

Vespers (All-Night Vigil) Op. 37

For Symphonic Winds

No. 6 Bogoroditse Devo (Rejoice, O Virgin)

No. 2 Blagoslovi, Dushe Moya (Bless The Lord, O My Soul)

No. 3 Blazhen Muzh (Blessed Be The Man)

No. 4 Svete Tikhyi (O Serene Light)

No. 15 Vzbrannoy Voyevode (Thanksgiving to the Mother of God)



Sergei Rachmaninoff
1873-1943

Arranged by William V. Johnson

PROGRAM NOTES

VESPERS, (ALL-NIGHT VIGIL) OP. 37..... Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

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The inspiration to transcribe five of the fifteen choral works contained in Sergei Rachmaninoff Vespers, Op. 37 came from many years of performing Bruce Houseknecht's transcription of Pavel Tschesnokoff's "Salvation is Created." I can't imagine a serious wind band that has not used this beautiful work over and over in both programs and as a warm-up chorale for rehearsals. My Rachmaninoff transcriptions are designed to be a sequel to the Tschesnokoff/Houseknecht transcription. Tschesnokoff (1877-1944) was a Russian choral conductor/composer and lived at the same time as Rachmaninoff (1873-1943).

Rachmaninoff was a composer, pianist, and conductor. He was widely considered one of the finest pianists of his day and, as a composer, one of the last great representatives of Romanticism in Russian classical music. Choral music makes up a relatively small part of Rachmaninoff's creative output, yet the medium inspired what many music lovers treasure as his most profoundly affecting composition. *Vespers, Op. 37* consists of 15 liturgical choral works for a cappella choir and was composed in less than two weeks in January and February 1915. The first performance was given in Moscow on March 10 of that year. It was received warmly by critics and audiences alike, and was so successful that it was performed five more times within a month. "Even in my dreams I could not have imagined that I would write such a work." Rachmaninoff told the singers at the first performance.

Vespers draws from the ancient musical tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, with its self-effacing focus on communal worship. The work shows Rachmaninoff anticipating an alternative to modernism's abrupt break with tradition by reclaiming early-music elements outside the mainstream classical tradition—a strategy that continues to be followed by a wide spectrum of contemporary composers.

For years, I have been fascinated and moved by the beauty of these choral pieces. Working with woodwinds and brasses and even percussion, I have come to realize that the wind band is much like a choir with its many colors and vocal-like emphasis on blend and balance. Indeed, Percy Grainger's *Horkstow Grange* for wind band sounds much like a Russian choir and some of the wind band works of Morton Lauridsen, Eric Whitacre and Frank Ticheli are transcriptions of beautifully lush choral works. For the first time, three of the movements from Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* have been rewritten for the modern wind band. On December 10, 2011, the San Luis Obispo Wind Orchestra, under my direction performed the premier of these beautiful works.

No. 6, 2 and 15 make a beautiful setting. No. 3 and No. 4 can easily stand alone.

William Johnson

Blazhen Muzh (Blessed Be The Man)
From Vespers (All-Night Vigil) Op. 37

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Arr. William V. Johnson

Poco allegro, ma tranquillo e dolce $\text{♩} = 76$

Flute 1 *p* *pp*

Flute 2 *p* *pp*

Oboe 1 *pp*

Oboe 2 *pp*

English Horn *p* *pp*

Bassoon 1 *p* *pp*

Bassoon 2 *p* *pp*

Contrabassoon *pp*

Clarinet in Eb *p* *pp*

Clarinet in Bb 1 *p* *pp*

Clarinet in Bb 2 *p* *pp*

Clarinet in Bb 3 *p* *pp*

Alto Clarinet in Eb *p* *pp*

Bass Clarinet in Bb *p* *pp*

Contra Alto Clarinet in Eb *pp*

Soprano Saxophone *pp*

Alto Saxophone 1 *p* *pp*

Alto Saxophone 2 *p* *pp*

Tenor Saxophone 1 *pp*

Baritone Saxophone *pp*

Trumpet in Bb 1 *p*

Trumpet in Bb 2 *p*

Trumpet in Bb 3 *p*

Horn in F *p* *pp* *p*

Horn in F *p*

Horn in F *p*

Horn in F *p*

Trombone 1 *p*

Trombone 2 *p*

Bass Trombone *p*

Euphonium *p solo* *end solo*

Tuba *p*

Double Bass *pp arco*

Timpani *pp*

Vibraphone *p soft sticks* *p*

Marimba *pp soft sticks*

This page of a musical score, page 2, features 30 staves for various instruments. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Ob. 2, Eng. Hn., Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2, Cbsn., Eb Cl., Cl. 1, Cl. 2, Cl. 3, Alto Cl., B. Cl., C. A. Cl., Sop. Sax., A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, Bari. Sax., Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3, Hn., Hn., Hn., Hn., Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, B. Tbn., Euph., Tba., Db., Timp., Vib., and Mar. The score begins at measure 18. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *mf*. Performance instructions such as *p solo* are present. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

