



SHAWN CROUCH

THE TRACERY OF LIGHTS



SERAPHIC FIRE | VOLTI | ESSENTIAL VOICES USA

The Tracery of Lights celebrates twenty years of collaborations with three ensembles that I have been fortunate to have worked closely with. Judith Clurman and Essential Voices USA, Patrick Dupré Quigley and Seraphic Fire, and Bob Geary and Volti. These recordings would not have been possible without the gentle guidance of these conductors and musicians for which I am forever grateful.

I so enjoy setting text to music. The compositions included in this album reflect my deep love of poetry and collaborating with poets both living and of the past. When setting text to music the word shapes every aspect of the composition; the rhythm, the timbre, and the through line are all composed in support of the word. It is my hope that these compositions are not simply settings of the poems, but rather the words have been given a new frame in which we can view them through.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people,
without whom this album would not be possible.

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Terri Rinkinen
Joanne Schulte
Geoffrey Silver
Brian Turner
Mark Wings
Sholeh Wolpé

And all of the incredible musicians who perform on this album

This compilation album was produced by Geoffrey Silver and mastered by Max Kuzmyak.

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THE TRACERY OF LIGHTS

1 THE LIGHT OF COMMON DAY 5:15
Seraphic Fire

Patrick Dupré Quigley, *conductor*; Anna Fateeva, *piano*

2 WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY 2:35
Essential Voices USA

Judith Clurman, *conductor*

PARADISE

Volti

Robert Geary, *conductor*

3	I. Mihrab	1:47
4	Chorale No. 1	2:13
5	II. A Soldier's Arabic	2:35
6	Chorale No. 2 - III. Sadiq - Chorale No. 3	3:52
7	IV. Lullaby	2:49
8	V. Mihrab	3:37

9 PIE JESU, FROM *THE ROAD FROM HIROSHIMA, A REQUIEM* 4:15
Seraphic Fire

Patrick Dupré Quigley, *conductor*

10 WHO WOULD YOU BE 2:56
Essential Voices USA

Judith Clurman, *conductor*; James Cunningham, *piano*;
Raman Ramakrishnan, *cello*

TOTAL TIME: 31:49

Seraphic Fire, Patrick Dupré Quigley, *conductor*; Anna Fateeva, *piano*

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

From 'Intimations of Immortality'
Recollections of Early Childhood by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

The Light of Common Day is composed as one brushstroke that slowly emerges as a canopy of long arching lines across the work's five-minute duration. The piano is not accompanimental, but rather, gives the composition a rhythmic grounding, which over time slows down and rises in pitch, helping the piece lift and slowly fade away.

Recorded May 21-23, 2014, Bower Chapel at Moorings Park, Naples, Florida

D. James Tagg, *Engineer*; Patrick Dupré Quigley, *Producer*

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Let nothing disturb you,
*Lord, make me an instrument of your
peace:*

Let nothing frighten you,
*where there is hatred, let me sow love:
where there is injury, pardon:*

All things are passing away:
*where there is doubt, faith:
where there is despair, hope;*

God never changes
where there is darkness, light;

Patience allows all things,
Where there is sadness, joy.

Whoever has God lacks nothing;
where there is sadness, joy.

God alone is all things
where there is sadness, joy.

*Prayer of St. Theresa of Avila
Peace Prayer of St. Francis
(text adapted by the composer)*

Where There is Sadness, Joy combines the *Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila* with the *Peace Prayer of St. Francis*. St. Teresa's prayer has a comforting, consoling quality which work as counterpoint to St. Francis's more declamatory text. The work builds to a climatic ending in which the meaning of joy can be found in all things God has created. The piece was commissioned by Judith Clurman's Essential Voices USA, in the spring of 2017, and recorded by the ensemble.

Recorded June 21, 2017, DiMenna Center for Classical Music, New York, New York
Silas Brown, *Producer and Engineer*
Originally released on *DEVOTION*, ©© 2023 Acis Productions LLC.

PARADISE

Volti, Robert Geary, *conductor*

3	I. Mihrab	1:47
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Chant

Do not despair, your lost Joseph shall return to Canaan,

This house of sorrows will be a paradise once more,

I. Mihrab

They say the Garden of Eden blossomed here
long ago, and this is all that remains,
wind scorpions and dust, crow-like jays
cawing their raspy throats in memory
of a song, a ghost of beauty
lingering in the shadow's fall.

