AN ANALYSIS OF “SEVEN LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS” (1993)
BY JAMES MACMILLAN

BY
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ABSTRACT

James MacMillan is one of the most well-known and successful living composers as well as an internationally active conductor. His musical language is influenced by his Scottish heritage, the Catholic faith, and traditional Celtic folk music, blended with Scandinavian and European composers including Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), Alfred Schnittke (1943-1998), and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971).

His cantata for choir and strings *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, was commissioned by BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) television, composed in 1993, and premiered in 1994 by Cappella Nova and the BT (British Telecom) Scottish Ensemble. While this piece is widely admired as one of his best achievements by choral conductors and choirs, it is rarely performed, perhaps due to its high level of difficulty for both the string players and singers.

The purpose of this dissertation is to present an analysis of the *Seven Last Words from the Cross* by James MacMillan aimed to benefit choral conductors rather than audiences. Very little has been written about MacMillan's choral works. My hope is to establish a foundation on which future scholars may expand and explore other choral works by MacMillan.

Chapter one provides an overview of MacMillan’s life focusing on his religious and political beliefs, education and musical influences, specifically how these characteristics appear in his choral music.
Chapter two discusses the development of Scottish traditional music with an emphasis on instrumental, vocal and choral music. By looking at Scottish traditional music, I will examine how aspects of MacMillan's musical language and identity come from traditional music.

Chapter three examines the history of the seven last words and passion story, including other settings of this text. This chapter also provides an overview of MacMillan’s piece including the text setting and a translation.

Chapter four gives an in-depth analysis of the Seven Last Words from the Cross, examining compositional techniques, harmonic relationships, form/structure, unique features, text treatment, use of traditional or historic elements and comparison with other works.

For my research, I used two choral scores (a vocal score and a full score) published by Boosey & Hawkes and two CDs published by the Dmitri Ensemble (April 2014, under the direction of Graham Ross) and, Polyphony (August 2005, under the direction of Stephen Layton).
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1-1 A Biographical Sketch

James MacMillan is one of the most recognized living composers of the modern age, as well as an internationally active conductor. His works span both the choral and instrumental music spheres and include many commissioned works. MacMillan’s compositional techniques are rooted in his Scottish heritage, Catholic faith and his close connection with Scottish traditional folk music.

MacMillan was born on July 16th 1959 at Kilwinning in North Ayrshire, Scotland. His father was a joiner and his mother a teacher. When MacMillan was four, his family moved to Cumnock in East Ayrshire where he joined St. John’s Roman Catholic School. When he was ten, he took lessons on piano and trumpet, which inspired him to compose short piano pieces and some instrumental pieces.

In 1973, MacMillan attended the secondary school Cumnock Academy (founded in 1969). While there, he performed and studied Renaissance sacred music with Bert Richardson, looking at works by Giovanni Palestrina (1525-1594), Tomas Victoria (1548-1611) as well as J. S. Bach (1685-1750). This training contributed to his strong foundation in ancient musical

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1 “Cumnock Academy” <http://www.cumnock.e-ayr.sch.uk/theschool.html>
languages. In 1977 MacMillan moved to the University of Edinburgh where he studied composition with Rita McAllister (b.1946) who introduced him to twentieth-century composers.

In 1981 MacMillan moved to Durham, England to begin graduate study in composition at the University of Durham, where he studied with John Casken (b.1949) and earned his Ph.D. in 1987. While in Durham MacMillan studied ethnomusicology and was especially interested in the traditional music of East-Asia. One can often hear sounds resembling the Indonesian ‘gamelan’ in his music.

In 1983 Macmillan returned to Ayrshire to work as a music teacher. At this time, he began to play and sing Scottish and Irish folk music, while also participating in local political and welfare activities during the miner’s strike. He became a member of the group called Broadstone in which he played for several years.

In 1986, MacMillan accepted a musical lecturer position for two years at Victoria University of Manchester. While there, his instrumental music was performed for the first time at the Musica Nova festival in Glasgow. Originally founded in 1961 as Musica Viva, the festival focuses on contemporary music and is presented by the University of Glasgow and the Scottish National Orchestra.

In 1988 MacMillan returned to Scotland and settled in Glasgow. This marked the beginning of an extremely creative period for MacMillan especially for his collaborations with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra which began as educational projects. In 1989, MacMillan

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2 Scottish musicologist and composer  
3 English composer  
attended the St. Magnus Festival in Orkney where his composition *Tryst* was premiered by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Paul Daniel and it was at this festival where MacMillan was appointed associate composer of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.\(^6\)

In 1990, MacMillan’s orchestral work *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* was premiered by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Jerzy Maksymiuk and earned him international recognition. In 1991, MacMillan conducted *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London and he was later appointed a visiting composer. Between 1992 and 2002 he worked as Artistic Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra's ‘Music of Today’ series of contemporary music concerts. His concerto *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* for percussionist and orchestra was written for Evelyn Glennie (b.1965)\(^7\) and premiered at the BBC Proms. This performance launched the 1992 Music of Today series.

