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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"THE THREE HERMITS": STUDY OF AN OPERA BY STEPHEN H. PAULUS

A Document

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

STEPHANIE L. KRUGER
Norman, Oklahoma
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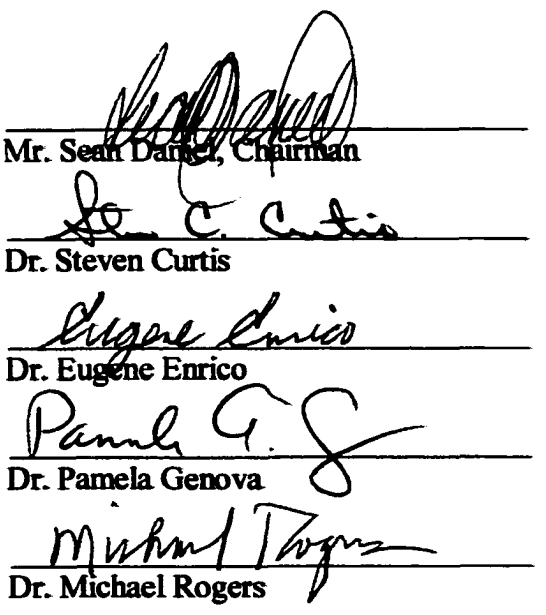
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"THE THREE HERMITS":
STUDY OF AN OPERA BY STEPHEN H. PAULUS

A DOCUMENT

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY



Mr. Sean Daniel, Chairman

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Dr. Eugene Enrico

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ABSTRACT

Stephen Harrison Paulus is one of today's leading American composers. A versatile and prolific composer of many genres, Paulus finds himself equally at home with works ranging from orchestral music to art songs. His current catalogue contains over two hundred works. Stephen Paulus' ability to create imaginative and beautiful vocal lines has contributed to his reputation as a leading composer of opera as well. His operatic works are in great demand. Paulus has written eight operas, most of which were commissioned by the Opera Theater of St. Louis. Paulus' latest opera, *Heloise and Abelard*, was premiered in April, 2002 at the Juilliard Opera Center, which commissioned the work.

The Three Hermits is a one-act opera based on a short folk story by Leo Tolstoy and tells the story of a bishop who receives a lesson in humility when faced with three truly holy men on a remote island. Recent performances of *The Three Hermits* in Salt Lake City and the wide-ranging success of its final chorus, "Pilgrims' Hymn," make this work especially noteworthy. This operatic work is discussed with regard to choice of text and musical characteristics. An interview with the librettist reveals vital information pertaining to the original concept of the project and *The Three Hermits'* transition from short story to dramatic setting. An interview was conducted with the composer to gain insight into how he perceives the project of composing opera and what processes are followed in its completion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Three Hermits first came into being in the form of a short story by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910). Tolstoy is best known for works such as *The Cossacks* (1863), *War and Peace* (1869), *Anna Karenina* (1877), and *What is Art?* (1897).[1] Between 1884 and 1886 Tolstoy also wrote a great number of short stories based on folk tales. *The Three Hermits* (1886) was one of approximately fifteen works intended for a form of serialized publication in much the same manner as Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* or George Eliot's *Felix Holt.*[2] In keeping with the other stories of the series, *The Three Hermits* depicts spectacular events that did not actually happen but leave the reader bound in the glory of God.

During this same period Leo Tolstoy suffered a great crisis of faith that so troubled him he produced a novel, *Confession* (1884), in which he struggles to find his place in religion, society, and God's will. In *Confession*, Tolstoy discusses that as a younger man he had faith only in his role as an artist/poet and his perception of his influence on others. After much initial success, Tolstoy realizes his faith is misplaced:

> This faith in knowledge, poetry, and the evolution of life was indeed a faith, and I was one of its priests. Being one of its priests was very profitable and quite pleasant. I lived a rather long time in this faith without ever doubting its truth. But in the second and especially in the third year of such a way of life I began to doubt the infallibility of this faith and started to examine it more closely.[3]

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[1] John Bayley. *Leo Tolstoy* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, Ltd., 1997), ix-x.

[2] Ernest J. Simmons. *Tolstoy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1973), 146-147.

[3] Leo Tolstoy. *Confession* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 19.

As Tolstoy struggled to find his place in faith and religion, he tried to resolve his feelings through his writing. One of the results of Tolstoy's effort to reconcile his faith is the short story, *The Three Hermits*. He realized that for him the answer to finding true faith does not always lie in the more obvious solution, like a church or specific religion, and is often combined with a sense of irony. As author Ernest J. Simmons points out, Tolstoy uses humor to lead us to truth;

> The rather pompous bishop, after teaching the Lord's Prayer to the ignorant hermits on an island, decides they need no further lessons in the faith when he discovers them running on the surface of the water in pursuit of his ship to seek further instruction from him.[4]

The folk setting of this story lends itself easily to a stage setting. *Hermits'* spiritual and mythological basis results in compelling storytelling. Its central themes of faith, arrogance, and hubris[5] are the backbone of many plays, operas, and novels. The Bishop's excessive pride and subsequent fall are ripe with dramatic tension as the story unfolds. It is relatively easy to see why this particular story was eventually set as an opera. Composer Stephen Paulus completed his opera based on this short story in 1997.

Stephen Harrison Paulus (b. 1949 Summit, New Jersey) is one of this generation's most important composers. A versatile writer of over two hundred works, Paulus' compositions range from symphonies and concerti to pieces for chorus, piano, and solo

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[4] Ernest J. Simmons. *Introduction to Tolstoy's Writings* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 141.

[5] Hubris is defined by *Webster's New World Dictionary* as arrogance caused by excessive pride.

singer. His music is appealing and commands attention. Stephen Paulus is one of very few composers today who is able to support himself solely on commissions from compositions, thus separating himself from most other working composers. Since 1997, Paulus also published many of his own compositions, including *The Three Hermits*. This important aspect of his career was brought about by the early success of *The Three Hermits* and public demand for sheet music of the choruses.[6]

Paulus' musical style has proven to be adaptable to many genres though there is an obvious emphasis on vocal music. Paulus received commissions from such notable vocal ensembles as the Dale Warland Singers, Robert Shaw Festival Singers, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and the Atlanta Singers.[7] He had works premiered by such diverse solo performers as Thomas Hampson, Leo Kottke, and Doc Severinson. Stephen Paulus also had orchestral works premiered at the Tanglewood, Aspen, and Santa Fe music festivals.

Among Paulus' most acclaimed works are his operas. He wrote eight operas which were commissioned by entities such as the Opera Theater of St. Louis, the Berkshire Opera Company, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Juilliard Opera Center. His operatic works are: *Harmoonia* (1991), *Heloise and Abelard* (2002), *The Postman Always Rings Twice*

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[6] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

[7] Beverly Taylor, "An Interview with Stephen Paulus" *Choral Journal* (March 1997), 17.

(1982), *Summer* (1999), *The Three Hermits* (1997), *The Village Singer* (1979), *The Woman at Otowi Crossing* (1995), and *The Woodlanders* (1985).[8]

A student of Dominick Argento and Paul Fetler, Paulus founded the Minnesota Composers Forum with Libby Larsen in 1973, won a Guggenheim Award in 1982, and served as composer-in-residence with Libby Larsen with the Minnesota Orchestra from 1983 to1987 and the Atlanta Symphony from 1988 to 1992.[9] Stephen Paulus currently serves on the board of directors of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and resides in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he continues his career in composition.

The adaptation of *The Three Hermits* into a church opera in one act was the original concept of librettist and author, Michael Dennis Browne. The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota commissioned the opera.[10] *The Three Hermits* was premiered April 24, 1997. The opera's minimal orchestration and accessible vocal forces make this work affordable for small budget venues, for it was intended to be manageable for churches that maintain a music program.[11] Rich harmonies and beautiful vocal lines

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[8] Ruth E. Krusemark, "The Organ Music of Stephen Paulus" (D.M.A. diss., University of Kansas, 1998), 47-49.

[9] Don Michael Randel, ed. *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 675.

[10] Stephen Paulus, *The Three Hermits*, libretto by Michael Dennis Browne (St. Paul: Paulus Publications, 1997), ii.

[11] Scott Robinson, "Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits*" *The American Organist* (September 1997), 86.

make this work unforgettable. *The Three Hermits* is an opera that is at once spiritual and compelling.

The Three Hermits is a morality tale of arrogance told through the eyes of a bishop who sees the world only in terms of right and wrong. The bishop, his mother, and several pilgrims are traveling across the White Sea. The bishop hears the tale of three holy men on an island and ventures there, certain that they must be in need of spiritual guidance. He endeavors to teach them the Lord's Prayer, believing that their method of prayer and expression of faith is incorrect. The bishop leaves the island pleased he has accomplished his goal in teaching this prayer to the men. Back at sea, the Bishop is stunned when the hermits run across the surface of the water to find the bishop and clarify parts of the prayer they forgot. He realizes he was a fool in the face of this miracle.[12]

The Three Hermits is a benchmark piece in the catalogue of Stephen Paulus, and any discussion of his operatic works must certainly include this opera, for it is representative of his compositional craft and gift for creating dramatic musical settings. The nuances conveyed in the text setting of this opera create a moving experience for the listener. The textures and vocal characteristics combine to leave no doubt as to the lesson the bishop learns at the opera's conclusion as they draw the audience into the awakening as well. Paulus says of his opera, "It's a story about grace and humility, which are things in short commodity these days. So I think it's a valuable lesson."[13]

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[12] Robinson, "Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits*," 86.

[13] Robinson, "Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits*," 86.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to present an examination of an operatic work by one of today's most important American composers. This research provides vocalists with a tool containing crucial information to aid in shaping interpretive decisions. Additionally, students of American opera have another resource in this genre.

The Three Hermits is truly representative of the operatic compositions of Stephen Paulus and as such is a central figure in discussion of such works. Part of the study involves a substantial interview with the composer to determine the thought processes and writing procedures that a leading composer follows when creating a work of this magnitude. An examination of writing characteristics, dramatic presentational style, and the source material for the opera are also important aspects of the study. Close attention is paid to this texturally-driven style of composition including vocal characteristics, text painting, how rhythm is more than a time signature, harmonic settings, and texture at important dramatic moments of the opera. By identifying these aspects of Paulus' compositional style we begin to have an understanding of the exceptional quality of his work.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Stephen Paulus has composed eight operas, and to this date no study of any one of these works has been undertaken. There are two other existing dissertations on his works, however. One of these dissertations covers his organ compositions (Krusemark) and the other is a survey of his choral works (Smith). The only other existing literature on the operatic works of Stephen Paulus is limited to articles from various periodicals, and these are typically general observations about his compositions and do not relate specifically to the task of writing an opera. It is of critical importance to have a thorough examination of how this outstanding American composer creates opera, through analysis and the composer's own point of view, especially in light of the noticeable lack of available print materials. In years to come Stephen Paulus will certainly be regarded as one of the finest composers of this era. We must endeavor to capture the essence of his style and approach to work now, while he may participate in such studies, in contrast to Haydn, Mozart or any composer of previous eras who cannot tell us how they created their musical legacy.

The composer's personal observations about opera are enlightening to performers and conductors seeking to perform not only *The Three Hermits* but his other operas as well. Information pertaining to vocal line characteristics, harmonic underpinnings, text painting, and rhythmic qualities are especially helpful to singers preparing arias by Stephen Paulus. This study provides information regarding the character and dramatic nature of this opera and offers a perspective on the characters depicted within the opera.

LIMITATIONS AND NATURE OF THE STUDY

The study of opera is a central issue to students of vocal arts. Standard repertoire students learn is typically selected from operas of European traditions. Yet, it is equally important that American students study operatic works by American composers, and Stephen Paulus represents the very best of the American opera tradition today. His works stand out in the field in terms of compositional skill and dramatic content. *The Three Hermits* is an important work for its beautiful simplicity and elegant vocal lines. The quality of this work commands special attention in a study of this nature.

The examination of his compositional and dramatic style is based on original analysis of *The Three Hermits*, as well as information obtained in the composer interview and observations made in the dissertations of Larry Smith and Ruth Krusemark. A videotaped master class with Stephen Paulus (*Stephen Paulus on Composing for Chorus*) also contributes to the style analysis. An attempt is made to highlight critical dramatic and musical points in the opera and discuss how these moments were constructed to increase dramatic tension.

This study includes a complete listing of all compositions by Stephen Paulus. There is also a survey of related literature including two other dissertations on choral and organ works of the composer. As is problematic with the researching of most living composers, there is not a great amount of literature available as source material on Stephen Paulus. Available literature is limited to the two dissertations mentioned previously and articles from periodicals or music reference texts.

As part of this study, an in-depth interview was conducted with the composer in which he discusses his approach both to composing opera and composing for voices. This interview serves as the main source material of this study. The composer also maintains an extensive web site. At the present time, *http://www.stephenpaulus.com* is the most comprehensive resource with regard to the composer and is currently the main public source of information about his career and works.

An interview was also conducted with the opera's librettist, Michael Dennis Browne. Browne is a published author of six poetry collections and has collaborated with Stephen Paulus on several projects in a working relationship that has spanned more than twenty-five years. This interview highlights the relationship between the original short story and how it was adapted for a stage presentation.

Although Stephen Paulus has completed several operas thus far, this study is limited to just one of these works, *The Three Hermits*, for an attempt to analyze each of these works would far exceed the scope of this study, and a close examination of one work permits a sharper focus of the study. *The Three Hermits* serves as a magnificent focal point in the operatic works of this American composer, Stephen Paulus.

Additionally, a brief comparison is made between the original Tolstoy and this opera. My intention is merely to point out differences between the versions. Differences may range from overall themes and imagery to the inclusion of central and peripheral characters and how additional characters affect the outcome of the story.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

An extensive search of available reference tools was conducted to obtain information on Stephen Paulus and *The Three Hermits*. Worldcat, OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.), First Search, and various search engines were among those internet resources consulted for the purposes of this study. This search resulted in the location of the dissertations of Ruth E. Krusemark (*The Organ Music of Stephen Paulus*), Larry Smith (*The Choral Music of Libby Larsen and Stephen Paulus: An Examination and Comparison of Styles*), and Penelope Ann Speedie (*American Operas on American Themes by American Composers: A Survey of Characteristics and Influences*). Several helpful texts related to twentieth-century opera such as *Recent American Opera: A Production Guide* by Rebecca Hodell Kornick, *The Companion to Twentieth Century Opera* by George Martin, and *Perspectives: Creating and Producing Contemporary Opera and Musical Theater: A Series of Fifteen Monographs* published by Opera America were also discovered at this time.

Of the dissertations mentioned previously, only Smith's study contains an in-depth interview with the composer, yet it is limited to a discussion of Paulus' choral music; however it remains valuable to this study in terms of the composer's style of composition with regard to the treatment of voices. Ruth E. Krusemark's research is beneficial here in terms of identifying some of Paulus' general style characteristics.

Stephen Paulus is mentioned in a variety of periodicals such as *The American Organist*, *Choral Journal*, and *Notes* (Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association).

Cursory citings in music reference texts such as *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians,* and *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* are also available. These references contain limited biographical information and lists of important works in various genres.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into eight chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the study, containing information regarding the necessity of this research. There are also portions of the introduction pertaining to how the study was conducted, the limitations of the study, and a section surveying related literature.

Chapter two focuses on the composer of *The Three Hermits*, Stephen Paulus. A biographical sketch of the composer is offered along with typical compositional characteristics, which provided a closer inspection of his style and which of those elements are included in *The Three Hermits*.

The librettist, Michael Dennis Browne, is the subject of the third chapter. It includes a brief examination of some of his other published works and biographical information. His approach to adapting *The Three Hermits* for dramatic presentation is discussed at this time.

The fourth chapter centers on the opera itself. A brief background on Tolstoy's short story follows a synopsis of the operatic version. A comparison between the original short story and the operatic version focuses on central theme, characters, and content. Compositional traits of Stephen Paulus are discussed and associated with excerpts from the vocal score to highlight these points. Special attention is paid to text setting, vocal line characteristics, rhythmic characteristics and tendencies, harmonic characteristics, and textures at important dramatic moments of the opera. The fourth chapter closes with some detail regarding voice casting, instrumentation, and the world premiere performances.

Chapter Five contains a transcription of an interview conducted with Stephen Paulus in St. Paul, Minnesota where the composer resides. This interview was accompanied by a visit to the church where the opera was premiered, House of Hope Presbyterian Church. Observing the church allowed me the opportunity to take several photographs of the initial performance location, some of which appear in the pages of this study.

Chapter Six presents a transcription of the interview conducted with Michael Dennis Browne. This interview was also conducted in St. Paul, Minnesota. Browne resides in Minneapolis and teaches poetry and creative writing at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul and has been associated with Stephen Paulus for more than twenty-five years. The discussion shows aspects of adapting a literary work for stage presentation and the collaborative process between composer and librettist.

Chapter Seven contains a transcription of a joint interview with the composer and the librettist in which they discuss aspects of collaboration on *Hermits* and other projects. The discussion also contains information relating to the opera's world premiere and subsequent performances. Paulus also shares his thoughts on the business of publishing music and how his Paulus Publications came into being.

The eighth and final chapter consists of conclusions based on discoveries made during the course of this study. A bibliography and appendices containing the compositions of Stephen Paulus to date, photographs of the premiere site and rehearsals, and a discography close the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMPOSER

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

People want to be sort of lost in the music. . . the cool thing about music is it's a communal activity that everybody experiences individually.[14]

Stephen Harrison Paulus was born on August 24, 1949 in Summit, New Jersey. The Paulus family moved to Roseville, Minnesota when Stephen was two years old. He showed signs of being musically gifted from the time he was a very young child and music was a fixture in the Paulus household. His father, a chemical engineer, was a church organist by avocation. His parents had a piano and an old reed organ in the home. It was his father who encouraged Paulus' musicality and eventually began teaching him to play the organ when he was eight years old.

Formal piano lessons began at age ten and his first few compositions followed soon thereafter. Paulus' compositional career began when he was just thirteen because it was then that he discovered some blank staff paper in the piano bench. His earliest works were an attempt to write pieces that were imitations of those he was studying. However his

[14] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

writing expanded during his high school years becoming more romantic and similar in style to works of Rachmaninoff. Paulus says of these early works,

> They were nothing original or anything like that, just a lot of junk probably but, you know. You had to start someplace and imitation is a good place to do that.[15]

In the fall of 1967, Paulus enrolled at McAlester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he continued studying piano. After two years he transferred to the University of Minnesota, where he ultimately completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Piano Performance in 1971. At the urging of a friend he took a job at the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota between 1967 and 1969, where he played the sunrise services and his friend served as choir director. Eventually the two young men switched roles at the church due to Paulus' performance anxiety.

This experience would later become very influential in Paulus' career. The choir at the church was very small; some of the participants were not able to read music while others read very well. Because of this disparity he had difficulty finding music the choir could prepare and perform with only a one-hour rehearsal once per week.[16] His frustration led to composing his own music for the ensemble, an experience he found to be very rewarding. Some time later, he sent of few of these compositions to a local publisher and when he received an unexpected royalty check it stirred his enthusiasm for a career in

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[15] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

[16] Larry Smith, "The Choral Music of Libby Larsen and Stephen Paulus: An Examination and Comparison of Styles" (D. M. A. diss., Arizona State University, 1998), 94.

composition.[17] He continued his education at the University of Minnesota and changed his area of study from Piano Performance to Theory and Composition. His original goal had been to pursue a career as a concert pianist, but he ultimately realized that he lacked the necessary ambition for solo performance. He began to focus on composition as his life's work. Paulus completed his Master of Arts degree in Music Theory and Composition in 1974 and received his Ph.D. in Composition in 1978. His primary instructors during his studies were Paul Fetler and Dominick Argento.

During his Master's studies he began an important collaboration with composer Libby Larsen, who was also a student at the University of Minnesota. The two graduate students realized that the only element the university composition program lacked was a forum for performance of their work. So they secured a student activities grant of four-hundred dollars and founded The Minnesota Composer's Forum in 1973. They arranged public events and garnered the support of colleagues to play their works by paying them just five dollars per performance with the promise that they would be able to make more money in subsequent performances.

The Minnesota Composer's Forum received a state arts board grant, but they were required to disassociate themselves from the university in order to accept the funding. The Minnesota Composer's Forum continued to grow and gained the attention of the Macknight Foundation which awarded them a six-year grant in 1974 that provided fifty-thousand dollars per year. The Minnesota Composer's Forum premiered one work annually by

[17] Krusemark, "The Organ Music of Stephen Paulus," 4.

Larsen and Paulus, as well as works by other young composers. During the six year period Paulus served as development director to Larsen's concert manager. Paulus left the organization in the fall of 1983, but he continued to serve on its board and as a consultant. The Minnesota Composer's Forum is now an internationally acclaimed arts program with an annual budget of over one million dollars, an amazing achievement that began with a very modest student activities grant.[18]

In 1975 Paulus and his wife were married. They have two sons, the older of which is a freshman jazz trumpet major at the Manhattan School of Music and the younger is in high school and plays cello and piano. They make their home in St. Paul, Minnesota, where they have always lived, with the exception of the four years they maintained an additional residence in Atlanta when Paulus was the Composer-In-Residence with the Atlanta Symphony from 1988 to 1992.[19]

In addition to a very busy schedule of composition and personal appearances, Paulus currently spends a great deal of his time overseeing the daily operations of Paulus Publications. Paulus' publishing firm came into existence following his increasing frustration with dwindling royalties and the inability of his publishers to adequately promote his work. Paulus feels that publishing companies are simply not motivated to promote classical works when they can generate millions of dollars of income through the licensing of music to advertisers, film makers, and television producers.

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[18] Krusemark, "The Organ Music of Stephen Paulus," 4.

[19] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

The situation was pushed to the fore when Paulus was approached shortly after the premiere of *The Three Hermits* by a local choral conductor who wished to use the final chorus, "The Pilgrims' Hymn," in a concert. Choral Director Kathy Saltzman Romey, of the University of Minnesota, inquired about the possibility of having the hymn extracted from the opera as a separate piece so as not to have to acquire the whole operatic score. Paulus knew that his publishers would simply tell customers they would have to purchase the entire score rather than accommodate them by agreeing to separately publish the hymn. He had a prior arrangement with the publisher by which if Paulus ever had a piece he wished to keep, he would be able to do so. To this point he had felt no need to do that. Paulus decided that *Hermits* was special, and he would invoke agreement to retain the opera.

He began publishing the piece himself and since the opera's premiere has sold over thirty-five thousand copies of "Pilgrims' Hymn." The hymn is now the cornerstone of Paulus Publications. It enjoys steadily increasing sales every year, which is another rarity. A new publication typically realizes its highest sales figures in the first year and then experiences a decrease in subsequent years. In addition to that, Stephen Paulus has since reacquired the publishing rights to his other works and now publishes almost all of his own works with very few exceptions.

Paulus remains in great demand as a composer and is working on completing several commissions; such as a piece for narrator and orchestra, *The Five Senses*, to be performed by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project at the New England Conservatory of

Music in Boston. A new mass, *Mass Number 2*, is scheduled to be unveiled by the Cathedral Choral Society at the National Cathedral in Washington D. C., and *Piano Concerto* will be performed by Anton Nel with the Philharmonia Virtuosi of New York. All of these works are slated for premieres in March of 2003. He is also contemplating a companion piece to *The Three Hermits*, making use of another short story by Tolstoy and joining forces with Michael Dennis Browne once again. At 53, Stephen Paulus has no plans for retirement at any point in the future, although he sees himself eventually accepting fewer commissions. Meeting deadlines puts an enormous amount of stress on him, but he feels he will always write and perhaps begin teaching composition, which is something he has not done previously. He feels that under the right circumstances this type of work would be a rewarding experience.

MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

One of the more intriguing aspects of Stephen Paulus' musical style is his affinity for writing to accommodate widely diverse performing forces. He crafted large ensemble pieces for String, Brass, and Woodwind Chamber Ensembles as well as Orchestra and Orchestra with Narrator. Paulus' choral works range from Mixed Choir to Women's and Children's Chorus. He completed several solo works for Organ, Piano, Guitar, Harp, and Voice. There is also his extraordinary collection of opera. This versatility translates onto the written page where Paulus displays an uncanny ability for capturing the essence of the

performing forces. He accomplishes this through a variety of applications. Paulus makes careful consideration of text setting and creates alluring melodic and vocal line characteristics. He is also aggressive with rhythmic and harmonic choices and has a thoughtful approach to the use of texture and voicing.

By his own admission Stephen Paulus is a composer who does not adhere to any one compositional technique. Melodies are determined, in part, by the text and are formed based on pitches that contrast one another. His main goal is to ensure that the text is set in such a way that the melody and any supporting instruments solidify the message of the text. Paulus explains his methods;

> Um, yeah, I'm not sort of a theoretical composer. I don't work by a system. It's obviously not twelve-tone although I have done things where I try and create a melody that wanders over the palette enough so that basically it comes out to be a ten or eleven note theme. Most people aren't aware of that, and I don't use it religiously or systematically. It might be something where I've got a melody that wanders around, that's fairly angular and just because of my searching for pitches that have contrast to the previous ones. What I'm looking for, mostly, is, well it's two things. One, to create a palette or a backdrop that sets the mood dramatically and that's from an instrumental standpoint that sets something up. And then, primarily, to make sure that the text is set so that it's understood and that the instruments either support, accent, embellish, or amplify what's going on.[20]

His works are often commissions so Paulus takes the time to learn about the ensemble he is writing for and tailors the music to suit them. Syllabic settings are common,

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[20] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

especially when the text requires additional clarity for comprehension. Intense or combustible emotional swings are typically set with a disjunct melodic line and placed in extreme ends of the pitch range. Most phrase lengths are regular, two to four measures in duration. The regular phrase lengths facilitate consistent breath management for singers. Some melismatic passages can occur and top notes are carefully prepared with the singers in mind. He is keenly aware of the abilities of the singers in question and writes within their means to avoid strident notes in the top of the vocal register.

Meter and tempo are two very important features of his musical style. Meter is a constantly changing fixture of Stephen Paulus' compositions. The elasticity of this characteristic is an attempt to articulate the natural changes in text stress. Time signatures will change rapidly and may include asymmetrical and mixed meters. Mixed meters provide energy and rhythmic variety. Syncopation is a rarity but is used occasionally, especially in instances of word painting for special effect. Tempo is strictly controlled through the use of numerous metronome markings. Paulus feels that pacing and tempo are essential issues and key to successful performances.[21] These indications should be carefully considered by musicians interpreting Stephen Paulus' compositions.

Paulus' harmonic language is very distinctive and flexible, developed by three primary considerations, namely, the text of the piece, the nature of the commission, and the vocal lines. Stephen Paulus puts great emphasis on the linear idea and therefore unique

[21] Smith, "The Choral Music of Libby Larsen and Stephen Paulus: An Examination and Comparison of Styles," 151.

melodic lines will sometimes dictate unusual harmonies, even within a diatonic tonality. In some cases, this linear concept can result in traditional tonal plans with extended tertian harmonic intervals of seconds, fourths, sevenths, and ninths, which can suggest a modal framework to the listener. The suggestion of modality is a frequent observation of Paulus' music.

Further, the use of added notes and extended harmony leads to chord clusters. Quartal, quintal, and secundal chords are common. Accidentals between voice parts in a choral score can identify areas of bitonality, and at cadence points it is typical to find root movement tonal progressions. In such cases it is common to notice the absence of leading tones even at the conclusion of a piece. It is fairly typical to notice that smaller works will remain within the confines of a single tonality while larger works will feature a more progressive tonal plan. A typical characteristic of Paulus' fluid style of harmonic planning is the absence of key signatures. He finds it faster and more efficient to simply apply accidentals where necessary. Key areas can modulate as frequently as measure to measure.

Texture is applied as a brushstroke, building dramatic colors. In a work by Stephen Paulus the texture can change frequently depending on the demands of the text or prevailing musical concept. Passages with texts containing an important message will be accompanied by a relatively thin texture, usually only the melody and simple accompaniment. By contrast, at passages with repetitive texts Paulus will introduce thicker textures with simultaneous voice parts overlapping and a heavier accompaniment. This is allowable because he will typically introduce each line individually before layering begins,

thus permitting the audience to absorb the message of the text. Simply put, texture changes serve as a vehicle for text painting. Thicker, richer textures will also be easily observed either at dramatic climaxes in a piece or at cadences and conclusion points.

In the videotape presentation, *Stephen Paulus On Composing for Chorus*, he points out that a composer needs to think about the voices for which they are writing. Music has to fit those dimensions and sound natural at the same time. He uses texture, harmony, and expressive markings to "create a musical mountain of sound" and capture the essence of the text, poetry, or commission. The goal in composition is that the audience is able to hear how a piece of music becomes a living, breathing thing.[22]

[22] Stephen Paulus, *Stephen Paulus on Composing for Chorus*, American Choral Catalog, Ltd., 1996. videocassette.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIBRETTIST

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

> Writing words for music is like building a boat rather than a house – you want something firm, buoyant, that will float when the music arrives. Build too heavy, and things sink. (And most words for music on the page are as about as interesting as boats on sand.) You leave room for the music.[23]

Michael Dennis Browne (b. 1940) was born in England and fell in love with the magic of words very early on. He has a mixed Irish/English ancestry and British and French poets fanned the flames of his youthful poetic aspirations. However, it was American poets Theodore Roethke and James Wright that eventually brought him to an intensified level of passion. Browne says of Wright's poetry,

> The images and symbols of Wright's poems haunted me. I wanted the world they showed. There are those who set out to seek their fortune in a crock of gold at the foot of a rainbow, but I wanted to locate those blazing horse droppings between two pines somewhere in the middle of unknown America.[24]

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[23] Michael Dennis Browne, "Words For Music" *A View From the Loft* (December, 2001).

[24] Spencer Foxworth, "A Laborer in the Vineyard" *The Minnesota Daily* (January 23, 1997).

Browne, like Paulus, grew up with music in the household; his father was also an amateur organist and choir master. This early exposure to music was critical in developing his love of the sound of music and words. Though Browne's father died when he was just nineteen, he was able to maintain a feeling of spiritual intimacy with his father by becoming involved with musicians and composers. He has great affection for all music and particularly church operas. He saw many of Benjamin Britten's operas performed in tiny churches in Oxford, England, and he believes that the cramped confines of the small venue added to the magic of the performances. Recalling these formative operatic experiences Browne says, "It was cramped. It was hampered. It was narrow. It was beautiful, very stylized, little suggestion of something larger but with modest means."[25]

In 1965, Michael Dennis Browne came to America with his dreams in tow to attend the Writers Workshop, a creative writing program of renown at the University of Iowa. Browne studied at Iowa and eventually taught there (1967-1968). He also taught at Columbia (1967-1968) and Bennington (1971) before moving to Minneapolis in 1971. He took a job on the English faculty at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul where he is a professor of English and director of the creative writing program. Additionally, he was a visiting professor at Beijing Normal University in the People's Republic of China in September, 1980.

[25] Michael Dennis Browne, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

He was interested in combining forces with a composer and had been looking in earnest for someone willing to share his enthusiasm for words and music. He had worked for a time with a young, English composer named David Lord and was interested in recreating that kind of partnership with a local composer. He contacted Dominick Argento but he was indifferent and then Paul Fetler, who was similarly disinterested. However, Fetler suggested that he contact a young, talented student of his, who was a Ph.D. candidate at the time, by the name of Stephen Paulus. Browne initially met Paulus in 1975 and they began working together in 1976. To date they have completed twelve projects together over twenty-six years.

Browne continues to be a prolific writer, crafting pieces with Paulus while his career in poetry continues to flourish. He has had pieces published in several important publications including Atlantic Monthly, The New Yorker, Iowa Review, Ohio Review, and Tri-Quarterly. Most recently he completed a poem called, "The Face," for ThreeCandles.org in the aftermath of the death of popular Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone on October 25, 2002. Browne has published six books of poetry including *Greatest Hits 1965-2000*, *Selected Poems 1965-1999*, *You Won't Remember This*, and *Smoke from the Fires*. He has a seventh volume, *Things I Can't Tell You*, due to be published in 2004.

ADAPTING TOLSTOY FOR THE STAGE

The Three Hermits was a labor of love for Michael Dennis Browne. It was his idea to set Tolstoy's short story as a church opera. Several years ago he was given a collection of Tolstoy's stories by Carol Bly, poet Robert Bly's first wife, and the first one he read was *The Three Hermits*. His immediate reaction was that it would make a great church opera. Browne brought this idea to Stephen Paulus in November, 1987 and was met with an initial lack of interest. Paulus liked the idea very much but was conflicted by the notion that he might have to go out and solicit a commission or write grant proposals in order to get the opera performed so he procrastinated for almost nine years. Finally Browne came to the understanding that he would need to somehow motivate his friend and did so by threatening to take the project to another composer, as Paulus tell the story,

> And he (Browne) finally said, 'Look. If you're not really interested in this I'd like to show it to another composer.' And of course that was the stone that once dislodged got me going. I said, 'No, no, no! You're not going to give that to another composer.'[26]

Browne's next step was to introduce the idea to conductor Tom Lancaster, a director of choral ensembles at the University of Minnesota. He was very enthusiastic about the project. Shortly after Browne's initial meeting with the conductor, Lancaster was at the home of Molly McMillan, an influential member of House of Hope Presbyterian Church, for a choir retreat. She had recently been at an event where Stephen Paulus' music

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[26] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

had been performed so when Lancaster and the minister of the church approached her with the idea she was so passionate about it that she decided to fund the entire production.

With the necessary funding in place all that remained to do was aggressively proceed toward completion of the opera. At that point the piece was nowhere near its conclusion. Michael Dennis Browne felt the story could stand on its own merits because it was a simplistically beautiful fable. He instinctively knew that he did not need to interfere with the story. He needed only to transform it into action from prose. It is an ancient story of fall and redemption, a message that transcends time or eras. It is able to touch audiences today as easily as it must have when Tolstoy first penned it. The only thing *Hermits* needed to bring it to life was tiny brush strokes of drama from the librettist.

For the librettist, the first step is to transpose the narrative into action and Browne does this by creating a movie of the action in his mind, planning all the actions of all the characters and he then proceeds to map it all out. His first draft was very basic to the story, trading some of the descriptive detail for character dialogue. As he explains,

> Just little transpositions into drama, into action. Dispersing it out. Transposing it into simple dramatic form. . . It's a brilliantly simple story, and I don't think I have to fix it up much. Just think of it in dramatic terms. So, I have to allocate certain moments of the story to speakers and action.[27]

In some respects this simple story required some added complications before it could be successfully presented on the stage. The largest of these additions are the

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[27] Michael Dennis Browne, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

characters of the Bishop's mother and the two nuns that travel with her, Sister Angelica and Sister Miriam. When Browne is asked why he added the Mother character he replies, "Well it was just a bunch of guys, wasn't it?"[28] More seriously, the Bishop needed a foil, someone who would challenge him and not allow him to constantly have things his way. A good example of this is when she reminds him of his childhood and how he used to compose his own prayers. This reminder of his childish ways mortifies the intractable Bishop. And musically, Browne and Paulus felt a trio of women's voices would be a nice counterpoint to the male trios of the Hermits and the Bishop, the Captain, and the Fisherman. So it seemed natural that if he were traveling across the sea, his mother might accompany him and as Bishop, nuns would almost certainly be part of a traveling delegation. The women add another triad to the many that blend into the tapestry of *The Three Hermits.*

The Mother also allowed for the inclusion of the Bishop's nightmare (Scene One) and all the insecurities that lurk in the shadows for the seemingly confident and rigid man. In the morning Mother and son discuss dreams they had the night before. She tells him that she dreamt of his father and happily sailing in a small boat. The Bishop recalls his dream held him under water with the great fishes where he was drowned. The Mother says, "A little strange, don't you think? Your parents on the water and you below."[29] Browne

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[28] Michael Dennis Browne, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

[29] Stephen Paulus, *The Three Hermits*, 17.

describes the Bishop as having a fear of water because it represents elements that are out of his control. Similarly, the creatures within the deep water are equally unpredictable and fearsome. Ultimately the Bishop tries to control the animal-like Hermits and is unsuccessful so his dream is realized, but to his surprise he is better for having failed.

