

DÓNAL RAFFERTY

Choral Études

for mixed choir

STYLE | SURROGATION

SATB solo & SSS AAA TTT BBB choir

Duration: c. 3'30"

Composed 2009

www.donalrafferty.net

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FOREWORD

The *Choral Études* were conceived during an important creative turning point in my compositional career. Although I had come into contact with his work before, I became acquainted with the writings of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) in earnest during my masters studies. His philosophical writings around the subject of the artist's role in society are something which greatly stimulated my thinking, particularly his belief in the importance of motivating a critical interpretation of one's music – and by extension, the world – in the listener. Contemporary art music has struggled to find relevance to society in the modern world partially because this is not always considered by the composer. Previously, I had come to the conclusion that to be a 'respectable' artist, it was enough to create something from one's imagination that did not exist before. This rationale quickly revealed itself to be quite hollow to me and I knew that in order for my continued motivation as an artist to prevail, I required something more to drive me. My work needed relevance, something which (at least for me) would connect it to the world I live in.

The sad truth of contemporary composition is that it is an elitist art form. It does not aim to be so but is nonetheless due to its very nature. Art which seeks to be the most truthful to its time and context is dependent on the interpretation of those relatively few individuals who seek beyond their regular sphere of thinking in order to find meaning in something unknown. With my *Choral Études*, my principal concern is the provocation of thought, while attempting to maintain a consideration of the importance of the listener's attention, and hopefully, interpretation.

One way in which we attempt to improve our understanding of the world is through the practice of modelling. We build, study, perhaps enjoy, and hopefully interpret scaled down, simpler models of the world around us. I think music can be used in a similar way. As a starting point, I have designed each étude to operate primarily in terms of one musical constituent, with this quantity being considered in terms of a comparable constituent of the real world, or in this case, a certain facet of my own personal world: the late-capitalist consumer society in which I live. The word 'étude' (study) in the title thus has dual meanings. I intend for the *Choral Études* to be a continual exploration, or diary of my evolving outlook.

Dónal Rafferty
3 March 2010

Choral Études

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PROGRAMME NOTE

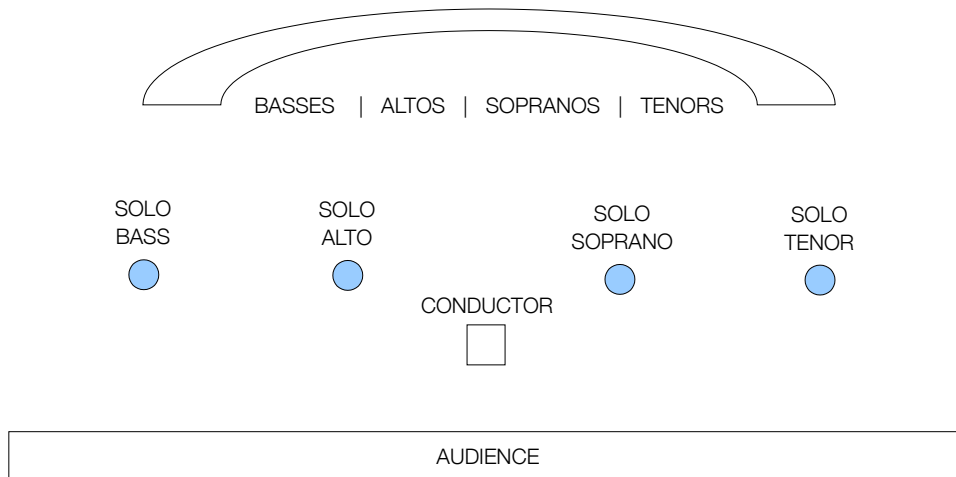
We live in an age where society is obsessed with celebrity and fame culture. In this modern day late-capitalist system, celebrities are the unqualified yet unfortunate wielders of quite unsettling amounts of power. Moreover, celebrities have become instruments of surrogacy, some people no longer thinking for themselves but simply following the outcome of decisions made by someone they have constructed an artificial connection with.