In 1993, MacMillan composed *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, which was commissioned by BBC Television and was first screened in seven nightly episodes during Holy Week 1994. It was performed by Cappella Nova and the BT Scottish ensemble under Alan Tavener.\(^8\) In the years 1994 through 1996, MacMillan traveled frequently. He visited Germany to hear the premiere of *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra directed by Sian Edwards, and had his first U.S. performances with the National Symphony in Washington under direction of Mstislav Rostropovich, the Cleveland Orchestra under direction of Jahja Ling as well as the New York Philharmonic (Slatkin), Boston (Ozawa), Milwaukee (Elder), Philadelphia (Andrew Davis), Detroit (Järvi), St Louis (Alsop) and Los Angeles.

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\(^6\) Boosey & Hawkes, Composers, Classical Music and Jazz Repertoire

\(^7\) Scottish percussionist

\(^8\) Boosey & Hawkes,

(Gershon). Other international performances were given in Netherlands, France, Sweden, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Japan and Australia. In 1997, *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* reached its 100th performance in the five years since its premiere.

In 2000 MacMillan accepted the position as a composer and conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, England. While working there, he led annual concerts and made several recordings of his own compositions. In 2009 MacMillan won the prestigious Ivor Novello Classical Music Award and the British Composer Award for Liturgical Music. One of his major choral works, *St. John Passion* (2007), was performed at the City of London Festival under the direction of Sir Colin Davis.

MacMillan was principal guest conductor of the Netherlands Radio Kamer Filharmonie from 2011 to 2012, and from 2012 to 2013 he conducted the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Symphony Orchestra and the Vienna Radio Symphony. He is also an associate composer for the Orchestral Ensemble de Paris. His most recently completed major choral work is a new setting of the *St. Luke Passion* for chorus including children choir and chamber orchestra. In October 2014 MacMillan launched a new music festival in his home town of Cumnock.

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9 “James MacMillan,” <www.internusica.co.uk/macmillan>
10 Anonymous “James MacMillan”
11 Boosey & Hawkes,
1-2 Education and Influences

MacMillan began composing in 1963 while at the Roman Catholic Primary School in Cumnock where he learned music theory, likely due to his studies of piano and trumpet. However he was also interested and inspired by popular music. In an interview with A&E, he said:

“Certainly, when I was younger I was hungry for musical experiences from all angles, and popular culture was one of those things which interested and inspired me.”¹²

His formal music education began at secondary school at Cumnock Academy in 1973. Through Bert Richardson, the head of music department, MacMillan was introduced to Renaissance sacred music as well as Baroque music especially J.S. Bach (1685-1750), and he became attracted to the music of G. Palestrina (1525-1594) and T.L. de Victoria (1548-1611). MacMillan also grew interested in working with large scale instrumental ensembles after he joined the school’s brass band and the County Youth Orchestra. During this time he developed contrapuntal techniques by studying the Baroque masters.

My best teachers were Bach and Palestrina. I studied them avidly at university. At school I tried little Bachian counterpoint exercices. Even though it was pastiche work I enjoyed it. It can provoke and activate the mind to work in a very musical way. Although the language has changed over the centuries, if composers could root themselves in the contrapuntal technique and ethos of that periods they would be doing themselves enormous favours. Yong composers need to be obsessed by inner working of

music and at some state become train-spotterish about the very stuff of music…\textsuperscript{13}

In 1977, MacMillan went to University of Edinburgh to study composition with Rita McAllister and earned a BM in composition. During this time MacMillan studied mostly twentieth-century composers such as Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), Anton Webern (1883-1945), Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and other Russian composers.\textsuperscript{14} He studied instrumental music by Messiaen and ballet music by Stravinsky, especially \textit{The Rite of Spring} (1914, rev. 1937/1967), \textit{The Firebird} (1910, rev. 1919/1935) and \textit{Petrushka} (1911, rev. 1947).

During interview in 1997 he said:

Yes, and for a while I found it quite hard to resist his influence. I can think of a piece I wrote ten years ago, like the orchestral piece ‘Tryst’, which make certain allusions to Stravinsky…the motoric aspect of the rhythms in pieces like ‘Tryst’, ‘The Confession of Isobel Gowdie’ and other pieces from that period certainly sprang from Stravinsky’s influence…\textsuperscript{15}

MacMillan also studied the music of avant-garde figures such as Luciano Berio (1925-2003) and, Pierre Boulez (b.1925). MacMillan explains:

“During my study, my main interest was studying the cosmopolitan masters, like Boulez and Elliot Carter….absorbing the modernist spirit and techniques”\textsuperscript{16}

In 1981, MacMillan went to graduate school of University of Durham in composition (Ph.D) with John Casken (b.1949 English). This was the time that MacMillan developed an interest in *Gamelan music*, the traditional ensemble music of Java and Bali in Indonesia.\(^{17}\) MacMillan uses gamelan instruments in two of his pieces; *Three Dawn Rituals* (1983) and *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (1989).

