

Composer's note

Western culture tends to devalue teenage girls' strength, character, and intelligence—the phrase 'like a teenage girl', for example, is seldom used as a compliment. Similarly, portrayals of Mary in art and music often downplay her courage and determination, instead emphasizing her more 'feminine' qualities. This piece offers a different view of Mary, and of young women.

The upper-voice choir may be made up of singers of any age and gender, but it is important that they sing in the style of Bulgarian female choral ensembles who perform folk music arrangements, such as the Koutev Ensemble or the groups represented in the album *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*. They should sing Italianate Latin, modified to give a Bulgarian inflection to the vowels. The mixed-voice chorus should sing in the style of a Western European or North American chorus, without any alterations to vocal production or pronunciation.

Tawnie Olson

This note may be reproduced as required for programme notes.

Duration: 8.5 minutes

Magnificat has been recorded by the Elm City Girls' Choir and Yale Schola Cantorum, directed by David Hill, on the CD *New England Choirworks* (Hyperion A68314).

Performance note

In traditional Bulgarian folk music, the singers are predominantly women and the instrumentalists predominantly men. Bulgarian women's songs traditionally come from work, seasonal rituals, and festivities, and though most are secular, sacred texts are also in the lexicon. The characteristic singing voice features two different vocal qualities, referred to as *teshka* (heavy) and *leka* (light). Many traditional Bulgarian songs have a limited pitch range. The typical tessitura for songs sung by groups in unison is only about a 5th, though modern choral arrangements of folk songs, using the authentic traditional vocal quality, have increased the overall pitch range of the songs.

When working with the choristers of the Elm City Girls' Choir to prepare this piece, we focused on two important elements: tone quality and ornamentation. To emulate a Bulgarian tone, we modified our vowels to the brightest possible formation, and embraced singing into the mask of the face (specifically the nasal cavities) for optimal forward resonance. We mixed in significant chest voice in all parts of the range, though with constant reminders about breath support so as to avoid vocal strain. To add vocal ornaments in the style of Bulgarian folk music, we did a lot of listening and experimenting. *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares* is a great resource, which we used to normalize this type of ornamentation to our Western ears. Singing in this style requires a shift of paradigms and a commitment to reinforcing new habits, but it is absolutely doable and intensely rewarding.

Rebecca Rosenbaum
Music Director, Elm City Girls' Choir

Commissioned by Karen Clute in honour of strong teenage girls everywhere

Magnificat

Luke 1: 46–55
The Angelic Salutation

TAWNIE OLSON

Freely ♩ = c.54

SOLO
mf

UPPER VOICES*

SOPRANO 1
Mag - ni - fi - cat. a - ni - ma me - a

SOPRANO 2
Mag - ni - fi - cat. a - ni - ma me - a

ALTO 1
ALTO 2

CHORUS*

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

for rehearsal only

Freely ♩ = c.54
mf

*The upper-voice choir should adopt the vocal style of a Bulgarian women's chorus; see the notes on page iii for more detailed guidance.

First performed by the Elm City Girls' Choir and Yale Schola Cantorum, directed by David Hill, at Christ Church, New Haven, Connecticut, on 22 September 2017.

24 *mf* *f > mf*

Et ex - ul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus me - us in De - o sa - lu - ta - ri me - o.

mf *f > mf*

Et ex - ul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus me - us in De - o sa - lu - ta - ri me - o.

mp *f > mf*

Et ex - ul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus me - us in De - o sa - lu - ta - ri me - o.

P

ve.

mf

64 *f* *ff sempre*

S. 1
Qui-a fe - cit mi - hi ma - gna qui po - tens

S. 2
Qui-a fe - cit mi - hi ma - gna qui po - tens

A.
Qui-a fe - cit mi - hi ma - gna qui po - tens

mf

S. 1
S. 2
(Benedicta tu in mulieribus)

mf

A. 1
A. 2
(Benedicta tu in mulieribus)

mf

T. 1
T. 2
(Benedicta tu in mulieribus)

mf

B. 1
B. 2
(Benedicta tu in mulieribus)

f *ff sempre*

mf

TUTTI

mf

93

Fe - cit po - ten - ti-am in bra - chi-o su - o,___

mf

Fe - cit po - ten - ti-am in bra - chi-o su - o,___

f *ff* *p*
Sanc - ta Ma-ri - a,___

f *ff* *p*
Sanc - ta Ma-ri - a,___

f *ff* *p*
Sanc - ta Ma-ri - a,___

f *ff* *p*
Sanc - ta Ma-ri - a,___

Rhythmic ♩ = c.144

f *ff* *mf*

120

- en - tes im - ple - vit bo - nis et di - vi - tes di - mi - sit in - a - nes.

- en - tes im - ple - vit bo - nis et di - vi - tes di - mi - sit in - a - nes.

- en - tes im - ple - vit bo - nis et di - vi - tes di - mi - sit in - a - nes.

- ca - to - ri - bus,

- ca - to - ri - bus,

- ca - to - ri - bus,

- ca - to - ri - bus,

