

# **Stony Brook University**



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**A Christmas Cantata**

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Joseph James Bartolozzi**

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**Music**

**(Composition)**

Stony Brook University

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Abstract of the Dissertation

**A Christmas Cantata**

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Alex Ross states in *The Rest is Noise*: “One possible destination for twenty-first century music is a final ‘great fusion’: intelligent pop artists and extroverted composers speaking more or less the same language. In a decentered culture, it (music employing fusion) has a chance to play a kind of godfather role, able to assimilate anything new because it has assimilated everything in the past.”

*A Christmas Cantata* employs fusion techniques on all levels of formal structures, pitch, and rhythmic choices, style, setting of text, harmonic language and orchestration.

I chose a Cantata form from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of its greater freedom compared to the Baroque Cantata. This loosely based form allows for the fusion of the hymn tune, *Forest Green*, with the style of Perotin’s motet *Sederunt*. I also employed fusion technique in the setting of text, pitch symbolism, and rhythm. For example, on the text “Natum vidimus natum,” (Born for us is Christ Jesus), I approached word-rhythmic painting by combining the trochaic, tribachic, and iambic rhythms from the rhythmic modes, thus creating the joyous dance-like rhythmic sparkle that the text suggested. Again, in the fugal subject of the first movement, I employed Baroque symbolism by using pitches based on Bach’s name B flat, B natural (H in German), A flat, and C sharp. Regarding harmonic language, style, and orchestration, the fourth movement is a Jazz Bossa Nova with lush upper extension jazz chords combined with an impressionistic orchestral accompaniment. The orchestral accompaniment is the binding force which weaves in and out of multiple styles, yet retains its classic accompaniment role.

The five-movement Christmas Cantata employs a variety of stylistic means in a post – modern style: intended to do justice to the many emotional modes of the liturgy.

*Dedicated To The Archangels Sandalphon and Zadkeil.*

*Special Thanks to Perry Goldstein and Daniel Weymouth and Garry Dial*

*A Christmas*

*Cantata*

*for*

*Soprano and Baritone Solo,*

*Chorus,*

*and Orchestra,*

*by*

*Joseph James Bartolozzi*

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## PROGRAM NOTE

*A Christmas Cantata* began as a commission to compose a work for orchestra and chorus that was accessible to all audiences. This was quite disheartening since I understood accessible to mean distinct melodies and sentimental orchestration. Nevertheless I accepted. With these parameters in mind I composed *A Christmas Cantata* utilizing “fusion technique” which is applied on many levels: formally, stylistically, harmonically, melodically and also within the orchestration.

A Christmas Cantata is a story within a story. It is about Mary and her willingness to accept God’s will to bear the child Jesus. The movements are purposefully out of order with regard to church liturgy, that is to say, the first and last movements are from the readings of the Nativity Vespers service on Christmas Day bracketing the second, third, and fourth movements which are about Mary and her acceptance of God’s will.

In keeping with the idea of a liturgical work, I chose the Cantata form, for it is closely tied to the Vesper service rather than the Baroque Lutheran Cantata which one associates with J.S.Bach, and which is based on the Gospel readings. I “fused” styles ranging from the Ars Antiqua period in some choral passages while combining twenty-first century Be-bop Jazz harmony that utilizes the upper-extensions of Jazz chords. This technique permeates the work. I also employed symbolism. For instance, the pitches of the fugue in the first movement were chosen based on Bach’s name.

The third movement is the central core of the work surrounded by two solo movements and two large choral movements creating a kind of musical symmetry.

### INSTRUMENTATION

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 Flutes/Piccolo            | <b>Chorus I and II*</b> |
| 2 Oboes                     | Sopranos                |
| 1 English Horn              | Altos                   |
| 2 Clarinets in Bb           | Tenors                  |
| 1 Soprano Saxophone         | Basses                  |
| Bass Clarinet in Bb         |                         |
| 2 Bassoons                  |                         |
| 4 Horns                     | <b>Soloists</b>         |
| 3 Trumpets in Bb with mutes | Soprano                 |
| 3 Trombones with mutes      | Baritone                |
| Bass Trombone               | <b>Strings</b>          |
| Tuba                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> Violins |
| Percussion (4 Players)*     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Violins |
| Timpani (5 drums)           | Violas                  |
| 2 Harps                     | Cellos                  |
| Celesta                     | Contrabasses            |

**\* In movements III and V a double chorus is required; therefore a full chorus of 70 or more members is required.**

### **\*Percussion Instruments Required**

Vibraphone (motor off), Glockenspiel, Marimba, Tubular Bells (Chimes), Xylophone,

Tambourine, Medium Tam Tam, Large Tam Tam, Gong, 4 Tom Toms (low to high),

Snare Drum, Triangle, 2 Woodblocks (1 low 1 high), Bass Drum, Maracas, Slapstick,

Mark Tree, Bell Tree, Large Suspended Cymbal, 2 Cymbals, Mark Tree, Sleigh Bells.