Upon returning to Ayrshire in 1983, MacMillan became interested in the folk music of Scotland and Ireland. For example, he set William Soutar’s poem *The Tryst* in the style of a Scottish folk ballad. This melody became a motive that reoccurred in later works such as *After the Tryst* (1988) for violin, piano and *Tryst* (1989) for orchestra.\(^{18}\)

In 1988, MacMillan began drawing influences from Polish composers such as Henryk Górecki (1993-2010) while he was a student of John Casken at the University of Durham. In the 1990s, MacMillan was a guest composer of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and one of his compositions *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* was premiered by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Jerzy Maksymiu (b.1936). *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*, which won him international acclaim, is considered MacMillan’s most notable piece because it reflects his strong catholic faith and political beliefs. Isobel Gowdie was a Scottish woman who was tried for witchcraft in 1662. MacMillan had been disturbed by accounts of the executions of alleged ‘witches’ in his native Scotland after the Reformation, where it is estimated that around 4500 Scottish were murdered (most of them women) for being ‘in league with the devil’. Most of these Scottish women were targeted simply because of their sex. In 1662, Isobel Gowdie was

induced under torture to confess to all manner of diabolical acts, for which she was strangled and burned at the stake.\(^\text{19}\) In the published score MacMillan wrote:

Initially I was drawn by the dramatic and programmatic potential of this insane and terrible story but the work soon developed a far more emotional core as I attempted to draw together various strands in a single, complicated act of contrition. On behalf of the Scottish people the work craves absolution and offers Isobel Gowdie the mercy and humanity that was denied her in the last days of her life. To do this I have tried to capture the soul of Scotland in music and outer sections contain a multitude of chants, songs and litanies (real and imagined) coming together in a reflective outpouring – a prayer for the murdered woman. This work is the Requiem that Isobel Gowdie never had.\(^\text{20}\)

This quote sheds light on what MacMillan feels the responsibility of the composer should be. To MacMillan, a composer is an artist who explores interests and issues larger than composer’s own thoughts and ideas.\(^\text{21}\)

CHAPTER II

2-1 Traditional Music in Scotland

Studies of the origins of traditional instrumental, vocal and choral music in Scotland can shed light on the development of Scottish choral music. In order to examine the musical languages found in James MacMillan's contemporary choral work, The Seven Last Words from the Cross, it is important to research why he is using certain compositional techniques and where they originated. By studying traditional Scottish music resources one can occasionally discover significant musical ideas from Scottish history using non-traditional music theories.

This chapter provides an overview of traditional Scottish music, especially Scottish vocal music focusing on musical characteristics, singing style, and the relationship of instrumental music, especially Scottish bagpipe. In this chapter, I will discuss the development of choral music using the history of early Scottish church music. Knowing the development of Scottish choral societies will also be an important clue to understanding Scottish choral music because the choral societies were the leaders of this genre.

2-2 The Bagpipes

The bagpipes, fiddle, and Clarsach (Celtic harp) are regarded as the traditional instruments of Scotland. Since the bagpipe is predominant in Scottish tradition, it is important to
understand the mechanics and sounds produced by the instrument as it is helpful in analyzing most of MacMillan’s compositions.

There have been different kinds of bagpipes in Scotland for many centuries, but much of the music heard today is connected to the military background, especially from the eighteenth-century when pipe bands were formed in the British army.

Example 1: Bagpipe diagram

Example 1 shows bagpipe diagram by Kevin Auld.  

22 The design of the bagpipe includes a blowpipe, an air-bag, a chanter, and drones (one bass and two tenors); sound is produced

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22 bagpipe instructor and performer in Seattle, WA, USA
through a double reed. The chanter can produce a scale of nine notes G-A-B-C#-D-E-F#-G-A and the two tenor drones play on A and bass the drone plays an octave lower A.

2-2a Mode and Pentatonicism

The scale is known as Mixolydian mode (a diatonic scale with flat 7th) on A. Many pieces of bagpipe music consist of pentatonic character. Seamus MacNeill (1948-1996) identified three pentatonic scales beginning on A, G, and D, each of which may be used in different ways so as to produce either a major or minor tonality.

The outside world is familiar with pentatonicism in Scottish traditional music. Study of Scottish pentatonic melodies reveals that, in Gaelic folk song, three pentatonic scales can be identified all involving anhemitonic scales. Pentatonic songs in Scotland include a greater number of five-note scales (ex. C-D-E-F-G). However, in western music theory the pentatonic scale is constructed of five pitches from the circle of fifths (ex. C-D-E-G-A or M2-M2-m3-M2). In this project the musical term “pentatonic” refers to five-note scales used in Scottish traditional music and is the term used by ethnomusicologists.