The traveling pilgrims also become a central figure in Browne's version of *The Three Hermits.* They act as a Greek chorus, commenting on the action playing out before them. Pilgrims are present in the Tolstoy version but without an active role, they are merely observers. In Browne's version they become fully realized, participating and remarking on the amazing events unfolding. With the exception of the final verses of the opera, the words sung by the pilgrims are taken from Russian Orthodox liturgy.

"Pilgrims' Hymn" is the final commentary delivered by the pilgrims and serves as another pointed reminder for the Bishop that all the effort he put into achieving perfection is misplaced. Many things, including miracles and salvation are out of his hands no matter how he tries to control them. It is in this chorus that the text of the pilgrims is altered to match this awakening. The following text shows us the Russian Orthodox liturgy which the pilgrims sing at the end of Scene Two ("Evensong") and the new text Browne wrote to accompany the revelation at the opera's conclusion ("Pilgrims' Hymn").

Evensong
Now that the day has come to a close,
I thank Thee, O Lord,
And I ask that the evening with the night
May be sinless;

Pilgrims' Hymn
Even before we call on Your name
To ask You, O God,
When we seek for the words to glorify You,
You hear our prayer;

Grant this to me, O grant this to me,
O Savior, and save me.

Glory to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.

Now that the blessed day has passed,
I praise Thee, O Lord,
And I ask that the evening with the night
May be without blame;
Grant this to me, O grant this to me,
O Savior, and save me.

Both now and forever,
And unto ages of ages,
Amen.

Unceasing love, O unceasing love,
Surpassing all we know.

Glory to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.

Even with darkness sealing us in,
We breathe Your name,
And through all the days that follow so fast,
We trust in You;
Endless Your grace, O endless Your grace,
Beyond all mortal dream.

Both now and forever,
And unto ages and ages,
Amen.[30]

It was Browne's idea to have the choral theme at the end of Scene Two return at the end of the opera. Although Paulus resisted this, Browne was persistent and eventually convinced him that it would work both dramatically and musically. He felt instinctually that a hymn based on the gospel of Matthew[31] was needed to pull the piece together at the end because it is the epigraph of the original short story as well as the opera. Even though Paulus expressed initial reluctance he agreed to record the tune so that Browne could set

[30] These libretto excerpts from The Three Hermits are used here by permission of Michael Dennis Browne. The Evensong text is taken from Russian Orthodox liturgy and occurs at the end of the second scene in which the Bishop returns from the island believing he has taught the Hermits how to pray. The Pilgrims' Hymn text was written by Michael Dennis Browne and set to the same theme as the Evensong but with new lyric to represent the Bishop's spiritual awakening.

[31] "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." Matthew 7: 8.

the new text to fit that melody precisely. When Browne returned to Paulus with the new text, they were both certain that they had something truly extraordinary.

Michael Dennis Browne's passion for *The Three Hermits* is equal parts obsession, adoration, marvel, and magic. Without his efforts this remarkable work would most likely not have come into being. In speaking with him it is exceedingly clear that even after five years his affection for this piece is not diminished in the slightest. His dramatic instincts took a story that is truly affecting in its simplicity and honed it into an intensely spiritual experience for the operatic stage. This is an experience that seems to have changed him as well. The popularity of "Pilgrims' Hymn" skyrocketed with the memorial concerts that followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. After six published collections of poetry, a whole new audience is recognizing his work. He explains,

> They had this big concert called Elegy in Orchestra Hall after 9/11 and they had combined choirs of 300 people and the only work by a living composer was "Pilgrims' Hymn." There was stuff like Brahms' "Requiem" and other stuff. And we knew that they were digging for the people in the rubble and the towers. And then the choir was singing, 'Ye whom with darkness sealing us in we breathe your name.' You just couldn't help but imagine. It was very, very powerful. And my "Words for Music" piece... talks about that for a poet who writes a book of poems that may sell a few hundred copies to know that through the medium of music you're reaching entirely different and larger audiences. And I mention, I think, in the piece that it sold X number of copies and I say, 'it's not a question of statistics, it's a question of a different kind of belonging.' Many more people have heard my words this way than have read my books of poems and I love the poems they're just different mental children.[32]

[32] Michael Dennis Browne, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

CHAPTER 4

THE THREE HERMITS

SYNOPSIS OF THE OPERA

Scene One opens at dawn aboard a ship sailing on the White Sea in Northern Russia, where a group of travelers are on their way from Archangel to the Solovetsk monastery. Pilgrims are performing their morning rituals. They perform reverences to icons they have set up on deck by crossing themselves and bowing. They begin to sing, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Have mercy upon us."

The Bishop appears on deck, engages in his own prayer ritual and leads the pilgrims in singing the "Lord's Prayer." During this sequence the Bishop's mother and two nuns arrive and join the gathering. After the conclusion of the prayer the Bishop greets his mother and the nuns. Mother asks the Bishop how he slept and he admits that he did not have a restful night because his dream about drowning among the fishes has haunted him once more. He tries to change the subject by asking her if she slept well and she acknowledges that she did. She confesses that she dreamt of his father and the two of them sailing in a small boat. She notices the irony that she dreamt of being above water and her son dreamt of being below.

The Bishop changes the subject by expressing his love of mornings, sunshine, and greeting the Lord with His prayer. Again, the mother senses the turmoil her son faces and

tries to gently remind him of his childhood, when he was not so rigid and inflexible. She tells him the story of when his pet mouse died and he wrote his own prayer to mark the passing when he was just five years old. She remembers the prayer and recites it to him, but he is mortified to think anyone should hear her mentioning a time when he was so undisciplined. He makes his opinion clear by quoting from Corinthians;[33] he is no longer such an unruly child. She counters his stubbornness by reminding him of the bible passage in Matthew which says that you will not enter Heaven unless you become as little children.

The Bishop is rescued from his mother's lecture when a pilgrim requesting a blessing kneels before him. He renders a rather overblown benediction to cover his discomfort. The pilgrim then returns to his prayers and the Bishop turns back to his mother and the nuns. They notice a group of pilgrims surrounding a fisherman near the bow of the boat pointing at something on the horizon. The fisherman tells them about the three strange, old men who live on a tiny island nearby. He assures the pilgrims that they are holy men, which he knows first hand, having been rescued by them during a storm the previous year.

The Bishop spies the commotion and demands to know what is going on. He wants to hear more about the mysterious holy men. The nuns ask the fisherman what they look like so he tells her that the first of the three is very old and small with many wrinkles. The middle one is unusually strong, so much so that he was able to right the fisherman's

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[33] "When I was a child I spoke as a child. I understood as a child, thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Corinthians 13:11.

overturned boat all by himself. The last of the three is very tall with a holy look in his eye. The fisherman said that they have lived on that island a very long time and frequently said, "Have mercy on us, Amen."

The Bishop demands that he be taken to the island for it is imperative that he knows what manner of prayer they use. The fisherman says that he cannot take the Bishop to the island and suggests he ask the captain. The mother, sensing some unrest in her son questions his motives and suggests that the hermits may be better off if left alone. Of course, the Bishop cannot accept this proposal. The captain appears and, joining with the fisherman, tries to convince the Bishop that the hermits are strange, stupid and not worthy of the Bishop's attention. Furthermore, such a detour would adversely affect the travel schedule. With that the Bishop puts an end to the discussion by offering the captain additional payment and telling them emphatically, "I will meet these holy ones."

Scene Two opens on a small boat being lowered from the ship. The Bishop descends a ladder to the tiny vessel and is joined there by the fisherman. As the men begin rowing toward the island the pilgrims can be heard singing a prayer while the mother and nuns pray before an icon. Finally, the Bishop steps ashore to find the hermits standing hand in hand. They bow to the Bishop and when he gives them his blessing they bow even lower. The Bishop tells them that he has been called by God to instruct all His flock no matter how small or how scattered; he will bring His word to them. The hermits look at one another, clearly confused.

The Bishop demands to know what they are doing to save their souls and how they serve the Lord. His questions continue to bewilder the holy ones. The first hermit takes a step forward and explains that they only serve themselves, finding random scraps to eat. Now it is the Bishop's turn to be baffled as he again asks them how they pray. The hermits look at one another and recite, "Three are Ye... Three are we... Have mercy on us!"

The Bishop does not find this to be an acceptable form of prayer. He tells the hermits that knowing the Trinity is not enough and he begins to teach them the Lord's Prayer by repetition. This does not go well at all; the hermits are confused and have trouble repeating the passages the Bishop is teaching them. Meanwhile, on the ship the mother and nuns are watching the proceedings through a telescope and see that the Bishop is not experiencing the success he imagined. They sing a beautiful trio, praying for patience for the Bishop and themselves.

It is now late in the afternoon and the Bishop continues his lessons with the hermits. The hermits' responses are wooden and awkward because they still do not quite understand what the Bishop is asking of them. The nuns continue watching the spectacle from the boat and wonder how much longer the Bishop will persist. The mother is unfazed by this, certain her son will remain on the island until he achieves his goal. The captain approaches them to say that they will not be able to remain anchored there much longer as sunset is rapidly falling upon them.

At last the Bishop is nearing a breakthrough on the island. The hermits are finally able to repeat the "Lord's Prayer," in a glorious quartet. The Bishop rises wearily and

thanks the hermits for their hard work and extraordinary effort. As he moves to leave he entreats them to continue praying as he has taught them. They stand and bow before the Bishop, who in turn blesses and kisses each of them. He gets back into the boat to the sound of the hermits singing the prayer he taught them. As he nears the ship the sound of the hermits becomes fainter. The Bishop can now hear the sounds of the pilgrims singing their evensong prayer. The Bishop boards the ship and is greeted with an embrace from his mother.

Night has fallen at the opening of Scene Three. The pilgrims are sleeping on deck and the Bishop cannot sleep with thoughts of the hermits running through his mind. His mother and the nuns urge him to rest after his monumental effort. He has done an admirable thing to teach men who knew so little. Still he is unable to get the poor and humble hermits out of his mind. Just then the mother sees something moving on the water. Unable to distinguish its form she calls to her son, who comes over, but he is similarly unable to identify the object. They take turns speculating what it is, perhaps it is the moon, another boat, or maybe fish. The Bishop decides that it is time for a professional opinion and calls for the captain who finally makes sense of the strange object, crying "the three!"

Chaos and confusion take over the inhabitants of the ship as the hermits draw closer and closer to the vessel. The Bishop collapses against the rail of the boat as the pilgrims awaken at the commotion and rush to the sides of the boat for a look at the spectacle. The Bishop and nuns begin to pray, but the mother and fisherman are incredulous. The hermits finally appear behind the boat, standing on the water hand in hand as they address the

Bishop. They were reciting the prayer he taught them but forgot what comes after "Who art in heaven?" They have come to ask him. The Bishop crosses himself and bows to the hermits, telling them that whatever prayer they use will certainly reach God. He finally admits that it is not his place to teach them. He apologizes for his willful pride in presuming to teach them anything when they are clearly sacred disciples of God.

At this admission, the hermits bow and begin running back over the sea to their island home. The pilgrims gather and begin singing the "Pilgrims' Hymn" to thank the Lord for knowing their needs before they even express them. As they fade into the distance the hermits can be heard still attempting to perform the Lord's Prayer as the Bishop taught them. At the same time the Bishop is heard repeating part of the hermits' original prayer, "Have mercy on us." The pilgrims continue singing and more faintly in the distance we can once again hear the hermits singing, "Three are Ye, Three are we, have mercy on us!"

TOLSTOY'S SHORT STORY

Tolstoy's version of this folk fable is said to have originated in the Volga district of Russia as early as the sixteenth century. Tolstoy offered his account of the story in 1886.[34] *The Three Hermits* begins on the deck of the ship, and it is daytime on the vessel traveling from Archangel to the Solovetsk Monastery. The Bishop approaches a group of pilgrims as one of them points at something on the horizon. A tradesman offers that the fisherman

[34] The following synopsis is based on the version of *The Three Hermits* as translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude in *Walk In The Light and Twenty-Three Tales*, Farmington: The Plough Publishing House, 1998.

was telling them of the hermits on a nearby island. They are three holy men who live on the island for the salvation of their souls. The fisherman discovered the hermits the previous year when they rescued him after his boat ran ashore during a storm.

The Bishop begs the fisherman to describe the hermits. The fisherman says the first hermit is at least a hundred years old, very wrinkled and wears a priests' cassock but is always smiling. He describes the second hermit also as very old but much taller and wearing a tattered peasant coat. The second hermit is also very strong. The fisherman says that the second one righted his overturned boat by himself with just one arm. The third hermit too is old, tall and is also exceedingly stern. He wears nothing but a tied mat around his waist. The three men were virtually silent and seemed to be able to communicate with one another simply by exchanging looks but the eldest of the three would occasionally be heard to say, "Have mercy on us."

The boat has now come closer to the island and the Bishop can see it plainly. He asks the helmsman the name of the island but is told that it is too small to have a name. The helmsman suggests that the hermits may not be anything more than an anecdote invented by fishermen, for he has never seen them. The Bishop wants to see these men in person, but the ship cannot get close enough to the island. They send for the captain and inquire if it is possible to row the Bishop to shore in a small boat. The captain admits that it is possible but tries to discourage the Bishop because such a detour would be costly. The Bishop offers to pay him for the additional time and the captain reluctantly agrees. The captain is mystified by the Bishop's desire to meet with such stupid, old men.

As the Bishop and a few sailors descend into the row boat they can see the hermits standing hand in hand by the shore, looking very much as the fisherman described. When they reach the island the Bishop greets the hermits and they bow in response. The Bishop offers a benediction and the hermits bow lower still. The Bishop explains that he is there to serve God and instruct His flock. He asks the hermits how they serve God on the tiny island. They respond by saying that they only serve themselves. "But how do you pray?" the Bishop asks. One of them responds, "We pray in this way. Three are Ye, three are we, have mercy on us." At this recitation all three look toward heaven.

The Bishop is pleased that they seemed to know the Trinity but tells them their method of prayer is incorrect. He implores them to listen to his teaching as he begins to teach them the manner of prayer called for in the Holy Scriptures. The hermits begin repeating the Lord's Prayer after the Bishop. The process is slow and laborious as the hermits have trouble duplicating the words of the Bishop. They start and stop dozens of times during that long afternoon but the Bishop is relentless in the pursuit of his goal. They continue the process until the hermits can repeat after the Bishop and also say the prayer on their own as well.

Darkness had fallen before the Bishop finally rose to leave his charges. They all bowed before him, and as he kissed them he urged them to continue praying as he had taught them. With that he got into the row boat and returned to the ship, moonlight glistening on the water. He could still hear the hermits loudly reciting the prayer they

learned that day. He looked back and saw that they were standing on the shore holding hands as he had first seen them.

Once back on board the ship the sails were set and the original journey resumed. It was quiet on the ship and the pilgrims were asleep on deck but the Bishop could not sleep. His mind was consumed with thoughts of the hermits. He quietly thanked God for the opportunity to teach such holy men. Suddenly he saw a flickering on the water. At first he thought it might be a bird or a small boat. He called to the helmsman for his opinion on the strange vision across the sea but he feared that he knew what it was without an answer from the sailor. It was the hermits.

The helmsman shouted in horror, realizing that it was the holy three. The pilgrims jumped from their slumber and ran to the sides of the ship to look at the strange sight. The hermits were gliding across the surface of the water without moving their feet and holding hands. They motioned for the ship to stop and they spoke simultaneously but with one voice. They said that they had forgotten what the Bishop taught them. They remembered as long as they continued the recitation but forgot as soon as they stopped. They begged the Bishop to teach them again. The Bishop assured the Godly men that their prayer would reach the Lord, and he admitted that it was not his place to try and teach them. This time it was the Bishop who bowed to the hermits as they turned and went back across the sea to their island home. A light shone until dawn on the spot where they finally went out of sight.

A COMPARISON: THE STORY AND THE OPERA

It is interesting to notice that Michael Dennis Browne's libretto is entirely faithful to the original short story. There are relatively few differences between them. However, when you place two versions of the same story together obvious comparisons can be drawn between the fable by Leo Tolstoy and the opera by Stephen Paulus and Michael Dennis Browne. Chief among the differences are characters added to the opera. In Paulus and Browne's version of the tale the mother and two nuns are central characters whereas in Tolstoy's story they are nonexistent. The trio of women adds richness and softness to the story which is not present in Tolstoy's text. As Michael Dennis Browne points out, "it was just a bunch of guys."[35]

Adding women to the story makes for a more compelling rendering of the Bishop. It is through their eyes that we see the vulnerabilities that make the Bishop more three-dimensional and human. These characteristics are masked in the Bishop Tolstoy created, even if they might have been implied. The women breathe life into a central character's development. It is a crucial moment when the mother reminds the Bishop of his humble beginnings. Her subsequent warning that he must regain his youthful beliefs or risk total failure is followed by the Bishop's refusal to accept her words of wisdom. He has turned away from the person he once was. Without this glimpse into the psyche of the Bishop he would remain a stereotypically grim character. The reward of this enlightenment is

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[35] Michael Dennis Browne, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

enormous at the conclusion of the opera because the audience is forced to care for the Bishop rather than merely witness his transformation. This is an unparalleled dramatic masterstroke by Michael Dennis Browne.

The women also provide another perspective for the audience. This important addition to the cast of characters allows the audience to participate in their viewpoint. The moment they foreshadow the impending fall of the Bishop as they sing, "we must be patient" is important because the audience now realizes something is amiss. The audience, thus having been forewarned must wait and anticipate the arrival of the Bishop's fall. Not only must the nuns and the Bishop be patient but the audience must also be patient. It is a wonderful twist that heightens the tension to an unbelievable level. They also add comfort and warmth to the male driven drama. Who is waiting with open arms to soothe the Bishop after his arduous day on the island? The mother is always nearby, patiently waiting.

Dialogue replaces narrative throughout the opera. In Tolstoy's version of *Hermits* there is very little dialogue between characters and is told in the third-person narrative voice. The end result of this approach is to leave the reader somewhat less invested in the outcome of the Bishop's spiritual awakening. The dialogue necessary to fuel an operatic version of the same story conspires to draw the audience deeper into the drama. We learn about each of these characters in the way they express themselves, and we therefore care more about their development. The Bishop's frustration is palpable in the opera when he attempts to teach the Lord's Prayer to the hermits, and their wooden responses to his urgent pleas add a much needed comedic contrast. Tolstoy paints this scene just as vividly but

without dialogue, only narrative, which leaves the reader outside the action as an observer. Those viewing the opera cannot help but be drawn into the frustration of the Bishop and the innocent bewilderment of the hermits.

The largest difference is obviously a musical representation with dramatic action versus opening a book to read the story. Certain aspects of the story which were enchanting on the written page become magical in an operatic setting. The simple chore of rowing the Bishop to shore becomes a thing of beauty in the hands of Paulus as the chorus sings a rowing theme, and the orchestra beautifully underscores the entire scene. The moment in which the Bishop teaches the hermits the Lord's Prayer becomes equal parts frustration and comedy with stretto entrances of the holy trio and pedal points ominously buzzing in the low strings. This is an advantage that the written page cannot compete with.

Ultimately it is an unfair comparison to place an opera in the same context as a short story. The one thing both versions have in common is an amazing folk story at their cores. Tolstoy was one of the world's greatest authors and created a work so genuine and meaningful that more than one hundred years later it inspired an English poet to turn it into a church opera. From humble beginnings a remarkable transformation is completed many years later, much like the Bishop's own journey.

CAST AND INSTRUMENTATION

The Three Hermits is designed to be performed by music programs in most large churches. As such, the performing forces have been selected to be economical for

organizations with modest means such as churches, college opera workshop programs, or community theater groups. *The Three Hermits* score calls for an orchestra of eleven members, nine principal roles, two small pilgrim roles, and a chorus of approximately thirty or thirty-five singers. The following lists indicate required performers.

Instrumentation

1 Flute
1 Oboe
1 Clarinet in B-flat
1 Percussion (doubles timpani) metal wind chimes, tom-toms, finger cymbal, timpani, chimes, glockenspiel, temple blocks, vibraphone, large suspended cymbal, bass drum, snare drum, tam-tam
Harp
Organ
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

Cast

Bishop – Baritone
Mother – Mezzo-soprano
Sister Angelica – Soprano
Sister Miriam – Soprano
Fisherman – Tenor
Captain – Baritone
First Hermit – Tenor
Second Hermit – Baritone
Third Hermit – Tenor
*Pilgrim #1 – Mezzo-soprano
*Pilgrim #2 – Tenor

Chorus of Pilgrims
(Mixed Chorus: SSAATTBB)

* May be taken from the chorus

Church choirs are ideal for this work because many such organizations are accustomed to performing larger works such as motets and masses. *The Three Hermits* is a similar musical experience for such ensembles because it is approximately an hour in duration and requires many participants. The only difference in an operatic setting is the additional requirement of acting. Additionally, some of the smaller roles may be cast from

the chorus. If the choir contains soloists it is possible that those members may also be capable of performing leading roles such as the captain or the fisherman.

The orchestra requires a minimum of participants by design. Hiring an orchestra of thirty or more players is a costly measure that many churches or community opera groups would have difficulty funding. Eleven instrumentalists are vastly more affordable and Stephen Paulus has also indicated that these numbers may be reduced even further if necessary.[36] He suggests that if budget restrictions prevent contracting the eleven musicians the score indicates then a concert-style version with piano or organ accompaniment is also acceptable.

STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

The Three Hermits best represents Stephen Paulus' creativity and skill as a composer. It is difficult to capture the essence of this magnificent work with descriptive detail alone. Score excerpts will be used to offer the reader an opportunity to observe characteristics as they are highlighted.

In a work such as this Paulus' compositional choices are completely determined by the libretto. His primary goal is to set the text in such a way that the message of the text is emphasized by both the melodic line and the instruments or voices that accompany it. In

[36] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

the following example, the Bishop and the pilgrims on the ship have just realized that the hermits are running over the surface of the water to find the Bishop.

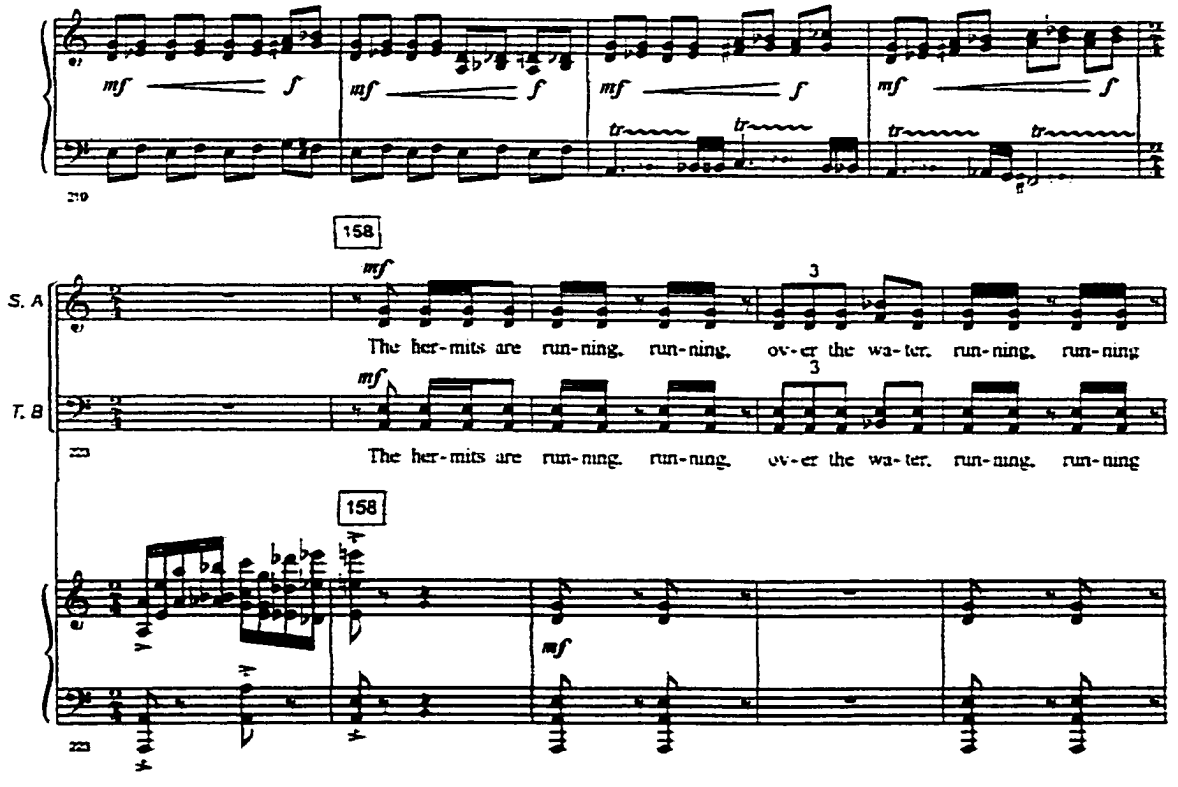


Fig. 1. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score page 114, Scene 3 is used here with permission of Stephen Paulus

Paulus uses the orchestra to capture the sound of the running of the hermits and the panic of the ship's inhabitants. This is echoed by the entrance of the chorus, singing in a fast, rhythmic, and syllabic manner. It is similar to a primitive type of chant. There are very few pitch changes in the choir and the accompaniment is very sparse. Paulus' intention is clear. He is creating the musical equivalent of stupefied babbling and

underscores that with the allowable minimum to make as stark and shocking a moment for the audience as it must have been for the pilgrims watching the hermits approach.

Paulus uses a variety of interesting techniques to articulate the meaning of the text. One of these methods is to use a character's voice to complete a thought or idea initiated by the orchestra. He also executes this approach in reverse order. This is concept is clarified by the score excerpt in Figure 2.

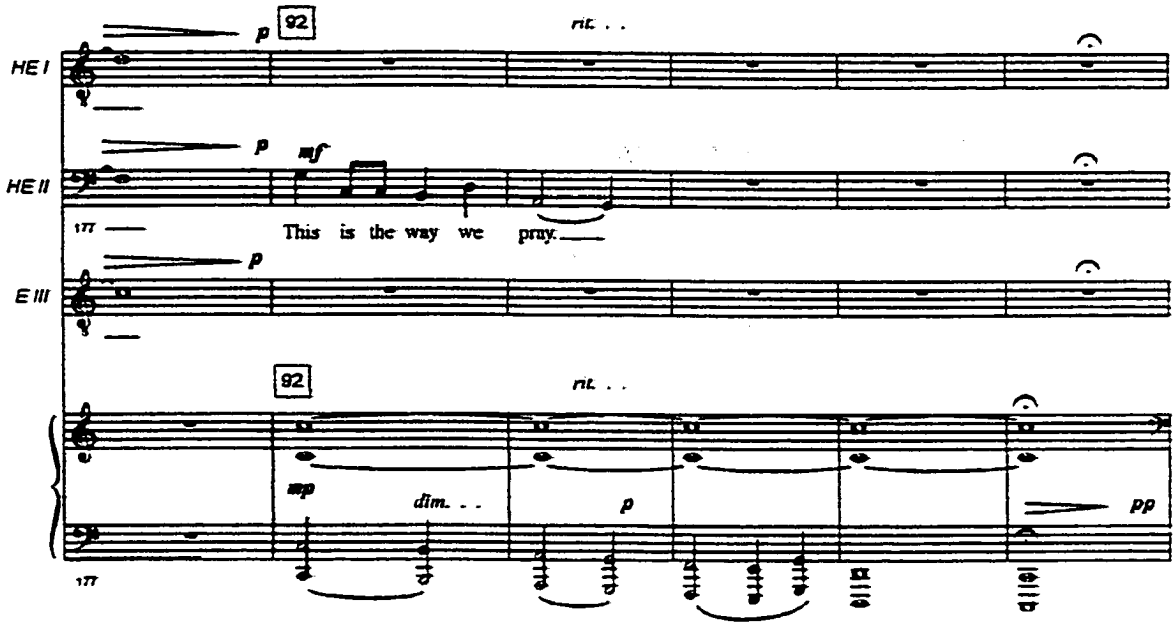


Fig. 2. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 61, Scene 2, used here with permission of the composer.

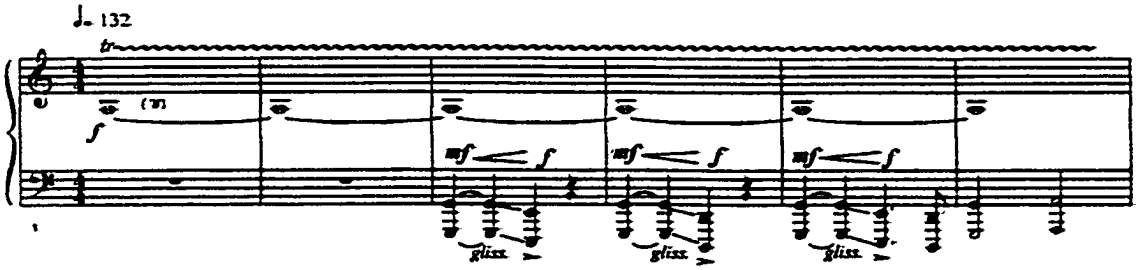
In this example, Paulus wished to demonstrate the depth of the hermits' devotion and reverence by having the voice part descend to a low C. He felt that the vocal line needed to continue its plummet in order to capture this moment of absolute reverence. However, it is difficult for most male singers to comfortably extend below a G and Paulus

knew that this was insufficient to realize his concept. He was able to achieve his original intent by having the low strings of the orchestra continue the vocal line, thus rendering the hermit's declamation simpler and more heartfelt.

Text painting is one of Paulus' great talents. He is able to create visual imagery through auditory stimuli. There are numerous examples of this throughout *The Three Hermits*. Figure 3 effectively illustrates a particularly powerful moment from the opening of Scene Two, in which the Bishop is rowed to the island to meet the hermits. The orchestra initiates a rowing theme. This is accompanied by long trills to foreshadow impending danger. Finally, the rowing theme begun by the orchestra is imitated by the pilgrims on the ship, with trills continuing all the while. The effect is spectacular and visual. It is not necessary to see sailors rowing a boat to have a clear mental image of that moment.

Scene Two

A boat is lowered. The bishop descends a ladder on the side of the ship. The fisherman joins him in the boat and



begins to row him toward the island. As the bishop travels toward the island, the PILGRIMS are singing on board ship.

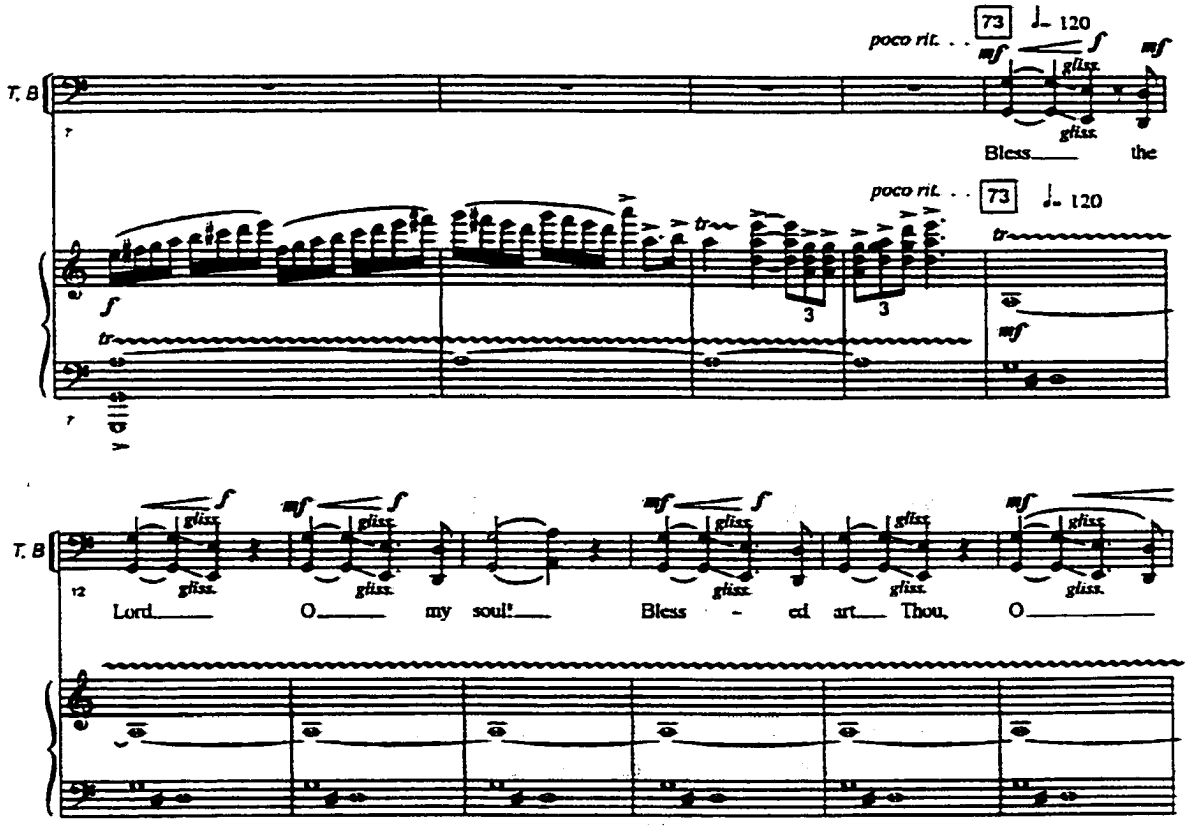


Fig. 3. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 48, Scene 2, used here with permission of the composer.

Syllabic settings are common in Paulus' compositions. This is especially true in moments of emotional distress for the characters or a pivotal plot point. In Scene One, the Mother discusses dreams with the Bishop and she makes a point of ensuring that the Bishop knows she is aware of his inner torment. She has accurately interpreted his dream. Paulus manipulates this moment with an angular melody that outlines extreme leaps in range for the singer, plunging down to a low D-sharp to imitate the Bishop's fear of drowning. The text is set syllabically to achieve absolute clarity for the audience.



Fig. 4. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 17, Scene 1, used here with permission of the composer.

Careful treatment of vocal registers is another hallmark of Stephen Paulus' compositions. He takes great care to become familiar with the ensemble he is writing for and stay within their capabilities. That tenet is observed in *The Three Hermits* as well. Paulus limits how high singers climb within the vocal register, how often they reach the upper end of their range, and how they descend from that apex. Paulus explains his reasoning.

