An Analytical Conductor’s Guide to the SATB A Capella Works of Arvo Part

Kimberly Anne Cargile, University of Southern Mississippi

Date of Award
Spring 5-2008

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)

Department
Music

Committee Chair
Dr. Gregory Fuller

Committee Chair Department
Music

Committee Member 2
Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe

Committee Member 2 Department
Music

Committee Member 3
Dr. Steven Moser

Committee Member 3 Department
Music

Committee Member 4
Dr. Jay Dean

Committee Member 4 Department
Music

Committee Member 5
Dr. Edward Hafer

Committee Member 5 Department
Music

Abstract
Arvo Part (b. 1935) is an Estonian composer whose works include film scores, piano and organ works, chamber music, choral/orchestral works, and unaccompanied choral works. This dissertation is limited to the composer’s SATB a cappella works. During an eight-year “period of silence” from 1968 to 1976, Part ceased serious composition in order to find his true compositional “voice.” During this hiatus, Part abandoned his Lutheran faith, converting to the Russian Orthodox Church, and discovered a fascination with sacred Medieval and Renaissance music, which had been denied him as a student in the USSR. These events, added to the lingering influence of his composition teacher, Heino Eller, became the primary influences in Part’s new style of composition, which he named tintinnabuli.

The tintinnabuli style is defined and explained in Chapter 1 and discussed in the analyses in subsequent chapters. For each individual work, I identify tintinnabulation elements, tonal centers, central pitches of various voices (not always the tonic), characteristics relating to Russian Orthodox liturgy, and Medieval or Renaissance musical characteristics. Also, the text source and an English translation are provided for each work. Chapter Two includes analyses of the SATB choral a cappella works composed through 1996. Chapter Three considers individual sections of Kanon Pokajanen and includes a discussion of Old Church Slavonic (the language of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the language of three of Part’s a cappella works).
Chapter Four includes analyses of the SATB choral a cappella works composed from 1997 to the present. In addition, general conducting issues related to Part's compositions will be addressed in Chapter Five (and in the analysis for a specific piece, when necessary), as well as performance practice issues (vibrato, intonation, room acoustics, etc.). The goal is to provide choral conductors with an analytical and practical guide to the SATB a cappella works of Arvo Part, which will serve as a teaching tool to better enable both conductors and ensembles to understand the structure of the music.

Copyright
2008, Kimberly Anne Cargile

Recommended Citation
https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/1106