35

Fl. 1 *pp* *end solo*

Fl. 2 *pp* *end solo*

Ob. 1 *pp* *end solo*

Ob. 2 *pp* *end solo*

Eng. Hn. *pp* *end solo*

Bsn. 1 *pp* *end solo*

Bsn. 2 *pp* *end solo*

Cbsn. *pp* *end solo*

E♭ Cl. *mf*

Cl. 1 *mf*

Cl. 2 *mf*

Cl. 3 *mf*

Alto Cl. *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

C. A. Cl. *mf*

Sop. Sax. *mf*

A. Sax. 1 *pp* *end solo*

A. Sax. 2 *pp* *end solo*

T. Sax. 1 *pp* *end solo*

Bari. Sax. *pp* *end solo*

Tpt. 1 *mf*

Tpt. 2 *mf*

Tpt. 3 *mf*

Hn. *pp* *end solo* *mf* *p*

Hn. *mf* *p*

Hn. *mf* *p*

Hn. *mf* *p*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf*

Euph. *mf*

Tba. *mf*

Db. *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Vib. *mf*

Mar. *mf*

51

Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eng. Hn.
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Cbsn.
Eb Cl.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
Alto Cl.
B. Cl.
C. A. Cl.
Sop. Sax.
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Hn.
Hn.
Hn.
Hn.
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tba.
Db.
Timp.
Vib.
Mar.
soft sticks
p pp

Piú mosso

69

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Eng. Hn.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Cbsn.

E♭ Cl.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Cl. 3

Alto Cl.

B. Cl.

C. A. Cl.

Sop. Sax.

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Hn.

Hn.

Hn.

Hn.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba.

Db.

Timp.

Vib.

Mar.

pp

f

ff

Piú mosso

Piú mosso

85

molto ritmico *ritenuto* *Tempo I, leggero, dolce* *ritenuto* *Tempo I*

Fl. 1 *p*

Fl. 2 *p*

Ob. 1 *p*

Ob. 2 *p*

Eng. Hn. *p*

Bsn. 1 *p*

Bsn. 2 *p*

Cbsn. *p*

E♭ Cl. *p*

Cl. 1 *p*

Cl. 2 *p*

Cl. 3 *p*

Alto Cl. *p*

B. Cl. *p* *mf*

C. A. Cl. *p* *mf*

Sop. Sax. *molto ritmico* *ritenuto* *Tempo I, leggero, dolce* *ritenuto* *Tempo I* *p*

A. Sax. 1 *p*

A. Sax. 2 *p*

T. Sax. 1 *p*

Bari. Sax. *p*

Tpt. 1 *molto ritmico* *ritenuto* *Tempo I, leggero, dolce* *ritenuto* *Tempo I* *p* *mf*

Tpt. 2 *p* *mf*

Tpt. 3 *p* *mf*

Hn. *p* *mf*

Hn. *p* *mf*

Hn. *p* *mf*

Hn. *p* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *p* *mf*

Tbn. 2 *p* *mf*

B. Tbn. *p* *mf*

Euph. *p* *mf*

Tba. *p* *mf*

Db. *p* *mf*

Timp. *p*

Vib. *p* *mf*

Mar. *p* *mf*

This page of a musical score is for a large orchestra, featuring a variety of instruments. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The tempo is marked as *Tempo I*, with *ritenuto* markings indicating a gradual deceleration at the beginning and end of the section. The dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) is used throughout. The instruments listed on the left side of the page are: Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Ob. 2, Eng. Hn., Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2, Cbsn., Eb Cl., Cl. 1, Cl. 2, Cl. 3, Alto Cl., B. Cl., C. A. Cl., Sop. Sax., A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, Bari. Sax., Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3, Hn., Hn., Hn., Hn., Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, B. Tbn., Euph., Tba., Db., Timp., Vib., and Mar. The score is divided into three measures, with the first measure marked *ritenuto*, the second *Tempo I*, and the third *ritenuto*. The music is written in a standard staff notation with various rhythmic values and articulations.