> You can afford to have the sopranos go to an A. You get to a B and you're asking for trouble. They don't sound good. You get to a C and you might as well just shoot yourself because it's ugly. You know, ninety percent of the choirs. It's only the very best choirs, I think, can cut it. Maybe you've got one soprano in a good community choir that can but... you know, it's usually belt it out as high and hard as you can. It's just, you might as well go into the middle of the piece and shoot off a shotgun. It's that dramatic and overbearing. So I thought they can gracefully go up to that first ledger line above the staff and, you know, rise there and then come back from that. It makes a nice, climactic moment... this has to be sort of a humble statement.[37]

Figure 5 will demonstrate that theory in practice. Notice that the soprano part in the chorus (at one measure after rehearsal number 12) ascends to an A above the staff and then descends stepwise. This same careful preparation of upper range notes is also observed in the tenor and bass parts in which the tenors do not go higher than a G and the basses do not climb past an E-flat.

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[37] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.



Fig. 5. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 5, Scene 1, used here with permission of the composer.

Meter is a critical component to text painting in *The Three Hermits*. Paulus uses meter and rhythm to influence crucial moments and the way the audience perceives them. In *Hermits* Paulus applies rapid time signature changes to capture natural speech inflections in sung passages and for comic effect. This technique is used to great effect in Scene Two in which the Bishop is desperately trying to teach the hermits the Lord's Prayer. Please

consider Figure 6. The hermits are unsuccessfully trying to learn the prayer and their stiff, mechanical responses overlap in a humorous way. At each successive repetition the Bishop grows increasingly frustrated.



Fig. 6. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 64, Scene 2, used here with permission of the composer.

Stephen Paulus utilizes a unique harmonic language that stems from harmonizing the melodic line in a meaningful way. It is important to Paulus that the harmony supports the melodic line in a manner that enhances the meaning of the text in a way that feels inevitable to him. It is not his typical approach to map out tonal plans. He is interested in sound combinations that result in exotic harmonies. He has a fondness for quartal and

quintal intervallic relationships, which is applicable to *Hermits* because these intervals add a feeling of reverence to the listener. Further, he tries to use combinations of consonance and dissonance in ways that sound inevitable to him and create exciting sounds. He accomplishes this by establishing pedal points with an imaginative melodic figure above.



Fig. 7. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 3, Scene 3, used here with permission of the composer.

Figure 7 illustrates Paulus' preference for quartal and quintal harmonies in this piece. Notice the parallel fourths and fifths between the voice parts of the chorus which are supported by similar movement in the accompaniment. The idea of pedal points with florid melody can be observed at rehearsal number 7. Paulus has combined a variety of compositional techniques within these few measures. The result is a dramatic opening that sets the tone for the entire piece.

Texture is applied carefully to preserve dramatic text declamation and to create the appropriate emotional climate. In Figures 8 and 8a, two different characters are presenting opinions. Paulus' typical approach to situations such as these is to allow each character to express his viewpoint individually and then gradually permitting him to overlap or sound simultaneously. His reasoning is that after each character has spoken, the parts can occur simultaneously because the audience will have had a chance to absorb the message each one presents. In Figures 8 and 8a the captain and the fisherman are trying to convince the Bishop not to go to the island to visit with the hermits. They're strange and peculiar old men that the Bishop need not bother with. The captain speaks first and expresses his opinion before the fisherman speaks. The fisherman offers his thoughts on the subject without interruption. After each man has voiced his opinion they combine their efforts to forcefully deliver this message to the Bishop.



Fig. 8. ***The Three Hermits*****, vocal score excerpt page 44, Scene 1, used here with permission of the composer.**



Fig. 8a. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 45, Scene 1, used here with permission of the composer.

Paulus creates the thickest, richest musical textures in *The Three Hermits* at moments of greatest dramatic tension. It is at these times that he paints the darkest colors, creating a broadness of sound that cannot be ignored. Characters at the height of an emotional swing are draped in a rich tapestry of sound. In Figure 9, everyone on the ship has just realized that it is the hermits they are seeing on the water and they pray, sensing the miracle in their midst.

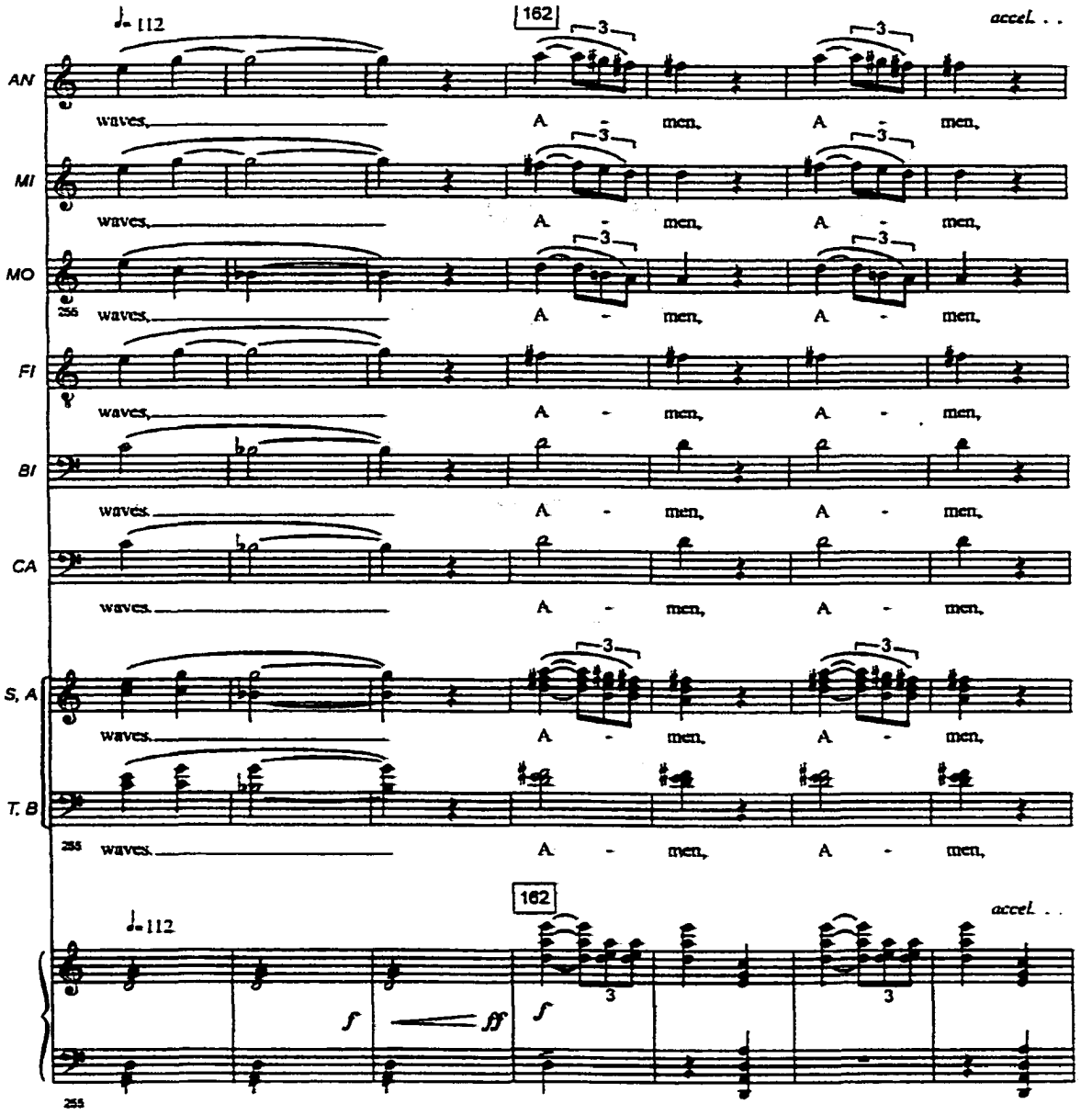


Fig. 9. *The Three Hermits*, vocal score excerpt page 120, Scene 3, used here with permission of the composer.

The Three Hermits is a truly magnificent work from a compositional standpoint. Stephen Paulus has crafted an opera that is completely determined by the content of the libretto and yet manages to exhibit a wide variety of compositional techniques within that framework. Though he readily admits that he is not a composer who works by a method, it is arguable that his textually-driven approach in this opera is a method with its own merits. His preference for quartal and quintal harmonies, pedal points, syllabic text declamation, explosive rhythmic figures, imaginative melodies, and exotic sound combinations creates a musical mountain of sound that is unique to this gifted composer and his unforgettable opera.

WORLD PREMIERE

The world premiere performances of *The Three Hermits* took place on April 24th through the 27th, 1997 at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. It received tremendous public support, and the opening was an enormous success. It is a success story that nearly did not happen, because in December of 1996, Stephen Paulus was nowhere near completing his composition.

Paulus had begun writing *The Three Hermits* in 1996 and expected that the compositional period would last approximately seven or eight months. In December, Paulus had completed approximately one-third of the opera when he met with some unexpected twists in his personal life that required his attention. He was born with a defective heart valve. Every six months his doctors evaluated his condition and in

December they gave him the news that it was time to replace the faulty valve. The situation was critical, and his doctors decided they needed to act immediately.

Paulus was reluctant to proceed so quickly. He argued that he needed to complete his opera before he could have the necessary surgery. As irony would have it, Paulus' doctor is a member of House of Hope Presbyterian Church and was aware that the church was producing the new opera. Dr. Yang Wang, Paulus' physician, asked him how long he would need to complete the work. Paulus knew that he would need until the first of February to complete the opera. Dr. Yang grudgingly consented but suggested that Paulus find no other reasons to delay surgery.

Knowing that the premiere date had already been decided and heart surgery was looming on the immediate horizon, Paulus began to write at a fevered pitch. He knew that he had to complete his work or it could potentially be delayed or perhaps remain unfinished if the surgery did not proceed as expected. He invested a great deal of effort into making *The Three Hermits* special in case it was to be the last composition of his career. He is reluctant to admit that his health influenced the composition at all but acknowledges that it could have been a factor in producing an overwhelmingly spiritual opera. He remembers the writing experience as a positive one in which his creativity flowed well.[38]

[38] Stephen Paulus, interview by author, Tape Recording, St. Paul, Minnesota, 11 October 2002.

Despite all the obstacles *The Three Hermits* premiered on schedule. Librettist Michael Dennis Browne remembers the experience as very emotional for participants and audience alike. Many audience members in tears were heard to say they would return the next night to see it again. The musicians and cast were very distressed when closing night was upon them. Browne was at a cast gathering at the home of one of the choir members following the performance and recalls that members of the choir assembled in the kitchen and spontaneously sang "Pilgrims' Hymn." They came together once more just because they loved the piece and were sorry to see the opera close.

The cast of the world premiere is the same group that performs on the soundtrack recording released by D'Note Classics. The chorus used in the opera was the Motet Choir of House of Hope Presbyterian Church. The stage director was Gary Gisselman, and the premiere was conducted by Thomas Lancaster. The principal singers and orchestra members are as listed below.

Cast of Characters in Order of Appearance

Bishop	James McKeel
Mother	Miriam Langsjoen
Sister Angelica	Esther Heideman
Sister Miriam	Vicki Johnson
Pilgrim 1	Marcia Laningham
Fisherman	Mark Schowalter
Pilgrim 2	Jon Harney
Captain	James Wintle
First Hermit	Corby Welch
Second Hermit	John Bitterman
Third Hermit	Phil Jorgenson

Orchestra

David Bullock.....Violin I & Concertmaster
Sheila Hanford.....Violin II
Karen McConomy.....Viola
Dale Newton.....Cello
Paul Ousley.....Bass
Jane Garvin.....Flute
Merilee Klemp.....Oboe
Jennifer Gerth.....Clarinet
Fernando Meza.....Percussion
Min Kim.....Harp
Nancy Lancaster.....Organ

The Three Hermits has created an emotional experience for audiences, singers, and musicians alike since its premiere. It is beginning to gain more popularity and has had several new productions mounted in the wake of "Pilgrims' Hymn's" growing popularity. In 2001 and 2002 there were presentations of *The Three Hermits* in Houghton, New York, Dallas, Texas, and Salt Lake City, Utah as well as a restaging at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN PAULUS

The following interview was conducted at the home of Stephen Paulus in St. Paul, Minnesota on October 11, 2002 [Corrections and revisions completed on November 11, 2002].

SLK: I think my first question about the piece was how did the Tolstoy come to your attention, and what made you decide that it would be a good piece to work for the stage?

SP: Actually the idea for the opera itself came from the librettist, Michael Dennis Browne. And let's see. The premiere was in April of '97. Approximately nine years prior to that time Michael had read this tale by Tolstoy, which was apparently a tale that was told to him by some peasants walking along the road. He [Tolstoy] had this habit of hanging out at pubs or something and hearing these tales and, then retelling them, you know, putting them into a story. So that they were, I guess, not entirely original, but they were based on something he had heard. I believe I'm right on that although you can ask Michael.

SLK: I believe I had read something similar, along those lines.

SP: So I'm not way off base. So then Michael approached me and said, "Here's a great little idea for an opera." Because we had previously done *The Village Singer* he had wanted to do another one-act someday and so I read it. I liked it a lot. And then, uh, we didn't have a commission so basically since you know I don't teach at any academic institution or anything I was always booked up with commissions and I . . . the idea of having to go out and beat the bushes, and raise a commission for it would take away time from writing and everything. So I basically, unfortunately I'm somewhat embarrassed to say, kind of kept putting him off, for nine years. And he finally said, "Look. If you're not really interested in this I'd like to show it to another composer." And of course that was the stone that once dislodged got me going. I said, "No, no, no! You're not going to give that to another composer."

I said, "Well it really needs to be done at a large church." And, um, I think we concluded maybe either St. Mark's Episcopal in Minneapolis or House of Hope Presbyterian and he [Browne] said, "Well I know Tom Lancaster [conductor] and maybe I'd run into Tom recently and whatever." Anyway, I hadn't seen him for a while. But Michael ran into Tom Lancaster, the musical director at House of Hope Presbyterian at Wilson Library, at the University of Minnesota and he pitched it to him before I could even get to him. Then I called Tom and he said, "Oh I ran into Michael and we talked about it." So, we got together with Tom, weighed it all out. I think we might have even discussed performers, performing forces, general idea of fees, and everything.

And I actually am totally frank, thought that it would probably languish there, or die. Not that I didn't have faith in Tom Lancaster and the church but I just . . . I thought you know, that this is a big project, the church had never done an opera before, and well at least I've [laughs] . . . probably shouldn't even say this . . . at least I've placated Michael. You know. I was interested in doing it. I just didn't to spend time, you know, submitting grant proposals, I don't do that any more, you know going out like that.

But it was going to be a tough time trying to raise the amount of money to mount a production, a full production. Well Tom, it went on for a couple of months, but he took the project to the minister, Jim Carter at that time. He's since left, gone to Alabama. He liked the project a lot and they talked to a, decided to talk to a woman by the name of Molly McMillan, who had, her family's been very important to the church. She's been a pastor of the church. She's retired now, so retired from that job but she does all kinds of things for them, flies all over the world, speaks, and uh, they went out to pitch it to her thinking that maybe she would be interested in helping with some seed money to start the project. And she had just heard a little anthem that I'd written for a Presbyterian church for a suburb called Roseville, North Como Presbyterian Church. And so she said, "Oh I know the music of Stephen Paulus." She said, "I just heard a piece of his as a matter of fact." So at the end of their little meeting she said, "Yeah, I like the idea a lot." And they kind of looked at each other and said, "Well what does that mean?" She said, "Well I would like to fund it." Turned out she meant the entire thing.

So it was a one stop deal. I think they came out of there and went and had a drink. So she was enthusiastic about it and from then just, you know, once the money's in place, like, you just choose things. Who do we get for a stage director? We got this wonderful guy called Gary Gisselman who's done a lot of theater. Tom [Lancaster] was obviously the music director. We decided who would be the Bishop and all that stuff, you know. So, it took a long time to come to fruition but once we started the ball rolling it just sort of happened.

SLK: So pretty much nine years in the making and then it finally happened?

SP: Nine years in the making and about two weeks to actually get it up on its, get it operational.

SLK: Wow. And do you remember, roughly, what the compositional period was?

SP: I was supposed to write it in, uh, '96 and then have it done by late fall or December of '96 and the premiere was April of '97. It turns out I was behind. I think I was only about a third done going into November, of that year. And so I really started to hoof it in December, big time. And realized that I was farther behind than I thought, because a piece like this could normally take me seven, eight months to write. And I wasn't nearly as far along as I wanted to be.

And then I had a, uh, an unfortunate happenstance. I had a heart valve that was defective since birth. And continually was tested on it every six months or so and in December of that year they told me that it was time to get it replaced. So . . . and the guy wanted to do it right then. And it turns out my cardiologist was a member of this church, still is, House of Hope Presbyterian Church. His name is Yang Wang, great guy. He's about eighty. And I said, "Well I can't have it done now because," I said, "I've got this piece to write and it's for your church." [laughter] I said, "You're going to be the cause of alienating a lot of people." And he said, "Well how much time do you need?" And I thought, "I've gotta have until February first," because I knew it was going to take not just December but January to put it together, the remaining parts. And he said, "alright but don't think of any other reasons to put this off." So I knew that it was serious. It was something that had to be taken care of.

So I wrote pretty much at a white hot pitch. And my wife thinks that, you know, there was something going on, that because, I you know, I was inspired. I knew I had to get done and everything, and I don't know if I'd put much truck in that except that I do remember thinking, well if for some reason or other the operation doesn't go right I hope this last piece is really good. So I kind of invested extra, extra in it. I try and put something like that in every piece. But this piece, I really, really worked hard on. It just kind of flowed and felt good the whole time.

SLK: Well it's a very spiritual piece. I mean, the text and music together combine to create a real spiritual experience for the listener. I certainly was struck that way. The final chorus, you know, is just staggering.

SP: Well thank you. Michael's [Michael Dennis Browne] idea was to add a character. Because he said the character of, uh . . . he didn't feel there were enough women in the

story. So Michael introduced the character of the mother, of the Bishop, which was an important character because also, Michael has an extremely good dramatic sense. And his writing is lean and yet it's expansive, and it covers a lot of things in one broad brush stroke. And he's very careful about details. By having the mother it allowed sort of a triangle of relationships between the mother who was sort of an overseeing figure, not only of the Bishop, introduce some conflict there. That's her son. But also the two nuns. And it provided me with a vehicle so that I could create a trio of female voices at one point which I felt was very important. So dramatically it satisfied Michael's sense but musically it also accomplished something that satisfied my sense towards having different combinations of characters singing.

SLK: Well and the combination of, I found it interesting that the trio of women and the trio of the three hermits, and how they each interacted with the Bishop.

SP: Yeah, well that's all part of the design.

SLK: It was pretty neat. I enjoyed that aspect. So, I won't pretend to be a big theory maven because it's not my big forte . . .

SP: Me too. [laughs]

SLK: . . . but I was hoping you could tell me about or what were some of the main compositional ideas that you tried to put at work here. Did you really just let the text guide you?

SP: Um, yeah, I'm not sort of a theoretical composer. I don't work by a system. It's obviously not twelve-tone although I have done things where I try and create a melody that wanders over the palette enough so that basically it comes out to be a ten or eleven note theme. Most people aren't aware of that, and I don't use it religiously or systematically. It might be something where I've got a melody that wanders around, that's fairly angular and just because of my searching for pitches that have contrast to the previous ones. Sometimes I'll look at . . . sometimes I've done it unconsciously. Although it must be because of my ears gravitating towards things. Some will say, "Oh did you know this is a tone row?" And I'll say, "No, I didn't know that." It's not, I'm not thinking of it that way but what I'm looking for, mostly, is, well it's two things. One, to create a palette or a backdrop that sets the mood dramatically and that's from an instrumental standpoint that sets something up. And then, primarily, to make sure that the text is set so that it's understood and that the instruments either support, accent, embellish, or amplify what's going on.

I just start at the beginning and I start rolling through. I knew it [*Hermits*] was three scenes. There's more than a theoretical thing, there's an architectural thing. Which would be more, well this is sort of theoretical. At the end of the second scene there's an "EvenSong," which is an actual thing from the Russian Orthodox liturgy that Michael put in there. I set that and I went along, and I, as my typical procedure is to play bits, chunks for the librettist when I'm working with someone on a piece like this. And I don't want to play, you know, every couple days and say, "What do you think of this?" because to some extent, you don't want their opinion at some point. Everyone's going to have an opinion if they have a brain. And that's fine, but you sort of want their collective opinion. Like, "ok, here's scene one. How are we doin'?" I feel I'm right on the money or I wouldn't be doing it. But I mean if they say, "Well that's cool but, you know, I'd sort of thought that the role of the Bishop would be more, whatever." Then you say, "Well, I can accomplish that if you want more emphasis there." Quite often I'll have Michael read the whole libretto and just sort of process, mentally, where the emphases are when he's talking about a piece.

At the end of the second scene there's this little bit of liturgy where they sang this thing as an evensong. I purposely, at that point, limited myself, sometimes I do this, I limited myself to just four part singing, S-A-T-B (Soprano-Alto-Tenor-Bass). There are no divisi there, and it's set low in the range. The tessitura is actually quite low, D-flat major. I actually chose a key because the Bishop is being rowed across to this island, and I wanted it to be sort of calm. You know, the lights come down, and because they're pilgrims and not very sophisticated, probably, they're not suddenly going to break into, you know, multi-part singing, and all that. So there I decided to take the story in a literal fashion. Now it would be unusual that they could sing beautiful four part harmony too so it's a matter of how much do you stretch the imagination or not stretch it.

Well anyway, I kept it simple, four part and then I played that for Michael, and when I got through the second scene and I said, "What do you think of all this?" Well, he was so enamored with that little hymn that he said, "The thing I've written for the end, the prayer for the pilgrims, is to conclude the opera is a different structure." And he said, "I'd like to redo it to fit the meter of this evensong" and I objected to that because, I said, "Well, you know, first of all that's a compositional choice. That's mine," and I said, "The last thing I want to be is formulaic." I don't want to just say, "Ok, so that worked in scene two, now he just plugs it into scene three. He turns on a switch and he's done." I really, that goes against my grain. He was fairly insistent. He said, "I'm going to rewrite the poem anyway so it will fit that." I think I even made a little recording, a little tape recording of the Evensong at the end of the second scene so that he could get the words right. So I mean I was saying no and I was saying yes at the same time. So I said, "Well, if it works and it seems like it's logical I'll do it but otherwise I'm reserving the right to sort of horse around with it and do it the way I want so that it's a convincing musical piece." Because I don't

think it's rigorous to just sort of plunk things in, you know. I mean it's not like it's a ritornello or something, it's just, you know, I've got a piece that dramatically has to arrive at someplace different.

So I got to the end of the opera and I was thinking about what he was saying, and I thought, you know here's a place where the Bishop now has been, he's been humbled and he's been enlightened. And the chorus, while in the second scene they're providing a backdrop for him to be rowing and they're sort of setting the scene. It's quiet and he's going on this nice, humble mission. Now, he's been rowed back (scene three). He's been altered dramatically. His character has changed. So we really need the chorus to comment on the Bishop. Not to say, "Oh Bishop you have changed. Isn't that wonderful?" But just to sing something and by hearing them sing, we come up with an idea that this is a transforming moment. So I decided to use the same hymn thing from the second scene because we need more brilliance here, because we need more. It's like the flower has opened. The rose has bloomed and all that, that I will allow the pilgrims to sing in parts. So that there's seven and eight part divisi and I'll put it in a higher key so that when it goes up to a certain point it sounds much more brilliant and elevating. So now it's up in F-sharp, which is a very bright key to most composers' minds. And what I also calculated in setting it was the top note in the sopranos is an A. I thought, theoretically, this is more where I'd go, rather than, "OK, am I using a ii-V or am I using a such-and-such to develop the such-and-such? Or is it a cluster?" Whatever.

I think about sometimes those things a little bit but more I think about where is the line going. And you get to this, I think, "Now there are probably going to be other church choirs or pretty good choirs that will do this." You can afford to have the sopranos go to an A. You get to a B and you're asking for trouble. They don't sound good. You get to a C and you might as well just shoot yourself because it's ugly. You know, ninety percent of the choirs. It's only the very best choirs, I think, can cut it. Maybe you've got one soprano in a good community choir that can but . . . you know, it's usually belt it out as high and hard as you can. It's just, you might as well go into the middle of the piece and shoot off a shotgun. It's that dramatic and overbearing. So I thought they can gracefully go up to that first ledger line above the staff and, you know, rise there and then come back from that. It makes a nice, climactic moment and yet it's not, it's also not me trying to show off my chops, like write big, high notes and everybody says, "oh it was fast, it was loud, it was high," or whatever and they're impressed. That's not the point because this has to be sort of a humble statement. It has to be full and rich and sound like it's making a comment on the Bishop's transformation. So that's part and parcel of why it [Pilgrims' Hymn, end of scene 3] was set where it is and that it goes up to that point and recedes.

And then it comes back to in the opera, of course, there's a little commentary by the Hermits in-between the two verses. So for the "Pilgrims' Hymn" when I took that out, I

had to excerpt that and I thought, after all this brilliance and divisi and all that, which you can justify because of the, not because of what the chorus is but they're singing for the Bishop, who has been enriched inside, and that's sort of a spiritual part of what I'm trying to say musically, that they can be richer because the Bishop is now enriched. But when they settle down, I mean we're talking about the melody here, when they settle down they end on this thing, the pilgrims, they're at a unison and the F-sharp is at the octave in the hymn that I extracted from it. In the actual opera they still maintain that F-sharp major chord, which, I wanted that fullness there at the end. Just having a full, choral sound but it fades into nothing. And then I think there are three chimes in three part harmonics at the same time too.

That explains at least some of that [compositional techniques]. You know, theoretically, I simply don't think in terms of what . . . I'm trying to put this in a way that makes sense and doesn't sound like totally asinine. When people analyze your music, I mean, I've had guys in front like at a pre-concert talk in front of a bunch of people at Lincoln Center say, "Well I notice your music is modal in this particular piece," well not this piece, maybe it is. And they'll say, "You use a lot of mixolydian in this particular movement," and everything and I say, 'really?' You know, it doesn't occur to me. It's not something I think about.

SLK: So you're going after particular sounds rather than saying, "Oh, let me try to use this technique in this spot"?

SP: Yeah. Technique, no one gives a damn about unless you're another composer or a music theory professor. [laughter] 99.99 percent of the audience doesn't give a hoot about technique, system, compositional method. All they hear, and most of them hear music once, unless they're, you know, if you're fortunate enough to have multiple performances and some people follow your work around, or they buy the recording but most people, you know, you're in a hall. Whether it's Avery-Fischer or the Kimmel Center or Minnesota Orchestra Hall or Chicago or something like that, the vast majority of those people there haven't heard your music before. You get one pass. And you've got to say something.

So, I always go for the sound and towards that end I try and figure out what, it has to be interesting to me. So I look for a combination of consonance and dissonance. This is the only thing that guides me. I look for a combination of consonance and dissonance that is somehow inevitable. It seems like it had to go there and yet somehow seems surprising. And you can do that with tonality, or you can do that with twelve-tone things, and you can do that with clusters, and with crazy sounds and whatever. It's my way of, you know, you can get into certain things. You can hear a piece that's fairly traditionally notated and yet it takes surprising little turns. And it's no different from listening to Mozart where you hear a sudden key change. Or a Beethoven, like in the *Eroica Symphony*, he's in the key of E-Flat

major [hums the main theme] and he's suddenly just goes down a whole step. Nobody does that or did that. "Hi. We're going to do a key change here but we're not going to go through the usual routes. We're just going to pick everybody up and move 'em down a whole step." Well to me, that's as startling today, almost, as it must have been at that time. How dare you just move us all down a whole tone?! You know, it's just outrageous.

So I think probably over and above anything my guiding, especially in a piece like this, you find the dramatic element, and I'm very concerned with the overall large scale architecture. And then I'm concerned, the trick about composition is not coming up with the notes but it's sort of psyching out what needs to be done to support the piece. You have to come up with an overall architecture.

I very much think about the use of the instruments because, you know if we're sitting there in a hall listening to this, if you're hearing harp constantly pretty soon harp becomes as common as clarinet in a Beethoven Symphony. So there are times when I maybe withhold the harp, withhold the brass, withhold the organ, or just have a bit only with organ because we haven't heard that combination. I look for combinations that are going to appear fresh so compositionally they're challenging to a listener or they stir up the pot. But they also make sense. You don't introduce harp for a fight scene, not that there is one in this opera but, you know, it doesn't always have to be angels and someone ascending the heights or something either. In this piece there was a conscious choice to use, at the beginning of the third scene, and I'm sure you've looked at this more recently than I have but there's a harp [sings the arpeggiated passage, vocal score p. 96] and then there's a little melody that drifts in.[39] To me, that was simply an effort to paint the idea of this ship bobbing along in the water and the moon coming up. Peaceful scene, it also, if you think about it, the Bishop is about to have his life totally disrupted because he's going to see a miracle.

SLK: Right.

SP: You know, three guys walking on the water saying, "Wait a minute. We didn't get it." So dramatically you have to think, "How do I?" You know, you don't want to start with a lot of tension and give it all away. This nice, peaceful scene and he comes up and you know, his mother is talking to him, says, "oh you must be tired." "Ah yes, but it was so satisfying to teach these humble guys. Blah, blah, blah." So that's what you reflect. You don't foreshadow in this case. There's trouble out on the water. That comes later. It doesn't take very long to do that.

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[39] All references to score locations in this discussion are related to the vocal score edition of *The Three Hermits* by Stephen H. Paulus, previously cited. Rehearsal and page numbers are given in brackets for convenience.

I'm just trying to give you, without being too vapid about it, an idea of how I work and in terms of what instruments I choose, and where there's an area in here after the Bishop . . . after the Hermits have come up and you know, they've told him they don't get it and everything, there's a place where there are three tunes that coalesce [pp. 124-125, vocal score]. There's one in an oboe, one in a clarinet, and they've each occurred separately other places. And here, they're not really tied to each hermit but it's, you know, throughout this piece I was sort of vaguely conscious of the "three" concept. The obvious religious overtones, the Trinity but there are three hermits, and there must have been a reason Tolstoy had three hermits, not two hermits, not four hermits, whatever. And so there are lots of . . . when I first, I'm remembering more now as we talk, I originally had a design three winds, woodwinds, three keyboards, and three percussion. Well we have flute, oboe, and clarinets, for the three winds. There's organ, harp, and percussion which aren't all keyboard but they're all sort of, they have that diatonic scheme and you can do all kinds of things on a xylophone or a marimba and all that. So that it's similar in its set up. You can play chords on that. You can play chords on a harp. Or you can play complete chords on the organ. And then I was going to have three strings but I opted, I thought, here's a case of a perfect example of how I work. The system would have been just great, everything's in threes. Three, three, three, and you've got Trinity and you've got three hermits and all that. You've got three women but I thought, musically that lets the piece down. I really need, well I ended up with a string quintet, right? Two violins, viola, cello, and contra bass.

SLK: Is this the spot that you were just describing [three tunes coalescing]?

SP: [taking the score] Let's see. I just have to look. Oh yeah, here we go.

SLK: That struck me a little bit [melody at rehearsal number 169], I don't know why but that tune struck me a little bit as "Shall We Gather At The River."

SP: Exactly.

SLK: Was that exactly what you intended?

SP: Uh huh. Yeah.

SLK: Ok, well cool because I thought maybe I was just reading too much into that but I just kept thinking that it sounds like that old hymn tune.

SP: Yeah, well I just thought. That's the kind of thing I will do. Technically that's not music theory but it is in a way because the choice in music shows you that, ok, here's

where I'm prone over. . . yeah but this whole thing [hums the melody at rehearsal number 170] and then it all comes together.

SLK: yes, combination of the three [melodies].

SP: So there's the first one [three bars before rehearsal number 168], it comes in-between or right before . . .

SLK: Uh, that's the uh, when the mother says to him, "remain as little children."

SP: . . . remain as little children, yeah. So this again is how I start a piece. Here's his mother talking to him. The "Shall We Gather At the River" thing I'm not sure what the point of that is except that I liked the idea. "Shall We Gather At the River," I mean there's a reason they gather at the river and the Bishop's being brought right there and told, "drink up bubeleh." [laughter]

SLK: And they are on the water.

SP: So each one of these [melodies] foreshadows something and says something. So it's a way, you know, this could have been one big scene with everybody commenting and going on. It's not worth that. It's too tender and under the weight of all that other things you would break it. But you can slip in little melody from oboe, clarinet, flute and then you put them all together to imply that at this point the Bishop has it all. He's put it all together. He's finally getting it. He understands what's going on.

SLK: Sometimes epiphany is a quiet moment.

SP: Yeah. It shouldn't be, it shouldn't always be banging him over the head with a . . .

SLK: Or a big light bulb.

SP: [laughter] yeah.

SLK: You had a neat thing I noticed, early in the second scene where the nuns sing a little tune that's echoed in chimes later on. [nuns duet, rehearsal number 53, p. 34 vocal score, chime echo at rehearsal number 123, p. 85 vocal score] I thought that was a real slick thing.

SP: Well thank you.

SLK: Because I think it was at that moment the nuns were discussing or commenting on the three hermits and that tune comes back later when the Bishop prepares to leave the island.

SP: Well you might say, "well how does that work?" To me, if I thought that tune should be something very angular and disjoint I would do it. To me it's not so important. Yeah, I think about the notes and pitches and all that but it's not so important. Like, hmm what style is that going to be? Should I have the same style all the time and just simply everything has to conform to it? Or should I be able to move around a bit? What's important is that I have a thought there and that as I'm writing other things I'm aware of the possibilities of plugging that in and having made some sort of comment. Some people will get it. Some people will say, "Oh I don't recognize that in the least. I don't know where that's coming from." or whatever. That's why, if a work has any sort of rigors to it, you see, oh when you hear it the second time or the third time or the tenth time you say, "oh you noticed that." Performers tell you that, "I never noticed that you're doing such and such." And you say, "Well that's what gives a work some weight and substance." If you can come back to it, whether it's Mozart or anything and say, "Well, man, that bears some scrutiny." There's some depth there.

SLK: I did that. I've listened to it [*Hermits*] several times. I actually listened to it a couple of more times on the way up here in the car and each time I listened to it I'd hear some little, just something that I didn't notice before and it makes me think about it in a new way.

SP: Oh, that's neat. Thank you. You seem very enthusiastic.

SLK: A lot of this seems to me, and please correct me if I'm wrong, it seems like an awful lot of what you came up with in terms of sound was dictated by what the text was saying and charged by what the message of the text was.

SP: That's exactly right. The text guides everything when I'm working on a piece like this.

SLK: In fact, especially with the bits that were, you know, obviously from liturgy it just seemed like I thought that the rhythm of that sounds an awful lot like how you'd say it all together in church, when you're saying the Lord's Prayer.

SP: Yeah, I'm not a guy to set a text in some needless acrobatic way. I just don't go there. And I see lots of samples of that in, well, some of my colleagues. You want to say, "Well have you really thought about this? It's not natural to sing that way." And if it's not natural to sing it that way then the listener is thinking that sounded unnatural. It's just a

choice of mine to do that but I don't want to set just something. It seems to me when you set it in an unnatural way, what you're basically saying is the musical line is more important than the words, which means to say you've already relegated the words to second place or third place. For instance, here's a line. I just want to show you. "This is the way we pray [rehearsal number 92, p. 61 vocal score]." Now, this what happens [indicates descending line in low strings following the Hermit's line], that might as well be the hermit. I very consciously wanted to do this. If he could sing that I probably would have done it but it would have been so comical to have him going F-E-G-D-C, would be a humorous moment. And so, the tricky part is what you don't talk about unless you're sitting down and having a conversation like we are is all thoughts that went into this one little spot. This guy is the older guy. He's got the deeper voice. "This is the way we pray [singing]."