Chorale

*If you tread barren deserts,
your steps towards the House of God
Thorns may prick and punish your feet,*

*Though the journey is full of danger
and the destination far,
Take heart there is no road without an end,
do not despair*

II. A Soldier's Arabic

The word for Love, *habib*, is written from right to
to left, starting where we would end it
and ending where we might begin.

Where we would end a war
another might take as a beginning,
or as an echo of history, recited again.

Speak the word for death, *maut*,
and you will hear the cursives of the wind
driven into the veil of the unknown.

This is a language made of blood.
It is made of sand, and time.
To be spoken, it must be earned.

Chorale

*Oh heart, do not lose hope if you cannot fathom the invisible world
Behind that screen countless shrouded games are at play,
Do not despair*

O heart, do not despair if death's savage flood threatens to ravage all existence

III. Sadiq

It should make you shake and sweat,
nightmare you, strand you in a desert
of irrevocable desolation, the consequences
seared into the vein, no matter what adrenaline
feeds the muscle its courage, no matter
what god shines down on you, no matter
what crackling pain and anger
you carry in your fists, my friend,
it should break your heart to kill.

Chorale

*O grieving heart, you will see a better day,
do not lose yourself*

This senseless mind shall find its home

IV. Lullaby

Akbar stirs the chai,
then carries his sleeping four-year-old,
Habib, to bed under glow-in-the-dark
stars arranged on the ceiling. Late at night
when gunfire frightens them both,
Habib cries for his father, who tells him
It's just the drums, a new music,
and the tracery of lights
he retraces on the ceiling, showing the boy
how each bright star travels
from this dark place, to the other.

V. Mihrab

If I say the desert is an afterimage,
that birds serenade us, that the moon
is the heart of God shining in heaven,
Arise, there is life's spring upon the meadow's throne
that if there is a heaven it is
Arise, countless shrouded games are at play
so deep within us we are overgrown,
that the day brings only a stripping of leaves
and by sundown we are exhausted,
Arise, if you cannot fathom the invisible world
then let it be, because if there is a definition
in the absence of light,
Arise, a flower umbrella shall spread and crown your head,
and if a ghost can wander amazed
through the days of it's
life, then it is me,
Oh heart, arise
here is the Garden of Eden,
where it is impossible to let go
of what we love and what we've lost,
So long as God is on your breath, arise
here, where the breath of God is our own.

Paradise is based on the poems of poet Brian Turner, an Iraq War veteran, whose moving accounts of the war are set alongside the poetry of the 12th Century Persian poet Hāfez as translated and selected by poet Sholeh Wolpé. Having myself had a brother who served two tours of duty in Iraq in the Marine Corps, I was drawn to the visceral images Turner paints with his text. In the music I want to emphasize the lyrical qualities and changing colors of the poems that emerge as arching musical lines that often seem to layer upon themselves.

The composition brings the listener from descriptions of the desert landscape, through Turner's view of what it means to take a life, and finally to a place of acceptance. In between many of the movements lie choral settings of Hāfez's poems. They are a calling to the modern poet, like ancient spirits speaking through the battered landscape.

This commission was made possible by a Chorus America Award through the Dale Warland Singers Fund for New Choral Music at the American Composer's Forum and placed third in the American Prize. Originally commissioned and premiered by Chanticleer and revised for Volti, Summer 2013. Brian Turner, "A Soldier's Arabic," "Sadiq," "The Al Harishma Weapons Market," and "Mihrab" from *Here Bullet*. Copyright © 2005 by Brian Turner. Used by permission of the poet and Alice James Books, USA, www.alicejamesbooks.org. All rights reserved worldwide.

Recorded March 2012–October 2015, St. Ignatius Church, San Francisco, California
Don Osokee, Lolly Lewis, *Engineers*; Lolly Lewis, Robert Geary, Mark Wings, *Producers*
Originally released on *This Is What Happened: More New Directions in American Choral Music* © 2017 *Innova*.
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9 | PIE JESU from THE ROAD FROM HIROSHIMA, A REQUIEM
Seraphic Fire, Patrick Dupré Quigley, *conductor*

4:15

Pie Jesu Domine
Dona eis requiem sempiternam

*Pious Lord Jesus,
Give them everlasting rest.*

Pie Jesu from *The Road from Hiroshima, A Requiem*, was commissioned by Patrick Dupré Quigley and Seraphic Fire to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. A prayer for peace in the wake of tragedy, this work uses ascending scale patterns to support an arching melodic line in a meditative fashion. The patterns give way to homophonic clouds of soft dissonances which themselves build to a climax before receding back to the original material.

