - mostly homophonic writing - treble dominated

“Tonight Eternity Alone”	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secular text - tall, homophonic chords indicative of the American partsong school - treble dominated
“Whispers of Heavenly Death”	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quite a few programmatic elements, however . . . - texture is extremely homophonic - tall chords - treble dominated - secular text
<i>Two Songs of Parting</i>	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predominantly treble dominated - secular text - non-imitative - no programmatic tendencies
“The Road Not Taken”	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secular text - some independent voice-leading, although texture is predominantly homophonic
“Oh My Luve’s Like a Red, Red Rose”	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secular text - song-like - completely homophonic
“All This Night”	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secular text(s) - homophonically conceived less a few measures of canonic writing later in the piece
“The Stairs Behind the Sky”	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some independent voice leading - not enough programmatic elements to consider it a madrigal - secular text
“Barter”	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strictly homophonic - secular text - song-like
“The Sun Has Climbed the Hill”	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quite homophonic - secular text - song-like

Discussion of a Selected Clausen Partsong

One of Clausen’s finest partsongs is “Tonight Eternity Alone,” which is a classic example of writing in this genre. In addition, the qualities inherent to the twentieth-

century partsong school are evident. Compared to “Jabberwocky,” for instance, there are no places in “Tonight Eternity Alone” where the listener experiences specific actions. In “Jabberwocky,” for example, the listener musically experiences the slaying of the Jabberwock through Clausen’s vivid writing. It is obvious by Clausen’s way of setting the word *snickersnack* that it is meant to be heard as the sound of the blade, and that the pauses and rests are meant to depict the dying creature meeting its doom. There are no such specific experiences in “Tonight Eternity Alone.”

Homophonic chords, treble-dominated textures, and song-like qualities have often been a straightforward way of classifying a late twentieth-century American partsong, comparative to the madrigal’s largely imitative voice leading and more imitative texture. “Tonight Eternity Alone” has all the features of a solo song with choral accompaniment; the melody is predominantly in the upper voice parts. The composition also starts very homophonically, devoid of any imitation whatsoever. The homophonic texture continues to thicken, and the chords become taller as the composition continues to develop. By measure twenty-five, the four-part SATB texture from the beginning divides ten ways. In fact, the basses alone divide into four parts. The entire D major chord on the downbeat of measure twenty-five covers more than three octaves. This same homophonic texture continues to prevail to the end of the composition. The final eight measures of the piece confirm this texture as the tall, thick, homophonic chords indicative of the American partsong continue.

Arrangement

Arrangement Defined: Clausen's Representative Arrangements

The art of the arrangement has a respectable history. Malcolm Boyd defines arrangement in this manner:

The word *arrangement* might be applied to any piece of music based on or incorporating pre-existing material: variation form, the contrafactum, the parody mass, the pasticcio, and liturgical works based on a cantus firmus all involve some measure of arrangement. In the sense in which it is commonly used among musicians, however, the word may be taken to mean either the transference of a composition from one medium to another or the elaboration (or simplification) of a piece, with or without a change of medium.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, with a history that includes Dufay's *Missa se la face ay pale* as well as Clausen's arrangement of "Plenty Good Room," there is much latitude for interpretation in this widely varied compositional form. In the twentieth century, the folk arrangements of Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, and Benjamin Britten paved the way for composers such as René Clausen to experiment with melodies—melodies that are also steeped in nationalistic and religious pride.¹⁵⁰

Clausen's arrangements include any composition based exclusively upon melodic or thematic material created by another composer, including any work based upon a hymn tune, a Christmas carol, a popular song, or a spiritual. The term *arrangement* is not used to describe any piece of music in which Clausen quotes hymn material, as exemplified in the following pieces: "At the Name of Jesus" (which quotes "In Thee is Gladness), "O Vos Omnes" (which quotes "O Sacred Head Now

¹⁴⁹ Malcolm Boyd "Arrangement," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (first accessed 20 January 2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁵⁰ Boyd, "Arrangement."

Wounded”), and “Let All that Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord” (which quotes “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”).

Table 3.7 René Clausen Arrangement Output

Name of Composition	Publication Date	Inherent Arrangement Characteristics
“Thank the Lord”	1976	- based upon folk tune
“On the Mountaintop Blows the Wind Mild”	1980	- based upon Silesian folk tune
“Cold December Flies Away”	1983	- based upon Catalanian Christmas carol
“Sweet Was the Song”	1985	- based upon English folk tune
“Simple Gifts”	1987	- based upon American Shaker tune
“Deep River”	1990	- based upon traditional American spiritual
“The Water is Wide”	1991	- based upon traditional American folk song
“I am Jesus’ Little Lamb”	1995	- based upon German hymn tune: <i>Weil Ich Jesu Schäflein Bin</i> from the Brüder Choral-Buch (1784).
“Through Our Beating Hearts Remind Us”	2000	- based upon anonymous German hymn tune: <i>Weisse Flaggen</i> .
“O Holy Night”	2004	- based upon traditional French Christmas carol composed by Adolphe Adam (1803-1856).
“Turn Around”	2004	- based on words and music by Alan Greene, Malvina Reynolds and Harry Belafonte.
“Plenty Good Room”	2004	- based on traditional American spiritual.