SLK: So this [indicating the descending string line] is a continuation of the same thought?

SP: Continuation of his thought. Ok so you say well this is just me being my musical self but it allows three bars, plus a fermata on that last bar, for the Bishop to react. You know, he's got to think, "this is the way you pray, ok." And he's not going to go, "ay carrumba." But he absorbs it but it accomplishes a dual purpose. It lets the audience absorb it. And rather than saying we've got to move the action, "This is the way we pray." "Not you right guys! You've got to do this." It's like, accept it. And later on, you know, the Bishop has to accept it and all that stuff. But here's a case where he accepts it and even though there's this nice, low line sinking away from him. It's like continuing his voice so we get his thoughts continued only in cellos and basses and we get to see the Bishop with a bit of anxiety because he's now, during these three bars, preparing to do this. "You know the trinity at least [rehearsal 93, p. 62 vocal score]." But rather than have him react right away it doesn't give us a chance as an audience to sort of digest what he's said. There are hundreds of things like that throughout the piece.

SLK: I'd love to go through some more of these points.

SP: We can. I remember starting here [overture] and just wanting like an open, expansive feel. That's why there are no . . .

SLK: Gliding across the sea is what it felt like to me.

SP: Yeah. I actually didn't think of that but I thought this needs to have a sort of a reverence so there are a lot of open intervals, fourths and fifths. And then a melody that implies, you know, could be like a little swell in the sea.

SLK: While we're here let me ask you, I noticed an awful lot of chimes and bells throughout. What was the purpose of that? I mean, I was thinking of a couple of things. Firstly, it adds to the feeling of a church or a religious nature, and then the other thing I thought was, well it kind of sounds like a Russian idiomatic thing, lots of bells and chimes too. Was that an intentional thing or were you just looking to create a sound?

SP: I think to me they added, well besides we've got percussion so we might as well use those, I think they added a feeling of sort of reverence and dimension. I think basically it was just to create a little bit of exotic flavor.

And also Russian Orthodox liturgy, rather unusual and amusing to see all these Presbyterian choir members crossing themselves, although they're supposed to do it in a different way. I can't remember quite how, I think it was the opposite of up, down, over and across instead of up, down, across and over, whatever it is.

What I wanted to do also, there are musical things where you're trying to accent dramatic things that are happening. The thing you're trying to think is ok, if we've got a chorus we have to use the chorus a certain amount of time. So I thought if the piece opens with a chorus it delays the entry of the Bishop. Rather just starting out. I mean, I could have chosen to start this opera with the Bishop doing a little prayer, "Our Father who are in Heaven [rehearsal number 14, p. 7 vocal score]," perfectly fine to start there. But it doesn't allow us to sort of gather the chorus, they're all waking up for the day, they're singing and all that stuff.

It's just sort of typical of my writing to have a lot of quartal things, fourth things, which starts with the men, then it adds the women. And then after you've got both sopranos, altos, tenors, basses doing all this in the beefy part of their range, if you want to keep it going and I wanted more chorus, what do you do? You have to increase the height. So you make them go higher, bigger chords, and then here's the high point [indicating p. 5 vocal score]. So from the first part where the orchestra comes in to the chorus, we get to the point where the chorus has had its high point and now we've settled it down on page, whatever, seven. We're ready for the Bishop.

But here, again, I'm just trying to give you a little of idea of the way I think. At this point, everybody's kind of settled down in the chorus so this could be, the Bishop could have entered very slowly with some ponderous thing. To me, that kills the opera. That's a dead piece and bang. So instead, there's gotta be some tension. So there's this, chunk, a little trill, tension then [rehearsal number 14, p. 7 vocal score]. And then he's saying this prayer now. You could say it's a prayer, "Our Father who art in Heaven," it ought to be very quiet and reverent. I thought give it some energy. And he can still be very fluid and lyrical, set very naturally. And underneath there's all this stuff rattling. And then the

chorus gets interspersed and they kind of rise up again. I never really thought much about, you know, it's sort of sea-like in the swells and all that but the piece is constructed that way. Some of that must have been subconscious I guess.

SLK: I love all these little details with the tension. I have a theory professor who loves to call stuff like that "dark undercurrents." You know, gets stuff stirred up, lets you know something new is coming.

SP: Yeah, yeah. It's a good way to put it. You can telegraph things. He can be singing like this and not know that there are three little kids behind him ready to throw a bucket of water at him, basically. It's like a Three Stooges comedy routine. Although we're not talking about comedy here but the concept is similar.

SLK: Well it's not without its humor though. I mean, there was plenty of irony in the Tolstoy itself.

SP: Absolutely. Yeah, and at this point here [rehearsal number 32, p. 20 vocal score] This is like ok, business as normal (for the Bishop). Here he's being quite literal, "I like the mornings quite the best . . ." So the music is like that. Before we've had this big choral thing, the opening, and then we've had this prayer thing but with dark undercurrents and now we're sort of getting, you know, he could just as easily have said, "Oh by the way, Mother, did you remember to bring the soap from the cabin?" or something. It's not, obviously, that mundane but this keeps going on for a while.

SLK: I like the little bit where the Mother remembers the prayers he made up as a child and he's just horrified by that. He doesn't want to remember that part of his past, "Mother, hush!" I thought that was really interesting.

SP: That's Michael.

SLK: It just sets him up for that's who he is now. He's just this kind of by-the-book, cut and dried guy.

SP: And also, what Michael will tell you is that he has a form for things that he's figured out when he writes a libretto or a poem. And I know he would say this because I've heard him say it to his poet students, poetry students, and that's the composer or musician finds another form. With music, we can elongate something, stretch it out. Obviously we can take a word and instead of it going in like a second and a half or something we can make that word last, you know, seven bars if we want to. So we change the emphasis, we change the form, we change the structure. And this little thing with this little prayer and the mouse and everything, I chose to, I think I used glockenspiel or something to make it sort of sound

like a toy piano to increase the amount of embarrassment at that point. And Michael's done a wonderful thing in that he set it up. We're raising him a little higher now. It's a higher stool to fall off of. And it's going to be a big one when he finally gets it and says, "these poor saps that are praying on this island don't know what's going on."

SLK: And here's the first one of those [rehearsal number 39, p. 26 vocal score], "when I was a child I spoke as a child . . ." Again, it just felt like it was pushing the bar up higher.

SP: Yeah, because he's making a real point. "I don't do that anymore." Uh-huh, ok. Oh, and I'm remembering how this scene ends. Michael provided several wonderful things. When the Bishop was thinking about the three wise men and he gets this, "oh the old one smiles all the time" and then he said, "have mercy on us," which foreshadows their prayer. "Three are ye, three are we have mercy on us." It's like it's a little ominous. And then it gave me a perfect chance to sneak, I mean this is the way I think, "have mercy upon us" with this low, kind of muddy chord [rehearsal number 61, p. 39] in the strings down there. And the men [sings the descending line of the tenors and basses on the text, "Amen."]. See I would just do this because I want something different. D, D-flat, C-flat, D-flat, E, D-natural, C-natural, it's all kind of wandering around there. You'd say, theoretically what's going on? Actually, you know, we should bring this in with the piano.

SLK: Ok, sure. [at the piano] I love when they settle into that low G-flat [one measure before rehearsal number 62, p. 40 vocal score].

SP: The satisfaction, musically, which I'm using just my ears, but you can say ok, this is this measure [six measures before rehearsal number 62, p. 40 vocal score]. And the choir you have to say, "men you've really got to get that C-flat." It's going to sound terrible and that's bad [the next two measures]. But it's not bad. These are the dark undercurrents. And they're not singing it too loudly. So to my mind what this did musically was suggest, in the same way that some of the earlier things do, there are some uncomfortable things going on here. We're not going to give it away yet but they are there. In many respects this piece, without sounding puffed out about it, pleases me because of some of the things that went on. I'm not sure how I even got there but when you have this, when they finally settle on this thing . . . and that line isn't chosen because I think well, they want a half step followed by a whole and a whole and a minor third. You could analyze that and a theory professor might come up with well this figure occurs here so he obviously was playing with half steps and whole steps. It had nothing whatsoever to do with it. All it had to do with is I've got this settled feeling but I don't want it settled because the men, almost like a Greek chorus, all they're saying is "Amen." But they're sort of saying or they could be saying, "Watch out. Something screeches around you."

SLK: It's almost an ominous "Amen."

SP: It's an ominous "Amen." That's exactly what it's supposed to be. And then all this stuff, the ship couldn't get much closer, and "What's this Alexei? What is it about these men?" This is a little ethereal stuff. [rehearsal number 66, p. 42 vocal score], that's like sarcasm.

SLK: I had actually written a note to myself, "misterioso" here.

SP: Yeah because she [the Mother] doesn't know what's going on. What is it about these men? Again, this contributes to the musical foreshadowing to . . . she's asking a question, "What is it about these men?" But the music is saying there is something about these men. The lady is going, "believe her for a while." They are just hints about what's happening is not the best idea.

This [rehearsal number 69, p. 44 vocal score], "From what I've heard these are stupid old men . . ." so that this thing that just happened back here [rehearsal number 62, p. 40], "There's the island . . ." that's just an announcement of it. Now, further embellishment. We now know something about the island. They're stupid old men and not worth your time. And when the Bishop arrives at the island, there are these same chords but they go faster. And then the hermits are all there looking at him like he's an invader.

Here's a typical thing I do in an opera. I will not have a duet or a trio, quartet, quintet, sextet, whatever until each character has had a chance to get their thought out. It's my way of paying respect to the words. Ok, so there's a fisherman and a captain. "From what I've heard these are stupid old men not worth your time. They're strange, strange and then some, let me tell you friends you've never seen the like." So now, we have a little duo here. First we have "They're strange and then some. Let me tell you friends you've never seen the like." We've already heard that. Then the other guy, the captain, says, "They're stupid old men not worth your time." Ok, so there's all this stuff going on. If this were the only time we were hearing this thing, I would not do this because I would say one guy's going to cancel the other. They're each going to cancel each other out. You don't get a chance to actually hear the words. Since we've heard them I'm now using, these are the instances where I do this, I'm using the words. The words are secondary. They have to have something to sing and I'm building a musical idea. It's higher in the range and they're building all this stuff up to the point where they set the stage for the Bishop to say, "I can pay for your trouble, Captain." So wherever there's a trio or duet or something you can almost always guarantee yourselves that you'll get those words by themselves, unadorned or simply accompanied or punctuated so that we get the meaning of the words. I don't want people not to know the Captain's and the Fisherman's opinions which are that these are "dumb, stupid old men. Don't waste your time." After a certain point we make a

musical thing about it. But, you know, with Mozart or anything once you get into trios or wonderful duets for the most part, except for a few pieces I can think of, the music is glorious and you can hear some of the words, some of the time but you can't hear everything because we don't hear that way. If you're talking here and someone else is here and you're both talking at me I can't process both conversations. Very few people can do that.

SLK: Yeah, Rossini's that way too.

SP: Yeah. So it's just another way, I'm just trying to give you some ideas as to how I'm working. Now this was quite literal. This is rowing music [beginning of Scene 2, p. 48 vocal score].

SLK: I was going to say! If that's not rowing music, I've never heard rowing music.

SP: Right and then they sing it. It was very easy to transfer that over to the men, the audience heard it in the instruments.

SLK: It's very visual, you can see them rowing.

SP: [laughing] Yeah, you can. And here's a case in working this way, this [melody] becomes an ostinato. So we don't care about that. And that [soprano/alto part a rehearsal number 74, p. 49 vocal score] is going to be heard above this. So I'm not contradicting what I just said. In this case yes, we have two sets of words going on but the men are singing only, "blessed art thou oh Lord." So that works. But eventually, here's another case even chorally, you've got everything going. But they're all singing words we've heard before. And this actually comes up more than anything.

SLK: Right because this is the new idea [tenor part at rehearsal number 75, p. 50 vocal score] and this is the texture we saw just a moment ago?

SP: Uh-huh. Even though this is higher.

SLK: So it's a layering?

SP: And these guys [tenors], because they're faster, I always hear them above and beyond everything, even though sopranos are supposedly the top line and it's always heard more easily. Well, you sort of tune this out because you're hearing this again. And they [tenors] have the most frisky line of anyone. The basses and the baritones have this slower ostinato thing. The women have sort of a gentle but more energetic thing. And then the men have to have something more to distinguish than the tenors.

SLK: That reminds me of something you had said in the "Stephen Paulus On Composing for Chorus" video about creating a musical mountain of sound.

SP: Mm-hmm. This is exactly what's going on. This is me indulging in a musical moment but is it serving another purpose? Yes, because I believe . . .

SLK: You have to get to the island!

SP: . . .You've got to get to the island. So we need some music to fill up the space. So as long as there's some text there to support what is going on and that we feel good about it and we can go with it, then I'm fine. It always has to feel natural.

And then to spin out of this you have an instrumental [rehearsal number 76, p. 51 vocal score]. It's the tenor line. The friskiest line becomes our instrumental thing here.

SLK: I think that was flute, wasn't it?

SP: It was flute, yeah. So I don't know. I mean, your theory question got me going about do I think much about theory? I don't but there's a lot of thought about what goes. Here's again where, "The Lord is compassionate and merciful [rehearsal number 80, p. 54 vocal score]." It's pretty similar [to the rowing motive]. It's the same thing but now it's a real phrase. And then they finish the whole thing up, and then here again when they were talking about the island and the stupid old men. Now we have the arrival [rehearsal number 82, p. 55 vocal score]. So it gives something dramatic. And then this [rehearsal number 83, p. 55 vocal score] is just an effort to make something reverential.

SLK: It's almost like a chorale.

SP: Yeah, a little processional or something. And again, it's a little bit similar [rehearsal number 89, p. 59 vocal score] to the Bishop's let's get down to business music when he says, "I like the mornings quite the best." This is also the same kind of thought. I didn't want to write exactly the same music. But it's just, "How to serve God? We don't know how. We only serve ourselves." Matter of fact, explains very day to day conversational stuff.

This I knew would come back [the Hermits' prayer, rehearsal number 91, p. 60 vocal score]. Also I felt this needed to be exposed. I made definite choices like no instrumental accompaniment here because it's the first time we've heard them say their prayer, which is very simple.

SLK: They're a unit. They have to be together.

SP: Yeah, we don't want a [plays a full textured version of the prayer]. Because then it's like, ok what's important here? The important thing is these three guys that are major reverential guys but the Bishop isn't going to believe it. So to increase his incredulity over the whole thing, I exposed this simple little three part thing, quarter note, half note, whole note. You've got three kinds of notes here. Then "This is the way we pray," we already covered that.

Now, I have to tell you the hardest thing in the piece to compose was learning the prayer, because you had to make them sound stupid and like fools. It was very difficult to do that and I knew it would be before I ever did it because you have to sort of program chaos. It's like in a theatrical thing you have to program like, ok this is going to be a thing where she comes in, drops the plate, he kicks it across the floor and splatters the guy that just bought the two hundred dollar tie and everything. Ok, how do we time that? This is the same kind of thing [rehearsal number 97, p. 64 vocal score]. How much of it do you give away? Choosing to be dissonant, learning at different rates each of them, obviously one is dumber than the rest who comes up with things out of nowhere.

And here's a case [overlapping "who art in" phrases, rehearsal number 98, p. 65 vocal score], it's a rather disjunct line but it goes by quickly and it fulfills the need of having something sound like it's sort of sporadic. And they just don't get it at all. You see, part of the humor also they can do perfect three part, "Have mercy upon us."

SLK: And meanwhile back at the ship the trio of women is watching the goings on, which I thought was a really neat way to pace it. Was that a combination of ideas? Or was that. . .

SP: That was Michael saying ok now we need to have them looking at what's happening and they have this little spy glass. The words aren't major at this point but you need to know what they're thinking. You know, he's shaking his head. He's lying down. He's sitting down [rehearsal number 99, p. 66 vocal score]. So, again, underneath that don't have a lot of stuff going on in the orchestra because we want to understand, "He's shaking his head, Madame. He's sitting down."

SLK: It's almost like a recitative.

SP: Mm-hmm.

SLK: Pushing the story forward?

SP: That's exactly right. And the things where you're pushing the story forward in opera, I think it's very important not to have that beat. If other things are say, a ten dollar idea something that moves the text forward shouldn't be. You have to go, "ok I was there. I came, I went to the thing. I got six dollars in change and I came back. They're still mad at me and they want to shoot me at the store but I'm going back anyway because . . ." and then you start to sing something. Because you don't need to spend, that's like a two dollar idea. The other stuff, "if that's what it is, His Grace will be needing every last ounce of his patience [rehearsal number 101, p. 68 vocal score]." And then, "And we must be patient too [rehearsal number 102, p. 69 vocal score]."

SLK: Oh, I love that! That's a beautiful trio.

SP: Well thank you. And that's what I'm trying to get to. I was very conscious of they're not terribly, they're important words but they're not earth shattering. They're just a comment. We need to know they're aware that he's having troubles out there. It reaffirms what we see directly when we're on the scene. Here's the Bishop going, "la, la, la, la, la. What's happening?" And then they're observing him as well. But here's where I say, ok, now here's where I get to write piece.

SLK: And here's how they feel about what's going on?

SP: Mm-hmm. And again, here's where they're adding something, the Bishop will have to come up with a "and we must be patient too" because they know more than he does and they're not the head poobah. Teaching them the Lord's Prayer. And I think that was, Michael had it sort of structured out but I had sort of worked by exactly how it looked in the libretto. So they get a little farther each time and by the end they finally got the whole.

SLK: Oh, the business where they finally start to get it. That's such a great payoff! It's the payoff for these preceding pages.

SP: Yeah, it's for having to suffer through these guys. But it introduces, and I've seen this in various productions, it introduces a little element of humor which is necessary. I've seen people play the piece where they cast these guys almost like the Three Stooges and it's not that. I think Michael might prefer that too, basically, but they're not the Three Stooges. You know? They're three older men. Nice, climactic point here for them to finish the Lord's Prayer on the hill.

SLK: And the Bishop can pat himself on the back.

SP: Yeah and with the same sort of unctuous music. This part I always liked [rehearsal number 123, p. 85 vocal score]. What I was trying to create was some magic here because

they keep . . . I can't remember if this was in chimes. It was in chimes earlier when the two nuns are singing.

SLK: The two nuns do it and then chimes later. I don't remember if it's chimes here or not.

SP: It might be chimes here too. I was trying to create some magic with this. This is the common prayer, "they're different. How are these two men? They're different. They're not like you and me." They've just left and they're basically saying, "they're different," even though he just made them the same. He's taught them the prayer. He's made them the same. They're different even though he just made them the same. And then they're just echoing, not parts or anything , just to prove that they've still got the prayer in tow [rehearsal number 124, p. 86 vocal score]. All in the same kind of medium tessitura. It's not standing out, gentle like that provides a wonderful backdrop for these three things that happen.

And then they [chorus] start with this [rehearsal number 126, p. 88 vocal score]. It's wonderful just to hear, a little louder and then they start to fade out. And I always sort of enjoy this transformation where the chorus sort of takes over. They started it. They set the first scene, they started the second scene. Here they're going to end the second scene but from this. And from here I could have gone almost anywhere musically. A common tone [modulation] and what I know about theory you could put in a box that big but I just never have been one to relish it. But I'm sure there's some theoretical stuff happening here. I'm not trying to harp on this but where do you go from [A-major cadence two bars before rehearsal number 126]? And I do remember thinking about this. I could have easily done that [playing a common tone modulation]. It's perfectly natural. It would sound wonderful but to me it's much more interesting to, and just hold that little string out and then they start this. It's got a lot more magic. Why? I don't know. It's a half step lower. By that far in that, if it's in D-major it's already ho-hum. But simply by changing [to D-Flat], if anything it's more interesting by the time you get to the same point. Why? I don't know. There's not a theory lesson that says, "oh when you get to this point and you've gone from I to V don't go to I but go to a I that's a half step under the previous I by common tone that's a third." I don't know. Partly it's where it's richer. And it comes from a unison. This is what I played for Michael and he said he wanted to change his thing.

SLK: And something about the tessitura of the sopranos there is so pleasing to my ear. I don't know why. Sometimes just not hearing them in the stratosphere makes you go all tingly. You know? I don't know what that is.

SP: I totally agree. I had a colleague write an opera once and I was part of a panel critiquing it and I said, in front of God and everybody, "You've used too many high notes." You could just see the room kind of. . .[shudder]. I said, "You know, if you bring out the bazooka, the canon," you know to use a war analogy or a gun analogy. You bring out the heavy artillery too many times pretty soon people will say "oh yeah they got the bazooka and the flame thrower," but they don't care. But if it's like every once in a while you think, what are they going to do with that heavy piece of machinery. And not only that, when it's in this range you can actually hear the words. Once you get up to here you're going just for sound. I remember thinking I wasn't going to have this accompanied. We needed to have that sense of rowing again, even though the Bishop is done rowing. We're not going anywhere but we are going someplace but someplace spiritual. Not someplace physically, now we're rowing to another island and we've got to check out four guys that sing. We're just lower and it gets deeper. We get more overtones.

And then here again, since this will happen later I just want the hermits to sort of echo [four measures before rehearsal number 134, p. 94 vocal score] so we don't forget about them. And then this time it seemed like overkill having them subtext. Just focus on the chorus. The lights come down and everything. And so, just take everything away and don't bring it back until we introduce the low notes in the cellos and basses [two measures before rehearsal number 134, p. 94 vocal score].

SLK: It's a more satisfying "Amen." Not as ominous.

SP: Because their intent is to settle down. This opening of the third scene is just atmosphere and stuff like that.

SLK: You've really painted of picture of a glassy surface of water and moonlight.

SP: That's exactly what I was trying to do. It's probably pretty literal. Anyway we've got some of this same rowing music, but now it's a little more violent [rehearsal number 136, p. 97 vocal score]. And here's the Mother [rehearsal number 145, p. 103 vocal score]. It's similar to her music that was saying, "What is it with these men." Thematically, you bring people's signature music out at certain times and you change it, and people are not going to say, "oh I remember that perfect fifth going to a fourth, coming down a minor third, minor second, up a fifth." They don't think that way. They'll think oh there's that sort of weirdo or mystical music.

SLK: Do you or do you not think in terms of a leitmotif idea? Or do you just think of how to put that together? Are you consciously thinking that this is a good time to bring that person's music back in or are you thinking of the concept of how you want them (the audience) to feel? Are you trying to elicit a reaction from the audience?

SP: Both. Both. I would think here that the Mother is coming back in. I don't like to be bound into every time this character makes an appearance we've got to use this music because it might be a number of those cases I might want to introduce a new theme. And say, ok here she is totally different character. She's transformed. We're going to have her stride in and sing whatever. In this case she's puzzled. She's still perplexed and she's got the same feeling, I think. Here's a chance to bring some of her thematic material back. Alter it a little bit but it's like if you met someone at a party and three weeks later you saw them at an art museum at some little function you'd say, "oh I remember that person they reacted weirdly when I said hello to them" or something and they retained that weirdness. Or "I remember them and they were particularly friendly, and gregarious, and forthcoming," and all that. So it gives me a chance each time to sort of add to their character and I will repeat things and sometimes contradict things like I'll put somebody else's theme under certain characters to sort of say, "you know what," like to the Bishop, "this is what your Mother would say about this," and how you're reacting. And so it's in the backdrop. We're going directly with what the Bishop feels. I can't think of an example but it would be like you had one character and I had another and we went out on stage and said something, but earlier in the opera I had said, "watch out, you're going to have trouble with this issue." And while you're singing, "Isn't it a wonderful day," my theme comes through and says, "There'll be trouble here before the opera's over." Then the audience starts to think, "That's interesting. Why is this music so ominous when she's singing about flowers and blue sky?" There's a reason it makes for dramatic tension. That's another way I continually think.

"The moon is so bright," this is just moving stuff along. "School of fish, seagulls," and "Time for a professional opinion," "Your Grace how may I help you?" Again, we're sort of forestalling a little bit. He sees something happen [rehearsal number 153, p. 110 vocal score].

"The hermits are running, running over the water." Again, we've got to kill some time because he can see the hermits are running, running over the water [rehearsal number 158, p. 114 vocal score]. And now they're done. There has to be some, it's like when you're watching a cartoon or something in a movie and he's supposed to be the character who's kind of sitting there for twenty minutes tortured about this thought, but it doesn't take twenty minutes on TV literally, but it might take two minutes. There will be strident music and tension going. So here we have the choir just building up. And when they're starting to realize in visual characters what it is it's, "praise God, praise God." Big choral, it's the biggest part.

SLK: It's the thickest texture we've seen so far in the piece.

SP: I think this little thing, "Amen, [rehearsal number 162, p. 120 vocal score]" is the same thing as when the hermits are saying at the end of their prayer. And then some of this music is similar to the Bishop when he's marching on to the island. It's got some of that unctuous chordal music but it's almost alarming at this point.

And then we're seeing some of the same tension happened like in the very beginning of the opera [rehearsal number 163, p. 122 vocal score]. So some things are coming full circle. There's some tension here going on with string things going on. And the Hermits are saying, "When you were teaching we could remember everything," is all homophonically together and everything. They act as a unit. It could have been some elaborate thing. They've had that and they fell apart. They're a unit. "Three are we, three are Ye. Have mercy on us." "While you were teaching we could remember everything," and then just to change of texture, "as soon as you left us, oh, our memory began to fail us." And with, "Our Father who art in Heaven," is a little dissonant just to show that they don't get it.

Now, this little thing, again, no third in there [rehearsal number 167, p. 124 vocal score] because it's too rich. This is very spare. And then this little sweetness [three measures before rehearsal 168, p. 124 vocal score], that's the Mother again. And he's very quiet [Bishop, rehearsal number 168]. Now you have this ["Shall We Gather At the River" theme at rehearsal number 169]. The more he's transformed the sweeter the music gets. It's very expansive here like it could be something ominous happening but then it's his mother's warning, "unless you are as a child." He starts very low. It's appropriate for him to be low rather than, "Your prayer! You Holy ones!" No, no, no man, he can barely talk. And he's dissonant a little bit. It's time for him to admit, "I'm not quite the guy I pretended to be." He starts a littler higher but then he's sinking again [three measures after rehearsal 169, p. 125 vocal score]. "In my pride I tried to change you." That's the strongest he can be. It's like saying, "I was wrong, sorry."

And then finally there's a wonderful moment, gosh I wish you could see this. I think it's right here [rehearsal number 172, p. 126 vocal score], in various Gary Gisselman productions. I'm trying to remember a visual. I believe at this point the Bishop reaches out and touches their faces just to guarantee that they're real. And the choir members are all around like this saying they're not an apparition. Ok, here we are back at the ranch music. Magical because paired with the visual, and I didn't know it was actually going to happen that way because even after performance or a final rehearsal he said, "why don't you do this and touch the guys?" So this is all vamp music until we get to here but it's not because eventually they start to turn away and walk. So they have to start back on their trip. It's just magical what Gary did with this.

And here's what I was aware of here [four measures before rehearsal number 174, p. 127 vocal score]. Here's where this final thing comes. But this had to be very simple so that when you started this choir you think, "What happened to the orchestra? Why aren't they there?" It's very simple. It's like it's standing out because that's a little higher we're happy to have something in the middle, sort of belly range. And purposely I kept that unaccompanied so that will be fresh and different.

And then the Hermits come in, "Pray for us. Have mercy on us." The Bishop says that, not the Hermits. The Hermits are still trying to, "Our Father who art in Heaven," but it's this junk from what has happened. So they're still not getting it. And then these guys, three women get their little commentary. It's a nice place at the end of the opera for everyone to put their oar in [rehearsal number 179, p. 129 vocal score]. All of this sort of has a musical value of suspending things because it's not settled until it gets to [Pilgrims' Hymn, rehearsal number 180, p. 130 vocal score]. And with this particular version I thought here's where we need the whole orchestra behind them. We'll be glad to have strings and glad to have harp and everything. And the one thing I pointed out was they don't stay up there. They get up there, the great note and then [descend, three measures before rehearsal number 183, p. 132 vocal score]. And I purposely marked this forte. Most people don't want to do that. Should be strong right up to there and not sort of suddenly. . . strong all the way.

And then the three Hermits have a chance to go back [rehearsal number 184, p. 133 vocal score] to their little, "three are we, three are ye have mercy on us." And they're in sync with things harmonically. Instead of having something that sounds a little dissonant it works out that they're in sync, the Bishop is in sync. They do this from the back of the church if everything's going well for them. So it's like an echo to the whole thing. And in this case I chose to have the chords because I thought I like the Pilgrims' Hymn. It's excerpted out. It made sense to have this a full chord that goes off to nothing. I just wanted that palette of the whole chords. So I didn't expect that we'd talk through the whole thing.

SLK: Oh, this has been terrific. Thank you so much! Can I ask you a question just in terms of how you get things down on paper? Why don't you use key signatures? Is that just this piece?

SP: No, I generally don't although I just put a key signature in for eight bars on this piece that I'm working on.

SLK: Is there something about working that way that's easier for you?

SP: I think basically because things change often enough so that what I don't want to have to do is always be changing the key signature like sometimes three times on a page or every two pages or whatever. It's easier to look at the page and say, "ok, here we've got G-flat and D-flat and rather than writing it all out G-flat major and then by the time you get to. . ." well let's look at something from the second scene. If this were in B-major, I'd have to add the G-sharp there. Then I'd have to suddenly I'd have to do for this chord, add the accidental A-flat, a natural for the C, and then put E and the A-flats in there. Then go back to this and even though there's a barline there I'd put a cautionary A-natural there.

SLK: So it's just more efficient?

SP: It seems to be more efficient. It depends on how. . . it seems sometimes a little cumbersome. But sort of like why wouldn't you do this when you're writing something like this that has a little bit more traditional language, references to hymns and things like that. It's more obvious about like that piece I'm writing for narrator and orchestra, which in most cases is probably a little more pantonal or has different things or has quick juxtapositions of different tonalities going on. It makes more sense in that not to have key signatures than this. I've been so used to not using key signatures for so long because twenty years ago nobody used a key signature. You just didn't. Nobody was writing tonal music. Now we're writing things that have tonality and all sorts of things in them that make it so you could use a key signature.

CHAPTER 6

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL DENNIS BROWNE

The following interview was conducted at the Dunn Brothers coffee house in St. Paul, Minnesota on October 11, 2002 [Corrections and revisions completed on November 26, 2002].

SLK: Let me begin by asking you a little bit about you because I did a little research and quite honestly I couldn't find a whole lot. I know that you've written some books of poetry, yes?

MDB: Did you go to Google?[40]

SLK: I went through Yahoo.[41] I guess I should have gone to Google.

MDB: Just go to Google. There's lots of stuff on Google.

SLK: OK, well a little bit about your background and what you're doing nowadays would be terrific.

MDB: I've got some stuff to give you. And if you don't have a copy of the program from the opera, what it does have is a synopsis and bio and so forth. So for example, there I am.

SLK: Oh, sensational. Thank you.

MDB: But if you want stuff, Google is usually better than the other one I find.

SLK: OK.

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[40] Google is an internet search engine. The web address is http://www.google.com/.

[41] Yahoo is an internet search engine. The web address is http://www.yahoo.com/.

MDB: But what I am in a nutshell is an English born, Irish ancestored person. And I came over from England in '65 to the University of Iowa to the Writers Workshop. It's a well-known, maybe the best known creative writing program. And I studied there then did some teaching and moved out here in '71.

And I was actually looking for a composer to work with. I had worked with a young, English composer called David Lord. And I had talked to Argento but he was not interested, Dominick Argento. And I talked to Paul Fetler who, I think, set one of my poems many years ago, but he said, "there's this wonderful, young composer called Stephen Paulus who's a PhD candidate. Why don't you talk to him?" So I met Stephen in '75. We started working together in '76. I think "Hermits" is our twelfth work. So it's been a wonderful friendship and relationship.

SLK: That's great. You just answered a bunch of my questions. What was your first collaboration?

MDB: Well, I think it was a couple of little carols, "Carol of the Candle" and "Carol of the Hill." "Carol of the Hill" has been recorded a couple of times. "Carol of the Candle" I don't think has but it's very beautiful. I think it's out of print now. And then we did a work, we did some children's songs, "Fountain of My Friends." We did an Easter work called, "Canticles." A wonderful choral work called, "North Shore" that the Bach Society commissioned but it hasn't been recorded. So I think those are the first works. "Fountain of My Friends," carols, songs for children, so forth.

SLK: It sounds like it's been a wonderful collaboration.

MDB: It's been good.

SLK: Now I had an opportunity to speak with him a little bit this morning and I was asking him how the story of the Tolstoy came to his attention. He said that was actually your doing.

MDB: I've got some things to give you. Bits of paper. This is a letter that I wrote to him, so you can have that copy, in '87 talking about the idea of the "Hermits." And how it happened was this. There's a Minnesota writer called Carol Bly, Robert Bly's first wife, he remarried, who happens to by my wife's aunt. So I'm related to Carol Bly and Carol one time gave me this book and said, "I think you'll like this." This is the copy. And I opened it up and I read "The Three Hermits" and I immediately thought it should be a church opera.

SLK: Right away?

MDB: Immediately. People sometimes think that's weird but I love church operas and had seen some Britten productions in England and elsewhere. And I just thought, "let's do a church opera." [laughter] So I proposed this to Stephen in November of '87. And with lightning speed [laughter], eight years later...

SLK: Yeah, he told me he put you off for a while.

MDB: Did he tell you what activated him?

SLK: That you were going to pass it on to another composer and then he got excited.

MDB: Yes [laughter]. Well interestingly we had talked about Tom Lancaster as a possibility at House of Hope and about two weeks later or whenever... Here's some of my notes that you might like to look at.

SLK: Wow, this is incredibly helpful. Thank you.

MDB: The kind of research I do, informal. I was in the music library at the U and I saw Tom and I said, "Tom, it's funny you should be here. Steve and I were just talking about you. We've got this really neat idea for an opera. Would you be interested?" And then as Tom will tell you the story, a little bit after that he was with the choir at a retreat out at Molly McMillan's house. She's the patron of the whole event.

SLK: Yes. He told me about her.

MBD: The well endowed patron and she had just been listening to Stephen's music and like it. And Tom and Jim McMillan, not McMillan, Jim was the minister at the time. Any way, Jim floated this idea at Molly and she was interested and ended up funding everything. And so it was really wonderful.

But I just loved it from the start. It was such a clear story. Lots of room for action and room for music. Oh, I didn't bring you something. I'll get you a copy of this. I've written a little piece called, "Words for Music," that's about writing words for music. And it starts by describing music as building a boat, not a house. Strong but buoyant. When the music comes it lifts the boat. So you leave lots of room for the music. I'll get it to you. So there's plenty of room in that text for the music. Lots of room. A spare story but a stunning story. And I just had an instinct it would be a good work.

SLK: Well it certainly is a compelling piece. What kind of process, if any, do you follow when putting a libretto together? And how much back and forth did you have with Stephen regarding the work?