Recorded January 17, 2012–October 2015, All Saints Episcopal Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
D. James Tagg, *Engineer*; Patrick Dupré Quigley, *Producer*
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10 WHO WOULD YOU BE

2:56

Essential Voices USA, Judith Clurman, *conducto*; James Cunningham, *piano*;
Daniel Miller, *cello*

Who would you have become?
What would be your favorite color?
Would you still look like Mom?
How tall would you be?
Would you keep playing soccer?
Where are the places you would go?
Who would you meet?
Would you become a father?
Would you have left a mark?
Would you have made a difference?
Who would you be?

Text by Shawn Crouch

In the wake of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Highschool, conductor Judith Clurman commissioned me to write a piece to commemorate all school children whose lives have been cut short by gun violence for her Hal Leonard Choral Series. This setting, written in the summer of 2018, and the recording, are, in her words, “dedicated to the memory of every child in the world who has been brutally murdered.” As a father I began thinking of the questions I would ask myself if I had lost my son in an act of violence. Since writing the composition there have been more and more of these sickening events. The words of this composition are an expression of loss and the music is for solace in uncertain times.

Recorded October 30, 2018, Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, New York
Silas Brown, *Producer and Engineer*
Originally released on *Words Matter*, ©© 2020 Acis Productions LLC.

Gramophone Magazine calls Shawn Crouch a “gifted composer” and the *New York Times* describes Shawn Crouch’s work as music of “gnarling atonal energy”. The *Miami Herald* called his *Road from Hiroshima; A Requiem* a “staggering achievement, an imaginative, powerful and deeply moving work.” Recently Crouch’s *Visions and Ecstasies, A Mass* was named “Best New Work” by the *South Florida Classical Review*. Shawn has received grants and awards from such institutions as the American Academy of Arts and Letters, The American Prize, ASCAP, BMI, Yale University, Society of Composers Inc., Meet the Composer, NewMusicUSA, and the Percussive Arts Society. He is the inaugural recipient of the Dale Warland Singers Commissioning Award given by Chorus America and the American Composers Forum. Shawn has had his works performed and commissioned by ensembles in the United States, Canada and Europe including the Cleveland Orchestra, American Modern Ensemble, The American Guild of Organists, Blow, Cantori New York, California E.A.R. Unit, Chanticleer, Del Sol String Quartet, Eighth Blackbird the Esoterics, Essential Voices USA, the Lunar Ensemble, Lost Dog New Music Ensemble, Non Sequitur, newEar Contemporary Ensemble, Plexure Trio, Phoenix Chorale, Prism Quartet, Quince Ensemble, San Francisco Choral Artists, Santa Fe Chorale, Seraphic Fire, Splinter Reeds, [Switch- Ensemble], the Yesaroun’ Duo, Variant 6, and Volti.



Shawn received his B.Mus. in composition from the New England Conservatory with honors and distinction in performance, his M.Mus. in composition from the Yale School of Music, and his D.M.A. in composition from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. Shawn Crouch is a BMI composer. Crouch is currently Associate Professor of Professional Practice in Composition and Theory at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music where he is artistic director of the Ensemble Ibis.

Seraphic Fire presents the highest quality performances of historically significant and under performed music and advances art through the professional development, refinement, and documentation of our musicians' talents while promoting community connectivity through educational programs.

Founded in 2002 to bring professional performances of vocal music to South Florida, Seraphic Fire has become a staple of the local and national arts community. Since its inception, Seraphic Fire has grown from a small volunteer-run organization to a professionally managed \$2.2 million organization with a staff of 10.

In 2007, the ensemble began touring nationally. In 2010, Seraphic Fire debuted internationally to sold-out crowds in Mexico City. Seraphic continues to tour nationally and recent tour locations include Vermont, Indiana, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Kansas City, and New York.

In 2008, the organization recorded its first album, and has since gone on to record 16 full-length albums. In 2012, the ensemble was recognized with 2 GRAMMY® nominations for its recordings *A Seraphic Fire Christmas* and *Brahms: Ein Deutches Requiem*. Two of the organization's recordings have debuted in the top 10 of Billboard's classical chart.

