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SOUTISTOR OCTOCION

Schütz: I Praise You, Lord

Text by Jaroslav J. Vajda adapt. and edited by Alice Parker



I. Schütz: I Praise You, Lord

SATB, a capella



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2–I Praise You, Lord—410-857 Printed in the U.S.A. on recycled paper. It is illegal to photocopy this music.

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I Praise You, Lo

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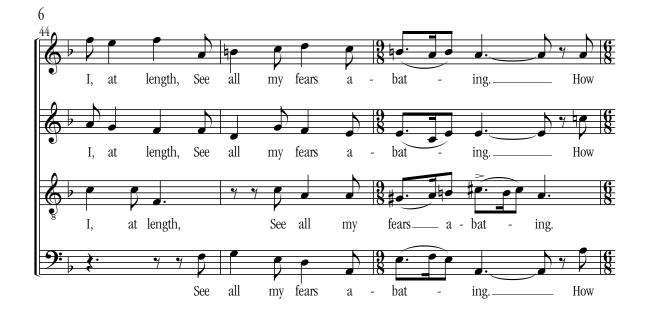
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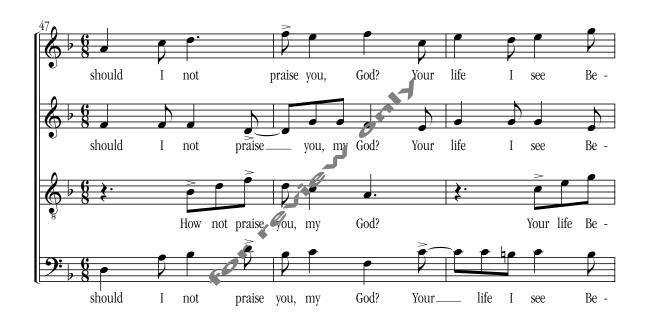
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And

| Praise You, Lord

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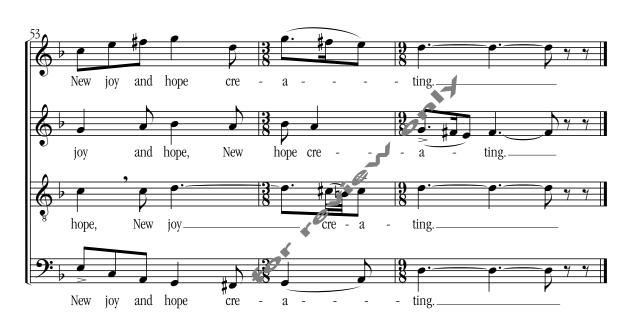




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Psalms for Barbara

I. Schütz: I Praise You, Lord (Psalm 30)
II. Schütz: How Lovely Is Your Dwelling (Psalm 84)
III. Schütz: Praise Ye the Lord (Psalm 117)

These three settings bring together a remarkably large number of participants. Their source is the *Becker Psalter* of Heinrich Schütz, composed and compiled in the years leading up to 1627, revised and enlarged as opus 14, and published in 1661. The texts were German verse paraphrases of the entire 150 Psalms by the Leipzig theologian Cornelius Becker. Schütz composed 103 new melodies for these brief hymns, and set all of them in delightfully varied harmonizations based on modal scales. He had made several settings for the choirboys in his training, but developed the whole volume only after the death of his wife in 1625.

If we begin with the antecedents of these poems, the anonymous early singers who gave us the Hebrew Psalms, and follow their handing down through countless translations in different tongues to the present, we come to the three translators here represented. Jaroslav Vajda, a Lutheran of Slavic descent, living in St. Louis, Missouri, has written many memorable hymn texts. Jean Janzen, of Russian Mennonite descent, lives in Fresno, California, and has many published secular and sacred poems. Henry S. Drinker was a physician and music-lover who lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the first part of the 20^{th} century; he translated all the Bach and Schütz choral works in his busy life.

My work here has been principally as compiler and editor. The Psalms are presented substantially as Schütz wrote them (exactly in the case of "How Lovely Is Your Dwelling"), with some added repetitions and very careful enhancements of the voicing to suit the occasion. The editorial markings are all mine.

I have long believed that the music of the *Becker Psalter* belongs in the library of every devotee of sacred music, alongside the chorales of J.S. Bach. They have so much to teach us of complexity within simplicity, of sinuous subtlety in rhythm, melody, and harmony, and of expressive text-setting. Composers, choirs, and organists adept in this music will be better musicians, as well as having a wider vision of the possibilities of the hymns used in our daily worship.

All these people are gathered together in these three anthems in the name of a woman who lived life to the fullest, reminding us of music and poetry's endless power to console and delight us even in loss.

-Alice Parker