MBD: Oh, lots! I think I've got maybe one draft to give you. It's complex, not complicated. I have to transpose it into action. And so I have to create, in my mind, a kind of movie. And there's this boat, and there's this Bishop, and how does he come on deck? And then how do the pilgrims? So I begin to run a little movie inside. And begin to think of it in terms of interchange. Bishop, pilgrims, fisherman, you know, to dramatize it. Write a first draft that's pretty basic to the story. I mean, I don't. . . I think the first draft I had the Mother. I had to make up a Mother which I'll tell you about. Simply, just casting it, taking out all the he saids, she saids. Sacrificing some of the descriptive detail but maybe having a character say, "Boy that cloud looks strange," when the narration says, "it was a stormy day." Just little transpositions into drama, into action. Dispersing it out. Transposing it into simple dramatic form.

I always trusted the story and my notes to Gary Gisselman say that. It's a brilliantly simple story and I don't think I have to fix it up much. Just think of it in dramatic terms. So, I have to allocate certain moments of the story to speakers and actions. For example, when the Bishop is rowed ashore, when you read that eventually you'll see what I say, I just had a feeling that the pilgrims should be singing something so I borrowed something from the Russian liturgy. And when he comes back from the shore we should have a hymn that gradually replaces the sound of the Hermits with the sound of the boat that he's reapproaching. The boat he left to meet the Hermits. So it's simple little brush strokes of drama there to bring the story to life.

SLK: And so the process from original idea of having the concept to convert this story to an opera for the church was about ten years in the making between your original thought of doing this and when Stephen was able to work on the project?

MDB: Well, that's the long frame but as soon as we agreed we were going to do it I started to do what you're talking about now in terms of detail which is, imagine it dramatically. How does the Bishop first appear? What do we want to be thinking of? How do the pilgrims first appear? So I mean, it sat around for seven or eight years but what you just asked me was what I start to do beyond the initial idea when we know we're going to do it. How do we dramatize this?

SLK: It's all fascinating to me, the journey the piece went through. It's funny because I've read the story and now I've sat down and just looked at the libretto itself and you've made some changes that, I think, just make the story all that much more fascinating. How did you come up with the idea to give the Bishop a mother?

MDB: Well it was just a bunch of guys, wasn't it [laughter]?

SLK: It sure was.

MDB: It was just a bunch of guys. And I'm a strong believer in the role of women in poetry and drama. I just felt that it would be good to have a foil for the Bishop, someone who would not let him get away with too much. I mean he's very arrogant in some ways. So the mother would be a good foil. So with the mother and the two nuns, and I described it in my notes somewhere, would be another triple. You know, you've got the three hermits, the three women, the Holy Trinity, and I just had a feeling that there should be a woman there and I decided the Bishop was traveling with his mother.

SLK: And why not?

MDB: And why not. I had a good mother. I like mothers. I like mezzos. I just felt he should have, for drama. If it's just the Bishop saying, "My good man, row me to this island," it's a little spare. Well you see if there's his mother and what when he's a little boy and the mouse, you know, and embarrassing him and he talks about his fear of water, fear of drowning, you know, "I was among the fishes."

SLK: I was going to ask you is his dream, in your opinion, literally that he's afraid of the water? Or is there something else weighing on him?

MDB: There's a little motif there of fear of water and I think it's, no, I think in psychological terms he is kind of an anal retentive. He wants to control everything. And water represents, in many symbolic situations, not only birth but death. You know, the waters of life, the waters of death. And water represents a lack of control. When you're in the water and little boat you're not in your solid house on solid ground. So I think that the ocean represents for him something he can't control. It shifts and moves and it's very deep and it's got fishes in it. And the three hermits are like this. They're described at one point as like being old fish. I just picked up on the little hint that they were animal-like. And you can't control animals too well. And the Bishop is in a floating world that he's not used to. So below that are the deeps and the fishes. It's just he's destabilized. I think that little motive works quite well, his fear of water. It's partly borrowed from T.S. Elliot, fear of drowning. There's a fear of water as one of the sections from a famous poem called, "The Wasteland." So again, it's got to be subtle. Just brush stroke that in.

Stephen actually wanted to take that out. Stephen played through the first scene one time, with me and Gary. I said, "there's one line I want to put back in that you took

out." I said to Gary, "which line do you think it was?" Gary said, "I know I was among the fishes [laughter]."

SLK: In particular I love the line where the mother and the son are discussing their dreams. The very last thing she says is that it's interesting I dream I'm above the water and you're below.

MBD: Yeah, "and you below." Yeah, I just wanted to build up some overtones of his unease. He's out of his element. His element is ground, is authority and the boat and the water and the hermits represent a whole other world. And they're animals. They're like animals, really. They're primitive. Animals. They're like savages. Of course he learns everything from them. In dreams, the most buttoned-down person like a Bishop, or as I heard someone say, Richard Nixon, can't control what happens when the conscious mind closes down and the unconscious mind opens up.

One of my favorite stories is called, "The Snow Queen," by Hans Christian Andersen and I dramatized that for the children's theater company here many years ago. In that story a little girl goes in search of her friend, who's been captured by the Snow Queen and in that everything becomes more and more primitive. She rides on a reindeer. She ends up reading a message written on a fish. Everything begets more animal-like at the end in some contrast to the iciness of the Snow Queen. So I think in literature animals often represent an unconscious part of ourselves that we don't acknowledge when we're awake but in dreams there they are, baring their fangs. Something like that. See there they look like. . . did you see this? I've got all this you can have. I've brought copies of things for you.

SLK: Oh, you are so helpful. This is wonderful.

MDB: What about this [holds up an embossed cocktail napkin]? This is from the reception.

SLK: You just saved everything! Wow.

MDB: Well, I keep things.

SLK: What, if anything, did you concern yourself with regarding how to direct this toward a modern audience? Or did you just center yourself on the idea of painting the brushstrokes from description to drama?

MDB: You know, folk tales and fables and parables, like the parables of Jesus in the New Testament, don't need much mediation. They're just there. The kingdom of heaven is

likened to a man who sowed seed on thorny ground. I mean it just has an ancient clarity to it. Hans Christian Andersen, the Grimm Brothers, you know, all those fairy tales are archetypal I think. They embody, Aesop's fables, they embody human characteristics with slightly different trappings from culture to culture. But they don't need much from someone like me. So I don't, in terms of modern audience, I think we have to bring the modern audience to something ancient that they may have lost touch with. It's like fixing up the liturgy so it's, you know, like a hoedown. I think I like simple church music but I think it's gone too far sometimes. I think it becomes, they've reduced the complexity of the music to make it like theme music for a sitcom. Too simple.

So I've always trusted the story to be stunning. It's a great, great story and according to some sources it goes back to the sixteenth century. It's an old story. I've got this thing for you here I can lend you. You can photocopy and get it back to me, by Gary John, who is a teacher at the U, who did his doctoral thesis on Tolstoy. And he thinks that Tolstoy didn't learn this from the guy I think he learned it from but this is a chapter from his thesis, if you want to read. He talks about the origins of the three old men back in the sixteenth century. So it's a good question but I just think it's a story that would work to any audience because pride before a fall, hubris, transformation, Paul on the road to Demascus, it's an archetype. It's in everybody. A lot of the mythical stories like Orpheus and Euridice. Orpheus gets Euridice back who dies but he's told you can lead her out of Hades into the upper world. If you look back you lose her. What does he do? He looks back. He loses her. So it's a trope. It's an archetype that's in all of us.

SLK: And another opera that worked extremely well for the story that it was.

MDB: Yes. So I always felt the story was going to work and I just wanted to dramatize it but get out of the way of the story, in a way. Build the right kind of boat for Stephen's music. And boy, did he come through. I think it's an inspired score.

SLK: Well, you know, I told him this too. I had seen him in a student symposium many years ago at Eastern Michigan University and I remembered meeting him and speaking with him a little bit and being struck by his music. When I had thought about doing him for a dissertation I contacted him and said, "well gosh you've done these operas and I've honestly never heard anything about them. Where do I get your stuff?" So he immediately sent me scores and recordings for this and *Summer*. Gosh, I just fell in love with the piece (*Hermits*). It's magnificent.

MDB: You know the circumstances of his writing it and what he was facing about two weeks after he finished it?

SLK: Yes, he told me.

MDB: We all think that was an element that if he's going to go out under the knife, this would be the one to go out. I just think it's inspired.

SLK: I think the whole thing is from beginning to end, the fact that it's so spiritual and kind of mystical and compelling.

MDB: Have you ever seen an audience after it? Have you ever seen a performance? The audience reaction after is, oh my. The buzz is incredible, a lot of tears.

SLK: I wept listening to it the first time. It's a magical thing. Did you just have an incredibly special feeling about it as you worked on it?

MDB: Yes. I always thought it was going to be superb. I always just believed it and think it's our best work. I love the message that it has. Yeah, I just feel I could die happy in a sense if I didn't do anything more. I think it's in that area. I love it.

SLK: He was telling me this morning that it was your idea to bring back the chorus at the end.

MDB: Oh, there's a good story.

SLK: Yeah I need to hear about that because he said that I should ask you about that.

MDB: What you'll read in my little notes is that I say to Stephen early on, "I somehow think that at the end of the story we should have some kind of hymn that's based on the epigraph from the gospel of Matthew." You know, your Father knows what you want before you ask for it. It's the epigraph to the whole work. And so in one of the drafts of the opera, I had just sketched in, very lightly, very tentatively, that theme. So I had an instinct that we should have a really good hymn at the end and Stephen said no. Here's what happened. Stephen called me up one evening in about January of '97 and said, "I've got something here that I'd like you to hear." It was the setting of the, "Now that the day has come to a close."

SLK: The Evensong?

MDB: The Evensong, as he's being rowed back. And I came over to the house and stood there with Patty [Stephen's wife] and it's not that I wept but I thought, "Ah, this is so beautiful." And I love his melodies but I thought this was special. And I said, "Do you suppose, Stephen, since I want to do a hymn at the end that would kind of finish it, that if I were to come up with some words to fit the melody, exactly, that we could possibly bring it

back again in some form?" And here's the non-musician, daring to suggest to a composer what he's supposed to and you don't normally do that. You know, like fifteen minutes later with the same tune? He said, "Well." He did love the tune. He was obviously haunted by his own tune. He said, "Let's try it." But it's not a thing you normally do. So I went around with it. He picked it out for me on the piano. He played it and I went on my walks listening to this and I began to construct some words, loving the tune. I'd sing it to myself. I do sing in an amateurish way, you know, like in the tub. I can hold a tune. And I gradually put together these verses. Anyway, the thing is, it seemed to work. But of course what he's done is transpose the key to F-sharp major from B-flat, I think and it's now divisi, eight voices.

So it was a strange contribution from a non-musician but it's changed his life. I mean, since this work, you know, he's founded Paulus Publications because of "Pilgrims' Hymn" I think. You know how many copies it's sold in five years?

SLK: No.

MDB: Thirty-two thousand copies, just as an anthem. It's been recorded a dozen times. Everyone loves it. So, I'm so happy for him and for us. Um, I just thought that tune was a keeper. And at the end of the production, you'll see the video, there's a little video you know. At the end of the production when they all light candles then they begin to sing this. First a capella and then the orchestra comes in and in the production Gary had lit the window behind and it's Kleenex time.

SLK: Oh, I bet! Just listening to it it's Kleenex time.

MDB: Yeah, it's very beautiful. So that was one of my little contributions. I'm very pleased that this happened. It was kind of my baby and then Stephen made it our baby but also that the hymn has been such a big deal.

SLK: And we've said so many things. Let me just clarify. What was it you felt would be so powerful about bringing back that particular hymn at the end with new text?

MDB: There was just something about the quality of the melody that I didn't want just to hear once. I felt it could reappear. I mean it's reappeared transposed key and more voices. It had a quality. I had this intuition that it would work. And I didn't say earlier, I've been writing poetry for forty years. You always work intuitively. You're not sure and you just think, "I want to try this," so, this should be a church opera. I mean, people say, "You really thought that?" I said, "Yes. I just had this intuition (snap), church opera." I had an intuition that this tune brought back with words about that God knows before you ask

would work. And, it has proved so but I was taking a leap in the dark. I didn't know. I'm not a musician. I sing in the tub.

SLK: I think it works extraordinarily well. It serves as a perfect closing to the whole piece.

MDB: Oh yes.

SLK: Let me ask you, since it's conceived as a church opera, this is a little bit of a different question, how would you feel about it being performed in other types of venues? Perhaps a collegiate setting or a semi-professional company or a professional company?

MDB: I think it's been done like that. It's fine. I don't mind who does it where, in a sense. I think Trinity College Hartford, I think they did it in a non-church setting. But what I like about the church setting is that it's very limited.

Oh, these are my little ideas [showing me his notes], "Lord before we even think to raise our something to You, You know we do not need." This was before the melody. This was back in '96. No, this was, "Before we even call oh God to You to tell what lies within our hearts, You know oh Lord You know." It's like doggerel. I was looking for that them. This is pre-melody, because the melody didn't come 'til January '97. So I was casting around for that them that I didn't have a tune.

Um, but your question was, when you have the people running on with silks for the ocean, for the lake, the sea or if you have the Captain singing out from the pulpit, not the crow's nest or whatever, when you see the pilgrims having to kind of squeeze up because there are thirty in the choir and the sanctuary is too small it's very beautiful. It's very old. I mean, that's what they used to do. They used to present miracle plays on little wagons, you know, and pull them from village to village. There's something very traditional about it. And it's wonderful at House of Hope. Have you been there yet?

SLK: Yes! He [Stephen Paulus] took me there this afternoon.

MDB: It's like a boat, upside down. It's like a boat. So the very limitations that cause some awkwardness of staging are part of the magic of it. A little moon comes up, you know, and it's just. . . I saw it done, one of Britten's operas down in the church in Oxford in the early 60's and it was the same way. It was cramped. It was hampered. It was narrow. It was beautiful, very stylized, little suggestion of something larger but with modest means. Maybe it's like Christ born in a manger. I mean there's something that at the heart of Christianity is that idea of the creator on a piece of straw, in a sense. That's an analogy. There's something very large, squeezed in. A stable of straw, you know. I had

never thought of that 'til now but something like that, the humble means. Or as the Bishop, "However humble the means," eyeing the Hermits. Does that make sense?

SLK: Yes, absolutely. Well let me see. . . this may be a nonsense question or not, I'm not sure but let me just ask, is there something that you'd like an audience to know about this work that may or may not be readily apparent while viewing, or listening, or considering?

MDB: Oh, good. No, that's not nonsense. Good question. Not really. I think though, that what I want for the piece is for the listeners to go there open to receive it, with an open heart because it's a poem about that happening. It's almost forced upon the Bishop by the miracle. And I think you can go there in an annoyed mood or thinking about what happened at the office that day. No, I think all I want is people to open to the timeless message of the story, now reinforced by music and some characterization. But it's the same idea of trusting the story to have its resonance. No, all I want really is for the listeners to be, to tune into it. That really doesn't answer your question but no, I don't think so. I think it works on so many levels.

SLK: I agree or else I wouldn't have driven up here!

MDB: I know. How many hours was it?

SLK: I think about thirteen.

MDB: Mmm. How long you here for?

SLK: Just until tomorrow.

MDB: I can lend you stuff if you want it. I don't want to give you too much because you don't need too much but here's what I've got. I've got some photographs if you want to see them.

SLK: Oh gosh, yes! Oh my goodness. He [Stephen Paulus] said that he knew someone had production photographs and he didn't know where they were.

MDB: Well, I've never seen those. They had some professional but these are mine. This is my daughter, Mary. My two girls lip synced and pretended to be two kids. It's a bunch of photographs from rehearsal photographs.

SLK: Oh these are wonderful.

MDB: Somewhere I've got the negatives. You could borrow these and see what you want. I don't know what's where. I'm not that organized. I don't know how much you need.

SLK: Well you know, I had thought that I'd like to include a few photos. I took some pictures of the church today.

MDB: Look, this woman's become famous now, Esther Heideman. She's singing with the Met now. She was one of the nuns. There's Mary, the little pilgrim.

SLK: Is this the conductor? The gentleman with the beard and the blue shirt?

MDB: It's Gary Gisselman, stage director. The conductor is Tom Lancaster. So there's some nice shots. And the video will bring it to life for you. The video is really nice.

SLK: What a beautiful venue to have that in. The church was perfect.

MDB: And one of the things I loved was, you know, my own background is Roman Catholic. I love having all these Presbyterians signing themselves and bowing, very non-Protestant. Yeah, it was tremendous.

SLK: So how long did it take you to convince Stephen to go for that change with the hymn at the end?

MDB: I don't know. I think when he played it through with the words, people have loved those words. Last October the eleventh, was it? They had this big concert called Elegy in Orchestra Hall after 9/11 and they had combined choirs of 300 people and the only work by a living composer was "Pilgrims' Hymn." There was stuff like Brahms' "Requiem" and other stuff. And we knew that they were digging for the people in the rubble and the towers. And then the choir was singing, "Ye whom with darkness sealing us in we breathe your name." You just couldn't help but imagine. It was very, very powerful. And my "Words for Music" piece which I'll send you talks about that for a poet who writes a book of poems that may sell a few hundred copies to know that through the medium of music you're reaching entirely different and larger audiences. And I mention, I think, in the piece that it sold X number of copies and I say, "it's not a question of statistics, it's a question of a different kind of belonging." Many more people have heard my words this way than have read my books of poems and I love the poems they're just different mental children. And there's this new song. Has Stephen played it for you, "The Road Home"?

SLK: No.

MDB: Oh. He should play it for you. It's an old hymn tune he was asked to reharmonize by Dale Warland. And I wrote new words and he's selling it now with Paulus Publications and it's going to do very well I think. It's just. . . you reach a different audience.

SLK: Well and poetry is just so musical in and of itself too. It must be a wonderful opportunity for you to kind of marry all those aspects of a project together.

MDB: It's such fun it's not fair. I feel almost guilty. As I say in the piece, "Words for Music," that my father was a good, amateur church musician. He was an organist and choir master. He died when I was nineteen and I think one joy I have is just that I feel closer to his spirit when I'm working with musicians because a poet works alone and when you work with composers you've got to change this and part of a rehearsal, part of a team. Whereas the poet is lord of the page but you're not lord of the page. You're second fiddle when you're a librettist. I just like that collaborative aspect of it. Steven and I had our own arguments of course, early in the '70's, like an early marriage. You know, some fights. Now it's very comfortable, twenty-six years.

SLK: Twenty-six years, wow. And for my part let me just say thank you. This has been such an inspirational piece and project to me. It's brought me a lot of joy and really has been a blessing.

MDB: I'm so happy. We were in Dallas last October. We were at Salt Lake City in March. They did it (the opera) there and it was just sweet. People loved the work.

SLK: Well I'll tell you, he sent me *Hermits* and he also sent me *Summer* and I guess as a mezzo I probably should have just salivated and run off with *Summer* and done lecture-recital and the whole works but, and it's a wonderful piece too, but there was just something about *Hermits* that just grabbed me and wouldn't let go.

MDB: There's something about it. The Mother is quite a nice role for a mezzo.

SLK: Absolutely and the trio with the two nuns.

MDB: Oh. See? Now Stephen does this weird thing. He'll take some innocent little phrase, "and we must be patient" and suddenly turn it into something magic. He did that in the first piece we did, *The Village Singer*. There was a little exchange between two characters and it became a gorgeous duet. He just plucks it out of nowhere. He finds a phrase and the melody comes to him and he does this magic thing.

SLK: I plan on talking to Stephen about this later but this might become a long term project. I'm just so in love with his work I might try to follow up and write something on

his other operas as well because to my knowledge no one's written anything much on any of his operas and it's such a shame. It's wonderful work.

MDB: I love them and I've done three one-acts. I haven't done the longer pieces. We've got a children's opera, which I love which no one has ever done since it was done in the schools.

SLK: Is that the *Harmoonia*?

MDB: *Harmoonia*. It's to die for.

SLK: I read the title of that and I thought it's probably wonderful but I haven't heard it. I couldn't find a recording.

MDB: Well, there's a bootleg. I was told that I had to write this opera for these kids in Iowa and it had to be about music and about outer space. Those were my parameters. It's got some pretty stuff in it and the final tune, "Singalow," is a pretty melody.

SLK: Thank you so much for your time and all the materials.

MDB: My pleasure.

SLK: Now I understand part of the agenda is to meet back at Stephen's a little later and maybe talk a little bit more?

MDB: I'm going to go over there in a little bit, maybe have a glass of wine but I have to call my daughter when I get there to see what she needs because my wife is out of town until this evening and I'm the parent on duty.

SLK: Ah ha. How many kids?

MDB: My little pilgrim. Three, the two girls and my son is just starting college in Chicago. So he's gone.

SLK: That's one gone but then the tuition bills start coming. Hey, thanks again and I'll see you shortly.

CHAPTER 7

A TALK WITH COMPOSER & LIBRETTIST

The following interview was conducted at the home of Stephen Paulus in St. Paul, Minnesota on October 11, 2002 [Corrections and revisions completed on November 4, 2002]. The first part of the conversation includes Stephen Paulus and Michael Dennis Browne and then concludes with Stephen Paulus.

SLK: I was interested in the notations for style and interpretation in the score. Did you feel like that was sufficient or did you feel like, "Gosh I wish I could have said more" and didn't want to fill up the score with a bunch of notes? For example, the tempi markings and style markings, you used "reverently" and stuff like this, slur and breath markings. Did you feel like that was sufficient? Did you feel like you were able to say enough in the score to have it realized?

SP: Oh yeah and I tend to under mark probably. Or did you think that was over marking? [laughter]

SLK: No, it's like a fingerprint and every composer is a little bit different where that's concerned and I just wondered. Sometimes you look at something of Bach's for example and you look at the score and ask if we're doing it right. Was he able to say as much as he wanted to say?

SP: That's a good question. I personally try to put enough in to sort of point the ship in the right direction but leave some latitude for personal interpretation. So that if in particular, like with the organ scores, unless I have a specific thing like, "this is a solo flute," or I want this whole section strings, I don't put down detailed registration. Some organists would like that. Sometimes those are the organists who don't want to think about it either so they can go punch, punch, punch, flip, flip, flip, it's all set and when they get to this section... you know, I'd rather have them figure it out and then I can be entertained by what they come up with. I don't want them to use trumpets in a section I think should be strings but you serve that by marking "piano," you won't have trumpets where it's "piano" probably.

I tend to put a tempo marking for wherever it changes. Then I like to add an occasional adjective just to say, you know, "reverently" or "capriciously" or "with abandon," something that just gives people a little more. You know, tempo only says something and I don't want the music performed clinically. Especially with an opera, you can give someone the idea of the general character and they'll be miles ahead.

MDB: What I'm thinking is that twenty-five years ago when you were relatively starting out, to do those kind of indications like, "tenderly," or "with reverence" in English rather than in Italian, was that innovative?

SP: Moderately so, I mean, people would still tend to use the Italian terms but I just thought, you know, this is America. I might as well write in English.

MDB: I've always had that sense of doing these markings in English was not such a convention as it may be now.

SLK: OK, maybe both of you would like to talk about this. How did the initial performances meet with your expectations after all this time of working on the score and the libretto fanatically and getting everything put together? How did those initial performances strike you?

SP: Um, Michael you talk about that.

MDB: Well, um, I was very profoundly pleased. I thought Gary [Gisselman, Director] did a great job and. . .

SP: and Tom [Lancaster, Musical Director] as well.

MDB: Well I'm getting to that. And Tom.

SP: Sorry.

MDB: And the lights and the costumes. . .

SLK: This can be the comical part of the interview.

SP: Don't forget the wig guy!

MDB: [laughter] And then the snacks! The way he [Gisselman] realized it dramatically in all the little touches. I thought he did a superb job and I had no idea how it would be with a

full house, pretty much a full house, and as I said to you in our conversation the buzz afterwards in the reception was, everybody was just rapturous about it.

SP: I have to say I was extremely pleased and you might just think, "Oh, you've done a good job," and it's fine and all that but to give you an indication of what happened during the premiere. One of the times Tom Lancaster, at rehearsal, went over like five minutes and they're all union players. There's only eleven of them but it doesn't matter if there were three. They're union players, you know. It's the easiest way to really tick them off. And so the contractor I know very well, Merilee Klemp. And I went up to her afterward and said, "I'm so sorry about that. I'm sure Tom works with professionals all the time," and what he was thinking and everything and "I'm sure it won't happen again." And she said, "Don't worry about it. We're really enjoying this." Now that's unheard of for union players. Now these are people that are playing all over the twin cities and when the second hand starts to get up to the twelve the reed is out, the bow's in the case, and all that. Well the next night he did the same thing and by that time I was mortified. And Merilee looked at me and she said, "Just forget it." And another thing she thought, and this we can attribute to Tom, it was a positive thing in this area was that she said, after the performances that, "This piece was such a joy to work on. Everybody in the ensemble feels that." She said, "Not only that, we're so thrilled that we had enough rehearsal time. So we felt like we were really doing a good job."

In so many of these things you only get one run through then there's the dress rehearsal and bang, you do it. And about the second performance everybody kind of knows where they're supposed to come in for sure or you don't have, "I was lucky I made that entrance." And, "What happened to the harp?" And that kind of stuff. So, it was beautifully prepared and there were several of the performers talking about it afterwards. They felt it was a real spirit of camaraderie and not just amongst the players but also amongst the choir members who, several I think, early on weren't sure quite what they were getting into. And "This will be different," and "We're not sure what kind of idea this is that Tom is propagating." But they hated to see it end.

MDB: It had, for several of the choir members, quite a strong effect on their faith life. They started about being members of a large, Presbyterian Church singing this contemporary music and then they became Russian pilgrims and learned to reverence and do all the signing and it really profoundly affected them. It really did transform some of them.

SP: Yeah, I think so.

MDB: So by the time the hour was over, the first performance, and we went to the reception in that nice, whatever that room was called, there was a tremendous buzz. You know, among the people and you just knew that we'd been at the birth of something. As they say, something special. To take from Dana Carvey, "something special." You knew you had done something special, "isn't that special?" You just knew it. The buzz was unmistakable. People would come up to me and they'd be crying. There would be tears.

SP: And people saying, "I'm coming back tomorrow night too" and a couple of people saying, "I saw all three" or something. You know, that's unheard of in a way. It's rare. Some will say, "Hey, I really loved your premiere," and all that and it ends. This one had a real buzz and the lady who for the whole thing right away wanted to talk about having a reprise. Well we waited three years. I think it was in 2000 that we did it again, not last year but the year before.

MDB: It was four years, close to 2001. Yes, it was 2001, four years later.

SP: But she wanted more performances. I said, "Wait! We already did three." So she said, "I think we should do six." I was in a meeting with a choir director and organist husband and wife team and Nancy, the organist, said, "Well there are many people with small kids in the choir I don't think. Six seems like too many performances." Was it six or four? I don't remember. Anyway, who cares? But the point was, I said, "Well why don't you let them decide." So anyway, Tom took it to the choir and he said, "Now some of you were in this last time. Some of you are new." It was unanimous and "We want to do all six." I mentioned this story to someone in the church a while back and they said, "Oh I remember that meeting." She said it was like, "We're doing as many as we can get up on the boards." It was an incredible experience.

MDB: And one of the choir members for the original production was not in the second one because he had some kind of situation with the church and had stored the set in his garage. So the boat was in his garage the whole time. It's wonderful. The fact that they loved it and the instrumentalists loved it and the director came back, it was kind of a love fest from the start.

SLK: Well the piece certainly has that feel to it. Now, the choir that performed is the choir that is with that church, yes?

SP: Right. It's just called the Motet Choir. I think part of the strength of the piece beyond the purely, the words or the music or combination of the two is that, A. It's only an hour long. B. Some of the smaller bits, you're using a resident choir that's part of the church so if you have a big church program they do the Bach whatever, motets, they do the Haydn and Handel. The only thing that's different about this is it's a big project but it calls for

some acting. So if you have a local theater or stage director but what was I going to say? Oh, some of the bit parts or smaller parts can be taken from the chorus.

MDB: Section leaders, right? Often the section leaders?

SP: Yeah, a soloist or whatever can play the Captain or the Fisherman. Or even the two nuns, I think came out of the chorus. But also there's a strength in that the lead role of the Bishop is a pretty demanding one. Maybe you'd have somebody like that in your regular church or community choir or opera chorus or whatever. Or maybe you have to, or even want to go out. In this case, we went out and got Jim McKeel, who's a terrific soloist and teaches voice at St. Olaf College. Well, it was terrific because the combined amateurs and professionals in whatever degree you want to combine them. And then you take the fact that it has, you know, an orchestra of only eleven. It's probably fairly economical to put on. Not uh, I mean orchestras are always going to cost money but you're not asking for them to hire a chamber orchestra of thirty-five or forty. Eleven players. You could even do it, you know, with a stupid piano accompaniment or organ. You can do a concert version of it.

I think, probably, we're just now starting to put more effort in to getting the piece around. It's had several performances. Actually this is, I had one other opera called, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, that may have had more performances but this is, I should say productions, that's had nine. It's about to have more. So this will soon become the most performed piece that I've had. Although *Village Singer* probably had twenty or so but I have no doubt that this will be the most performed piece, you know, just sheerly from a logistical standpoint.

There are other operas that I think are, uh, just as good in their own way but you know an opera is a huge undertaking. They're very expensive. And this also has the, you know, you write a big two or three act opera and you, you know, you gotta get an opera company. This piece can be done by a church with a pretty big music program. It can be done by a school. Hart School of Music did it; just put it on, you know, at some auditorium. It can be done by a community group, as in Dallas, which was just, it was The Dallas Opera Project but it's not an opera company. They just put people together and put on a little opera. So, churches, community groups, schools or university opera workshops, and just regular opera companies, like Utah Opera. When they put it on it was for this festival, the Madeline Festival, that I gave you that booklet.

SLK: Mm-hmm.

SP: I figured, you know, couple hundred, a hundred and fifty people or whatever. And I kind of went, you know, "ho hum" because I was walked in and they said, "It sold out." It

was like a thousand people there. See, it was the lead-off thing for their festival. So it just shows us that, I think the right vibes are in place and that the piece, hopefully, will have a lot of performances. I'd love to see the thing filmed sometime soon.

MDB: You know it would sort of be a good, natural PBS[42] thing.

SLK: Oh, I think so. I had asked him [Browne] earlier but you just sort of answered my question. We talked about different places that performed. I had asked him how he felt, though it was conceived for a church setting, I wondered how you felt about it being performed in other venues.

SP: Oh, I think it's great.

SLK: Do you think it's just as viable and works just as well?

SP: Oh yeah, because, you know, the message of the piece, in the text and then how the music embellishes it is the same whether it's, you know, whether it's in a church or not. If you put it in a church it immediately adds a little reverence, you know, backdrop, which is fine. It's great but, um, I could see it being done in any number of places as long as you've got lighting. You know, that's where the magic starts, I think is key. Handle the lighting, and it's the characters. You know, you could do it in the middle of the woods someplace if you have the right lighting and the backdrop and you can hear the orchestra. Why it would still, you know, the message in the piece, I think, would get across. I don't know. Did I disagree with you? I hope not.

MDB: No, not at all. I was saying that I like the limitations that the church setting imposes and it's very touching when this thing rubs up against the fact that you've only got room for so many and you've got these thick pews that the Hermits have got to come down. Orchestra has to be squeezed. I like that. It's an ancient thing, of course.

SP: Yeah. So that they have to work with the space they're given?

MDB: Yes.

SP: And some churches don't work as well as, probably, some other community centers because they're, you know, they don't have a place where you can tuck that orchestra over on the side and say, "They'll be fine there. We can hear them but they're out of the way." Or they don't have a place big enough to move a choir of thirty-two, or whatever,

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[42] PBS is an abbreviation for Public Broadcasting Service which operates with the assistance of viewer donations and often presents videotaped performing arts productions.

something like that. I've forgotten what it was. I'm sure but you need somewhere between two dozen and thirty-some singers, you know. You've gotta have enough to make, you need a group that looks like they might be traveling someplace, not six or eight dusty pilgrims trying to sing eight-part divisi.

SLK: Yeah. I just think it would be wonderful, my last school, Eastern Michigan, was a fairly small school with a real energetic opera director but not a lot of resources and I was thinking it would be a wonderful piece for schools like that, that don't have an awful lot of resource but have a lot of drive and determination to do good work.

SP: Yeah, absolutely right.

SLK: You know, there's only so many *Marriage of Figaros* you can crank out.

SP: [laughter] Yeah. People should be, the language in this. . .

MDB: *Gianni Schicchi*?

SP: Oh, I'm skipping that one! [laughter] Well I can see it being done lots of different place and in, it doesn't, you know the other thing and this is because of Michael and the story. It doesn't demand that you buy into any particular religious group. You know, it's talking about humility, um, and praying and all that kind of stuff. But, you know, praying even for an agnostic can be meditating or somehow. I mean, actually I have a tough time buying the fact that someone can think that there's, there's nothing that's sort of outside of us. If nothing else it's a force or something that's operating, that's controlling things that we don't yet understand. So all you have to do is buy in that much to be able to say, "OK." This has, just you know, take it on that level. This man is, uh, unctuous and not so humble and by going through this tale, he's humbled, you know? It's surrounded with those. . .

MDB: It's archetypal. It can be, I think, you know, *Scrooge* or something, you know, and the ghosts.

SP: Yeah, exactly.

MDB: That's not Christian but that's certainly an archetypal turnaround. So you're exactly right, he doesn't thrust the Christianity down your throat.

SP: Right. It's non-threatening and it still has punch, which is the real key thing that, you know, you can deliver a wallop of a message about how to behave toward your fellow humans. And that people can change and they can learn some things, and it's clothed in this business of, you know, people crossing themselves and all that. So, you know. . .

MDB: Presbyterians crossing themselves.

SP: Yeah, but backwards, right? Or however they do that, down and over and across or something? Yeah, I never did get that right but. . .

MDB: It felt very subversive to me as a Catholic, to see these Presbyterians doing all this.

SP: Well you were weaseling your way in.

MDB: I was loving it, all this ritualistic stuff. They got quite good at it. They got into it.

SP: Oh, they very much got into it.

MDB: A lovely moment, which I'll tell you, uh, there was a party, was at the last performance, someone. . .

SP: Yeah, I missed it. I knew you were gonna tell this.

MDB: A choir member nearby had a very elegant apartment just near the church and we were there. There was nice drink and food, and champagne, and at some point suddenly from the kitchen we heard the hymn. They had all gathered and they just spontaneously went into singing the "Pilgrims' Hymn." It was just so beautiful. They loved it so much, they just sang it. And it was a wonderful moment.

SP: I could just kick myself. Yeah, it's, um, I mean, you probably touched on this, but I never would have envisioned that this piece would have been used for anything other than what it's designed to do.

MDB: The "Pilgrims' Hymn"?

SP: The thing you're talking about. It showed up on all these 9-11 events.[43]

MDB: I mentioned the concert, the Elegy Concert, that it was sung by three-hundred voices.

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[43] "9-11 events" refers to terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York City, the Pentagon, and Somerset County, Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001 and the numerous memorials and concerts that followed.

SP: Yeah, and just, I missed that. I was out of town for that. So anyway, but I mean, I think Michael's words, "even with darkness sealing us in." I had more emails from people all over the country saying, you know, "we just happened to have that on our deal and we sang it in rehearsal and then we had five minutes of silence," or something. I was just dumbfounded because I never even put the two together with the, it's just synchronicity but if it worked out to help people get past a point and do some healing and all that, I think that's, that's fine.

MDB: It's lovely.

SP: Yeah, it's nice. Um, I'm trying to think of anything we didn't cover that I might have felt like mentioning five minutes after you've left.