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

Transposing Score

In movements that require a double chorus. The second chorus (chorus II) needs to be no fewer than a total of 25 members.

**Duration:** circa 34' 30"

Movement I: ca. 8'

Movement II: ca. 2' 30"

Movement III: ca. 8'

Movement IV: ca. 8'

Movement V: ca. 8'

**TEXT**

**From the Nativity Vespers Service On Christmas Day**

**Movement I**

**Quem vidistis Pastores?**

**Latin**

Quem vidistis pastores? Quem vidistis pastores?

Dicite: Dicite

Annuntiate nobis in terris Quis apparuit.

Natum vidimus natum

Et choros angelorum

Collaudantes, collaudantes Dominum.

Alleluia, Alleluia

**English**

Shepherds, tell us your story.

Speak to us!

Again describe the vision of glory which on earth appeared.

Born for us was Christ Jesus.

We heard the angel chorus. Singing praises,

Singing praises of the Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

**Movement II**

**Magnificat**

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae;

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent

Omnes generations omnes.

My soul praises the Lord highly. And my

Spirit has exulted in the God of my salvation.

For He has been mindful of the lowly status of His handmaiden:

surely, henceforth all generations

will call me blessed.

**Movement III**

**O Magnum Mysterium**

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum

Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum

Jacentem in praeseptio

Beata virgo beata cujus viscera meruerunt

portare Dominum Christum.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

O wond'rous this mystery that even lowly beasts might behold Him.

Who through the Son of God, a Son of man on earth was born.

Within a manger He did lie.

O blessed virgin most holy worthy was thy womb

That did carry our Savior Jesus Christ.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

**Movement IV**

**Ave Maria/Salve Regina**

Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Maria gratia plena,

Ave Ave Dominus Dominus tecum.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus,

Et benedictus fructus ventris, ventris tui, Jesus.

Sancta Maria Mater Dei, ora pronobis peccatoribus,

Ora Ora pronobis, peccatoribus.

Nunc et in, hora mortis, In hora mortis nostrae,

in hora mortis nostrae, Ave Maria. Amen.

Ave, Maria: Hail Mary, full of grace,

the lord is with thee. Blest are you among all women.

And how truly blest is the fruit of

your womb, Jesus.

O holy Mary, God's own mother, pray for us

your children who stray from the way,

now and in that final hour when we come to

death. Amen.

*(Salve Regina)*

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae:

Hail, Mary, Mother and Queen of  
tender mercy,

Vita dulcedo et spes nostra salve.

Our life, our comfort, and our hope,  
we hail thee.

**Gloria In Excelsis Deo**

**Movement V**

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus

Glory to God in the highest and on  
earth to men

bonae voluntatis.

of good will peace and love abiding.

Jubilare Deo omnis terra,

O be joyful in the Lord, ye nations,  
With gladness

Servite Dominum in laetitia.

serve the Lord, with gladness serve  
him.

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus

Glory to God in the highest and on  
earth to men

bonae voluntatis.

of good will peace and love abiding.

Introite in conspectu ejus,

Come before Him, come before His  
presence,

in exultatione, exultatione.

Come unto Him with singing, joy  
and exultation.

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus

Glory to God in the highest and on  
earth to men

bonae voluntatis.

of good will peace and love abiding.

Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus:

Now know ye: know that the Lord  
God is strong

Ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos.

and mighty, He created us and not  
we ourselves.

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus

Glory to God in the highest and on  
earth to men

bonae voluntatis.

of good will peace and love abiding.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

## Percussion Map

### Percussion I

Xylophone, Chimes, Marktree, Tambourine w/ Sticks

### Percussion II

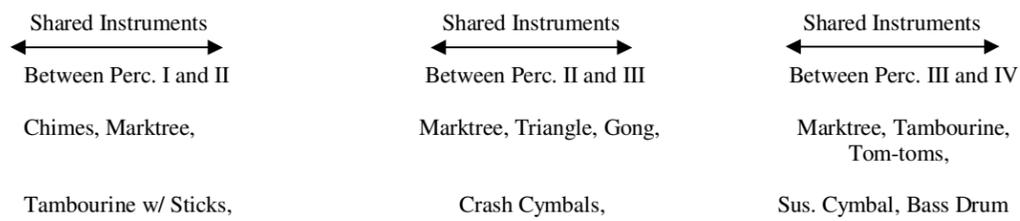
2 Woodblocks Low and High, Slap Stick, Crash Cymbals, Triangle, Marktree, Gong

### Percussion III

2 Tam-Tams Med. Lge., Snare Drum, Bass Drum, 4 Tom-Toms,

### Percussion IV

Marimba, Sleigh Bells, Sus.Cymbal w/Yarn mallets Hand, Tambourine, Maracas, Claves.



## Percussion Identification Chart

*Tympani (set-up)*



Chimes\* Vibraphone (sounding at pitch)  
 Glockenspiel(sounding 2 8ves higher)  
 Xylophone (sounding 8 higher)  
 Marimba (sounding at pitch)