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23 MacNeill was founder of the college of piping, Scotland, 1944.
25 Ibid.
26 These scales do not contain semitones. Ibid.
Although the pentatonic scale is predominant, other scales are used, such as hexatonic and heptatonic.\textsuperscript{30} Based on the bagpipe scale the tonic pitch is A. However, that A is just the name of the note, not the actual sounding pitch. The bagpipe has grown sharper over the years so that the A note on most modern chanters is in the area of a B-flat (sometimes even slightly sharper).\textsuperscript{31}

All these bagpipe scales are polytonal; at times the scales sound major while at other times they sound minor. Some of the difficult passages in MacMillan’s melodies include chromaticisms and polytonality, which are derived from bagpipe scales. For example, the collection of five notes (F#-G-A-B-C#) in the chorus part of the first movement of \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross} is taken from the nine notes of the bagpipe scale. Example 2 shows a five note selection taken from the nine notes of a bagpipe scale in the first movement of \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross}.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Example 2: Selection of MacMillan’s five note in first movement}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{30} The hexatonic scale consists of six notes while the heptatonic contains seven.

2-2b Harmonic Drones

The use of harmonic drones is characteristic of bagpipe music. The three drones use single reeds to play constant notes. The drone notes harmonize with the melody played on the chanter in a similar manner to pedal tones in organ music. This drone figure can be seen in MacMillan’s choral and instrumental works, such as in Example 3.

Example 3: Harmonic drones, from third movement of Seven Last Words from the Cross

2-2c Ornamentations

On the bagpipe, ornamentations or grace notes are most frequently used to emphasize notes. They are also used to separate a single note played two or more times in a row. MacMillan uses this idea in his many compositions. These ornamentations derived from the Pibroch, a theme and variation form of bagpipe playing by virtuoso bagpipe players to demonstrate their mastery of the instrument. As MacMillan describes: “Pibroch is a form of bagpipe playing that has a lot of florid ornamentation punctuating the line….”

32 Ratcliffe, Interview with James MacMillan, p.39-42
ornamentation figures used in *Pibroch* including the *Siubhal*, *Dithis*, *Leumluath*, *Taorluath* and *Crunluath*. Example 4 and 5 shows an example from *Pibroch* and an example from *Videns Dominus*, both of which use ornamentations.

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34 Ibid, A variation in which the theme note is followed by the tonic A each time

35 Ibid, A leaping section where the theme note is followed is by a grip to the E

36 Ibid, A combination of four grace notes

37 Ibid, A combination of seven grace notes

Bagpipe music is one of the most varied forms of folk music in Scotland and characteristic aspects of the bagpipe are seen in many MacMillan’s works.

2-3 Vocal Tradition

Scotland is well-known for its traditional folk music, which is in turn influenced by traditional English and Irish music. When studying Scottish folk music, it is important to consider vocal, instrumental, and dance music, since because these traditions often use the same material in different ways. Many songs also appear in instrumental versions and instrumental pieces can be danced to or have words to sing. In most cases, it is impossible to say which version is the original. For example, *O let me in this ae night* (Example 6) appears as a song in the Scottish Musical Museum in 1792, but it is also recorded as a fiddle piece in different versions of the fiddle book of 1805.

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39 The Scots Musical Museum, a collection of songs
<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-scots-musical-museum-a-collection-of-songs>
2-3a Ballads

The main genres of vocal music are ballads and laments, which are very popular in Scottish vocal music and are generally sung by one singer with accompanying instruments such as the harp, fiddle, or bagpipes. Scottish vocal music was also used for special occasions such as weddings, kirns, and farewell parties. However, very little is known of the actual songs used and the versions may vary from one place to another. For example, *Good night and joy be with you all* was a farewell party song from southern Scotland in the eighteenth-century. We can find this piece in a number of song books in slightly different versions in Edinburgh but we can also find this song in Aberdeen's collection of nineteenth-century song which circulated all over Scotland.\(^\text{40}\)

\(^{40}\) Songs & Their History
Scottish vocal music has a very long history. The first collection of Scottish folk songs was written by John Forbes (d. 1675). The Scottish music publisher in Aberdeen published *Songs and Fancies, to Three, Four, or Five Parts, both Apt for Voices and Viols* in 1682 (Example 7). It was printed a total of three times over the next twenty years and it contained 77 songs with English text.\(^{41}\)

![Example 7: Songs and Fancies, to Three, Four, or Five Parts, both Apt for Voices and Viols](https://example.com/example7.png)

Most of the Scottish ballads published in the book are anonymous which was common as Scottish folk music was just being printed beginning in the seventeenth-century. However, Scottish folk music started being printed en masse during the eighteenth-century and included great works, such as *Orpheus Caledonius*, a collection of Scottish songs published in 1733; James Oswald’s (1711-1769, Scottish composer) *The Caledonian Pocket Companion*, published

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in 1751; and David Herd’s (1732-1810, Scottish anthologist) *Ancient and modern Scottish songs, heroic ballads, etc. collected from memory, tradition and ancient authors*, published in 1776.  