SLK: I don't know, just maybe a couple of closing questions like, um, you've composed over two hundred works now. Where does *Three Hermits* kind of fall in your, obviously a parent loves every child but where does this one kind of fall in terms of, you know, having been a special experience for you?

SP: Uh, well I'd have to say that this is right up there in one of the, one of the top pieces if you include all of them. This has to be one of the favorite pieces for several reasons, partly because it represented, whatever, our fifteenth collaboration or something? Fourteenth?

MDB: Twelve, I think. Thirteen, thirteen with the wedding song.

SP: We work together and partly it's a personal thing because of my affection for Michael, working with him. And we had worked on a lot. We've done two other operas.

MDB: That's right.

SP: This represented sort of a culmination, I think, of our craft. And at the height of our, certainly we're by this time, we're pretty well-seasoned artists who have learned a lot of things and not just a lot of things individually like what makes a great libretto, what makes a great piece of music. But we've also learned, you know, like a marriage, collaborating over anything from a boy choir piece to a children's opera, to another opera, a few oratorios, to song cycles. This, I think, represents sort of a culmination of those experiences. On my own personal level of, you know, pieces that you're remembered by or thought fondly of, this would have to rate right up there at the top, you know, few half dozen or whatever. I've got a piece for, uh, concerto for string quartet and orchestra which was premiered by the Cleveland Symphony.

MDB: It's a lovely piece.

SP: That, to my mind, is the best thing I've written for orchestra and it's a strange idea. The idea, the idea of a solo group, pitting a string quartet against this orchestra, you know, ninety-six players, you know. What a backup band. But that piece worked out very strongly to my thinking and uh, I had one chamber piece, I mean, like you say you like them all or you. . .

MDB: What about the organ concerto? That's really wild.

SP: Yeah, the organ concerto. That would rate right up there in maybe, uh, actually the last couple of operas, I feel, are on a par with *The Three Hermits*. Simply, especially the last one and a piece I wanted to do for about twenty years. The last two would have been my second opera. Each one was subsequently turned down because the opera company said it would be too big a project but I felt like it's probably a good thing I didn't get to do it in 1982 because now they're much better pieces. So I think in a way that the last three operas would be among my favorite pieces and just, the organ concerto, um. . .

SLK: And that's the operas are *Heloise and Abelard* and *Summer*?

SP: And *Summer*, yeah.

SLK: *Summer* is fabulous too.

SP: Well thank you.

SLK: I really enjoyed hearing that.

SP: *Heloise and Abelard* is much more intense as a piece and it sort of captures, you know, some of the things, dramatic things like mad book shadow book. It's not that kind of language but it's a piece we worked on earlier in our. . .

MDB: It's strange words.

SP: Strange words and even stranger music and that's a different time period. Yeah, I think that. . .

MDB: He set some things. He didn't have to do it but he did [laughter].

SP: Now you tell me, twenty-three years later.

MDB: But I was only in my thirties. What did I know?

SP: I knew even less!

MDB: Well that was great.

SP: But, you know, I think *Three Hermits* is really an important piece for me. Also, it came at a time when, I was telling you about it, it's where I had heart surgery, and you know, it was just there were a lot of, sort of like, major life issues on the, on the table and the plate and...

MDB: And, you know, people say about pre-pubescent. It was your pre-publishing. I mean, "Pilgrims' Hymn" started you to be a publisher, right?

SP: Right. That's another reason.

MDB: Paulus Publications is a great phenomenon and...

SP: I didn't imagine that. I just didn't.

MDB: And it started with "Pilgrim's Hymn." He saw the potential for it as an anthem. Who was it suggested? Kathy Saltzman Romey, "Why don't you extract it from the opera and have a choir do it?" And that led to everything.

SP: Right. Kathy Saltzman Romey, who is the director of the, I think, the large choir and the women's choir at the University of Minnesota. She's got those two choirs and Tom Lancaster has the chamber choir, the guy who did the premiere of *Hermits*. And she had come, I think her husband had come to see the opera and he said, you know, she goes, working musician, the last thing you want to do is go to one more concert, especially if it's not even your own, right? We go to way to many concerts anyway but he said, "you gotta go see this." So she wanted to come. So she came and I think called me up afterwards and said, you know, "I love that final chorus. Could you extract that?" And I sort of grudgingly said, "Well, yeah, I suppose." It never would have occurred to me because I just go on to the next project. She even volunteered to do it herself and I said, "No, no, no, no, I'll do it," and it's like, take out the solo parts. So, grudgingly I did that and then I decided, "You know what? Maybe I should retain this piece."

I had an open arrangement with my publisher, that they would take everything I wrote and if they didn't want to use it they would give it back, which they had never done. If I didn't want something published with them I could say I don't but I had never done that. So in this piece, I think partly because I was in that, uh, recuperative period and I was sitting around, I had looked at my royalty statement steadily going down, steadily. It went

down from low to, like the stock market now, just kind of, low. So I thought, "You know what? I'll just fax him," because things should be in writing with publishers and all this kind of stuff. "Ronald, I'd like to hang on to this opera, and uh, handle it myself because I've got a lot of contacts." Sort of leaned on the, that, you know, "I was a church musician a long time. I've got a few contacts in this field. Why don't you let me do it? We'll see what happens." So he didn't answer real fast. So I finally called him and I said, "You know, I didn't get any response from you on that." He said, "That was my response." So he was not pleased, but then I said, "You know, well if we haven't been able to generate much income in this business and I've got all these works." It didn't make sense, you know?

Well, uh, so that turned out to be fine and then, but then I had on my hands the problem of getting this thing published. So I just went down to the Midwest Quick Print Shop, down near, uh, just a mile or two away and got an estimate and they said, "Well, you know, it's going to be most cost-effective if you print up a thousand." So we printed a thousand of these silly things and then Kathy needed like, two hundred or something for some read-through at a choral clinic she was doing. So I figured I'd have eight hundred left for the next ten years, sell a few every year but somebody phoned me after the clinic and they wanted fifty. And then someone else wanted a hundred, and someone else wanted two hundred more. And pretty soon, and I just would type up, you know, "Invoice," and then bag 'em up myself. Mail, go to the Post Office and mail 'em out, very labor intensive. Michael said, "Well if you want help bagging. . ." I said, "No, you don't want to get into this end of it," you know, "keep writing."

So eventually then I, uh, I had to print a second run, which just dumbfounded me. And, uh, I started in July of '97. July 7, 1997 the first copies were ready, mailed them out. I reprinted it six times. I hired someone to help me out a little bit. After six reprints of a thousand each I thought, you know, this is getting ridiculous so I should finally go big time and print three thousand, which lowers the per-unit price, so I did that. Well now, and then I ended up with more people working for me and everything because I didn't want to be down in the basement bagging up my music. That's just, you know, that takes away from writing. So now we've sold, I think, almost thirty-five thousand copies.

SLK: Wow.

SP: Um, I think we've had eight or nine productions of the piece. We have several more slated. There's one in Birmingham, Alabama that I think will happen in September, the first week of October of next year. There's one in Atlanta that was supposed to happen until the choir director's wife's appendix burst, so that was put on hold. Now, I'm to be down in Atlanta twice in the next month and I'll just ask him, you know, "How is your wife doing? Is she healing? And are we off onto the. . ." I'm sure we'll get that performed.

MDB: Santa Fe has been dangling there.

SP: They've had that on. We've called them and on and on. They ordered the scores. They ordered the video, the recordings. I can't figure out what's going on. Opera companies are very elusive. I think eventually they'll do it when they find the right venue or something. They've been very unforthcoming.

But this piece is, um, it's just selling like crazy. It's been sort of the flagship. You know, it's the first publication of my publishing thing and it's just, I don't know, we're now up to, I think we're getting five thousand printed every time. And, you know, if it continues. Usually things like this go for a couple years, you know, while they're new publications with the publishers and then they tail off. And then, you know, they sell like thirty copies a year. And this has sold more copies every year rather than less. I mean, that, uh, at least one other thing that's done well like that. . .

MDB: What's the Texas piece? How are the figures on that?

SP: Uh, that sold about twenty thousand since June but it's. . .

MDB: Since June! [laughter]

SP: But it got on a list for the Texas Choral All-State Chorus. Yeah, and that's kind of unusual when you get into that market. You know, none of this, I mean it's the blind. We don't know what we're doing except we just, you know, answer the phone, and the email and, respond to people and do what any good business person would do. You know? You make a mistake, you apologize, you fix it somehow.

But a lot of publishers, more than you want to know I'm sure, publishers are not into marketing composers these days, most of them. And they do a dismal job of, well they do a very good job of hiding your music and not, you know, getting it out to the public. So, with the internet as it is, you know, you put up a web site, you get a mailing address and all that. Everybody, we get orders from, for everything, you know, Tokyo, and Poland, and Israel, and Finland, and you know, not tons yet but the fact that we're getting some shows us that people. . .

MDB: All in the last five years? And all of that because of "Pilgrims' Hymn?" It's amazing.

SP: Yeah, one little, uh choir thing.

MDB: I've got to go soon to get Mary but can I, may I see the basement?[44]

SP: Paulus Global Enterprises? [laughter]

MDB: Because he moved it from upstairs. I haven't seen it. He promised to show it.

SP: Yeah, it was in my little office up here for a long time and then we were like, there were never usually four of us, I think we only had three at that time but it would be four, but not usually all at the same time. But every once in a while you'd get everybody in there it was like. . .

MDB: I'd like a little tour.[45]

SP: . . . and then they have to distribute it out to all these, you know, dealers and everything, so, the minute they do that there was money because they're investing money in inventory. What does inventory do? It sits on shelves until it's turned into cash, it's you know, it's nowhere. So, if you've had, like, in the past, they say, "Well we've published three of your things so far this year, you know, that's your part of the pie," the budget. Instead of saying, "if somebody calls, we can print in a heartbeat," and it's always in print. So then the key you do also. I don't know if I ever sent you these. Did you get any of this stuff? Did Danielle send this?[46]

SLK: No, I don't have any of this. No, I don't have this. I saw it listed on your web page though.

SP: And there's an updated choral catalogue. But then the thing is, then you print up a catalogue, this is like one of our old ones, and you list everything and all the information like, um, what the text is, the instrumentation, the voicing, how long it is, if it's Christmas, secular, sacred, a number, catalogue number you can find, and then the price. And the thing is there never is anything out of print then. And when you call the major publishers now, "Oh well that's out of print." "For how long?" "Well, we don't know." I mean Melissa[47] was just telling me, she called G. Schirmer about something, on a piece that she

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[44] Mary is Mary Browne, Michael's daughter and the basement of Stephen Paulus' home is the current location of his publishing company, Paulus Publications.

[45] At this point the conversation picks up in the basement after the tour of the publishing company offices. Michael Dennis Browne has since left and conversation begins to focus on the business of publishing and distributing music.

[46] He is handing me several copies of various choral and instrumental scores as well as order catalogues.

[47] Danielle and Melissa are office assistants with Paulus Publications.

wanted and they gave her that run around, they, "This is out of print," "Well could you be more specific?" "It's out of print," and they actually got huffy when she tried to nail them down. So she called the composer and he said, "Yeah, I've got a set of parts you can have but don't tell the publisher." That's ridiculous. They're not working for the artist.

The other disconnect is that if you, um, rent, if you go to a publisher like European American was mine, and you, say, rent a piece like, um, anything that requires a, you know, for chorus and orchestra, *Voices of Light*, this thing, for mixed chorus and orchestra, you rent the orchestral score and the parts. Now, if you call them back and you want to buy one of these pieces they say, um, you know, "go to your dealer for that." So the public is confused, I think. They say, "Well this is your publisher but they won't sell to me. I have to go to my dealer for that, unless I'm doing a larger piece." Sometimes the publishers aren't great about what piece, you know, well that has seven instrumentalists and chorus so that's a rental item. You say, "Well why do I want to rent it? I want it in my library." So there's all this back and forth. And we're, you know, we're basically a publisher and a dealer, but we sell to dealers. So if dealers call us, and we're careful not to get in their way. If a dealer calls us and says they want a hundred copies of this you have to give the dealers forty percent discount, just across the board because they have to make money selling to the customer. So, we're happy to sell to dealers but some people don't prefer to do business that way or they don't know that they can get it from the dealer. Or they find you on the web site and say, "Can I get a dozen copies of this?" and we say, "Sure." They're not going to say, "Oh, no I want to go to my dealer to make sure he stays in business." Or she stays in business.

SLK: So do you handle almost all of your own publishing needs now then? Or do you still deal with an external source?

SP: Uh, I think what you're looking for is, like, do we print everything?

SLK: Yeah, do you still have works that go through outside publishers or are you, do you publish all your own stuff?

SP: No, I'm handling, the last two operas, *Heloise and Abelard* and *Summer*, I had to give to my publisher that I worked with up until 1997, European American Music. The reason is the president of the firm at that time got involved with the negotiations. One was with Juilliard School and one was with Birkshire Opera Company. I think he said, "You know, if I'm negotiating your fee and all that, why, we've got to own the piece." I said, "Fine," and just sort of thought, you know, they're not getting that many performances anyway. Who cares, you know? Fifty percent of a little amount is, is no big deal. Nothing to, uh, get too upset about. So, now I actually, I wish I owned them because I think, you know,

we're going to be putting some effort into promoting them. But other than those two pieces, since 1997 everything.

Also I got about sixty or seventy copyrights back from my publisher because they didn't have contracts on the work. So I said, "You don't have a contract, you don't own the piece, you know. Why don't you return it to me?" They balked a little bit but then they just said, "OK, fine, you know, you've got this little operation," and Ronald Fried, who's passed away unfortunately, uh, was pretty supportive about the whole thing. He said, "Well good luck and I hope it works out," because he knows it's hard to promote this kind of music. But, you know, we're doing it and everything here we either print up here, you know, we can photocopy large scores, like, you know, orchestra scores or, um, in the case of something that sells a lot of copies, like that Texas piece or "Pilgrims' Hymn," we'll send it out to a place in Pennsylvania called, Cherney Printing, and they'll print off three thousand or five thousand copies.

Occasionally, I used to use another printer around here and there seems to be no need for that any more because we can do, you know, if someone orders a hundred copies of something we can do it. It's not, you know, and there's one exception to that. This piece, just arrived, a band piece I wrote for the St. Olaf Band and in three years, or two years or whatever we were able to get, uh, about three performances. And I finally acknowledged a guy from Boosey & Hawkes [music publisher] wanted to publish this in a series. The guy's name is Craig Kirchhoff. He teaches band. He's the director of wind ensembles at the U [University of Minnesota] and, um, he hounded me and hounded me. So I went back to my regular publisher because I still had, you know, kind of a relationship with them and I said, "You guys want to do this?" and they had that, they're aligned with Warner Brothers so they said they had to ask Warner Brothers. Well it went on for a year and every time I called they said, "Well we don't know, we don't know." So finally I said, "Heck with it." I can't. Band music has its own way of getting promoted and I gave it to Boosey & Hawkes. I had no idea how it's gonna do but they seemed to think it would sell a few thousand copies at least. Well that's, see that's two thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-seven copies more than I had been able to get. I think there's a way to promote band music that's different than what we're doing with some of the other things.

SLK: Well, you know, band directors just have this little network and word of mouth.

SP: Yeah and Boosey's into that network. Yeah. And they said, uh, they said, "Well first of all we sent out eighteen thousand CDs [compact discs] with your piece on it." You know, even if I could get the CDs for fifty cents a copy that's nine thousand dollars right there to commit, you know? That was more than the first three years of total business that we did because it was a small operation. Now it's becoming more, it still would be a lot of money, nine thousand dollars. And then you've got the mailing and all that so I thought,

"Here's somebody who wants to put the money in. They've hounded me for it. I'll give it to 'em." And, you know, I'm not finicky about saying, "It's all mine and nobody's going to touch it. If somebody can do a better job with something, fine. Give it to 'em and let 'em run with it. So, anyway, it's a lot more work than, I think, they figured on but I'm actually not doing most of the work on their time so. . .

SLK: And you've got cool gizmos!

SP: Gizmos [laughter]!

SLK: I want that score binder you've got. That's pretty impressive.

SP: Oh, the machine? That's Virtual Presentation Concepts.[48] If you end up wanting to know how to get that, it costs a hundred and ninety-nine dollars. The firm is in Eagan, about fifteen minutes drive from here.

SLK: We drove through Eagan on the way here, I think.

SP: I can get you the name and the address and everything. And the neat thing is, between Melissa and Danielle, Sharon, and Jodi, the four people working with me on this, you know, I really, there are times when I'm gone for the whole week. And I'll talk to Danielle maybe once or twice, and it just goes on. If something comes up and it's a problem then I get a call on my cell phone right away. Otherwise, you know, the operation as it exists now just shunters[49] right along, working fine. And now we're expanding into other areas and trying to figure out how to promote the orchestral things. We've not really done any promoting. It's just been sort of word of mouth stuff but we're now thinking of, um, trying to make some initiatives and actually calling and writing and emailing some orchestra people, just to let them know because half of them, I think it was Woody Allen[50] who said, "Ninety percent of success is showing up."

Well I think there's so much information. We were talking about this earlier. There's so much information out there that unless you sort of say, "Here. This is my latest sculpture or piece that I've written," people don't know about it, you know, they're going

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[48] The company is actually called Vital Presentation Concepts, 4870 Biscayne Avenue, Eagan, Minnesota 55123, phone (651)322-4500, web address http://www.vpcinc.com/. They manufacture a music binding system that allows scores to lay flat while open without punched holes or staples.

[49] Shunt or shunter is defined by *Webster's New World Dictionary* as to move or turn to one side.

[50] Woody Allen is a famous writer, director, and producer of comedy films such as, *Annie Hall*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters*.

to see something else laying around and they're going to grab that. So you just have to have a presence and then I think it all works. So, we'll see. Alright, this is another little piece that Michael and I wrote [*The Road Home*, for mixed chorus].

SLK: Oh, he talked about this. OK.

SP: And this is the second catalogue we did and it's just all, you know, there's nothing fancy about it. We added a little border color thing like the orchestra brochures, you know, but when someone gets this there's a bio. They don't have to email me and say, "Could you send a bio?" These are all, you know, smaller works that are done alphabetically and then there's a section on larger works. Yeah, large works, anything that's multi-movement and then Melissa, she's got her own choir. Melissa and Danielle both have masters degrees in choral conducting and they're just wizards. I'm just lucky I think.

SLK: You know, I am thinking of adding an appendix to the study with lists of works other than *The Three Hermits*. Between the two catalogues you just gave me, is that most all of your works? Or is, are there any other catalogues I need?

SP: No, I don't have any other catalogues. This will cover all the choral things, that covers orchestra and it probably doubles things like chorus and orchestra. The only thing these wouldn't cover would be keyboard works, solo vocal, operas, and chamber works. That sounds like a lot but that's all on the web.

SLK: OK, I was going to say, it would be on your page.

SP: Just print out the, you know, go to the specific categories on the web page. And Sharon Garrison-Reed, you met her earlier, right? She's just recently updated the website. She's pretty anal retentive, I mean, she's pretty fastidious about details, spelling, movements, who premiered it, and all that. So, all the information that is there has been updated within the last week.

The "Pilgrims' Hymn" page, we have one score page and then we have a clip, those audio clips just went up. We're just figuring out how to do that. It takes a lot of space though apparently.

SLK: Yeah, the sound files are huge.

SP: Huge, right?

SLK: Yes.

SP: We went from like two mega, is it megabytes? Or what is it?

SLK: Mm-hmm.

SP: Sharon said our web space did use two to three megabytes of space. And since she's put up this handful of clips, it's up to fifty.

SLK: Right, yeah. Sound files are enormous.

SP: And so, this is all run through her father's travel agency and he has sort of an adjunct web serving business. I guess, that she's not sure when we're going to max out, you know, if we were to get up to a hundred or whatever. But if other people are interested in music, I imagine everybody's going to have to have large, uh, web space or nobody will be able to load music.

SLK: Exactly. Well and you want to be able to put bits of your work on there that they can say, "Oh, that's what that sounds like."

SP: I just think, I mean, I think the idea of having complete listing of the title of the piece, what it's scored for, who commissioned it, premiered it, the text if it's a choral piece, and then having a clip you can listen to, or the whole thing. It's like everything's there but the music and I think probably if you could get two, three pages of music, or at least the first page of music up, it'd be better than going to a store and browsing. You don't even have to open the page. You sort of go click, click, click and scroll.

SLK: I thought that was neat with the page of the "Pilgrims' Hymn" on that, for *The Three Hermits* because you can just sit down and plunk through that and then click on the sound files and have a listen and it's a real neat layout.

SP: Yeah, it's sort of readable when you print it out. It's not great but, I mean, you can kind of read a little bit of it, enough to make out what's going on.

SLK: Well this is really wonderful. I think you gave me one of these [CD], *Voices From the Gallery*, yes you did.

SP: Yeah, *Voices From the Gallery*. Um, if you want you can take one of these [CD, *Mass For the Earth*]. This company, this is Koch and I have trouble dealing with Koch. It's because they really rip the artist off. They charge you like eleven dollars for a CD that probably costs them two [dollars]. They say that's the artists rate but you've gotta be kidding. The other guy is giving, the guy that sold me these at, I don't know, five bucks each or something, it costs him one. You know, so, to me it's unconscionable to rip off the

artist and I'm not some flaming radical but you know. None of us are, you know, unless you're Aaron Copland or Gershwin, you know, nobody's going to make bushel baskets full of money like pop artists and all that. So, they're sort of biting the hand that supplies them. Did I miss anything?

SLK: I don't think so. I've got quite a stack [of CDS] to play with here. This is awesome! Thank you very much.

SP: Oh, you're welcome. This is a piece here that sold, I think I gave you this, but this has sold like twenty thousand copies so far because it got on some list and all these kids in Texas had to buy it, all these choirs.

SLK: What's the name of the piece?

SP: "Sing Creations Music On"

SLK: OK, because you just kept saying, 'the Texas piece,' and I didn't know what that meant. Because I kept thinking that I hadn't seen that on the web page. I was thinking, "What's 'Texas Piece'?"

SP: It's from a piece called *Songs Eternity* but I don't have the whole thing here but if you get interested in it I'd be more than happy to supply the entire thing.

SLK: Well, can I bother for just a few little biographical questions? And then I'll get out of your hair. I know I've been bothering you all day but...

SP: Oh sure. No, no, no, no, no. This is not a bother.

SLK: OK, well how about just a little biographical sketch? Like, you came from New Jersey or something and ended up here. Have you always been musical, like, from a little kid?

SP: Yep, pretty much. Uh, born in Summit, New Jersey because my dad had a job out there. When I was two they moved back here and been here for the rest of my life, except for four years in Atlanta, 1988 to 1992 when I was a composer in residence for the Atlanta Symphony. And I rented a house down there and brought the family down, kids went to school there and everything. So, we were kind of back and forth in the summer especially.

Uh, my parents had a piano at home when I was growing up and an old reed organ. And my first keyboard lessons probably, as I recall when I was about eight, were on reed organ. My dad was a chemical engineer but, uh, by avocation he was an organist. He

played for church services all the time. When I was ten they started me with formal piano lessons. I studied until I was about twenty-two, taking in college at Macalester College[51] for two years while I went there and then two more years at the University of Minnesota. I don't think I studied, let's see, I was a graduate student and I continued on for part of the way but when I really got into my Ph.D. I didn't study, I just kind of focused on, actually I got a Masters, um, a B.A. in Piano Performance, and a Masters degree in Theory and Composition, and a Ph.D. in Theory and Comp. So I think after my undergraduate work was done I basically quit studying and, you know, didn't give recitals or anything.

Um, started studying piano at ten, as I mentioned, um, started writing actually when I was about thirteen, mostly because we had some blank staff paper in the piano bench. And I just pulled it out and I started writing cheap imitations of things I was studying and by the time I got in high school I was writing big, overblown, romantic, Rachmaninoff-type things. Actually, some of them I found the files when I was cleaning the attic. I had saved a couple of them apparently. They were nothing original or anything like that, just a lot of junk probably but, you know. You had to start someplace and imitation is a good place to do that. I studied composition from my undergraduate days at Macalester, continued when I went to the U [University of Minnesota] and got my degrees there. Studied principally with Paul Fetler, who's now retired and lives in Florida, in the Keys.

I had a church job between 1967 and 1969, which I was talked into by a friend of mine who wanted a choir director/organist combo and this guy convinced me we could take the job even though I had, I had played organ. I had five or six lessons on organ, group lessons, when I was a high school student. The church wanted to hire somebody. The church wanted someone who would play the sunrise, Easter Sunday sunrise service, because the regular organist didn't want to get up at five and do that. So they had six kids training and I don't think any of them ever did it. My dad being an organist actually, he trained me after those group lessons. And, so I could play my way around pretty well but, uh, never comfortable with it. Uh, but my dad trained me how not to have the bad habits that a pianist usually brings to playing the organ, which is that it's just a piano with a pedal board. It's not as we know. It's a totally different instrument but I credit, uh, my dad and that organ study time with having an affinity for the, and knowing how to write for and treat it idiomatically. And the organ concerto I did for Norman McKenzie in Trinity Presbyterian in Atlanta really caused quite a stir, much to my surprise at the premiere. Robert Shaw premiered it and it was received really well. That was in March of '92. Then it was played at the A.G.O. Convention[52] in, uh, June of that year and the crowd was so large they had to have, you know, two shows, one on one night, one on the next night. So I think the church holds, I think it was five hundred, so they had a thousand after the two

[51] Macalester College is in St. Paul, Minnesota. http://www.macalester.edu/.

[52] A.G.O. is the American Guild of Organists.

nights. Or it was a thousand and they had two thousand or however. I mean, you could hear it on the tape. It was like the biggest bravo and whoop I had ever had on anything. And they just went nuts. They stood up immediately and I was in the middle of a pew about two-thirds of the way back and I had to get out so that I could take my bow and everything. It was very strange, a wonderful reaction. So, you know, from that I wanted to be more interested in the organ.

Um, let's see. What else would be pertinent? The job I worked, the choir director job I had was a Presbyterian church and I ended up being the choir director because the other guy didn't really like standing in front conducting and I was too nervous about playing every Sunday. I would get all the repertoire. I said, "You take the organ, I'll do the choir directing."

Um, not much other than it was a couple of recitals in school, I've never been, had the mentality or the whatever to perform. It's just not my, I'm not shy but I'm not, I don't think my talent was ever formidable. I just think when you get up there you just have to be, you know, in your own little world and love it. And to some extent, I'm not cut out to be a conductor either but I've been thrust into a situation or two, or six, where I had to conduct my own work. Everybody always thinks it's so cool that the composer conducts his or her own works and uh, you know, if you conduct all the time I'm sure you get the feel of it, like when I was conducting this choir it was fine. You know, sort of not go for a year and a half and conduct nothing and all of a sudden someone wants you to. Um, it's easier with a choir than it is with orchestra. I've done very little orchestra conducting. I think I would like to do that more as I get older, you know, I think it would just be fun not to always be cranking, you know, I write a dozen pieces a year. Some of them are very large and it's enough to uh, you know, just pull you under. I've got three major pieces to get done now by the end of this year, December and halfway through one and haven't started the other two. Needless to say, it worries me.

But I like the idea, I've never taught, except for one quarter when I substitute taught for Dominick Argento,[53] who was leaving the university for a three year period. Never taught and I think I would enjoy it. I really like the idea of trying to enlighten people and show what's worked for me and how, you know, I don't, comes in and I think it's very difficult to teach and really probably can't teach it. Like you would sort of show people what they're saying if they, like, hold up a mirror to them and 'Here's what you're doing. Do you like that and if so, why and if you don't, why not?' and you figure out how to change it. But I don't think, you know, you just sort of have the gift or you don't. I think the tools, learning orchestration, that you can help on but then you just take orchestration

[53] Paulus studied composition with Argento, born in 1927 and a leading composer of American vocal and operatic works such as, *Postcard from Morocco* and *The Dream of Valentino*.

classes. Eventually I might teach some if I'm looking for some school, offered a whole bunch of money, and you have to be in a warm climate, and [when] I'm, you know, seventy-three and looking to chill out a bit. Or maybe Italy, I'd go to Italy in a second. Southern France would be OK.

But, um, let's see, I'm trying to think of anything else that's pertinent. I got married in 1975 and I have two kids, an eighteen year old who's a jazz trumpet player at, freshman, at, the Manhattan School of Music, absolutely loves it. I hope New York is ready for him. And my youngest son, Andrew, or Andy, he goes by the nickname of Spud. He's out playing football now with his, yeah, he ate nothing but potatoes or French fries for several years.

SLK: Ah, hence the nickname.

SP: Yeah, actually when he was young I had been calling him that and it stuck unfortunately. Um, he plays cello and piano, he's a really good student. My wife is a visual artist. [pointing around the room] That's her painting. That's her painting over in the corner.

SLK: Wow. I was going to say that I had been admiring these since I walked in the room.

SP: Oh, I wish she were here. She's, uh, she's into several different things.

SLK: Is that one by the stairs hers too?

SP: That's hers.

SLK: It's gorgeous.

SP: Yeah, thank you. In fact, I can show you before we're done, that one became a CD cover. She's actually a teacher. She teaches first and second grade art at a private school where our kids went and one is still going but he's in the middle school now and she's in the lower school. The middle and upper is one campus and the lower is another. Um, so she does that and paints now sort of in her spare time but she likes more just, you know, getting out of the house, going to a job where someone else is the boss.

I like this. It's about as dressed up as I get, sandals and jeans and a shirt unless I'm going to a premiere or giving a talk, you know, a pre-concert thing but I just like casual. I like being my own boss. Of course, people who are their own bosses are often their own worst enemies because, you know, the work is always here. You work all the time, even when you take a break. So you have to kind of learn, chill out, not answer every phone call.

We've lived here since 1987 but it was in '88 to '92, we owned the house but we basically lived in Atlanta. So we've been here for, what, fourteen years and prior to that I lived in another house. We're really fond of this area in spite of the New Jersey thing and my wife grew up in the area. So,

SLK: So where do you see all this going? Do you have a master plan, like, you think you're retire someday? Or do you think you'll always write, you know?

SP: Yeah, I mean, "retired" is a word that ought to be retired because, well I don't really understand. I understand the concept of retirement if you've been working a job for thirty-five years that you didn't like and someone will now pay you to stop doing that. You get to do other things that you probably have deprived yourself of during those thirty-five years. But, you know, retire also to my mind is a bad word because it, it smacks of obsolescence and there are too many people who die eighteen months or less after they retire. You know, um, I mean, I wish there was a word as short that meant "change in meaningful activities for the rest of your life," or something. But, I'm not trying to be too philosophical here but at the moment I can't see myself, occasionally there's a, rarely there's a lull moment when you think you're not at, you'd say, "None of this is worth it," but you just think, you know, "If I'm working this hard and working in Corporate America, I'd probably have my own jet," or something. Not that, I mean, this is obviously a very nice, pleasant house and everything, and uh, but um, I really don't ever want to, at least at this point, stop. I would like to write less as I get older and actually, it's a good question.

One of the main reasons for the publishing firm, well yeah, it's to make some money because I wasn't making any money with my other publisher. However, or very little I shouldn't say that, one of the main reasons is, you know, now it's like my income comes primarily from commissions, you know, and some guest appearances. And then we had this little amount over here that was money from my publishing. What I'd like to do is make this go higher and this lower and say, "Well I only have to do this much writing every year and I've got all this other money coming in from royalties." So I could keep the writing level at, um, an activity level at something that feels more manageable because now I'm basically running all the time and I always feel like I don't have time to finish the pieces I want to do, you know. Now, if I had only one piece to write in six months instead of four.

But I think as you get older you have, I mean, at thirty, at least when I was thirty, and thirty-five it was like, you know, are there twenty-four hours in the day? That's how many I want to work, you know? At fifty, I'm content to, you know, work twelve. Chill out, as it were. Or ten sometimes or even, you know, and I'm finding also as I get older I have more interests, you know. I would love to be able to take, especially when my youngest son ends off in college and away from home or whatever, I would love to be able

to take, uh, the summer and be in Italy. Maybe rent a place with a piano in it or a veranda overlooking the Ponte Vecchio[54] or something like Professor Dominick Argento has had for many years, and, um, you write one piece over the summer. But see you can't do that if you're trying to support all this structure of, you know, kids go to school and house payments and all that. Or you can't lessen the amount you create. You have to keep creating. But my logic was, if the works you've written can be generating income, royalties, it's like an annuity, you know? It's like something flowing in constantly and that's the way it should be.

I just think, you know my publisher specifically and all publishers in general have not done the marketing thing. And I would say that in front of a room full of publishers. You know, they first of all don't have the staff, they don't have the time, they don't have the money. And they probably are a bit short on the expertise but I would bet if the money and staff were there, the works would be promoted. They just don't see any money in it. They can make more money licensing works for use with, like, if you take "O fortuna" from *Carmina Burana* and you license it to the Coca-Cola Company you know, you can make a hundred thousand dollars or three-hundred thousand dollars. Well imagine how many "Pilgrims' Hymns" you have to sell. Even thirty-five thousand over five years is nothing compared to three phone calls and a letter from your lawyer. So, you know, it makes sense. I don't blame them but then we shouldn't be sort of sending our works off.

With the internet, it's totally, I'm a global store, as is anybody. You know, you could be a global commodity just by the fact that you're out there. You get listed in search engines and people find us. It's absolutely amazing. They call up and order like we've been here for years. "Ya got a catalogue?" "Sure." "Send me a catalogue, send six." "OK, fine." And I think more and more people appreciate having a human being answer the phone and we have voice messaging for you know, if you call Sunday night at six we're not here. Well, I am but I got out of answering line three, the business line, at all hours just because it might be an order. But most times you get a real person and I think we add, I guess as a small publisher, we add a human element.

As a matter of fact, this Texas piece, "Sing Creations Music On" is a classic example. It's part, it's the third movement of a piece I wrote for the Glen Ellyn Children's Choir, co-commissioned by them and the American Boychoir. A woman in Michigan, as I understand it, called and wanted to know if we would consider printing up and mailing her the third movement, for use in her schools or whatever. We said, "Sure." It's, we can adapt, we're quick. You know, we were able to pull out those pages and run off copies.

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[54] Ponte Vecchio is an Italian landmark and the name translates as, "the Old Bridge." Spanning the Arno River, Ponte Vecchio is actually quite a large bridge with several shops built into its design and is located in Florence.

Make a little title page, now that's a different piece, I mean, but it's the same piece but it exists instead of third part of this, now its own part. Well, most publishers, I can guarantee you, would just simply say, "No, buy the whole thing or forget it. You know, we printed it up, we've got a thousand of those. Why should we print something else?" Well fortunately we did that. This woman happened to be on a panel or a jury to select the repertoire for the Texas All-State. So the next order was for ten thousand copies and then they emailed, the guy in Texas emailed us back and said, "Whoops I made a mistake. I meant fifteen thousand." And then we talked to a couple of dealers and they said, "We don't know what they're talking about. Everybody who's been on this list before has sold between twenty and twenty-five thousand." And I think, I think we're very close to twenty. So the dealers are right, they know, they're out there. It's like the people that sell the gas. The gas companies are, they said, "Well this is what you did last year."

