

Troy D. Robertson

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes, by Troy D. Robertson, an alumnus of the group, was commissioned by the Festival Singers of Florida in honor of Dr. Kevin Fenton, founder and artistic director, on the occasion of the choir's tenth anniversary. Dr. Fenton's passion for excellence in the choral arts is legendary. It is from his vision, his energy, his enthusiasm, and passion for his craft that the Festival Singers of Florida came into existence. The impact of his vision, that by simply singing together we can bring peace throughout the world, is ever-expanding. He is an inspiration to anyone privileged to know him and he is truly a voice for peace.

Ron Hatley
Board of Directors Liaison
Festival Singers of Florida

A note from the composer:

The Beatitudes are among the best known verses of the Bible. When I first considered the text as a possible subject for this piece I was at a loss as to what my approach might be. As I read the verses again and again, however, I thought about how these words must have sounded to the first ears on which they fell. I thought about my friend Kevin Fenton and Festival Singers of Florida, and I began to see a possibility.

* * *

The opening "crow" of the piano, quiet and in the distance, is meant to set us in the proper frame of mind. That is to say, we already know the whole story, how it ends, and we know it from several sources. We are not the heroes of the story. Given that, the Beatitudes, far from a list of comforting assurances, are an indictment and an admonition:

The lowly and weak will have their share of heaven. The rest of us have our warning - woe to us!

After the opening crow the piano paints a backdrop of idyll (either "the mount" or "the plain," depending on the Gospel). Into the midst of this peaceful repose the singers offer strange ideas: "Rich are the poor... fortunate are you who hunger... blessed are you who weep..." These odd words of comfort change to words of conviction: "Woe to you who are rich... you who are full... you who laugh now..."

In the final moments of the piece Jesus (despairingly?) asks, 2,000 years hence, "Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?" In the coda that follows, the choir meditates on the more difficult, and therefore the most radical, of these sayings.

My hope is that this piece will challenge singers (and perhaps the audience) to hear these familiar words with new ears, to hear them as the strange and radical ideas they are.

Troy D. Robertson

The Beatitudes

3

*Written for Festival Singers of Florida and their conductor,
Kevin Fenton, in honor of 10 years of music and friendship*

The words of Jesus from the Gospels of
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

Troy D. Robertson

Freely $\text{♩} = 120$

Piano

The piano introduction is in 3/4 time, marked 'Freely' with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. It features a right-hand melody of eighth-note chords and a left-hand accompaniment of sustained octaves. Dynamics range from *pp* to *p*.

"...this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."

8 $\text{♩} = 60$

The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and piano accompaniment are shown. The tempo is 60 beats per minute. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'Then Jesus lifted his' on a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment features a melody in the right hand and sustained octaves in the left hand, marked *rall.* at the end.

brilliant, rich sound, expressive

15 *mp tutti* *non dim.* 3
 Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp tutti *non dim.* 3
 eyes on his dis-ci- ples—and said: Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp tutti *non dim.* 3
 eyes on his dis-ci- ples—and said: Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp tutti *non dim.* 3
 Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

p *mp*

22 *mp*
 For-tu-nate are you—who hun-ger now, for you shall be full.

mp
 For tu-nate are you—who hun-ger now, for you shall be full.

mp
 For-tu-nate are you—who hun-ger now, for you shall be full.

mp
 For-tu-nate are you—who hun-ger now, for you shall be full.

p *mp*

30

p *rit.* *mf* $\text{♩} = 120$

Bless-ed are you who weep now: You, you will know joy!

Bless-ed are you who weep now: You, you will know joy!

Bless-ed are you who weep now: You, you will know joy!

Bless-ed are you who weep now: You, you will know joy!

p *rit.* *mf* $\text{♩} = 120$

p *mf*

38

The musical score is for a four-part vocal setting of the text "Blessed are the poor." The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of staves. The first four systems each contain a vocal line (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are "Bless - ed, _____ Bless - ed _____ are the poor. _____". The piano accompaniment is shown in the fifth system, consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The piano part features a rhythmic melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The tempo/mood is marked "mp" (mezzo-piano) at the beginning of each vocal line and the piano accompaniment.

mp
Bless - ed, _____ Bless - ed _____ are the poor. _____

mp
Bless - ed _____ Bless-ed are the poor. _____

mp
Bless - ed, _____ Bless - ed _____ are the poor. _____

mp
Bless - ed _____ Bless-ed are the poor. _____

mp
Bless - ed _____ Bless-ed are the poor. _____

45

cresc. Bless - ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn. *decresc.*

cresc. Bless-ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn. *decresc.*

cresc. Bless-ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn. *decresc.*

cresc. Bless-ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn. *decresc.*

cresc. *decresc.*

52

mp Bless-ed are the meek. *cresc.* Bless - ed are those who

mp Bless - ed, bless - ed are the meek. *cresc.* Bless - ed are those who

mp Bless-ed are the mer-ci-ful.

mp Bless-ed are the mer-ci-ful.

mp *cresc.*

59

hun - ger. Bless - ed are the pure of heart. Bless - ed are those who hun - ger. Bless - ed are the pure of heart.

66

Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers. Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers. Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers. Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers.

80

mp cresc. *rit.*

But woe, but woe, but,

mp cresc.

But woe, but woe, but woe,

but woe, but woe,

mp cresc.

But woe, but woe, but woe,

mp cresc. *rit.*

88 *f cresc.*

— woe, woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are

woe, woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are

woe, but woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are

woe, but woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are

a tempo

f cresc. *decresc.*

96 *mp*

full! You who laugh now.

full! You who laugh now.

full! You who laugh now.

full! You who laugh now.

mp

104 *gently*

You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.

You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.

You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.

You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.

non cresc. *p rall. e dim.*

112 *slowly, with frustrated intensity*

mp *diminuendo*

Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?

mp *diminuendo*

Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?

mp *diminuendo*

Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?

mp *diminuendo*

Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?

p

♩ = 120

122

//

mp sempre decresc.

Do good to those who hate you. Do good to those

Love your e-ne-mies. Love your e-ne mies.

You are the light of the world. You are the

Let your light so shine, Let your light

♩ = 120

129

p

who hate you. Give up all you have. Give

Love your e-ne mies. Love your e-ne mies. Give up

light of the world. You are the light of the world. You are the light of the

so shine, Let your light so shine, Let your light so shine, Give up all you have.

136

up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.

all you have. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.

world. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.

Give up all you have. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a -

143

Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.

Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.

Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a -

noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.

150

al niente

al niente

al niente

8 noth - er.

Love one a - noth - er.

al niente

rallantando

The musical score consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano accompaniment is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are 'noth - er.' and 'Love one a - noth - er.' The tempo marking 'rallantando' appears in measure 153. The score ends with a double bar line in measure 155.