

For the University of Montana Chamber Chorale, Dr. David Edmonds, Conductor

Northwest Passage

Three Poetic Landscapes for SATB Chorus and Piano

3. The Prairie

John Hay (1838–1905)

Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)

Z. R. S., alt.

Expressive, but moving ahead *poco rit.*
♩ = 72 *mp*

Soprano
Alto

The skies are blue a-bove my head, The

Expressive, but moving ahead *poco rit.*
♩ = 72 *mp*

Piano

5 *mp*

S
A

prai-rie green be-low, And flick-er-ing shad - ows, shift - ing shad - ows,
And flick-er-ing shad - ows, shad - ows,

T
B

mp

Pno.

Red. *

8 *mp*

S
A

o'er the tuft-ed grass The shift - ing sha-dows go, hmm

o'er the grass The shift - ing sha-dows go,

T
B

div. *unis.* hmm

Pno.

p

12 *p* *ped.* *

S
A

hmm

T
B

p *mp*

Pno.

mp *p*

The

16 *mp* *ped.* *

S
A

And flut - ters round his

T
B

but - ter - fly - a fly - ing flow'r - Wheels swift in flash - ing rings, And flut - ters round his

Pno.

mp

ped. *

19

S
A

qui - et kin, With brave — flame-mot-tled wings,

T
B

qui - et kin, With brave — wings, with wheels — swift in

Pno.

light head voice

22

S
A

flash-ing rings. hmm — hmm — The

T
B

flash-ing rings. hmm — hmm —

Pno.

*Red. ** *p* *mp*

27

S
A

life that sings a - mong the flow'rs, The lisp - ing of the breeze, The
hmm —

T
B

hmm —

Pno.

p *mp*

30

S
A

hot ci-ca-la's sul-try cry, The mur-mur-ous dream of bees.

T
B

hot ci-ca-la's sul-try cry, The mur-mur-ous dream of bees.

Pno.

Red. *

33

S
A

hmm

T
B

hmm

Pno.

(loco) mp

The

Red. *

36

S
A

mp p

And o'er the tuft-ed grass The shift - ting

T
B

skies are blue a-bove my head, hmm

Pno.

mp

Red. *

39 *poco rit.*

S
A
T
B

sha-dows go. hmm

hmm

poco rit.

Pno.

p *mp*

poco rit.

Broadly, poco meno mosso

44 *f*

S
A
T
B

Far in the east, No

Far in the east, Far in the west,

Broadly, poco meno mosso

Pno.

f

47

S
A
T
B

ac-cent wounds the rev-'rent air, No foot-print dints the sod,—

No foot-print dints the sod,—

Pno.

3

50 *ff* **Broadly, poco meno mosso**

S
A Lone_ in the light the prai-rie lies, Far _____ in the

T
B Lone_ in the light the prai-rie lies, Far _____ in the

Pno. *ff* **Broadly, poco meno mosso**

Red. *

54

S
A east, Far _____ in the west,

T
B east, Far _____ in the west,

Pno.

57 **Broadening to the end**

S
A
T
B

Wrapt _____ in a dream _ of God. _____

Wrapt _____ in a dream _ of God. _____

Pno.

Broadening to the end

l.h.

r.h.

Ped.

*
2015
ca. 8'25"

Notes

Northwest Passage is a set of “poetic landscapes” that reflects on three elements of the great Northwest of the United States—rivers, mountains, and prairies. Each sonic reflection (movement) combines to form a larger image, not unlike someone standing on a vista and seeing rivers, mountains, and prairies—each distinct, but part of one vast expanse.

The work is scored for two versions: mixed chorus and piano, or mixed chorus, wind quintet, and string quartet. The harmonic vocabulary of the work maintains an uncomplicated, transparent (“organic”) approach in describing nature. The melodic vocabulary immediately pulls the listener’s eye to the image, and rhythm is used as the underlying spark that is subtly ever changing and unpredictable. These three poetic landscapes should be performed without applause between movements.

1. *A Willow by the River* | William Carlos Williams was a medical practitioner, pediatrician, and an avid writer. He wrote short stories, novels, plays, critical essays and, of course, poetry. The subjects of his writing were often “local” images, and he preferred to see the world “as it is,” without unnecessary trappings or “airs.” He was an important mentor to many younger poets of his day. “Willow Poem” (*A Willow by the River*) has no rhyme scheme but is comprised of fourteen individual lines. The willow is the focus of the poem (by its title and content) and how it never changes but will always “be.” The river represents, among other things, life quickly moving by and in a constant state of motion.

2. *Mountains* | Marjorie Seiffert (who often used the pseudonyms Elijah Hay or Angela Cypher) led an incredibly full and balanced life. College introduced her to a world beyond her domestic and civic life and, as a result, she wanted to experience self-empowerment and independence. She prided herself in being a spouse, mother and maintaining a full slate of professional appearances and commissions for writing. Her poetry is vivid, keenly “visual,” and full of fast-paced, tightly woven ideas. “Mountain trails” (*Mountains*) was written at Glacier Park, Montana in September 1917.

3. *The Prairie* | John Hay was an American statesman who was personal assistant to Abraham Lincoln. He also served as U. S. Secretary of State and Ambassador to Great Britain. He was a cultivated man of letters and wrote poetry which was straightforward in design and delivery. Nature was often the subject of his creative output.

—Z. Randall Stroope

Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)

For biographical information about the composer, please visit his website.

www.zrstroope.com

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