So, by being flexible and adaptable and probably not making any money off that first transaction, because of the labor spent getting it ready and all that, you know, that piece itself probably supports the staff for, you know, three months. So, I don't know. It made sense. So this is where other publishers, they're just not willing to, or able to maybe, to maneuver that quickly. In and out, and say, to talk to people and say, "Sure, yeah I think we can do that. Well it's going to cost a little more than we thought but is that ok?" "Yeah, OK," and then you negotiate and bang it happens. It's a great little, I'm enjoying it as much as I'm enjoying writing partly because when I sort of left European American Music, one of the people there said, "Good luck. No one else has been able to do this so I don't know why you should be able to." That's all they needed to say, you know!

SLK: They said the right thing.

SP: Yeah, I'm greatly motivated by stuff like that.

SLK: Red blanket in front of a bull.

SP: Yeah, exactly! They were the red blanket and I was the bull. Nobody else'll be able to do this. I have since seen that person and I didn't remind him but I said, "You seemed a little skeptical at the time but it's going pretty well." So I got an email from him saying, "I have a couple of questions for you." He's now an attorney but he's in the music business, or still is.

SLK: So, um, one last question then.

SP: Why do it at all [laughter]?

SLK: No, actually the question was like a hundred years from now somebody's maybe looking at this and they've decided that *Three Hermits* is this magnificent thing and I'll since have bugged you six other times about talking about your other operas. . .

SP: Oh yeah?

SLK: and uh, what do you want students in the future, or even now, to know about your music? Or how would you like them to think of your stuff or think of your career or whatever?

SP: Um, yeah, you know questions like this are, uh, I think it's almost impossible for us to project even, you know, ten minutes after you're deceased what's going to happen. Although usually there's a period of about a month after you've passed away that it doesn't matter how you are, whether it's Morton Feldman[55] or any, you know the interest in his music skyrocketed before, you know, he was even in the ground apparently. But, um, I think what I, you know, the thing I'm trying to do and that I would hope people would get from my music, whether it's while I'm alive or a hundred years from now is that there, there's a real person, was or is a real person, behind there who's trying to convey, something we talked about earlier, some intellectual rigor, that there's stuff, there are layers in most of the pieces that bear repeated listening so that you're a composer of substance, first of all. Not necessarily in this order but that's one thing. And the other thing is that I basically function by the sound of things and that I wanted the organization of sounds to somehow have an impact on people. So that they were either touched, or excited and thought, "Man, this is like going on a, you know, incredibly fast train to someplace and feels like it's going to crash but it keeps rescuing itself."

I mean, I think very much visually and emotionally when I write music so that I often have little images of like, conflict or confluence, or something going on while I'm writing and uh, sometimes they just help me to write and I find that sometimes that stuff communicates pretty readily. The chamber piece, the CD I gave you has a piece called *Dramatic Suite* on it and it's like a little psychological study. One movement is called, "Fiery" or "Electric" or something. Another movement is called "Desolate." You know, now what's that about? It could be about a specific person. It could be about a relationship but I like the fact that hopefully, to future audiences, that there's a certain universal aspect to the music that, you know, everybody, it doesn't matter what you're going through or have been through or will go through, people can pretty much identify with something that's desolate. They can say, "I know what that," as a matter of fact at the premiere of this

[55] Morton Feldman (1926-1987) was an American composer who was known for his experimentation with sound, improvisation, graph notation, and his association with fellow experimentalist, John Cage. He was married to composer Barbara Monk.

piece in New York with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, a guy came up to me after a bunch of people had left and everything and said, "Mr. Paulus?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I liked your piece but I didn't think the 'Desolate' was desolate enough." OK, that's a guy who's lower than I was and I was pretty low right then because it was three weeks after my heart surgery. But, you know, the fact that he had a comment about it means that somehow I connected with the guy.

I should have connected better but I mean, I. . . I forgot even what your question was except I think I'm circling around it in saying that I'd like people to somehow connect with it, with the music. It'd be more important for me in ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred years to have people go to a performance of one of my works and come out and say, "You know I really like that. I really like the Paulus. I loved the third movement," rather than to be successfully dissected and taken apart in a music theory class and having students come away with, "Well I don't understand what the retrograde inversion had to do with that piece. I didn't even see it." You know?

I don't write that way by the way but I do come up with certain puzzle things and references to other themes, sometimes themes in other pieces that I'll repeat that have very personal meanings for me and will never mean anything to anyone else. It's there for me and I enjoy it or, you know, inwardly smile thinking, "Yeah that was clever." You know, composers like being clever. And you find all kinds of things hidden in music whether it's Bach or, I'm not talking about dark secrets but just things like, Handel using a theme from an aria he discarded in an old oratorio but now shows up in *Messiah*. I mean, there were plenty of bits in *Messiah* that were dribbled over to other pieces and I can't help but think that he was feeling good about either recycling or sometimes like I've used themes or pieces where I thought, "I like this little theme and I just haven't gotten it out of my system yet," and I find another, I just had this happen in a piece I'm writing, where I used a little bit from *Heloise and Abelard*. And the emotions are the same but one's a piece for narrator and orchestra and the other's an opera. So all of a sudden it was just there, bang. Sometimes that's not appropriate, that's too much like another piece you wrote or you're just recycling. But sometimes you think, "that's an appropriate thing," it's in a different area or register or whatever and it feels good to have it there.

SLK: I was going to say that I'm gratified to hear you say that about dissecting things in music theory classes. Sometimes I think that you work so hard dissecting every little morsel that to me it almost feels at times like you're taking the music out of the music sometimes.

SP: Yeah, I think I don't wanna trash or diss people whose job is to analyze things because as a student, you know, you learn how to create by unraveling, you know, a Bach motet or a Beethoven sonata. "Oh, that's how they structured this and there's the form." Still is the

point, as I said earlier, the vast majority of your audience, ninety-nine percent of the people, might be able to pick out a theme or rhythm pattern or whatever, that they can't talk about the piece except to say that they liked it. Or they thought it was really fiery or they, "Wow, there was wild stuff going on," or "Oh that was such a gorgeous melody. How did you do that?" That's, that's all they get from it. So you have to be able to deliver in that area and that's what I would like to be, uh, have thought of my music, that I could deliver in that area and still stand the, up to the microscope of examination and "Oh yeah, there was stuff really going on here. He was thinking and isn't this clever?" Sometimes there are things that we do subconsciously or unconscious, well not unconsciously but subconsciously when we're writing a piece because we're sitting there working with all this material. It's like a, like a painter is working with this turquoise and that blue and this magenta and that red and this puce and everything and they don't realize when they've painted a whole painting that they've used certain things in ways that were just, you know, subconscious when they were doing it. That'll happen musically and someone will point out, uh, "Do you realize you used this little theme?" and I said, "No, I didn't but it was in the brain there somewhere."

Patty Paulus: Hello.

SP: This would be the artist. This is my wife, Patty. This is Stephanie. She was asking what I hope people would think of my music in a hundred years. How's that for a question?

PP: Wow.

SP: I said that I hope that they would sort of think that there was some connecting thing. I'd rather have it stand up to an audience than to a theory class. Although I'd like to have a theory class say there's something there but basically I said most people, oh, Patty's a great candidate because she'll listen to something, even very contemporary and say, "Oh I think that's really interesting." Now that's very informed. I mean, she's heard more contemporary music concerts. She's heard thousands of composer's works. You know, music theory guys are necessary and everything, I never, I hate to, maybe you should turn this off [tape recorder], I never even got to Shenkerian[56] analysis. I mean, I didn't know what it was and I swear they didn't have it when I was studying.

SLK: I think I had a semester of it and I came out of there going, "What?!"

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[56] Heinrich Shenker (1868-1935) was an Austrian music theorist who developed a method of music analysis whose root lay in the study of pitch organization as a means of understanding successive degrees of tonal structure in any musical work.

SP: When did that start, the 80's?

SLK: I think so.

SP: See, I was done by '78. And believe it or not, I don't know how I missed this but some guy at the University of Michigan said to me, "Well I noticed you used the octatonic scale a lot," and he said, "What's your justification for that?" I didn't know what he was talking about [laughter]. But, you know, you've got to rationalize everything and you know, a lot of times I would say, you know, "Why is that there?" and I remember a couple of time saying, "Because I liked it." And some conductor once said to me, he said, "You really compose by the sound of things," and I said, "Sure." How else would you? We're talking about a sonic art. You know? We're not talking, people don't show up at orchestra hall to hear a guy with a blackboard or an overhead projector say, "Well the introduction of the first theme," although at pre-concert talks you say, "You're going to hear the first theme in the oboe. Then the composer very cleverly puts it in the contra basses but in pizzicato. You may not recognize," OK, that informs people but when you go to the actual concert you're not sitting there with a, you know, someone diagramming it, showing it.

People want to be sort of lost in the music. They really want to be, I think, pulled into a journey that lasts a certain amount of time and when they get to the end of it everybody's had their, the cool thing about music is it's a communal activity that everybody experiences individually. We all sit in the same hall but you can't talk to the person next to you about it or you get, "Shh!" like that. You shouldn't be talking. But we're all sitting there experiencing the same wave or projection of sound. We've all brought our own baggage from the day, our own life baggage, all our relationships, and our anxieties, our animosities, and our joys, and everything and at that particular moment everybody's hearing the same thing.

And when it's done if it's, I do think there are ways of creating sound that engender certain responses and that you can create gloom and doom music, and not just one way, there are countless ways but, you know, you can create music that's exuberant and joyous and if you hit it, hit the nail on the head in the right way, you get that tremendous ovation. And that's the audience's way of saying, "What you are doing was so convincing and so involving and engaging that, you know, I want to respond to it by applauding or 'bravo' or whatever." And that can be the actual performance itself but if it's great music, and performed beautifully it's even better. Then people feel like they were at a special place, at a special time, they were privileged to be at, and you remember those experiences for years and years and years. I had one at Northrup Auditorium in Minneapolis. It was the last time I ever heard Artur Rubinstein play and he played the third Chopin ballade that ends with four chords. Let's see, one, two, three, four, like that and he did a little agogic accent before the last chord, just that little hesitation. Five thousand people went [gasps] and it

was, to this day it still gives me goose bumps just to think of five thousand people could have a uniform reaction. It was like they had just been taken up to a cliff, almost thrown over and he grabbed them right before it happened. It was an amazing experience. I think that's what people are looking for. That's why they pay eighty-nine dollars to go see an opera or a hundred and sixty dollars to go see an opera.

SLK: It was like that at school. When Marilyn Horne came down, she did an inaugural concert for this new music center we had. . .

SP: Great artist.

SLK: and she did her, you know, trademark "Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair," and the whole audience just went [sigh]. It was just so cool.

SP: Yeah and how gratified, and but humbled way she must feel to know that she can engender that response.

SLK: And she just lit up, it was amazing.

SP: That was like six hundred cc's of adrenaline and just, wham, right into her but in a way that makes her want to go on and sing the next gig and continue doing what she's doing and feel great about herself as a human being. I think all that stuff is tremendously affirming and, you know, I think all of us have some sort of creative bent. It's just stamped. Some of us have more of a gift than others. I would say there's no doubt about that. Some people are good recreators, not great creators but you need that too because in the hands of the recreators we have creations realized. You know, everybody has some creative bent and it's just through the educational system it's just, everybody tries like mad to stomp it out. Most of the time they're successful, unfortunately. We'd have a lot more people um, painting, sculpting, writing. Of course we don't need more composers. We already have too many composers out there! Too many painters, way too many. Oh yeah, I paint. I had someone going, "Oh yeah, my cousin's a composer." You know, I think he had made some innocuous tune, he said, "Yeah, he made six million off of that."

SLK: Well gosh, I think I've probably taken up enough of your time. I've been here pretty much all day. This has just been such a wonderful experience for me. I've really enjoyed it.

SP: Well thank you for taking the time to come up, Stephanie. Really, I was amazed when I said, "Why don't you come up?" I can't even remember if I knew where you were coming from but when you said, "Oh that sounds great," I thought, "Oh my God!"

SLK: Hey, well I've been listening to this piece for a long time now and you know, when you said you had time free I just said, "Yes! OK!" and I just worked out my schedule because I thought, "I'm not going to miss this opportunity."

SP: That's cool, I appreciate it and if you have other uh, you know, we wanna get it right so, if you have other questions either by phone or email I'll be happy to answer them and get it so that, we should have the definitive thesis on the piece after all the effort you've put into it and I just wanted to be cooperative so there was no chance of saying, "Well if only we could have spent another ten minutes or seen the church or talked to the librettist or whatever it would have been complete," but I feel. . .

PP: Did he send you the tape, the making of [*Backstage With The Three Hermits*]?

SP: Yeah, but it didn't get there yet.

SLK: Yeah, it didn't get there yet. It's probably sitting in my mailbox now I'm sure.

PP: That is so cool.

SLK: I can't wait to see it.

SP: It's not the performance so much, I mean, it's not a complete performance it's bits and pieces but the. . .

PP: It's the making of it, I think was really interesting.

SP: And it's got the Hermits, I described how the Hermits walk on the plaster stilts and then they had the blue silk for the waves.

SLK: Oh, I'll bet that was cool. And he showed me the church.

SP: She saw the church and she got some pictures.

SLK: Yeah, I got some pictures and I got to talk to Michael so it really has been a complete *Three Hermits* immersion experience.

SP: The only other thing we could have done was Tom Lancaster and you didn't have approval to talk to him anyway!

SLK: No, I didn't get my permission slips in order but um, you know.

SP: If it turns out you want to speak to him and or Gary Gisselman and if you say it's important to do that and you get the things that require your university, why I can just call them and say, you know, "She's going to call you."

SLK: Terrific, thanks.

SP: Depending on what you need. You never know what's going to happen with a thesis. An advisor can say, "Well the one thing that's really missing," sometimes they say that just to irritate you and uh, rule number one about those guys is they make the rules and rule number two is it's all rule number one.

SLK: [laughter] Well I'm waiting for their editorial comments to conflict. One says to do it this way and the other says to do it another. Then what do you do?

SP: Say, "You guys fight it out." So what's your projected date for graduating? Or do you finish or is this. . .

SLK: Well, I'm trying to. I've actually written quite a bit of the paper but I needed to talk to you and Michael before I could go any further but hopefully I'm going to try to get things cranked out by December.

SP: Moving right along and then would you graduate in the spring then?

SLK: Yeah, spring graduation.

SP: Well good.

SLK: And thanks again for everything.

SP: I enjoyed it. You asked really good questions.

SLK: Really? I was afraid I'd sound like a big dork.

SP: Nope, you passed the dork test.

SLK: Yea! I was worried. Thanks again, it was terrific meeting you.

SP: Thanks, you too.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The Three Hermits is quite simply one of the finest contemporary American operas. When so few composers actually write operas these days, an effort this outstanding must command attention. The compositions of Stephen Paulus are Neo-Classical with a Romantic flavor and reminiscent of 20th century composers Dominick Argento, Ned Rorem, and John Corigliano, while his intuitive emphasis to text painting sets him apart. The simplistic beauty of the libretto paired with Stephen Paulus' gift for melody and text settings combines to leave the listener awash in the emotional wake of the Bishop's journey. It is clear that Browne and Paulus were at the height of their crafts, working in tandem to create a spellbinding operatic experience.

The Three Hermits was completed in 1997 and Stephen Paulus and Michael Dennis Browne have as much affection for the work as when it was new. Their devotion is infectious. It was clearly a labor of love for these two artists, which undoubtedly contributes to the success of this work. They were both quite eager to participate in this study and as my heavy luggage on the way home after meeting them will attest, they were also very generous with their personal materials as well.

It is an opera that is simultaneously profound and simplistic. It is profound in the sheer emotional and spiritual weight of the experience and it is simplistic in that at its primal core is a folk story so pure in focus that it compels the audience to watch even

though the outcome is predictable. The power in this piece is the combined mastery of Browne and Paulus. The music so impressively binds the fibers of the Browne's libretto together that the audience has no choice but to embrace the miracle before them, much in the same way the Bishop does. Joseph Kerman, author of *Opera As Drama*, comments on the power of music to convey a message.

> Now just what music *can* do is of course a famous aesthetic problem. According to the classic solution of the seventeenth century, music depicts 'affects.' But the twentieth tends rather to discern certain kinds of 'meaning' in music, significances impossible to define in words by their very nature, but precious and unique, and rooted unshakeably in human experience. Meaning cannot be restricted to words. If even ostensibly abstract instrumental music is thought to have meaning, the case is surely strong with opera, where the specific conceptual reference is continuously supplied – by the libretto. Supplied as clearly as possible by the presentation of situations and conflicts, and by the use of words in their 'denotative' aspect.[57]

The human condition and many of its facets are absolutely expressed within the scenes of this opera. Faith, fear, insecurity, pride, love, anger, bewilderment, and humor are all captured here. Paulus' gift for text painting is on magnificent display throughout the piece, even where there is no specific text. And where there is dialogue, Paulus manages to convey the appropriate emotional setting by creating a musical score that surrounds and uplifts the moment without masking the beauty of Browne's libretto.

Perhaps it is true that Paulus' heart problem provided divine inspiration in the composition of this opera. It would certainly explain some of the more sublime moments

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[57] Joseph Kerman. *Opera As Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 11.

of the piece, such as the "Pilgrims' Hymn," "We Must Be Patient," or his magnificent setting of the Lord's Prayer in the opening scene. However, it is also conceivable that Tolstoy's folk story and Browne's libretto inspired him just as much. In either case, it is an unforgettable operatic experience whose magic lies in the musical setting. The sheer listening pleasure is enough to satisfy, even without the benefit of seeing the piece performed live.

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APPENDIX A

COMPOSITIONS OF STEPHEN PAULUS[58]

Chamber Works

Air On Seurat (The Grand Canal)
Cello & Piano
Commissioned by the National Society of Arts and Letters
Premiere: May 15, 1992, at the Nation Cello Competition
Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona
Duration: 7 minutes
SP 143

American Vignettes
Cello & Piano
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler
Premiere: March 1, 1988, at the Saarbrucken Festival, Germany
Duration: 18 minutes
SP 115

Art Suite
Cello & Piano
Commissioned by David and Judy Ranheim
Premiere: April 3, 1999, at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Ohio
Duration: 15 minutes
SP 337

Bagatelles
Violin & Piano
Commissioned by Emory University
Premiere: February 9, 1990, in Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 12 minutes
SP 338

Banchetto Musicale

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[58] The information on these pages comes from the composer's web site, http://www.stephenpaulus.com/.

Cello & Piano
Commissioned by Gloria and Fred Sewell
Premiere: April 21, 1981, at House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 12 minutes
SP 339

Berceuse for Solo Harp

Harp
Commissioned by Betty and David Price
Duration: 5 minutes

Centennial Fanfare

Brass
2 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, & Snare Drum
Duration: 2 minutes
SP 376

Concerto For Brass Quintet

Brass Quintet
Commissioned by the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation
Premiere: April 2, 1991, at Tully Hall, New York
Duration: 15 minutes
SP 151

Courtship Songs

Flute, Oboe, Cello & Piano
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler
Premiere: August 29, 1981, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 17 minutes
SP 114

Dramatic Suite

Flute, Violin, Viola, Cello & Piano
Commissioned by the Minnesota Commissioning Club
Premiere: February 6, 1996 at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
St. Cloud, Minnesota
Duration: 24 minutes
SP 121

Duo for Clarinet and Piano

Clarinet & Piano
Premiere: May, 1974 at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Minnesota Composer's Forum
Duration: 5 minutes
SP 344

Exotic Etudes
Solo Viola, Piano & String Quartet
Premiere: March 12, 2000, Tucson Chamber Music Festival Tucson, Arizona
Duration: 22 minutes
SP 346

Fanfare: UMN 150
Brass Quintet
Duration: 1.5 minutes
SP 393bq

Fantasy in Three Parts
Flute & Guitar
Commissioned by Susan Hedling
Premiere: October 15, 1989, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 15 minutes
SP 141

Four Conversations with Guitar
Commissioned by guitarist Jeffery Van
Duration: 8 minutes

Images of Time Present and Time Past
Violin, Cello & Piano
Commissioned by the Board of Directors of Music in the Park Series
Premiere: May 9, 1999
SP 349

Inscriptions for Two Harps
Harp
Commissioned by Lynne Aspnes
Duration: 12 minutes
SP 351

Landmark Fanfare

Brass Quintet
Commissioned by Mrs. John F. Alden
Duration: one-half minute
SP 352

Life Motifs
Violin, Cello & Piano
Commissioned by Dr. Mark Allen Everett
Premiere: November 10, 1988 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Duration: 12 minutes
SP 113

Music for Contrasts
String Quartet
Commissioned by the Minnesota State Arts Board
Premiere: 1980, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 15 minutes

Music of the Night
Violin, Cello & Piano
Commissioned by Oglethorpe University
Premiere: February 3, 1992 at Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 15 minutes
SP 363

Ordway Fanfare
Brass Quintet
Premiere: 1984, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 1.5 minutes
SP 365

Partita
Violin & Piano
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler
Premiere: July 29, 1986 at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival
Duration: 22 minutes
SP 367

Partita Appassionata
Violin & Piano
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler

Premiere: July 5, 1996 at the Seattle Chamber Music Festival
Duration: 22 minutes
SP 366

Quartessence
String Quartet
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler
Premiere: October 5, 1990, The Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Duration: 20 minutes
SP 134

Seven for the Flowers Near the River
Viola & Piano
Commissioned by Linda and Jack Hoeschler
Premiere: October 24, 1988 at Tully Hall, New York
Duration: 19 minutes
SP 116

Seven Miniatures
Violin, Viola, & Cello
Commissioned by Ensemble Capriccio of Minneapolis
Premiere: November 12, 1989, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 21 minutes
SP 120

String Quartet No. 2
String Quartet
Commissioned by Dr. Mark Allen Everett
Premiere: April 13, 1987, Norman, Oklahoma
Duration: 20 minutes
SP 372

A Summer's Love for Solo Harp
Harp
Instrumental adaptation of the love duet from Act I of Paulus' opera *Summer*
Duration: 4 minutes
SP 402

Two Moments for Guitar
Guitar
Duration: 6 minutes

Orchestral Works

A Place of Hope

Chamber Orchestra & Chorus
Commissioned by Mayo Center for Humanities of the Mayo Foundation
Premiere: October 5, 2001, Ordway Center for Performing Arts, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 15 minutes

The Age of American Passions

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Baton Rouge Symphony
Premiere: January 7, 1999, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Duration: 27 minutes

Behold This Man! George Washington

Narrator & Orchestra
Commissioned by The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association
Premiere: September 12, 1999
Duration: 13 minutes

Brown Penny

Treble Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by the Wisconsin State Sesquicentennial Commission
Premiere: May 31, 1998, Madison, Wisconsin
Duration: 25 minutes

Canticles: Songs and Rituals for the Easter and the May

Chamber Orchestra & Chorus
Commissioned by the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Minneapolis
Premiere: May 15, 1977, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 35 minutes

Christmas Tidings: Five Carols for Mixed Chorus

String Orchestra & Chorus
Commissioned by the Cantari Singers
Premiere: December, 1987, Columbus, Ohio
Duration: 18 minutes

Concertante

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Premiere: April 27, 1989, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 11 minutes

Concerto for Orchestra

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestral Association
Premiere: April 6, 1983
Duration: 27 minutes

Concerto for Organ

Orchestra & Organ
Commissioned by Trinity Presbyterian Church of Atlanta
Premiere: March 29, 1992, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 21 minutes

Concerto for Organ, Orchestra and Chorus

Organ, Orchestra & Chorus
Premiere: November 10, 2002, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 30 minutes

Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra (Three Places of Enlightenment)

String Quartet & Orchestra
Commissioned by The Cleveland Orchestra
Premiere: September 21, 1995, Cleveland, Ohio
Duration: 25 minutes

Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra (The Veil of Illusion)

Violin, Cello & Orchestra
Commissioned jointly by the New York Philharmonic and the Atlanta Symphony
Premiere: May 19, 1994, New York Philharmonic
Duration: 25 minutes

Concerto in the American Style

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Tucson Symphony Orchestra
Premiere: April 30, 1998, Tucson, Arizona
Duration: 21 minutes

Dialogues

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra
Premiere: April 27, 2001, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Annapolis, Maryland
Duration: 6 minutes

Divertimento for Harp and Chamber Orchestra

Harp & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by Betty and David Price
Premiere: March 19, 1983, Southeastern Iowa Symphony Orchestra
Duration: 12 minutes

Ground Breaker

Orchestra
Commissioned by the St. Louis Centre Partners of Minneapolis
Premiere: October 7, 1987, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 7 minutes

Ice Fields

Guitar & Orchestra
Commissioned by Leo Kottke
Premiere: October 27, 1990, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Fort Wayne, Indiana
Duration: 18 minutes

Letters for the Times

Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned jointly by the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood and the Fromm Foundation for the Tanglewood Music Festival.
Premiere: August, 1980
Duration: 15 minutes

Manhattan Sinfonietta

Orchestra
Commissioned by The Dalton School of New York City
Premiere: May 9, 1995, New York, New York
Duration: 15 minutes

Mass

Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by The New Choral Society of Central Westchester

Premiere: May 15, 1999, Scarsdale, New York
Duration: 31 minutes

Night Speech
Baritone & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Spokane Symphony
Premiere: April 21, 1989, Spokane, Washington
Duration: 20 minutes

North Shore
Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by an individual artist grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board
Premiere: October 16, 1977, Bach Society of Minnesota
Duration: 32 minutes

Ordway Overture
Orchestra
Commissioned by The Minnesota Orchestral Association
Premiere: January 16, 1985, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 5 minutes

Prelude to a Rhapsody
Violin & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Lancaster Symphony Orchestra
Premiere: November 23, 1996
Duration: 5 minutes

Reflections: Four Movements on a Theme of Wallace Stevens
Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by grants from the Northwest Area Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Composers Commissioning Program administered by the Minnesota Composers Forum
Premiere: March 22, 1985, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 21 minutes

Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra
Violin & Orchestra
Commissioned by Orchestra Atlanta
Premiere: August 1, 1996, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 8 minutes

Seven Short Pieces for Orchestra

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis
Premiere: February 9, 1984, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 13 minutes

Sinfonietta

Orchestra
Commissioned jointly by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Meet the Composer Orchestra Residency Program
Premiere: September 12, 1991, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 15 minutes

So Hallow'd Is The Time

Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by the Greenwich Choral Society
Premiere: December 7, 1980
Duration: 35 minutes

Songs of Meditation

Treble Chorus & Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus
Premiere: November 19, 1998, Tucson, Arizona
Duration: 28 minutes

Spectra for Small Orchestra

Chamber Orchestra
Commissioned by National Endowment for the Arts Composer Fellowship
Premiere: April 12, 1980, The Houston Symphony
Duration: 15 minutes

The Spirit That Sets Us Free

Chorus & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Highland Park Presbyterian Church of Dallas, Texas
Premiere: November 14, 1999
Duration: 30 minutes

Street Music

Orchestra

Commissioned jointly by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Meet the Composer Orchestra Residency Program
Premiere: January 30, 1990, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 4 minutes

Suite from "Harmoonia"

Orchestra
Commissioned jointly by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Meet the Composer Orchestra Residency Program
Premiere: 1991, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 5 minutes

Suite from "The Postman Always Rings Twice"

Orchestra
Commissioned by the Wisconsin State Sesquicentennial Commission
Premiere: July 26, 1986
Duration: 22 minutes

Suite from "The Woodlanders"

Orchestra
Premiere: The Unitarian Society Chorus and Orchestra
Duration: 15 minutes

Symphony for Strings

String Orchestra
Commissioned by the Oregon Bach Festival
Premiere: July 5, 1989
Duration: 22 minutes

Symphony in Three Movements (Soliloquy)

Orchestra
Commissioned jointly by the Minnesota Orchestra and Meet the Composer
Premiere: January 15, 1986
Duration: 32 minutes

Translucent Landscapes

Orchestra
Commissioned by The Peninsula Music Festival
Premiere: August 6, 1982
Duration: 18 minutes

Trumpet Concerto

Trumpet & Orchestra
Commissioned by Doc Severinsen with James Sedares and the Phoenix Symphony
Premiere: April 25, 1991
Duration: 25 minutes

Violin Concerto

Violin & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Premiere: November 5, 1987, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 25 minutes

Violin Concerto No. 2

Violin & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival
Premiere: July 3, 1992
Duration: 21 minutes

Voices

Chorus & Orchestra
Commissioned by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education and the Minnesota Orchestral Association
Premiere: November 2, 1988
Duration: 40 minutes

Voices from the Gallery

Narrator & Orchestra
Commissioned by The Atlantic Sinfonietta
Premiere: November 4, 1991
Duration: 32 minutes

Voices of Light

Chorus & Orchestra
Commissioned by Westminster Choir College of Rider University
Premiere: April 12, 2001, Avery Fisher Hall, New York, New York
Duration: 22 minutes

Choral Works

Title	Voicing/Instrumentation	Category	Duration
A Place of Hope	SATB/Orchestra	Secular	15 minutes

Agnus Dei from ***Mass***	SATB/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
All Living Beings	SATB a cappella	Secular	6 minutes
All My Heart This Night Rejoices	Treble/Keyboard/Flute	Christmas	3 minutes
All Sky	SATB a cappella	Secular	5 minutes
All Things from ***"Embracing All"***	SATB/Flute/Piano	Sacred	4 minutes
All Things New	SATB/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
Allelujah! Christ Is Risen	SATB a cappella	Sacred	2 minutes
Always Remember	Treble/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
An American Medly	SATB/Brass Quintet	Secular	15 minutes
Angels and the Shepherds	SATB/Organ	Christmas	2 minutes
Angels We Have Heard On High	SATB/Organ	Christmas	2 minutes
At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners	SATB/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
At the Tomb	SATB a cappella	Sacred	3 minutes
Awakening	SATB a cappella	Secular	20 minutes
Barbara Allen	SATB/Guitar	Secular	3 minutes
Beautiful Things	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Bells	3-part chorus/Keyboard	Secular	4 minutes
Blessed Are All Thy Saints	SATB/Organ	Sacred	2 minutes
Bread of the World	2-part chorus/Keyboard	Sacred	3 minutes
Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella	SATB/Guitar	Christmas	2 minutes
Brown Penny	Treble/Piano	Secular	25 minutes
Built On A Rock	SATB/Keyboard	Sacred	4 minutes
Calming the Storm	SATB a cappella	Sacred	4 minutes
Canticles: Songs and Rituals for the Easter and the May	SATB/soloists/Narr./Orch.	Sacred	35 minutes
Canticum Novum	SATB/Flute/Oboe/Perc./Harp	Christmas	30 minutes
Carol of the Hill	SATB/Keyboard	Secular	10 minutes
Cats, Friends, and Lovers	Women's Chorus a cappella	Secular	10 minutes
Child My Choice, A	SATB a cappella	Christmas	4 minutes
Christ Our Passover	SATB/Brass/Timpani/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
Christmas Eve Carol	SATB a cappella	Christmas	4 minutes
Christmas Tidings: Five Carols	SATB/Strings/Handbells	Christmas	18 minutes
Come Good People, Let Us Sing	SATB/Brass/a cappella	Sacred	3 minutes

Come Life, Shaker Life	SATB/Brass/ a cappella	Sacred	3 minutes
Credo	SATB/Organ	Sacred	8 minutes
Day After Day	SATB a cappella	Secular	2 minutes
Day Break	Treble/Percussion/Piano	Secular	4 minutes
Ding Dong! Merrily on High	SATB/Flute	Christmas	2 minutes
Each Day	SATB a cappella	Sacred	5 minutes
Earth Sings, The	3-part Treble/Perc./Piano	Secular	9 minutes
Echoes Between the Silent Peaks	SATB/Flute/Oboe/Strings/ Percussion/Harp	Secular	25 minutes
Elixir, The	SATB/Congregation/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Embracing All	SATB/Flute/Piano	Secular	11 minutes
Evening	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Evensong	SATB a cappella	Sacred	5 minutes
Every Soul Who Has Willingly Served	SATB/Organ	Sacred	2 minutes
First Nowell, The	SATB a cappella	Christmas	2 minutes
For All Saints: Four Songs Sacred Texts	SATB/Organ	Sacred	10 minutes
For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest	SATB/Brass Quintet/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Fountain of My Friends	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	10 minutes
Four Advent Carols	SATB/Organ	Christmas	12 minutes
Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind	SATB a cappella	Secular	10 minutes
Friendly Beasts, The	SATB/Soprano/Tenor/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
Gabriel's Message	SATB/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
Gentle Breezes	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Gloria from "Mass"	SATB/Organ	Sacred	6 minutes
Glory To God	Cantor/3-part Male/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
God Be With Us	SATB/Percussion/Piano	Sacred	8 minutes
God Is Music	SATB/Youth Choir/Organ	Sacred	6 minutes
God With Me	SATB a cappella	Sacred	2 minutes
Grass from "Prairie Songs"	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Guiding Light of Eternity	SATB/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Hallelu!	2-part Voices/Harp/Keyboard	Christmas	3 minutes
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	SATB/Soprano/a cappella	Christmas	3 minutes
Hear My Words	2-part Chorus/Keyboard	Sacred	3 minutes
Holly and the Ivy, The	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	4 minutes
Has Gud Er Idel Glede	SATB unison/Keyboard	Sacred	2 minutes
How Far Is It To Bethlehem?	SATB/Oboe/Harp/Soloists	Christmas	3 minutes

Humanity Sings	Treble Chorus/Piano/Orch.	Secular/Sacred	3 minutes
Hymn	SATB/Piano	Secular	4 minutes
I Cannot Dance, O Lord	Treble Chorus/Piano/Orch.	Secular	4 minutes
I Gave My Love A Cherry	SATB/Soprano/Harp	Secular	3 minutes
Impart	2-part Chorus/Piano/Guitar	Secular	4 minutes
In Heaven Is Joy and Gladness	SATB unison/Keyboard	Sacred	2 minutes
In Praise	SATB/Handbells/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
In the Furnace ofLove's Fire	SATB/Percussion/Piano	Secular	28 minutes
In the Moon of Wintertime	SATB a cappella	Christmas	3 minutes
Jesu Carols	SATB/Harp	Christmas	10 minutes
Jesu's Lyfelyne	SATB/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
Joy Comes with the Morning	2-part Treble/Keyboard	Sacred	2 minutes
Joy to the World	SATB/Soprano/a cappella	Christmas	2 minutes
Jubilate Deo	SATB/Organ	Sacred	6 minutes
King of Glory/King of Peace	SATB/Organ	Sacred	6 minutes
Kyrie	SATB/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Lately Arrived from London	SATB/Piano	Secular	5 minutes
Let All Creation Praise	SATB/Organ	Secular	5 minutes
Letters for the Times	SATB/Soloists/Chamber Orch.	Secular	20 minutes
Lift Up Our Hearts, O King Of Kings	SATB Unison/Piano/Flute	Sacred	3 minutes
Lightener of the Stars, The	SATB/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
Lord, Here Am I	2-part Chorus/Guitar/Piano	Sacred	2 minutes
Love Letters	Women's Chorus/Piano/Flute	Secular	10 minutes
Love Opened a Mortal Wound	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Love's Philosophy	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Loving-Kindness	Men's Chorus a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Luminous Mind	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Madrigali di Michelangelo	SATB a cappella	Secular	20 minutes
Marginalia	SATB/Flute/Perc./Guitar	Secular	10 minutes
Mass	SATB/Perc./Harp/Organ	Sacred	30 minutes
Meditations of Li Po	SATB a cappella	Secular	15 minutes
Melodys of Earth and Sky	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
Mighty Songs	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	4 minutes
Mowing, The	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
MusiQuotes	SATB/Piano	Secular	13 minutes
Naked Circle, The	SATB/Flute/Piano	Secular	4 minutes
Neighbors of Bethlehem, The	SATB/Flute/Piano	Christmas	7 minutes

