

Song of Silent Voices Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory

Often read at Holocaust remembrance events, this text excerpted from Psalm 19 represents our attempt to underline a quiet realization: the voices of children silenced by genocide have much to say to us...if we but listen. The piece ties together various themes in our earlier work. *Ani Ma'amin* was our attempt to honor lives lost during the Shoah. Both *Witness* and *Beneath the African Sky* were inspired by the story of Clemantine Wamariya, a child who narrowly escaped the Rwandan genocide and lived in various refugee camps across Africa for years thereafter.

The text is first presented in Hebrew. As has often been the case, our use of Jewish musical elements has been supported by the assistance of Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director of the Zamir Chorale in Boston. He reconstructed a Syrian Jewish cantillation of the text. It's not a commonly-known chant. While the cantillation of most of the Bible has been carefully preserved by Jews for thousands of years, the cantillation of the Psalms was lost except in some communities. Today, most Jews chant the Psalms using a simple Psalmody. This Syrian system is different. It's detailed and obscure. We used the melody Josh sent us as the basis for the solo which opens the piece. We imagined it being sung by a cantor. But it might be sung effectively by a child.

Presented subsequently in English and Kinyarwanda, the melodies (combined like a partner song at the end) are originally composed. Clemantine provided us the text in her native language.

Joshua Jacobson's pronunciation guide for the Hebrew text is follows:

Follow the rules for Italian diction, but note: kh = German ch, but very guttural; e is open as in bet; é is closed as in bait (but without the diphthong); 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.

ha-sha-MA-yim <i>the heavens</i>	me-sa-pe-rÍM <i>are declaring</i>	ke-vód-ÉL <i>the glory of God</i>	
u-ma-a-sé <i>and the works of</i>	ya-DAV <i>his hands</i>	ma-GÍD <i>tell</i>	ha-ra-KÍ-a <i>the firmament</i>
YÓM <i>day</i>	le-YÓM <i>to day</i>	ya-BÍ-a <i>utters/expresses</i>	
Ó-mer <i>speech</i>	ve-LAI-la <i>and night</i>	le-LAI-la <i>to night</i>	ye-kha-ve-DA-at <i>tells knowledge</i>
ÉN Ó-mer <i>no speech</i>	ve-ÉN <i>and no</i>	de-va-RÍM <i>words</i>	
be-LÍ <i>without</i>	nish-MA <i>being heard</i>	kó-LAM <i>their voice (their sound)</i>	
be-khol-ha-A-rets <i>throughout (in all) the land (the earth)</i>	ya-TSA <i>goes out (emanates)</i>	kav-VAM <i>their line (ray, sound wave)</i>	
u-vik-TSÉ <i>and in the ends of</i>	té-VÉL <i>the world</i>	mi-LÉ-hem <i>their words</i>	
la-SHE-mesh <i>for the sun</i>	SAM <i>he put</i>	Ó-hel <i>a tent</i>	ba-HEM <i>in them</i>

When the Psalm text is presented in Kinyarwanda, follow rules for Italian vowels. *J* should be pronounced *zh*, not like an English *J*. *Rs* should be rolled. In the word *irindi*, the initial *i* is passed through so quickly as to be nearly dropped...but not quite. In this portion of the song, we have take great care to create a melody which supports the syllabic stress as read to us by Clemantine Wamariya:

u-MUN-si u-BWI-ra UN-di MUN-si in-KU-ru YAB-yo, IJ-o-ro RI-ka-bi-men-YE-sha i-RIN-di JO-ro.
Na-no-ne, nta nKU-ru, NTA n'am-a-GAM-bo, KU-ko IJ-wi RYAV-yo ri-tum-VI-ka-na.

Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory, June 29, 2010