

commissioned by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra
and Chamber Choir

Valediction

for SATB choir *a cappella*

poem by Norma West Linder
music by Jeffrey Ryan

Perusal Copy

Valediction

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Performance Notes:

Duration ca. 5:40.

♯ give note a slight rhythmic and dynamic stress.

Programme Notes:

As a composer who loves writing for voices, I am always on the lookout for words that inspire music in my imagination. When I found Norma West Linder's *Valediction* many years ago, it immediately spoke music to me.

Linder's poem opens with its protagonist entering the garden of death, late in life, and uses plant symbolism to tell of past pain and future promise. Tulips, a symbol of courtship in many cultures, are closed; roses, a symbol of romantic love, have vanished. It is the birch tree, the symbol of renewal and rebirth, that reaches out in embrace. Musically, two related gestures—a sad yet comforting rocking, transforming into larger, joyous circular lines—serve as the building blocks of this setting for a *cappella* choir.

Valediction was commissioned by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir.

VALEDICTION (Norma West Linder)

Nursing the ancient ache
of human sorrow
I enter the garden
at twilight
But tulips are closed
against me
Red roses have disappeared
into the shadows
of doubt
Only the arms of the birch tree
reach out in luminous welcome
ghostly white arms
of the birch tree
reach to encircle me
Leaves whisper silver-toned secrets
Sorrow drifts off on the wind
Starlight brings sweet benediction
World without, whirled without end

poem by
Norma West Linder

commissioned by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir

Valediction

music by
Jeffrey Ryan

for SATB choir a cappella

$\bullet = 60$ Sadly resolved

p stagger breathe

mp

Nur -

p Nur-sing, -

p nur - sing, -

p nur - sing, -

Nur - sing, -

p Nur -

p Nur -

9 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *p*

rit. to $\bullet = 48$ **A** $\bullet = 60$ Gently rocking

sing, nur sing, nur - sing, - nur sing, nur -

Nur - sing, nur - sing, - nur

nur - sing, nur - sing, nur - sing,

sing, nur - sing, -

15

sing the an - cient, an - cient - ache, -

sing the an - cient, an - cient - ache, -

nur - sing, nur - sing, nur - sing, -

- nur - sing, - nur - sing, - nur - sing, -

21 **B**

S the ache of hu - man, of hu - man, -

A the ache of hu - man, of hu - man, - hu -

T the an - cient ache, the ache of

B the an - cient, an - cient ache, _____

rit. to ----- $\bullet = 48$ **27** **C** $\bullet = 60$ Moving forward

S hu - man sor - row I en - ter, I en - ter, I en - ter the gar -

A man sor - row I en - ter, I en - ter the gar -

T hu - man sor - row I en - ter, I en - ter the gar - den

B ache of hu - man sor - row I en - ter the gar - den

33 **D** $\bullet = 60$ Reflecting in regret

S den at twi - light.

A den at twi - light.

T at twi - light. But tu - lips, but tu - lips are

B at twi - light. But tu - lips, tu - lips are

40 *mp*

S Red, red, red ro - ses have dis-ap-peared, have

A *mp* Red, red ro - ses have dis-ap-peared, have dis-ap-peared,

T *mp* *pp* stagger breathe *mp* *mp* closed a - gainst me have dis-ap-peared,

B *mp* *pp* stagger breathe *mp* *mp* closed a - gainst me have dis-ap-peared,

46 **E** *mf*

S dis-ap-peared in - to the sha - dows, in - to the sha - dows, the sha - dows, the

A have dis-ap-peared in - to the sha - dows, in - to the

T have dis-ap-peared

B have dis-ap-peared

52 **F** *p* *stagger breathe*

S sha - dows, sha - dows of

A *p* *stagger breathe* sha - dows, sha - dows, sha - dows of

T *p* sha - dows of

B *p* in - to the sha - dows of

61 **G**

pp *p* *mp* *p*

S *doubt.* I en - ter the gar - den (n)

A *pp* *p* *3* But tu - lips are

T *pp* *p* *p* Doubt. Twi - light.

B *pp* *p* *p* Doubt. Twi - light.

66 **H**

p *mp* *pp* *p*

S *rit. to* *mp* *pp* *p* Red ro - ses have dis - ap - peared, On

A *mp* *p* *3* *mp* *pp* closed. Red ro - ses have dis - ap - peared,

T *pp* *pp* Sor - row.

B *pp* *pp* Sor - row.

48 *60* Caressing

72 **J**

S ly the arms of the birch tree, on - ly the arms

A *div.* *p* reach out,

T *p* reach out,

B *p* On ly the arms of the birch tree,

On ly the arms of the

79 K

S of the birch tree reach out, reach out, reach

A in lu - mi - nous, —

T reach out, reach out, reach out in lu - mi -

B birch tree reach out, reach out in lu - mi -

86 L *rit. to* $\bullet = 48$ *In hushed awe* $\bullet = 60$

S out in lu mi-nous wel - come. Ghost-ly white arms

A lu mi - nous wel - come. *pp*

T nous, lu mi-nous wel - come. *p* Ghost-ly white arms

B nous, lu mi-nous wel - come. *pp*

92 M *Joyously*

S of the birch tree reach to en-

A reach, reach en- *mf* *div. f*

T of the birch tree reach to en- *mf*

B reach, reach to en- *mf*

100 *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *mf* *mf*

S cir - cle me, to en - cir cle me, to en -

A cir - cle me, to en cir - cle me, to en -

T cir cle me, en - cir cle me, en -

B cir cle me, to en - cir cle me, to en -

106 *f* *mf* *mf* *f* *mf*

S cir cle me, to en - cir cle me,

A cir - cle me, to en cir - cle me, en -

T cir cle me, en - cir cle me,

B cir cle me, to en - cir cle

112 *mf* *p* *pp* *pp* *p < mp* *pp*

S en - cir - cle me, en - cir - cle me.

A cir - cle me, en - cir - cle me. En - cir cle me.

T cle me, en - cir - cle, en - cir - cle me. En - cir - cle me.

B me, en - cir - cle me.

rit. to *p* *pp* *pp* *p < mp* *pp*

O ♩ = 60 *Comforted*

118 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* **P**

S Leaves whis - per sil - ver-toned se - crets.

A *stagger breathe* *p* < *mp*
En - cir -

T *stagger breathe* *p* < *mp*
En - cir -

B *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*
Leaves whis - per sil - ver-toned se - crets.

124 *p* *mp* *p*

S Sor - row drifts off on the wind.

A *pp*
cle me.

T *pp*
cle me.

B *p* *mp* *p*
Sor - row drifts off on the wind.

129 **Q** *p* *mp* *mp*

S Star - light brings sweet be - ne -

A *pp* *mp*
En - cir - cle me, sweet be - ne -

T *pp* *mp*
En - cir - cle me, sweet be - ne -

B *p* *mp*
Star - light brings sweet be - ne -

134 *p* *rit. to* *mf* *p* $\bullet = 48$ **R** $\bullet = 72$ Suddenly lifting up

S dic - tion. World with out, —

A dic - tion. World with out, —

T dic - tion. — World with out, — whirled, —

B dic - tion. World with - out, whirled, —

div. mf *unis. p*

139 *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *mf*

S whirled, —

A whirled, —

T whirled, — whirled with -

B whirled, — whirled, — whirled —

144 *rit. to* *p* *(molto)* $\bullet = 48$

S with - out end. —

A whirled with - out end. —

T out —

B with - out —

p *mp*