Nocturne	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
North Shore	SATB/Soloists/Chamber Orch.	Secular	32 minutes
Now is the Gentle Season (A Spring Madrigal)	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
O Little Town of Bethlehem	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
O Praise the Lord	SATB/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
O Sacred Breath, O Blazing Love	SATB/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
Ocean of Clouds, An	SATB a cappella	Secular	6 minutes
Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful	SATB/Soprano/a cappella	Christmas	3 minutes
Oh, Susanna	SATB/Keyboard/Brass	Secular	3 minutes
Old Church, The	SATB a cappella	Secular/Sacred	4 minutes
On the Road	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Oneness	Treble Chorus/Piano/Orch.	Secular/Sacred	4 minutes
Oneness Within, The	SATB/Flute/Piano	Secular/Sacred	4 minutes
Pay Through the Nose	Treble Voices/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
Peace	SATB a cappella	Sacred	5 minutes
Personals	SATB/Flute/Percussion	Secular	5 minutes
Pilgrim Jesus	SATB/Organ	Christmas	5 minutes
Pilgrims' Hymn	SATB a cappella	Sacred	3 minutes
Pium Paum	SATB/Chamber Orchestra	Christmas	3 minutes
Place of Hope, A	SATB/Chamber Orchestra	Secular	15 minutes
Prairie Snow	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Prairie Songs	SATB a cappella	Secular	22 minutes
Praise, My Soul, the King Of Heaven	SATB/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Psalm 1	SATB a cappella	Sacred	6 minutes
Psalm 121	SATB/Soprano/a cappella	Sacred	4 minutes
The Road Home	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Roll, Jordan, Roll	SATB/Soloists/Keyboard	Sacred	4 minutes
Run, Shepherds, Run!	SATB/Organ	Christmas	1 minute
Sacred Songs: Seven Songs On Sacred Texts	SATB/Flute/Oboe/Perc./Organ	Sacred	30 minutes
The Sage	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Sanctus et Benedictus	SATB/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes
Savior From on High, A	SATB/Oboe/Harp/Piano	Christmas	3 minutes
Sea and Sky	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	1 minute
Shall I Compare Thee?	Men's Chorus a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Shall We Gather at the River	SATB a cappella	Sacred	3 minutes
Shantyman's Life, The	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Shepherds! The Chorus			

Come and Swell!	SATB/Handbells	Christmas	2 minutes
Ship Carol, The	SATB/Harp	Christmas	2 minutes
Silver the River	2-part Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
Simple Gifts	SATB/Keyboard	Sacred	3 minutes
Sing Creations Music On	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
Sing, Hevin Imperial	SATB/Organ/Brass	Christmas	5 minutes
Sing, Hevin Imperial	SATB/Keyboard	Christmas	3 minutes
Single Girl	SATB/Harp/Brass	Secular	3 minutes
Snow Had Fallen; Christ Was Born	SATB/Keyboard	Christmas	3 minutes
Snow Lay on the Ground, The	SATB/Keyboard	Christmas	3 minutes
So Hallow'd Is the Time	SATB/Organ/Brass	Christmas	3 minutes
So Hallow'd Is the Time	SATB/Soloists/Chamber Orch.	Christmas	35 minutes
Song in the Air, A	SATB Unison/Keyboard	Christmas	2 minutes
Song, Like the Voice of a Multitude, A	Treble Chorus/Piano/Orch.	Secular/Sacred	6 minutes
Song of Joy	SATB/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
Song of Songs	SATB a cappella	Secular	2 minutes
Songs Eternity	Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	8 minutes
Songs from the Japanese	SATB a cappella	Secular	15 minutes
Songs of Meditation	Treble Chorus/Orch./Piano	Secular/Sacred	28 minutes
Sorrow Song	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Soul, Like the Moon, The	Treble Chorus/Orch./Piano	Sacred	4 minutes
Sound of Silence, The	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Spirit That Sets Us Free,The	SATB/Orchestra/Organ	Sacred	30 minutes
Spring Song	2-part Treble Chorus/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
A Stephen Paulus Christmas:			
Nine Christmas Carols	SATB a cappella	Christmas	23 minutes
Te Deum	SATB/Organ	Sacred	3 minutes
This Endris Night	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
This Happy Morn	SATB/Organ/Brass	Christmas	3 minutes
This Is The Month, and This The Happy Morn	Women's Chorus/Organ	Christmas	3 minutes
Three Chinese Poems	SATB a cappella	Secular	8 minutes
Three Nativity Carols	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	11 minutes
Three Songs on Poems Of Wilfred Owen	SATB a cappella	Secular	8 minutes
Too Many Waltzes	Men's Chorus/Perc./Harp	Secular	10 minutes
Tulatulla	3-part Women/Flute/Harp	Secular	3 minutes
Twilight Hymn	SATB a cappella or Piano	Sacred	3 minutes

Two Madrigals	SATB a cappella	Secular	4 minutes
Underneath A Star	SATB/Keyboard	Christmas	3 minutes
Undivided Measure	SATB/Organ	Secular	5 minutes
Virtue	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Visions from Hildegard, Part I	SATB/Flute/Oboe/Perc./Organ	Sacred	21 minutes
Visions from Hildegard, Part II	SATB/Brass/Percussion	Sacred	16 minutes
Visions from Hildegard, Part III	SATB/Soloists/Instr./Organ	Sacred	28 minutes
Voices	SATB/Soloists/Orchestra	Secular	40 minutes
Voices of Light	SATB/Orchestra	Secular/Sacred	22 minutes
Wassail Song	SATB a cappella	Christmas	2 minutes
Watching the Moon At Midnight	Treble Chorus/Piano/Orch.	Secular/Sacred	5 minutes
Water Is Wide, The	SATB/Soloists/Harp	Secular	3 minutes
Waye Not His Cribb	SATB/Harp	Christmas	4 minutes
We Give Thee But Thine Own	SATB/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
We Sing Thy Birth	SATB/Organ/Brass	Christmas	12 minutes
We Three Kings of Orient Are	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	5 minutes
Whalen's Fate	Men's Chorus/Guitar	Secular	3 minutes
When I Am Filled With Music	SATB/Piano	Secular	3 minutes
When In Our Music God Is Glorified	SATB/Brass/Organ	Sacred	4 minutes
Whitman's Dream	SATB/Brass/Percussion	Secular	11 minutes
Wind and Sun	Treble Chorus/Perc./Piano	Secular	3 minutes
Winter Song	2-part Chorus/Piano	Secular	2 minutes
Winter Song	SATB a cappella	Secular	3 minutes
Wishes and Candles	SATB/Harp	Christmas	3 minutes
Wonder Tidings	SATB/Oboe/Harp	Christmas	4 minutes
You Shall Love	SATB/Organ	Sacred	5 minutes

Organ Works

Concerto for Organ, Orchestra and Chorus
Organ, Orchestra & Chorus

Premiere: November 10, 2002, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 25 minutes

King David's Dance

Organ
Premiere: October 25, 2002, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 5 minutes

Mass

Organ
Commissioned by The New Choral Society of Central Westchester
Premiere: May 15, 1999, Scarsdale, New York
Duration: 31 minutes

Meditations On The Spirit

Organ
Commissioned by John Stansell
Premiere: November 13, 1995, Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York
Duration: 15 minutes

Organ Concerto

Organ
Commissioned by Neil and Sue Williams and Dan and Sandra Mackey
Premiere: March, 1992, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 21 minutes

Paean

Organ
Commissioned by Anne and Todd Wilson
Premiere: July 7, 1996, American Guild of Organists, St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, New York
Duration: 7 minutes

Three Temperaments

Organ
Commissioned by Robert and Durema Kohl
Premiere: October 10, 1996, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas
Duration: 19 minutes

Toccata

Organ

Commissioned by Kathy Handford
Premiere: July 31, 1996, Lahti, Finland
Duaration: 10 minutes

Triptych

Organ
Commissioned by House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota
Premiere: May 21, 2000, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 15 minutes

The Triumph of the Saint

Organ
Commissioned by Elizabeth and Raymond Chenault
Premiere: March 4, 1994, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 22 minutes

Piano Works

Childhood Scenes

Piano
Commissioned by Friends of Music at Emory University
Premiere: April 14, 1991, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 12 minutes

Dance

Piano
1986

Preludes – Book I

Piano
Commissioned by Friends of Music at Emory University
Premiere: September 19, 1994, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 18 minutes

Translucent Landscapes

Piano
Commissioned by Kapell Piano Foundation for Contemporary Music and Musicians
Premiere: October 6, 1982, The American Academy in Rome, Italy
Duration: 22 minutes

Solo Instrument Works

A Summer's Love
Harp
Instrumental adaptation of the love duet from Paulus' opera, *Summer*.
Duration: 4 minutes

Berceuse
Harp
Commissioned by Betty and David Price
Duration: 5 minutes

Four Conversations With Guitar
Guitar
Commissioned by guitarist Jeffery Van
Duration: 8 minutes

Two Moments for Guitar
Guitar
Duration: 6 minutes

Opera

Harmoonia
One-Act opera for children
Libretto by Michael Dennis Browne
Commissioned by Des Moines Metro Opera
Premiere: February 23, 1991, Opera Iowa, Des Moines Metro Opera, Muscatine, Iowa
Duration: 45 minutes

Heloise and Abelard
Opera in three acts
Libretto by Frank Corsaro
Commissioned by the Juilliard Opera Center
Premiere: April 24, 2002, The Juilliard Theater, New York, New York
Duration: 2 hours, 20 minutes

The Postman Always Rings Twice

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Colin Graham
Commissioned by Opera Theater of St. Louis, Missouri
Premiere: June 17, 1982, St. Louis, Missouri
Duration: 120 minutes

Summer

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Joan Vail Thorne
Commissioned by the Berkshire Opera Company
Premiere: August 28, 1999, Berkshire Opera Company, Pittsfield, Massachusetts
Duration: 120 minutes

The Three Hermits

Opera in one act
Libretto by Michael Dennis Browne
Commissioned by House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota
Premiere: April 24, 1997, House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 60 minutes

The Village Singer

Opera in one act
Libretto by Michael Dennis Browne
Commissioned by Opera Theater of St. Louis
Premiere: June 9, 1979, New Music Circle of St. Louis, Missouri
Duration: 60 minutes

The Woman at Otowi Crossing

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Joan Vail Thorne
Commissioned by Opera Theater of St. Louis
Premiere: June 15, 1995, St. Louis, Missouri
Duration: 120 minutes

The Woodlanders

Romantic tragedy in three acts
Libretto by Colin Graham
Commissioned by Opera Theater of St. Louis
Duration: 125 minutes

Vocal Works

All My Pretty Ones
Soprano & Piano
Commissioned through a National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship
Premiere: April 1, 1994, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 26 minutes

Art Songs
Tenor & Piano
Commissioned by Paul Spery
Premiere: May 11, 1983, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 27 minutes

Beloved Home
Soprano & Piano
Aria from the Paulus opera *Summer*
Duration: 5 minutes

Bittersuite
Baritone & Piano
Commissioned by Nicholas Nash
Premiere: February 12, 1988, St. Paul, Minnesota
Duration: 16 minutes

Letters from Colette
Soprano, String Quartet, Piano, & Percussion
Commissioned by The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival
Premiere: August 2, 1986, Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Long Shadow of Lincoln
Bass-Baritone, Violin, Cello, & Piano
Commissioned by Friends of Music at the Supreme Court
Premiere: May 26, 1994, Supreme Court Building, Washington, D.C.
Duration: 20 minutes

Mad Book, Shadow Book: Michael Morley's Songs
Tenor & Piano
Commissioned by the Schubert Club of St. Paul
Premiere: February 13, 1977, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Duration: 25 minutes

Songs of Love and Longing

Soprano & Piano
Commissioned by the Georgia Council for the Arts
Premiere: April 27, 1992, Atlanta, Georgia
Duration: 10 minutes

Three Elizabethan Songs

Soprano & Piano
Minnesota Composers Forum
Premiere: October 19, 1973, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

APPENDIX B

DISCOGRAPHY[59]

Title	Available Recordings
Air On Seurat (cello & piano)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio
	d'Note Classics/DND 1037 St. Paul Sinfonietta
	Innova 539 "A Chamber Fantasy" Mina Fisher, Cello Jill Dawe, Piano
All My Pretty Ones (soprano & piano)	Albany Records TROY036-2 "Songs" Ruth Jacobson, Soprano Paul Schoenfield, Piano
American Vignettes (cello & piano)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio
The Angels and the Shepherds (chorus, flute & handbells)	da Chiesa SoundRecordings DCSR-105 The Gwinnett Festival Singers William O. Baker, Conductor
	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	RCM Catalogue # 19605

[59] Discography information obtained from the web site of Stephen Paulus, http://www.stephenpaulus.com/.

	"Christmas" Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia Orchestra Paul Salamunovich, Conductor
Angels We Have Heard On High (chorus and organ)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Artsongs (tenor & piano)	Albany Records TROY036-2 "Songs" Paul Sperry, Tenor Irma Vallecillo, Piano
	CRS Master Recordings CD 9662 "Art Song Heritage of the Americas" Frederick Kennedy, Tenor
Barbara Allen (chorus & guitar)	Augsburg Fortress 23-0981 (cassette and LP) The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Bittersuite (baritone & piano)	Albany Records TROY036-2 "Songs" Hakan Hagegard, Baritone Warren Jones, Piano
Bring A Torch!, Jeanette, Isabella (chorus & guitar)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Canticum Novum (chorus, flute, oboe, percussion, harp)	"Wonder Tidings" Includes:'Three Nativity Carols,' 'Hallelu,' 'Jesu Carols,' and 'Canticum Novum' Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni)

	David Dickau, Conductor
Carol of the Hill (chorus & organ)	Pro Organo, CD 7065 "Music at St. George's" St. George's Episcopal Church Wilma Jensen, Conductor Nashville, Tennessee
"Carols for Christmas" (chorus)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
"A Chamber Fantasy" (chamber music)	Innova 539 Judith Ranheim, Flute Jane Garvin, Flute Merilee Klemp, Oboe Chouhei Min, Violin Troy Gardner, Violin Korey Konkol, Viola Mina Fisher, Cello Thelma Hunter, Piano Jill Dawe, Piano
"Chamber Music" (chamber music)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio
Christ Our Passover (chorus, brass, timpani & organ)	The Church of the Covenant Cleveland, OH Todd Wilson, Conductor

"Christmas Echoes - Vol. I" (chorus)	Augsburg Fortress 4-11 The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
" Christmas Echoes - Vol. II" (chorus)	Augsburg Fortress 4-12 The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Concertante (orchestra)	New World Records 363-2 "Works By Stephen Paulus" Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Yoel Levi, Conductor
Courtship Songs (flute, oboe, piano & cello)	d'Note Classics/DND 1037 St. Paul Sinfonietta Innova 539 "A Chamber Fantasy" Jane Garvin, Flute Merilee Klemp, Oboe Mina Fisher, Cello Jill Dawe, Piano
Ding Dong! Merrily On High (chorus & flute)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Dramatic Suite (flute, piano, violin, viola & cello)	d'Note Classics/DND 1037 St. Paul Sinfonietta Innova 539 "A Chamber Fantasy" Judith Ranheim, Flute Chouhei Min, Violin Korey Konkol, Viola Mina Fisher, Cello Thelma Hunter, Piano

Echoes Between The Silent Peaks (chorus, flute, oboe, percussion, harp, violin & cello)	Koch Int'l Classics 3-7279-2 H1 Oregon Repertory Singers Gilbert Seeley, Conductor
Evensong (chorus)	American Choral Catalog ACC 121 "December Stillness" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	CAER 71998 Choral Arts Ensemble of Rochester Rick Kvam, Conductor
Fantasy In Three Parts (flute & guitar)	Gasparo Records GSCD-336 "Canyon Echoes - New Music for Flute & Guitar" Susan DeJong, Flute Jeffrey Van, Guitar
The First Nowell (chorus a cappella)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	New Art Recordings "Midwinter: Carols in Concert" Ars Nova Singers Thomas Edward Morgan, Conductor
Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind (chorus)	Innova Recordings MN 110 "Choral Currents" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
God With Me (congregational hymn)	HOH CD-401 House of Hope Presbyterian Church Choir St. Paul, Minnesota Nancy Lancaster, Organ

Hallelu! (chorus & harp)	Plymouth Music Series 09026-68015-2 "Welcome Christmas: Carols from Around the World" Philip Brunelle, Conductor
	The Choraliers of Candler School of Theology "Endless Your Grace" Marian E. Dolan, Conductor
	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	"Wonder Tidings" Includes:'Three Nativity Carols,' 'Hallelu,' 'Jesu Carols,' and 'Canticum Novum' Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni) David Dickau, Conductor
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (chorus a cappella)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
The Holly and the Ivy (chorus, oboe & harp)	Delos DE 3267 "Dallas Christmas Gala" Dallas Symphony Orchestra David Davidson, Conductor
How Far Is It to Bethlehem (chorus, oboe & harp)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
I Gave My Love A Cherry (chorus & harp)	Augsburg Fortress 23-981 (cassette and LP)

	The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Jesu Carols (chorus & harp)	SFDC3 Santa Fe Desert Chorale Larry Bandfield, Conductor
	Chariot Records 97101 Roger Wagner Chorale Jeannine Wagner, Conductor
	MCC 101 Monmouth Civic Chorus of Redbank, NJ Mark Shapiro, Conductor
	MCC 2 "Wonderful Mystery" Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni Minneapolis, MN) David Dickau, Conductor
	"Wonder Tidings" Includes:'Three Nativity Carols,' 'Hallelu,' 'Jesu Carols,' and 'Canticum Novum' Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni) David Dickau, Conductor
Joy To The World (chorus a cappella)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Life Motifs (violin, cello & piano)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio

The Lightener of the Stars (chorus & organ)	The Choir of Christ Church Christiana Hundred (Wilmington, DE) William Owen, Conductor
"An MCC Christmas" (chorus)	MCC 101 Monmouth Civic Chorus of Redbank, NJ Mark Shapiro, Conductor
Meditations of Li Po (chorus)	New World Records 80504-2 "Divine Grandeur" The New York Concert Singers Judith Clurman, Conductor
Music of the Night (violin, cello & piano)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio
O Little Town of Bethlehem (chorus, oboe & handbells)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	New Art Recordings "A Floweret Bright: Christmas Music of the Renaissance and the 20th Century Ars Nova Singers Thomas Edward Morgan, Conductor
Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful (chorus a cappella)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Organ Concerto (organ, strings and percussion)	Pipedreams CD-1003 "Pipedreams Premieres, Volume 2" Atlanta Symphony Members

	George Hanson, Conductor Norman Mackenzie, Organ Petty-Madden Organ Trinity Presbyterian Church, Atlanta
Partita Appassionata (violin & piano)	d'Note Classics/DND 1037 St. Paul Sinfonietta
	Innova 539 "A Chamber Fantasy" Troy Gardner, Violin Jill Dawe, Piano
Peace (chorus)	Augsburg Fortress AUGCD911 Augsburg College Choir (Minneapolis, Minnesota) Peter Hendrickson, Conductor
Pilgrims' Hymn from *THE THREE HERMITS* (chorus)	The St. Agnes High School Concert Chorale (St. Paul, Minnesota) William E. White, Conductor
	American Choral Catalog ACC 123 "Bernstein & Britten" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
	The Greenville College Choir North Carolina Jeffrey S. Wilson, Conductor
	The Choraliers of Candler School of Theology "Endless Your Grace" Marian E. Dolan, Conductor

A Savior From on High (chorus, oboe & harp)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Seven for the Flowers Near the River (viola & piano)	Gasparo Records GSCD-301 The Lanier Trio
	"Five for the Flowers Near the River" Five Movements from SEVEN FOR THE FLOWERS NEAR THE RIVER Cala Records Ltd. CACD 0510 "New York Legends" Cynthia Phelps, Viola
Seven Miniatures (violin, viola & cello)	Titanic Recordings Ti - 231 Ensemble Capriccio Minneapolis, MN
Shall We Gather At The River (chorus)	Augsburg Fortress 23-0981 (cassette and LP) The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
The Ship Carol (chorus & harp)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Single Girl (chorus)	American Choral Catalog ACC 122 "Blue Wheat: A Harvest of American Folk Songs" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Snow Had Fallen; Christ Was Born	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas"

(chorus & keyboard)	The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
So Hallow'd Is the Time (chorus, soloists & orchestra)	Pro Arte PDS 257 (out of print) (cassette and LP) Plymouth Music Series of Minneapolis Philip Brunelle, Conductor
"Songs" (solo voice)	Albany Records TROY 036 Hakan Hagegard and Warren Jones Ruth Jacobson and Paul Schoenfield Paul Sperry and Irma Vallecillo
Songs from the Japanese (chorus)	New Art Recordings "All Sky: New American Choral Works" Ars Nova Singers Thomas Edward Morgan, Conductor
Symphony for Strings (orchestra)	New World Records 363-2 "Works by Stephen Paulus" Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Yoel Levi, Conductor
Symphony in Three Movements (Soliloquy) (orchestra)	Elektra/Nonesuch 79147-2 Minnesota Orchestra Sir Neville Marriner, Conductor
The Three Hermits (opera)	d'Note Classics/DND 1025 (Premiere recording of the complete opera 9 soloists, chorus, 11 instruments) The House of Hope Presbyterian Church Choir St. Paul Sinfonietta Thomas Lancaster, Conductor (see also recordings for *PILGRIMS' HYMN*)
Three Nativity Carols	New World Records

(chorus, oboe and harp)	"Season's Promise" Also includes 'Wishes and Candles' New York Concert Singers Judith Clurman, Conductor
	"Wonder Tidings" Includes:'Three Nativity Carols,' 'Hallelu,' 'Jesu Carols,' and 'Canticum Novum' Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni) David Dickau, Conductor
	"A Sound of Angels" Orpheus Chamber Singers Donald Krehbiel, Conductor
Three Songs on Poems of Wilfred Owen (chorus)	aca Digital Recording Inc. CM20046 "An American Sampler" The Atlanta Singers David Brensinger, Conductor
Three Temperaments (organ)	Digital Chips DCD 2001 "Music From Bales Organ Recital Hall, University of Kansas" (World premiere recording) James Higdon, Organ
Translucent Landscapes (piano)	RBW Record Co. label; Parkville, Missouri; #CD016 Album: "Something Old, Something New" Selection: "Five Translucent Landscapes" Joan DeVee Dixon, Piano
Triptych (organ)	HOH CD-403 House of Hope Presbyterian Church St. Paul, Minnesota Nancy Lancaster, Organ
Voices	Albany Records TROY 182

(chorus & orchestra)	Pacific Choral Pacific Symphony Orchestra John Alexander, Conductor
Voices From the Gallery (narrator & orchestra)	d'Note Recordings DND 1010 Pro Music of Columbus Janet Bookspan, Narrator Timothy Russell, Conductor
Violin Concerto (orchestra & violin)	(Concerto for Violin and Orchestra) New World Records 363-2 "Works by Stephen Paulus" Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Robert Shaw, Conductor William Preucil, Violin
Violin Concerto No. 2 (violin & orchestra)	Aspen CD82093 The Aspen Festival Orchestra Lawrence Foster, Conductor Robert McDuffie, Violin
Wassail Song (chorus a cappella)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor New Art Recordings "Midwinter: Carols in Concert" Ars Nova Singers Thomas Edward Morgan, Conductor
The Water Is Wide (chorus & harp)	Augsburg Fortress 23-0981 (cassette and LP) The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor American Choral Catalog ACC 122 "Blue Wheat: A Harvest of

	American Folk Songs" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
We Sing Thy Birth (chorus, organ & brass ensemble)	"Cantate Hodie: Sing Forth This Day!" Bach Choir of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh Symphony Brass Brady R. Allred, Conductor
We Three Kings (chorus, oboe & harp)	d'Note Classics DND 1015 "Carols for Christmas" The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Whalen's Fate (chorus & guitar)	Augsburg Fortress 23-0981 (cassette and LP) The Dale Warland Singers Dale Warland, Conductor
Wishes and Candles (chorus)	New World Records "Season's Promise" Also includes 'Three Nativity Carols' New York Concert Singers Judith Clurman, Conductor
"Wonder Tidings" (choral music)	Magnum Chorum (St. Olaf College Choir Alumni) David Dickau, Conductor
"Works By Stephen Paulus" (orchestra)	New World Records 363-2 Atlanta Symphony Orchestra William Preucil, Violin Yoel Levi, Conductor Robert Shaw, Conductor

APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPHS



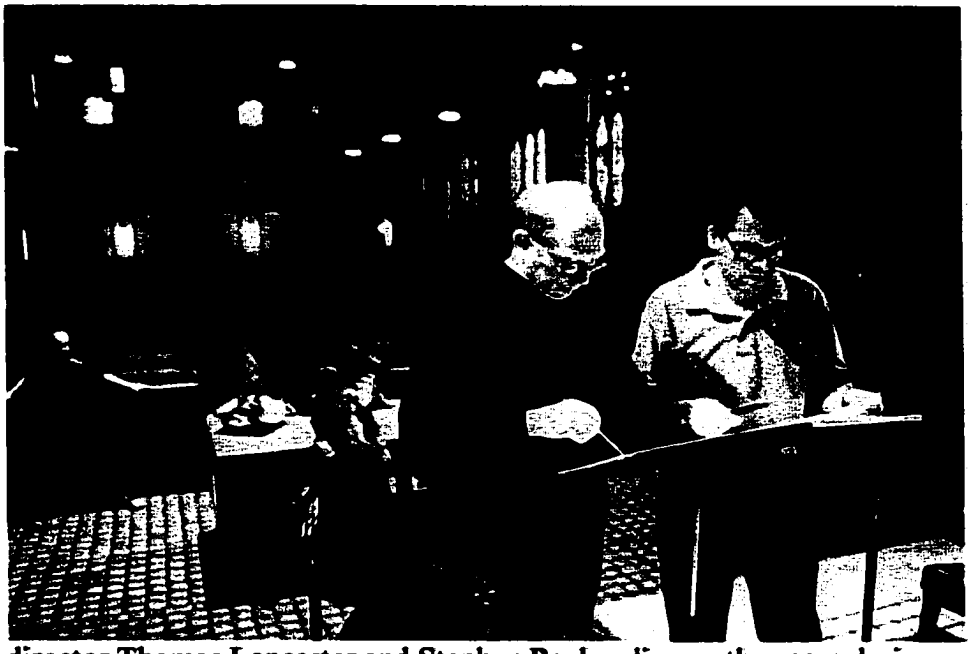
From left to right, Stephen Paulus, stage director Gary Gisselman, and Michael Dennis Brown. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



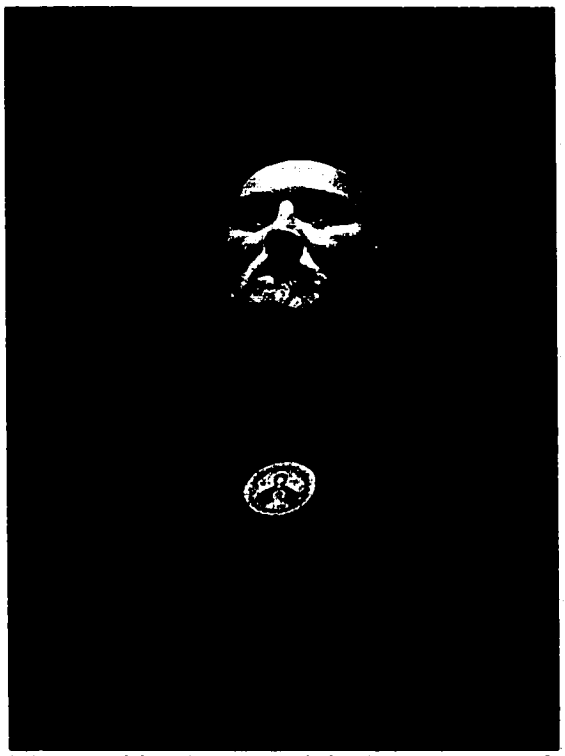
From left to right, Stephen Paulus, stage director Gary Gisselman, and musical director Thomas Lancaster. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



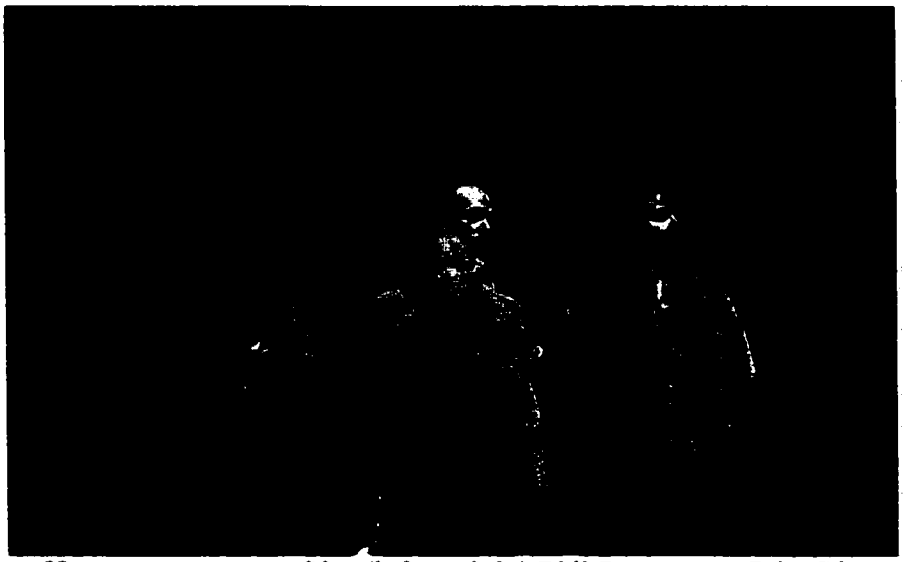
House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, photograph by author, Stephanie L. Kruger



Musical director Thomas Lancaster and Stephen Paulus discuss the score during a rehearsal at House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.

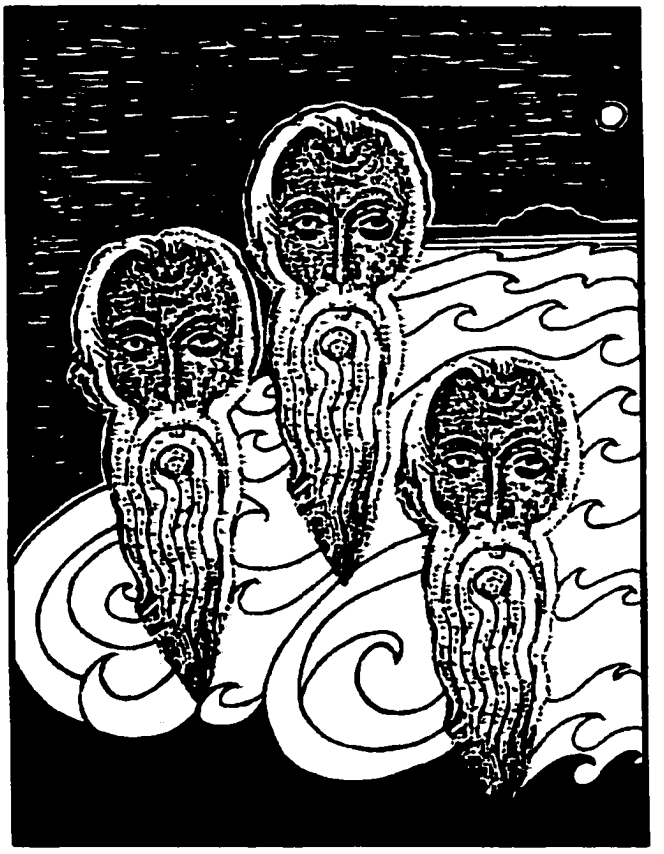


James McKeel, as the Bishop. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



The Three Hermits as portrayed by (left to right) Phil Jorgenson, John Bitterman, and Corby Welch for the world premiere. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.

THE · THREE · HERMITS



A World Premiere Opera

Based On A Folktale By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, April 24 • Friday, April 25 • Sunday, April 27

The House of Hope Presbyterian Church

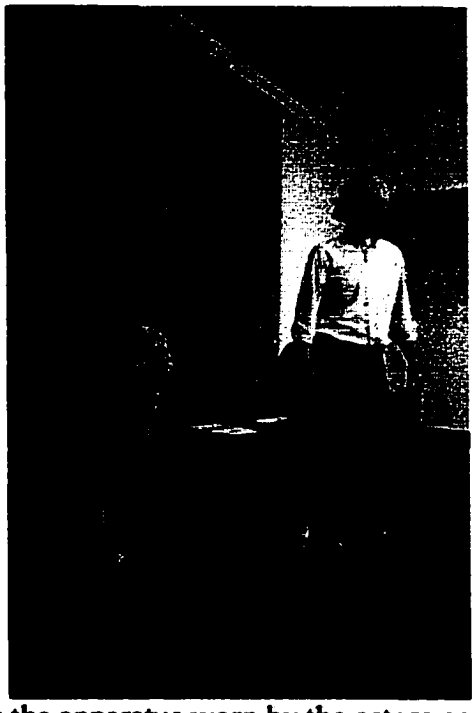
Program cover from the world premiere performances. The artwork is by Patty Paulus, used here with permission of Stephen Paulus.



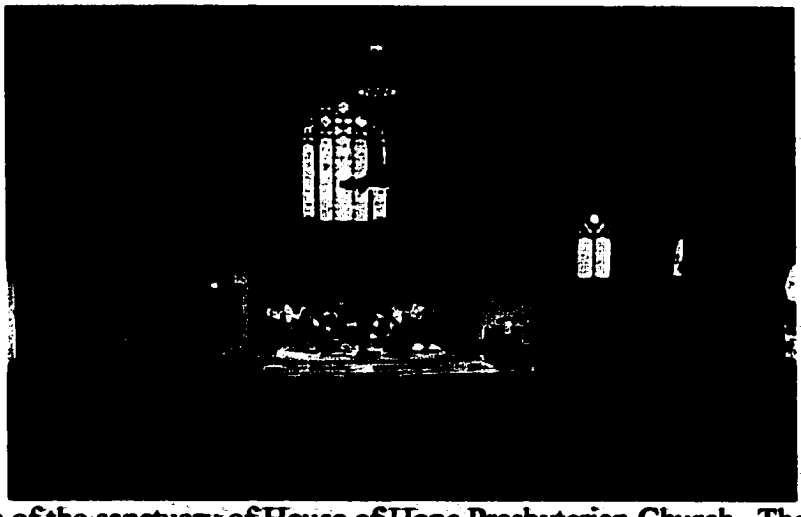
The Bishop and the pilgrims on the deck of the ship. This is a rehearsal photograph taken by Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



This photo, taken during a rehearsal, depicts the scene in which the Bishop is rowed to the mysterious island to meet the hermits. This photo is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



This photograph illustrates the apparatus worn by the actors portraying the hermits (Corby Welch left, John Bitterman, right)to present the illusion of walking on water. Blue silks were used to create the water. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.



A photograph of the sanctuary of House of Hope Presbyterian Church. The alcove to the right of the photograph is where the orchestra was placed during performances. This photograph is the property of Michael Dennis Browne and is used here with his permission.