

A r o n F r a n k

C h o r a l e

for voice and piano

Chorale

(2021)

for voice and piano

Aron Frank



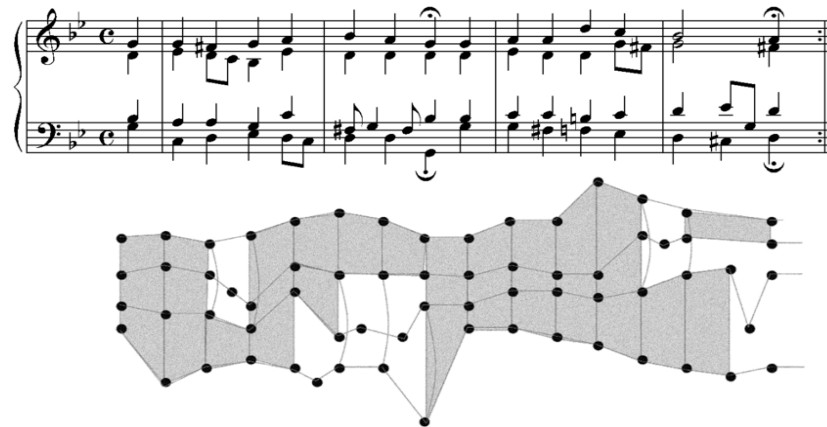
EDITIONS

Program Note

"Chorale" is a composition for voice and piano, inspired by the four-part Chorales of J.S. Bach. Bach's Chorales were typically conceived in four-part harmonies, divided into the traditional Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass (SATB) voicing. The simplistic nature of the Chorales, which adapted hymnal texts in a homophonic style, creates a pure and spiritual quality, quite fitting for the religious settings in which Bach's music was performed. In my composition, which seeks to re-contextualize these four-part Chorales within a modernist aesthetic, I drew upon the beauty of Bach's subtle and simplistic Chorales. I also discovered a distinctly modern style in the work of two 20th-century artists: Igor Stravinsky and his composition *"Symphonies of Wind Instruments,"* and a short poem entitled *"La Noche de San Juan,"* written by Argentine poet Jorge Luis Borges.

Written in 1920 in memory of Claude Debussy, Stravinsky's *"Symphonies of Wind Instruments"* ends with a multi-voice Chorale. A clear reference to J.S. Bach, the rich sonorities that permeate Stravinsky's musical tribute influenced my harmonic choices in *"Chorale."* Hidden within his dissonant language seems to be an unspoken spirituality, an expression which may have been the result of his deeply religious nature. I am moved by this ineffable quality, and tried to capture it through the use of a progressive but still reflective sound, juxtaposed against diatonic harmonies.

The addition of a vocal text, a poem entitled *"La Noche de San Juan,"* or St. John's Eve, written by Jorge Luis Borges, supports this blend between the past and present. Borges' poem is part of a collection entitled *Poesía de la Noche*, in which a symbolic return to nature and one's innermost self are central themes. As I set Borges' translated text and my own poetry to music, forging a unique union between the transcendent nature of both these creative elements (music and poetry) became a way of bringing clarity and a certain intensity to the reflective tone of the composition. Ultimately, it is my hope that this counterpoint of creativity draws the listener into an experience where music and poetry, the personal and progressive, past and present, are blended seamlessly.



First four measures from J. S. Bach's Chorale 73, with quadrangles illustrating synchronous notes.
Cambouropoulos, Emilios. *Voice And Stream: Perceptual And Computational Modeling Of Voice Separation*.

Poems of “Chorale”

La Noche de San Juan – St. John’s Eve

By Jorge Luis Borges

El poniente implacable en esplendores
quebró a filo de espada las distancias.
Suave como un sauzal está la noche.
Rojos chisporrotean
los remolinos de las brascas hogueras;
leña sacrificada
que se desangra en altas llamaradas,
bandera viva y ciega travesura.
La sombra es apacible como una lejanía;
hoy las calles recuerdan
que fueron campo un día.
Toda la santa noche la soledad rezando
su rosario de estrellas desparramadas.

