

Joshua Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory

Joshua examines an ancient story. It is informed by musical material from two traditions vastly separated by time, geography and experience. The African and Jewish Diaspora cultures might seem to have little in common. But Israel's identity and spiritual tradition was codified in a collection of amazing stories. Through an uncanny series of historical twists and turns, slaves in America heard of Israel's journey. They empathized with the proud and purposeful nation forced into slavery by Egypt. They found hope in Israel's great escape: the Exodus, four decades of desert subsistence and entrance into a Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. *Joshua* examines one chapter in this story. After Moses died, God called Joshua to assume leadership of the nation, and lead a march on Jericho. The instructions were precise: march seven times around the city; blow the trumpets; sound the battle cry (literally, all shriek at the same moment). Miraculously, the impregnable fortress crumbled, eliminating the final barrier separating Israel from the Promised Land.

On a second level, *Joshua* honors the people and events who/which challenge the impenetrable walls we build in our own lives: the walls behind which we hide from ourselves and each other; the walls that keep us isolated and alone; the walls that separate us from our respective Promised Lands.

Joshua is dedicated to the memory of Moses Hogan. The Hebrew text we use in the work's opening section (from the Old Testament book of Joshua) reflects this fact: *God said, "My servant, Moses, has died. Rise now. Every place you tread with the soles of your feet I will give you. As I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will never fail you nor abandon you."*

Moses Hogan explored a rich musical inheritance to find a unique and marvelous Promised Land of his own. Our world is infinitely more beautiful for his journey. Pearl Shangkuan commissioned *Joshua* for the Calvin College Women's Chorale, which is published by earthsongs. She subsequently commissioned this SATB version for the Calvin College Alumni Choir.

Joshua would be a very different piece without the generous assistance of Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director of the Zamir Chorale in Boston. After selecting excerpts from the Old Testament book of Joshua to open our work, we sent them to Jacobson. He gave us Hebrew transliterations. Later, we asked if he could provide us with traditional Hebrew cantillation related to the Joshua story. He recorded himself singing it and emailed us an mp3...something so ravishingly beautiful that we find ourselves listening over and over just for pleasure. The melody played by the trumpet in the opening section of *Joshua* is based on Jacobson's singing. This musical material reappears in the trumpet solo near the end of the piece.

Joshua Jacobson's notes on the pronunciation and translation of the Hebrew text are below:

Follow the rules for Italian diction, but note: *ch* is pronounced the like *ch* in Bach, but very deep in the throat; *e* is open as in bet; *é* is closed as in bait (but without the diphthong); *g* is always hard as in get; *i* is open as in bit; *í* is closed as in beet; *o* is open as in bought; *ó* is closed as in boat (but without the diphthong); *r* is always flipped or rolled; *s* is always unvoiced, as in sad; *sh* as in shoe; *u* is pronounced like the oo in mood; *z* as in zebra.

va-YÓ-mer a-dó-NAI: mó-SHE av-DÍ MÉT.
said God Moses my-servant has-died
ve-a-TA KUM kol-ma-KÓM a-SHER tid-RÓKH kaf-rag-le-KHEM BÓ,
so now rise! every-place that will-tread the-soles-of-your-feet on-it
la-KHEM ne-ta-TÍV, ka-a-SHER ha-YÍ-tí im mó-SHE, eh-YE i-MAKH;
to-you I-give-it as I-was with Moses I-will-be with-you
ló ar-pe-KHA, ve-ló e-ez-VE-ka.
not I-will-fail-you and-not I-will-abandon-you

Furthermore, there are some considerations about our English spellings of colloquial Southern dialect. Paul grew up in the deep South, and he attempts to spell things as they would be pronounced. Sometimes the English alphabet does not allow this to be done clearly. Whenever the word *to* is spelled *tuh* and whenever the word *the* is spelled *duh*, the vowel to be used is a schwa (◌). Our music notation program does not readily allow this symbol to be typed in a score. Also, note that *cain't* rhymes with *ain't*.

Technical issues: First, the mini-choruses, which appear at measure 99, should be voiced as indicated. Do not create a mini-chorus comprised of basses altos and another of altos. Each mini-chorus should be mixed as the score indicates, TTB and SSA. Second, the high D-flat on the final chord should be sung by one, solitary soprano. It's like an overtone. You don't really need to hear the note. You just need to *feel* it in the room. Finally, we implore conductors to perform this score as written. There is no room for gospel-style "breakdown," vamps, or improvisatory solo singing. Like Moses Hogan's music, this is a through-composed concert piece based on ancient material. It is not a gospel song. Yes, our work is influenced by the gospel tradition. But the gospel elements we bring to the piece are *notated*. Stick to the score.

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