The region most often associated with the Scottish ballads (also called bothy ballads) is East Scotland and in particular, the Grampian region of Aberdeen. This region holds a rural population who traditionally speak a strong dialect called *Doric* which is often included in song lyrics, such as those by Charles Murray (1864-1941 Scottish poet) who was one of the rural poets from the Aberdeen. One of his most popular songs was *Gin I was God* (If I were God).

Until a century ago, many ballad melodies were utilized by the agricultural workers who ventured to every part of the nation as migrant workers. They would use these songs at gatherings to comment on the issues of the day as well as maintaining historical accounts of heroic and dishonorable activities. The travelers are a very important source of the folk music in Scotland, where travelling folk are largely associated with gypsy or roving families. In the past, they would travel as a community from rural fairs and other agricultural events such as harvests and plantings. Their way of life was one of freedom, where at camp during the night they would gather around the fire tell ballads to the children and sing them among the group, thus preserving their way of life in song.

The vocal music of Scotland is considered monadic, consisting of a unharmonized solo vocal melodic line. Some Lowland folk song tunes are characterized by a dual modality or bitonality, where the melody apparently begins in one mode and ends in another mode. Scottish vocal music is generally accompanied by bagpipe and percussion. However, in an orally transmitted state it does not have supporting harmony. Heterophony may have arisen when

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several instruments played a tune simultaneously, but with different ornamentation. This music occurred in the churches for the special occasion of singing metrical psalms. Metrical psalm is a regular syllabic meter which thus can be sung to a hymn-tune. In home worship, the psalm singing is more ornamental, at times like the decorations.

In Scottish vocal music, there was a specific folk singing style which differed from the classical music style. Scottish musicians in the eighteenth-century distinguished folk singing as a “chanting” described as follows:

In singing, or rather chanting, this ballad, the last two lines of every stanza are repeated. In 1786 I heard a lady then in her 90th year, sing the ballad in this manner.

...these wild and monotonous strains so common in Scotland, to which the natives of that country chant their old ballads.

The most brilliant [historical] episodes are occasionally chanted to monotonous legendary airs.

It is interesting that Scott and Leyden uses the words “monotonous.” They are not just saying that the tunes consist of one note, or a narrow range. It could also mean that the songs were sung in an undemonstrative deadpan style.

Ballads were also sung slowly in free rhythm and highly ornamented style with no audible beat. More evidence regarding the singing style is recorded by Robert Bremner (1713-

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46 William Stenhouse, 1820, Illustrations, no.203, ‘Gil Morice’
47 Walter Scott, Waverley novels, Volume 6, p.288
48 John Leyden, 1801, Preliminary dissertation, p.225
1789 Scottish music publisher), in an essay published in 1762. He writes about the difficulties that such musicians faced. John Glenn (1801-1862) actually described country singers “make themselves ridiculous.”

Another difficulty was that country singers frequently sang out of tune, usually flat on the 7th degrees of the scale or a major second below the tonic note. For example, in the psalm tune in the region of Dundee, even when there is accompaniment, singers sing the 7th scale degree flat. William Dauney (1800-1843 Scottish musician) also remarked about this flat 7th note in 1838:

> The use of the flat, instead of the sharp, 7th for the penultimate note, is an ancient...practice...the remains of which still subsist in the psalm and even ballad singing of the uneducated, in all parts of the country.  

The reason singers sing the 7th scale degree flat is related to the bagpipe scale, which produces a Mixolydian scale.

The timbre of most ballad songs may almost be considered to be in conversational style with tone qualities of informal speech, such as a more narrative tone. The singer's basic responsibility is to tell a story in a dialect and accent which can be understood by listeners. This more personal tone creates a warm and relaxing environment for the listener.

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50 Glenn, John, 1900, *Early Scottish Melodies*, p.2
52 Diatonic scale with flat 7th
2-3b Laments

Another main genre of the Scottish vocal music was the Lament. A lament refers to any piece of music expressing grief, specifically music for bagpipes at Scottish funerals. However, laments can be an interpretative approach to song or chant. Since this genre was often used for funerals in many rural communities, laments have a ritual character. The ritual lament accompanying a major rite of passage often involves weeping and cries of grief. A well-known lament was *Cumha na Cloinne* (Lament for the Children) composed by Padruig Mor MacCrimmon in 1650s, composed for death of seven of MacCrimmon's sons (Example 8). This music is for the Scottish bagpipes.