The setting sun, with implacable splendor,
parted the distances on its blade.
And night is here, tender as a willow.
Whorls of brusque bonfires
Splutter into red:
wood offered in sacrifice
bleeds into the high flames:
living flag, blind mischief.
The darkness is as gentle as someplace far away.
Today the streets remember
that they were fields one day.
And through the holy night,
Solitude says its rosary of far flung stars.

Translation by Christopher Maurer

The Light Within

By Aron Frank

The birth of a new day
Listen to life’s onward pull,
resonating light.

In this timeless space,
swayed through sensuous moments
I am lifted through tranquil melodies floating,
high above and below me.

Fearless of freedom’s will,
I sing and dance in dim daylight
atop clouds of infinite beauty,
in hope and trust You free us this day.

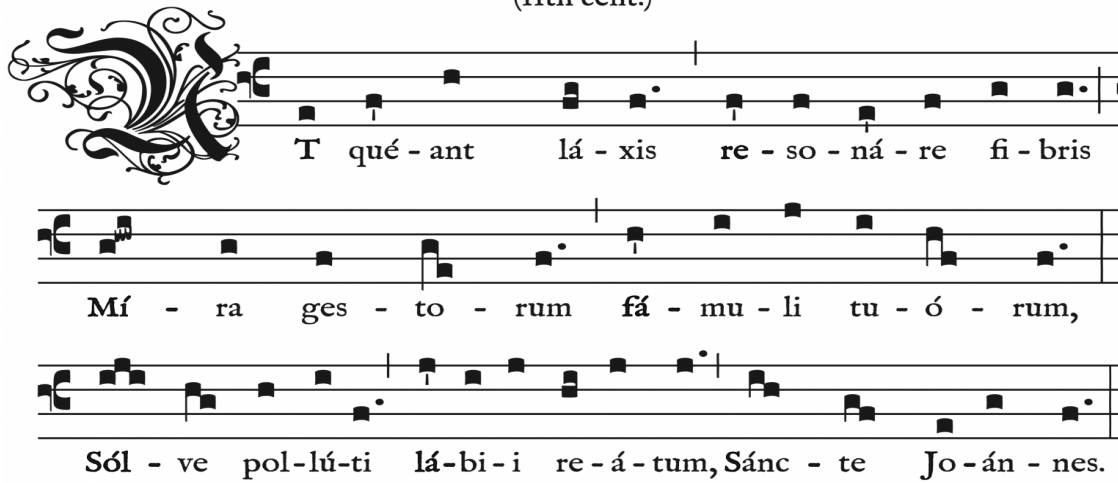
Guide us on Your peaceful path
And see us on our way
Towards happiness and tranquility

Amidst the static sounds of our society,
silently whispers Your distant voice
Shifted in waves of abundant beauty
Your love surrounds me

Contained within, absolute and pure
Listen to life’s onward pull
calling your distant name,
And see us on our way, this day

Guido d'Arezzo : Ut queant laxis

(11th cent.)



11th century medieval chant of Italian music theorist and pedagogue Guido d'Arezzo

“Voici mon secret. Il est tres simple:
On ne voit bien qu’avec le cœur;
L’essential est invisible pour lex yeux.”

“And now here is my secret:
It is only with the heart that one sees well.
What is essential is invisible to the eye.”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The premiere of “*Chorale*” took place in October, 2021
at the *Fondation des États-Unis* (FEU) in Paris, France.

Chorale

for voice and piano

Aron Frank

[2021]

Legato tranquillo, lento espressivo (♩ = 50)

rit. -----

Soprano

Piano

(2+3) (3+2) (2+3)

f *p* *mf* *pp*

A tempo

Senza Misura*

Sop.

Pno.

La No - che de San Juan

mp sotto voce

mp sonoro

pp delicato

(harmonic)

Red. _____

*The words, *La Noche de San Juan*, should be sung at a slow and steady pace, in a hushed monotone.

9 *rit.* ----- ,

Sop.

Pno.

p *f* *mp*

Measures 9-11. The Soprano part has rests. The Piano part features complex chords and arpeggios. Dynamics are *p*, *f*, and *mp*. A *rit.* marking is present at the end of measure 11.