Four solo parts are offset against the rest of the choir. The solo voices share between them various riffs from contemporary pop songs. The rest of the choir is quite static, with minimal melodic movement being driven by the actions of the solo voices. The choir's music is 'recycled' from the *Melody | Discourse* étude. The text shared between the the solo voices is an oft-quoted yet nonetheless appropriate 'shloka' (verse) from the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad*, one of the oldest parts of the Hindu scriptures.

Asato Maa Sad Gamaya	Lead us from the unreal to the real,
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya	Lead us from darkness To light,
Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya	Lead us from death to immortality,
Ohm Shanti Shanti Shanti	'God' let there be peace peace peace.

Style | Surrogation

PERFORMANCE NOTES



- The choir and soloists should be situated as above. The choir should be a background presence.
- The contemporary pop song riffs shared between the soloists in their original form are:



- The choir's material is adapted from the *Melody | Discourse* étude. The repeating notes in each voice of the other étude are here substituted with sustained notes.
- The final note should be indefinite in pitch and sung as a general slide down with a diminuendo and simultaneous closing of the mouth.

Performance note:
 The choir should always be a background presence. The conductor may wish to position them some distance back from the soloists or even offstage.

Choral Études

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Duration: c. 3'30"
 Lyrics from Brhadaranyaka Upanisad
 (1.3.28)

Dónal Rafferty
 September 2009

Slow ♩ = 50

Soprano solo
 shan - ti

Alto solo
 Om Om shan-ti shan - ti

Tenor solo
 Om shan-ti ti

Bass solo
 shan - ti

SOPRANO
 Oh

ALTO
 Oh

TENOR
 Oh etc.

TENOR
 Oh etc.

TENOR
 Oh etc.

BASS

A

8

S. solo

Ooh

A. solo

shan - ti Om shan-ti Ooh Ah

T. solo

shan - ti shan - ti to

B. solo

shan - ti Om shan-ti shan - ti sa ma

S.

Ooh Ooh Ooh Ooh

A.

Ooh

T.

Ooh Ooh Ooh

B.

Oh Ooh

gliss. *f* *gliss.*

f *gliss.* *p*

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

pp *f* *p*

3 3 3

B

15 *p*

S. solo
sad ya A - sa-to ma sad ga-ma ya Pah

A. solo
ga ga - ma - ya Pah ta -

T. solo
ma ma sad Pah!

B. solo
A - sa to ma sad gama - ya

f *gliss.*

S.
etc. Pah Ah

A.
etc. Ah etc.

T.
etc. Ah

B.
etc. Ah

f *p*

29

S. solo *p* yor ma - mr - tam *f* ga - ma - ya, Sha

A. solo *p* *3* *3* mr ty ma - mr - tam *f* ga - ma - ya, mr - ty - or ga - ma - ya Sha

T. solo *mp* ma - mr - tam *f* Sha!

B. solo *mf* *p* mr - ty - or mr - ty - or ma - mr - tam *f* *gliss.* Sha!

S. etc. Sha

A. etc. Sha

T. etc. Sha

B. etc. Ah

35

S. solo *gliss.* *mp* *cresc.*
A - sa - to ma sad

A. solo *gliss.* *mp* *cresc.*
A - sa - to ma sad ga - ma

T. solo *mp* *cresc.* *mf*
ma sad A -

B. solo *mp* *mf*
A - sa - to ma sad sa

S. *p* *cresc.*
ah etc.

A. *p* *cresc.* *mf*
Ah etc.

T. *p* *cresc.* *mp*
Ah etc.

B. *p* *mp* *cresc.* *mf*
etc.

40

S. solo *f* *ff*
ma sad ga - ma - ya!

A. solo *f* *ff*
- ya A - sa - to ma sad ga - ma - ya!

T. solo *f* *ff*
to sad ga ma sad ga - ma - ya!

B. solo *f* *gliss.* *ff*
ma ma - ya! gama - ya!

S. *mf* *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

A. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

A. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

A. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

T. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

T. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.

B. *cresc.* (choked) *f secco* *gliss.*
a! a a a a a - a - a a au - m.