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54 Scottish piper
It is important to understand the lament when studying MacMillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, but traces of this genre are found in his other works, as well. In 1991, MacMillan composed the instrumental piece *Tuireadh*. *Tuireadh* is Gaelic for “lament” or “requiem” and attempts to musically capture this outpouring of grief by making allusions to the intervallic and ornamental archetypes of various lament styles from Scottish traditional music. After three years, this music became one most influential source of *Seven Last Words from the Cross*.

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2-3c Gaelic Song

There are many folk singers who concentrate on Gaelic singing. Gaelic is a Celtic language brought from Ireland before 500AD that has survived to modern times because of a strong oral tradition. Vocalization and using the harp and the bagpipe are strong indicators of Gaelic singing character. Most Scottish Gaelic poetry is intended to be sung. The verses were syllabic with a fixed number of syllables to the line but without any regular stress-pattern, following instead the natural stresses of the language.56

The most famous Gaelic folk genres are Waulking Songs (“Walking Songs,” Example 9), generally sung by women folding the cloth after weaving and Quern songs for grinding grain, which were also sung by females. The Waulking Songs, which involve a call and response pattern are lengthy and draw their themes and melodies from diverse sources.57 Some famous songs for male voices are the Rowing song and Shearing songs for cutting crops. All Gaelic folk songs have words of great importance that reinforced community and rhythm to keep the pace of work consistent.

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Aspects of Scottish traditional music can be found in MacMillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross* and includes, use of the pentatonic scale and harmonic drones which often occurs in bagpipes, use of ornamentations found in traditional folk songs and instruments. MacMillan’s use of Scottish traditional music material is a most important musical language in his works and it became a feature of MacMillan’s personal style.

2-4 Choral Tradition

Usually when people think of the music of Scotland, thoughts easily go to Skirl of bagpipes, the music of Celtic folksongs, or even the movie ‘Brave heart’. However, these musical and cultural traditions do not constitute all of Scottish music. Scotland also has a heritage of choral music, even though that heritage can be difficult to trace. According to many
church history resources, there was choral music in Scotland during the early medieval period. Unfortunately, very little evidence remains about Scottish choral music from that period.

Scotland's choral music begins with early medieval sacred music. According to Reese in his book *Music in the Middle Age*, Gregorian chant was introduced in Scotland by the eighth-century in Glasgow.58 In the eleventh-century churches began to develop in a variety of ways including through church music, such as church choirs. Some cathedrals like the St. Machar's in Aberdeen (1256) founded a “choir (or song) school” to train boy singers; however enrollment at these institutions was quite small, with only two to six boys participating from the thirteenth to fifteen-centuries.59

Nothing is known about any secular Scottish music before the sixteenth-century, except some ballads and folk songs; however, very few vocal or instrumental pieces from that time are accessible today. Most of this music was enjoyed by the aristocracy. During this time, French influence was strong, as the Scottish adapted many French compositions from Dufay, Machaut and Lassus.

Scottish choral music began to flourish during the sixteenth-century in the collegiate churches of Edinburgh, St. Andrew, Glasgow, and Aberdeen despite near constant war with England. The influence of the Reformation and the Presbyterianism of John Knox, in general, showed some of the strides being made toward the development of the strong polyphonic tradition. Knox was one of the leaders of the Reformation in Scotland who had profound faith in Calvin's theologies and tried to apply them in Scotland. He was more open-minded than other leaders. For instance, there were other musicians who took Knox and Calvin's teachings to

58 Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York: Norton, 1940)
59 Ibid. p.14
extreme lengths, restricting church music to several plain settings of the psalms.\textsuperscript{60} The revolution against the Catholic Church's perspective on music produced Psalters in Scotland as well as England and France. The Scottish Psalter of 1564 may be the most extreme example of Scottish Catholic style after the Reformation.\textsuperscript{61}

In 1712, Handel permanently settled in England and primarily composed music with English texts, especially oratorios. Handel's most important innovation in the oratorio was the use of the chorus. His experience with choral music from Italy and Germany, led him to give the choral part more prominence. His early training familiarized him with the Lutheran chorale tradition. Chorales are typically four-part settings, which consist of a melody and three lower voices, and often include classical settings of hymns. These chorales tend to be simple tunes with the texts often sung in a rhyming scheme and are in strophic form. Handel was especially influenced by the English choral tradition,\textsuperscript{62} which he had absorbed and extended in his choral composition, Chandos Anthems (1717-1718), and other works for Chapel Royal in England. Handel's music became so popular that even after his death, it was frequently performed. During the Baroque period, amateur choristers were rare. Amateur choral societies had not yet been created, and choristers came mainly from the cathedral as well as other well-known church choirs. Currently in Scotland, there are more than a hundred choral groups producing concerts actively in major cities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. As a result, they produced many great conductors as well as choral groups, after Handel's death.