Discussion of a Selected Arrangement

One of the simplest genres to classify because of its inherent nature of a borrowed melody, all of Clausen’s arrangements are model examples of this genre. The melodies used are drawn from his national, regional, or spiritual heritage and provide examples in which the tune is utilized in its entirety. This is a contrast to compositions

such as “At the Name of Jesus,” “All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord,” and *Gloria*, in which only excerpts or single stanzas of a work are incorporated into the larger compositional texture. In the case of “All that Hath Life and Breath,” Clausen also makes modifications to the melody by placing it in 5/4 time rather than 3/4 time, altering the character of the tune, and thus taking it out of contention for study as an arrangement.

There are notable characteristics identifiable within groups of his arrangements. For example, if one were to discuss comparatively Clausen’s folk songs (listed as such in table 3.7, above), one would find several inherent qualities that link the songs one to another. First, each arrangement features the use of the entire tune, often with multiple strophes or verses. In Clausen’s folk arrangements (especially his earliest ones), the fundamental qualities of the tune and its traditional rhythmic properties are rarely modified. This leads into point number two, which is that Clausen keeps his folk arrangements deliberately simple. Even his later folk arrangements of the early 1990s, such as “The Water is Wide,” demonstrate the same simplistic sensibility, strophic formal design, and unfettered harmonies, that were apparent in earlier models such as “On the Mountaintop Blows the Wind Mild.”

In slight contrast, his hymn and spiritual settings are much more harmonic and formulaic in development than his folk arrangements. One of his earliest folk arrangements, “Thank the Lord,” is a simple composition that he sets strophically, gently working with the tune, adding little more than harmony and a tambourine to the setting. His compositional growth in this genre is especially noticeable compared to one of his most recent spiritual arrangements, “Plenty Good Room.” It is considerably

more challenging because Clausen affords himself more compositional license when arranging a spiritual, preferring to keep folk songs folk-like. “Plenty Good Room” features a much more complex harmonic and formulaic palette. Later arrangements feature more complex key structures, longer transitional sections, and original writing that is motivically drawn from the borrowed material.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHORAL MUSIC OF RENÉ KING CLAUSEN: A RETROSPECTIVE DISCUSSION

Summary

The choral music of René King Clausen is a model for other such compositions of the early twenty-first century because it is intelligently written, has audience appeal, and advances the choral art through a constant and continual evolutionary process. This study of Clausen's music is a first step to understanding some of the intrinsic answers to questions about the direction of contemporary choral music, for example: 1) in what choral genres are composers continuing to write? 2) How do composers now construct these compositions in order to make them unique and fresh in the eyes and ears of contemporary listeners and scholars? Moreover, 3) what is the mission, the driving force that keeps composers like Clausen writing? This summary will seek to answer these three questions as they pertain to the musical and artistic expression of René Clausen.

The Choral Music of René Clausen in Review

Clausen's repertoire is widely varied. Between 1976 and 2004, he has published in excess of sixty-six compositions, many of which are substantial, lengthy works. He has created pieces in several different sacred genres including anthems, motets, and cantatas, as well as a variety of secular genres including chansons, madrigals, and partsongs. He has also written several sacred or secular arrangements that stylistically

encompass everything from hymnody to popular music to the American spiritual. Even though there are common threads that relate the compositions one to another, every composition is different from the last.

One of the most important questions is the second: How do composers like Clausen construct new music that is fresh and exciting? It is the inference of the author that Clausen seeks to accomplish this by taking standard formal designs, modifying them, and creating hybrid versions of standard models. These modifications displace the listener's sense of musical expectation, causing interest to be piqued at every cadence. However, Clausen still employs three basic forms when constructing his music: strophic forms, sonata form, and through-composition. Binary form, ritornello form, and other forms are used but are much less prevalent.

Regarding Clausen's compositional expression through strophic forms, the most prevalent use of this design is found in his arrangements. One of the earliest is his 1976 publication, "Thank the Lord." In this case, he uses the form in a simple manner, developing it very little and rarely going beyond what would be expected. As his career progressed and his compositional palette grew, these strophic forms matured greatly. "Simple Gifts" is an example of a more mature writing style, in which Clausen expands the strophic form, treating it more as a theme-and-variation technique and allowing himself much more opportunity to explore and create through this more malleable construction. Nevertheless, one of the most recent strophic structures is his 2004 publication of "Plenty Good Room," which is derived from the same basic framework as "Simple Gifts" yet is much more thoroughly developed. In this most recent strophic

arrangement, Clausen uses much less of the original material, placing more emphasis on the intervening transitional material located between the strophes.