As the organization grew, so did its impact. In 2009, the Miami Choral Academy was launched as Seraphic's first K-12 education initiative. Miami Choral Academy was an after-school chorus where students were directed by Seraphic artists. The program was reconceived in 2016 as the Seraphic Fire Youth Initiative, a multi-pronged initiative that consists of in-school workshops, education concerts, and in-school teaching artist residencies now reaching schools in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Collier counties. In 2022, the organization launched its first High School Masterclass that brings together outstanding high school choral students for a 1-day masterclass as they work with and learn from the artists and conductors of Seraphic Fire. Seraphic has also sought to increase training opportunities for collegiate-level students who wish to pursue a career as a professional vocalist. In 2018, the Professional Choral Institute was launched in partnership with Aspen Music Festival and School. In 2018, the Ensemble Artist Program began in partnership with UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music. In 2021, the program expanded to University of Miami.

In Fall 2019, Seraphic unveiled its strategic plan that guides its work as it strives to become the exemplar for quality contributions to professional ensemble singing in North America.

Volti's professional singers, under the direction of founder and Artistic Director Robert Geary, are dedicated to the discovery, creation, and performance of new vocal music. The ensemble's mission is to foster and showcase contemporary American music and composers, and to introduce contemporary vocal music from around the world to local audiences. The group has commissioned more than 100 new works, by emerging as well as established composers.

Hailed by *San Francisco Classical Voice* as "undoubtedly the finest collection of new music singers we have," Volti boasts a 43-year track record of some of the most sophisticated vocal performances in the nation. Composers seek opportunities to partner with these stellar musicians, who are known for their sheer technical brilliance as well as their vibrant, passionate sound. Nationally recognized as a pioneer in new vocal music, Volti has won the prestigious ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music seven times—the only vocal ensemble to ever be honored with this award so many times—a testament to the fresh perspective and new voices the group brings to life.

Art is redefined in every generation by the best and the brightest, artists who are paying attention to the world around them. Volti seeks composers who explore timely issues of the modern human experience. At a Volti concert you might hear music addressing such topics as social justice, political and class strife, and different conceptions of God/spirit. Volti explores the nexus between poetry and sound, the translation of inspiration to creation, the evocative power of an artist compelled to express this thing, at this time, in this way. At its best, it's the aural equivalent of a sunspot—an explosion of energy, a flash of brilliance, a glimpse of some eternal truth seen in a new and breathtaking way.

ESSENTIAL VOICES USA

judithclurman.com

Judith Clurman's Essential Voices USA (EVUSA) is one of New York's preeminent choral ensembles. EVUSA performs in many of the city's iconic venues and events, and records and premieres works by America's finest composers and lyricists. The ensemble is comprised of a talented roster of seasoned professionals and auditioned volunteers, dynamically fitted to the unique needs of each project.

Regularly on stage with The New York Pops in its Carnegie Hall subscription series, EVUSA held a month-long residency at National Public Radio, receive the honor of participating in President Obama's Inaugural events, and performed on NBC's July 4th Macy's Fireworks

Spectacular and at the Rockefeller Center Tree Lighting. On July 1, 2022, the ensemble performed *Washington Women*—a choral cycle it commissioned to celebrate the contribution of women to the body politic—for National Public Radio's Tiny Desk Concerts.

The ensemble produced *The Composer Speaks* at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, a series of musical performances complemented by panel discussions with composers and lyricists. In the area of new music, EVUSA has premiered the works of many leading composers, collaborating with Milton Babbitt, Robert Beaser, Jason Robert Brown, David Chase, Shawn Crouch, Bill Cutter, Marvin Hamlisch, Rupert Holmes, Sheldon Harnick, Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon, Andrew Lipka, Nico Muhly, Stephen Schwartz, David Shire, Howard Shore, Mark Sirett, James Sizemore, Georgia Stitt, and Jonathan Tunick.

EVUSA has recorded with opera and musical theater luminaries, including Jamie Barton, Brian Stokes Mitchell, and Kelli O'Hara. Commercial recordings on the Sono Luminus and Acis labels include *America at Heart*, *Celebrating the American Spirit*, *Appalachian Stories*, *Cherished Moments: Songs of the Jewish Spirit*, *Holiday Harmonies: Songs of Christmas*, *Cradle Hymn*, *May You Heal*, *Season of Light: Songs of Thanksgiving*, *Christmas*, *Chanukah*, *New Year*, *Rejoice! Honoring the Jewish Spirit*, *Washington Women*, *Winter Harmonies*, *Words Matter*, and *DEVOTION*.

The Light of Common Day, and *Pie Jesu*,
published by G. Schirmer on the Craig Hella Johnson Choral Series

Where There is Sadness, Joy, and Who Would You Be,
published by Hal Leonard on the Judith Clurman Choral Series

'Lullaby' from *Paradise*,
published by G. Schirmer on the Dale Warland Choral Series

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