12 *accel.* ----- **A tempo**

Sop.

Pno.

ff *p* *mp*

tr

Red. -----

Measures 12-14. The Soprano part has rests. The Piano part features complex chords and arpeggios, including a trill. Dynamics are *ff*, *p*, and *mp*. An *accel.* marking is present at the end of measure 12, followed by a return to **A tempo**. A *Red.* marking is at the bottom.

Senza Misura

Sop. 14 *mp* sotto voce *mp*

La No - che de San Juan The set - ting sun,

Pno. 14 *f* (like bells) *p* *pp*

mf 8^{vb} *p* (loco)

Red. Red.

Sop. 20 *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*

with im - plac-a - ble splen - dor, par - ted the dis - tan - ces on its blade and

Pno. 20 *p* *f* *p* (agitato)

Red. (sost.)

Sop. 22 *f* espress. *p* *f*

night is here ten - der as a wil - low

rit. A tempo

Sop. *p*

24 wil - low

Sop. *pp* *mp* *ff* (agitato) *f* Sprechstimme (expressive speech)

26 in - to the lone-ly night (ight!) whorls of brusque bon-fires splut-ter in-to red!

Pno. *mp* *f* *mf* *p*

Leo.
(sost.)

Sop. *mp* *pp* (whispering)

29 time slips a - way in - to sol - i - tude in-to dark-ness sh

Pno. *mp* *pp*

pp *delicato*
8vb

Freneticamente con rubato (♩=100-104)

Pno.

32

mf *sfz* *p* *mp* *f* *sfz* *ff* (loco)

8^{vb} - - -

Sop.

33

(2+2+2+3) (2+3)

Pno.

33

sfz *mp* *f* *ff*

3

Sop.

36

Pno.

36

mp *p*

7

Red.
(sost.)

Sop. *f* *ff* *mf*

37 Whorls of brusque bon - fires splut - ter

Pno. *f* *ff* *f legato* *mf*

Leg. *Leg.*

ritenuto

Sop. *p* *mf*

39 in - to red

Pno. *mp* *p*

Leg. *Leg.*

Senza Misura

Sop. *p* *pp sotto voce*

La No - che de San Juan

Pno. *p* *pp delicato*

Leo.

A tempo, grazioso e molto delicato (♩=84)

Pno. *f* *p* *ff* *mp* *f* *p*

(3+3+2+3)

Pno. *sfz* *p* *f subito* *mp* *sfz*

Senza Misura *sfzp* $\leftarrow$ *f* $\rightarrow$ *p* $\leftarrow$ *f* $\rightarrow$ *p* $\leftarrow$ *f*

Sop. 50

wood

come un'improvvisazione

Pno. 50

f $\rightarrow$ *mp*

mp $\rightarrow$ *f*

sfz

ff

p

Red.
(sost.)

p

sfzp $\leftarrow$ *f* $\rightarrow$ *p* $\leftarrow$ *f* $\rightarrow$ *p* $\leftarrow$ *f* *sfp*

Sop. 52

(d!) of - - - fered (d!) in

Pno. 52

mp $\rightarrow$ *f*

p $\rightarrow$ *f*

sfz

f

pp delicato

Red.
(sost.)

8vb

f

Red.
(sost.)

8vb

56 Sop. *mf* sa - cri - fice

56 Pno. *p* *f* *mp* *p* *p* *ppp* *f* *mp* (damper)

Red. (sost.)

Interludio vocale, legato e cantabile

Interludio vocale, legato e cantabile

58 *mp*

Sop. wood _____ of - fered (d!) in _____

sfz *pp* *f* *p*

accel. ----- **A tempo**

Sop. *f* *p sfz p* *mp* *ff* *mp calmando*

— sa - cri - fice — bleeds in - to high — flames! liv - ing —

Sop. *p* *mf* (port.) *p*

flag — blind mis - chief —

Pno. **Più Mosso** (♩=100)

p *f* *p* *f* *mp* (2+3)

ped. (sost.) *mf* *ped.* (sost.)