After Handel's death, the Scottish organized various choral festivals toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth-centuries. From that time on, the amateur choral

\textsuperscript{60} Cedric Thorpe Davie, Scotland’s Music (William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1980) p.35-36
\textsuperscript{61} The Scottish Psalter of 1635
\textsuperscript{62} The anthems generally consist of 6-8 movement including instrument sinfonia or overture, solo and choruses
societies started to grow fast and became a fundamental part of society. Currently, amateur choral groups are spread throughout Scotland, because they have enough trained composers and choral conductors.

When Handel produced his first English oratorio *Esther* in 1720, there was no properly organized choral group in Scotland. There were concerts occasionally, which were performed by well-known music groups such as the “Musical Society of Edinburgh.” According to Arnot in the *History of Edinburgh*, before that time several gentlemen performed a weekly club at the Cross Keys Tavern (kept by one Still, a great lover of music and good singer of Scotland songs), where the common entertainment consisted in playing the concertos and sonatas of Corelli, then just published, and the overtures of Handel. That group expanded in 1728 into a society of seventy vocalists and instrumentalists for the purpose of performing weekly concerts. This society worked systematically and management was in the hands of the governor and also five directors. The concert was at first designated the “Gentlemen's Concert” and they had a concert in the St. Mary's Chapel.

In 1762, the society became a much larger group, so they built St. Cecilia Hall at Wynd. They performed some operas and other concerts and, their programs contained the best music of the time. Famous artists were engaged, and during the eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century, this organization was the center of concert production of musical art in Scotland.

Nineteen years after the Edinburgh Society was founded, the city of Aberdeen organized the music society in 1747. The members were from the district and it was managed by a mayor

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64 Ibid. p.7

The city of Dundee had a music society during the middle of the eighteenth-century, but very little is known about it. This society performed instrumental works including overtures by Handel. According to Thom in his book, \textit{History of Aberdeen}, some music books or program notes from the eighteenth-century carry the stamp of the “Dundee Musical Society.”\footnote{Ibid. p 10}

The Musical Societies of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee were mainly instrumental societies. But the Edinburgh Music Society had additional distinctive features in its composition since several of its members were vocalists able to take part in singing choruses. For example, Handel gave his special permission for them to perform his oratorios. Unfortunately, there were no actual choral performances because the Italian opera was predominant and many songs in the society's library were arranged for orchestral accompaniment, including Handel's Italian operas.

In 1755, a funeral concert was performed by the Edinburgh Musical Society for the death of the Governor of the society under the direction of J.F. Lampe. The program consisted of choral music from Handel's oratorios such as \textit{Samson}, \textit{Deborah}, \textit{Messiah}, and \textit{Judas Maccabaeus} at the new concert hall, the “Canongate Theater.”\footnote{Robert, A. Marr. The Rise of Choral Societies in Scotland, \textit{Music for the People} (John Menzies & Co, Edinburgh, 1889), p 13}

The year 1772 was remarkable for the Edinburgh Music Society because their documented concert schedule was programmed with only choral works with orchestral
accompaniment. For example, they performed, Jommelli's *La Passione*, in March; Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* during Easter week; Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in July; and in December, Handel's *Messiah*.

In 1815, there was a music festival held in the city of Edinburgh, which presented choral music. Later, this festival became a large choral festival. Many choral groups performed Psalm tunes, oratorios, and choral works by Handel and Haydn.

By the middle of the nineteenth-century, most choirs were established in principal cities of Scotland. A significant feature of Scotland in the nineteenth-century was the establishment of music education. They built a music school and started to teach young musicians singing, harmony, and music theory. The development of choral festivals, the establishment of choirs, and music education were a distinct step of the musical evolution in Scotland.

2-5 MacMillan’s Musical Identity

MacMillan’s musical identity can be categorized into two parts: his strong Roman Catholic faith and his involvement in Scottish traditional music especially Celtic.

In most of MacMillan’s compositions, he draws deeply on his Scottish heritage as motivation for his works. His interest in traditional Scottish music began when he was a university student. As MacMillan described in an interview with *The Thistle and the Shamrock*, National Public Radio program:

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69 Ibid. p 23
It wasn’t anything that had any precedent in my earlier life. Scottish music wasn’t a part of my family background. I discovered it afresh, and it was like a brand new discovery for me, aged twenty-two, twenty-three, which is quite an incredible thing for any Scottish musician to make that discovery of one’s self at such a late stage.\textsuperscript{71}

During his time at the university, he began to play and sing Scottish and Irish traditional music at folk clubs and pubs in western Scotland. MacMillan eventually joined a folk band called Broadstone. Later on when he returned to Scotland after studying in the University of Durham, England. He became interested in Scottish political issues too, MacMillan explains:

During my study….I thought maybe I had ignored something in the reservoir of cultural experiences Scottish people had. I think I speak for most Scottish composers when I say it’s not an antiquarian or folklorist instinct that makes us delve into this, but to find a resonance, and do ever-changing things with it; it’s not a conservative musical instinct.\textsuperscript{72}

MacMillan’s use of Scottish traditional music material became a central element in his “newly emerging fecundity of expression.”\textsuperscript{73} And it became a feature of MacMillan’s personal style, appearing in most of his compositions.

