

st. luke magnificat program note

I had, for some time, had in mind the setting of religious, and in particular, Latin texts, when in 1985 I was commissioned by Gaudeamus to write a work for unaccompanied double choir. I decided to write a work joyous in affirmation of the Spirit rather than a more sectarian, religiously pompous piece.

While writing, the text preyed on my mind and I found myself, uncharacteristically, writing music that wasn't to plan. This at first concerned me but finally I allowed myself to feel free to support the broad spiritual and dramatic thrust of the words rather than rigidly imposing a musical 'form' on the work.

As it finally turned out, I finished with a hybrid – a work strong in dramatic thrust, yet cast in a rather free, yet formally satisfying 'sonata' type structure. The one change, made on dramatic grounds, was in the placement of the Esurientes and the Deposuit. This was in order to end the middle section with a stronger dramatic statement.

Although the work has, as a structural element, strong tonal orientation, the harmonic language I use is usually far from diatonic and I am sure this will be apparent at once.

My st. luke magnificat is scored for unaccompanied SSAA/SATB choir and was commissioned by Gaudeamus, Canberra, with the assistance of the Australia Council Music Board. Work on the magnificat was completed in mid-April, 1986.

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