

PAUL WINCHESTER

23RD PSALM

SATB chorus unaccompanied

Notes

This piece was the first piece I ever had performed as a composer. I had recently completed a summer at Interlochen Center for the Arts and had just joined the best choir I had ever sung in. I had been experimenting with writing music for a couple of years, but had only ever heard them played back in poor MIDI renderings through Finale. But, when I approached my choir director to see if he was interested in premiering a piece of mine, I was shocked and delighted when he agreed, and I presented him with this piece.

23rd Psalm showcases much of what I was experiencing and imbibing in my my newfound foray into choral music being done at an excellent level. I had been singing works by Eric Whitacre and other, similarly approachable, living composers, introducing me to “pleasant dissonances” such as add9 chords and diatonic clusters. I had also just sung and been very struck by Bruckner’s *Os Justi* and this piece follows its form almost exactly: with an overall ABA form with a very active contrapuntal section in the middle.

While this piece was written before I had really received much formal training, what it may lack in maturity, it makes up for as an earnest and naively passionate expression from a young person who still had no idea what the full career path of a composer looks like and all of the complications of determining one’s own harmonic language, fitting into a crowded landscape, making a living by writing music and all the other stresses. It’s a pure expression of joy in music.

Text

The Lord is my Shepherd. I want nothing more.
He leads me to lay in green pastures and He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.

Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I shall fear no evil when You are at my side.
Your rod is my comfort and Your staff is my hope.

You prepare a table for me before my enemies. My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long!

23RD PSALM

Paul Winchester

Tranquil ♩ = 72

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano (for rehearsal purposes only)

The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my shep-herd; I want no-thing

The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my shep-herd; I want no-thing

The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my shep-herd; I want no-thing

The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my shep-herd; I want no-thing

Tranquil ♩ = 72

(for rehearsal purposes only)

7

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. Oh I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. Oh I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

more. I want no-thing more. He leads me to lay in green

pas - tures and He leads me be - side still wa - ters. He re - stores

pas - tures and He leads me be - side still wa - ters. He re - stores

pas - tures and He leads me be - side still wa - ters. He re - stores

pas - tures and He leads me be - side still wa - ters. He re - stores

Piú mosso ♩ = 80

my soul. I walk, I

my soul. I walk through the val-ley. I walk through the val - ley of

my soul. I walk through the

my soul. Al-though I walk through the val - ley. I walk through the val-ley, I

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47

fore my e - ne - mies. You pre - pare a ta - ble. You pre -
 my e - ne - mies You pre - pare a ta - ble. You pre -
 my e - ne - mies. You pre - pare a ta - ble for
 ta - ble for me. You pre - pare a ta - ble for

53

pare be - fore my e - ne - mies. You pre - pare a ta - ble for me. You pre - pare a
 pare be - fore my e - ne - mies, You
 me be - fore my e - ne - mies. You pre - pare a ta - ble for me. You pre - pare a
 me be - fore my e - ne - mies. You pre - pare a ta -

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72

pp *lontano*

p

mer - cy will fol-low me all the days of my life. Ah _____ The Lord is my
 mer - cy will fol-low me all the days of my life. The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my
 mer - cy will fol-low me all the days of my life. The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my
 mer - cy will fol-low me all the days of my life. The Lord is my shep-herd. The Lord is my

79

p *ff*

fff

shep-herd and I shall dwell in the house, the house of the Lord my whole life long!
 shep-herd and I shall dwell in the house, the house of the Lord my whole life long!
 shep-herd and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long!
 shep-herd and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long!