Sop. *p* *mf* *mp* *dolce* (gliss.)

the dark - ness — is as gent - le —

Pno. *f* *mp* *f* *p* *pp* *ff* *mp*

ped. (damper)

f *mp*

74 Sop. *as some place far a - way* *to - day*

Pno. *p* *ff* *mp*

Red. (sost.) *Red. (sost.) mf* *p*

77 Sop. *rit.* *p*

Pno. *ff* *mp*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 11, for Soprano (Sop.) and Piano (Pno.). The music is in 4/4 time. The Soprano part begins at measure 74 with the lyrics 'as some place far a - way' and 'to - day'. The Piano part also starts at measure 74. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the Soprano, and *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the Piano. There are two reduction sections marked 'Red. (sost.)' with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The score concludes in measure 77 with a *rit.* (ritardando) and *p* (piano) marking.

A tempo, contrappunto a quattro voci

Sop.

79 *sfz* (ay!) *f* streets *mf* re-mem - ber

Pno.

79 *p* quasi un'improvvisazione *mp* *mp* *mp* *mf*

Red. (sost.) (right hand)

81 *mp* sotto voce *f* *p*

they were fields one day

81 *p* *f* *mp* *(agitato)* *(pausa)* *p* *pp* *mf*

glissando effect inside the low piano strings *Red.*

83

Sop.

Pno.

p *mf* *mp* *pp*

repeat ad libitum until final note

3 *3* *8^{va}* *8^{vb}*

Red.

Semplice con rubato, l'istesso tempo

88

Sop.

Pno.

p *f* *sffz* *p* *mf*

8^{va} *(loco)* *8^{vb}*

Senza Misura

Sop. 91 *mp* And through the ho - ly night

Pno. 91 *p* *f* *mp* *sonoro* *pp*

p *Leg.*

Sop. 94 *f* *p* *mp* (port.) sol - i - tude

Pno. 94 *mf* *sonoro* *pp* *p* *mp* *sonoro* *mp*

8va - *(loco)* *Leg.*

Sop. 97 *pp* *mp* (gliss.)

says its ro - sa - ry

Pno. 97 *mf* *mp*

Red.

Sop. 101 *mf* *calmando poco a poco* (port.) (gliss.) *pp*

of far flung stars

Pno. 101 *pp* *mp* *pp*

Chorale con rubato (♩ = 50)

** the birth of a new day/
listen to life's onward pull/
resonating light /*

Sop. *mf* *p* *mf*

Hm

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf*

Sop. *p*

*In this timeless space / swayed through sensours moments /
I am lifted through tranquil melodies floating / high above and below me*

Pno. *p* *mp* *f*

**A poem entitled "The Light Within" is read aloud by the singer. The words are to be spoken at a steady pace, clearly spoken at a mezzo forte dynamic, on top of the piano's Chorale part. Each fragment of the text should align with the notated measures they are placed on top of.*

Sop. *mp* *f* *mp*

113 Ah

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *f*

8vb - -1 (loco) *8vb - -1*

Red.

Sop. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

116 (like bells)

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

8vb - -1 *8vb - -1*

Red.

*Fearless of freedom's will / I sing and dance in dim daylight, atop cloud of infinite beauty,
In hope and trust You free us this day / Guide us on Your peaceful path, and see us on our way*

*Toward happiness and tranquility /
Amidst the static sounds of our society /*

*Silently whispers your distant voice /
Shifted in waves of abundant beauty /
Your Love surrounds me /*

Sop.

119

dolce e molto espressivo

Pno.

119

f *p* *pp* *mp*

(sim.)

*Contained within, absolute and pure /
Listen to life's onward pull, calling your distant name /
And see us on our ... this day /*

Sop.

123

legatissimo

Pno.

123

pp *p* *pp* *p*

Red. (sim.)

molto rit. ----- **A tempo**

Sop. *mf* *f*

Ah

Pno. *f* *mp* *f* *sfz* *mp*

mp

rit. ----- **A tempo**

Sop. *mp* *mf* *f* *pp*

Ah

Pno. *p* *ff* *p*

(diminuendo al niente)