Sonata form (and its derivatives) is the structure that Clausen uses most frequently in his compositions. The earliest example of sonata form is “All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord,” published in 1981. In a comparable manner to the basic way in which “Thank the Lord” was written, “All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord” is comparably simple. Clausen uses a basic ABA structure to create and develop his theme, later contrasting it with complementary B material. The recapitulation is nearly identical to the opening material. Clausen’s later sonata-based compositions are more intricately written. In these cases, the repetition of the A material is more freely recapitulated and, although similar, is not an exact replication of the opening material. A good example of this more mature writing is witnessed in *Gloria*. In this larger-scale, three-movement work, sonata form is used on a much more sophisticated level. Symphonic sonata form, following classically based examples, is the framework upon which he creates this work. One also witnesses the use of a more developmental approach to key areas. As his work progresses in sonata form over time, Clausen becomes much more deliberate about his choice of keys, an indication that his use of sonata form is significantly maturing. Although used less frequently in recent years, Clausen still uses sonata form in some of his later works, such as “There is No Rose,” in which the traditional anonymous text seems to necessitate the use of sonata form’s time-honored construction.

In numerous compositions, however, Clausen uses a more through-composed formal design. An early example is “At the Name of Jesus,” published in 1990.

Previously, Clausen was headed in this direction, expanding the sonata form's middle section into two or three subsections. This is clearly the case in "Hymn of Praise," in which an ABCDA design was used. In this piece and others, Clausen did not have a problem creating new thematic ideas; before "At the Name of Jesus," he always felt compelled to return to A material, regardless of whether it returned in the original key. By the time of "At the Name of Jesus," Clausen had removed the shackles associated with traditional forms, an entrée which resulted in a wealth of new writing. Primarily, he was able to become evermore programmatic. "Song at Dusk," for example, is much more eloquent because of its musical description of the setting sun without the need for a recapitulation. One of the best through-composed examples, however, is his most recent large-scale work, *Memorial*. In stark contrast to *Gloria*, a three-movement work following symphonic sonata form, this 2005 publication was entirely through-composed. Following the "Song at Dusk" example on a much larger scale, *Memorial* was written to be much more dramatically descriptive. Because of Clausen's desire to relate the story of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, through-composition was the form best employed to express the inherently challenging plethora of emotions. Sonata form would simply not have expressed the emotional palette of musical colors necessary to make the composition a viable and long-lasting work of art.

The third and final question that keeps coming to the fore is this: "What is Clausen's impetus for writing choral music?" The answer helps explain what drives Clausen to write better choral music with each new composition. His driving force is his need to set the highest quality texts to music, and his choices are widely diverse and eclectic. Throughout his career, Clausen has drawn source material from the Bible,

from standard folk and hymn repertoire, and from highly reputable ancient and contemporary secular poets such as Walt Whitman and Robert Frost. He also has an eye for texts written by poets and writers who are lesser known but are able to convey a profound spiritualistic meaning. In *Memorial* and *Crying for a Dream*, to name only two, Clausen's need to express texts in a non-superficial, often programmatic way has led to a bounty of repertoire that has continued to increase in quality, power, and complexity.

Conclusions

Because René Clausen is still in the middle of his career, it is challenging to draw formal and final conclusions about the long-standing impact of his music while still maintaining a sense of impartiality. If considering only the quality and breadth of Clausen's compositional output, it would be simple to defend the premise that he is one of America's best contemporary choral composers. Being included in that exclusive list, however, is not determined by the number of compositions he has written or by the number of genres in which he has output. It has much more to do with the fact that several of his compositions may indeed have longevity in future centuries. The compositions that have the greatest chance of remaining a viable part of future repertoire are his works for the concert stage: the motets (such as "In Pace" and "O Vos Omnes"), the partsongs (such as "Tonight Eternity Alone" and, and perhaps even his chanson, "La Lumière.") Several of these compositions are notable because they already seem to be a historical testament to the essence of choral music in contemporary America. It is not so simple to assert that his larger works will also have this same impact in the future; in comparison, his *a cappella* works continue to be his strongest

output. It will be important to track and study Clausen's future compositional endeavors in order to ascertain his true place in American and international music history.

Recommendations for Further Study

Throughout the course of this study, further actions for doctoral study became apparent. Because the long-standing historical nature of Clausen's compositions cannot be known, it will be important to follow his ongoing career. Presently in his fifty-third year, Clausen could potentially write choral music for another thirty years or more. Consequently, this document is only a half study. The other "half" of his repertoire will need to be discussed in thirty or more years' time when Clausen is no longer adding new compositions to his repertoire.

As this current study progressed, however, other ideas for further study emerged. Because of the tight marriage between Clausen's music and the texts he has set, it would be worthwhile to investigate how he uses text to inspire his writing. This study could focus on the programmatic nature of this writing and the incidence of common traits from one composition to the next.

From a music theory standpoint, it would be fascinating to study Clausen's use, or non-use, of traditional harmonic function, and its evolution from his earliest compositions to his latest. This study would be especially intriguing by delving into Clausen's use of the liturgical church modes. Special attention could also be taken to analyze his modulations from key to key to ascertain whether there are patterns intrinsic to his writing.

There are many other options available. It will be up to many other scholars to continue peeling back the layers of Clausen's music so that eventually we have a clearer idea of what makes his music so unique, so powerful, and so meaningful to audiences around the world.

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