MacMillan’s Roman Catholic faith has a strong influence on both his personal and professional life as a composer. The majority of his music shows spiritual beliefs. MacMillan

\textsuperscript{71} Fiona Ritche. Interview with James MacMillan, on The Thistle and the Shamrock: Classic Collaborations
\textsuperscript{72} Robinson. “Seven last words of wisdom: Scottish composer James MacMillan shares his philosophy.”
\textsuperscript{73} Potter, James. “MacMillan in focus; introduction to the music of James MacMillan”
says: “my own music is inspired by spiritual and theological matters.” MacMillan also mentions his love of sacred music:

I used to sing tenor in choirs at school, and later at university, and I loved it. Sacred music is something I’ve always enjoyed writing, ever since I was in school.

MacMillan’s Catholic faith usually appears in his use of sacred text settings. The text setting originates not only from his familiarity with the liturgy, but also from the significance that these texts have for him. MacMillan also uses religious musical material like Gregorian chant, chorales. MacMillan frequently creates a musical structure derived directly from the liturgical practice. In crafting liturgical works, he is especially concerned with the way the music conveys the overall narrative.

He explains:

“I’ve always been interested in liturgy and inspired by it since I was a boy. The non-narrative aspect of it has influenced my music. Having said that, there is that in me which is interested in pure narrative in telling a story. I think that there may be a potential creative conflict in those two approaches: the stylized, ritualistic, non-narrative sense of theater which one can find, I think, in piece like Seven last words, (and) the human dimension that goes underneath the artificiality of pure liturgy.”

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74 James MacMillan, From the window; a worldwide magazine of journalism, poetry, travelogues, and experiential writing.
76 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

3-1 History of the Seven Last Words and Other Compositions

The seven last words of Jesus Christ on the cross constitutes one of the most dramatic events in Christ’s life. This theme has inspired many artists, especially choral composers for centuries. In my research, I have noted at least forty-five composers who used these words as inspiration in composing music for both voice and instruments.

The first known setting of “The seven last words” is *Septem verba Domini Jesu Christi* by Orlando di Lasso (1530-1594), Franco-Flemish composer of the late Renaissance. Perhaps the best known setting of this text is a German cantata by Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), *Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz*, SWV 478 (1645, revised 1655). Schütz composed the work in Weissenfels Germany for a performance in Dresden. Joseph Haydn’s (1732-1809) setting of the seven last words is also a well-known piece however, it was originally an orchestral work that premiered in 1786, for the Good Friday service at Oratorio de la Santa Cueva (Holy Cave Oratory) in Cádiz, Spain. In 1787 the Viennese music publisher Artaria requested that he create a string quartet version. From 1794-1795, Haydn again revised the work, this time creating a choral version with a German text. This version premiered on March 26, 1796 in Vienna and was published in 1801.

Musical settings of “The seven last words” form a sub-genre of the Passion genre which always contains the story of Jesus’s suffering and crucifixion based on Biblical text. Passion
settings began during the Middle Ages, as a plain chant or plainsong, which was sung by the deacon. During the fifteenth-century, the three parts were often sung by three deacons and as a result, the dramatic nature of the text was amplified, and the congregation could follow the narrative easily. In the sixteenth-century, new types of passions were introduced. Popular in Italy was the Responsorial Passion in which the words of Jesus Christ were set in the polyphonic sections. The Motet Passion was also through-composed and set polyphonically. Lastly the Summa Passion, comprised of excerpts from the four gospels, was widely popular.\(^{77}\)

The region that contributed the most to the development of “The seven last words” and the Passion during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries was Germany where Lutheran composers such as Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), J.S. Bach (1685-1750) and Georg Telemann (1681-1767) wrote representative works. In the nineteenth-century “The seven last words of Jesus Christ” and passion texts were usually found in oratorios, which used a large orchestra and chorus.

In the modern age, “The seven last words of Jesus Christ” and the Passion are written in a variety of musical styles according to the composer’s background and interpretation of the crucifixion scene. This genre now stands as a major category of music.

3-2 An Overview of MacMillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross*

Like the music of Olivier Messiaen, an acknowledged influence, MacMillan’s compositions are inseparable from his devotion to Roman Catholic Church. This sense of religious belief inspires much of his work, in which he seeks to combine the sacred with the everyday. In a 2004 interview, MacMillan said:

“To me, the very sense of the sacred that we are talking about is rooted in the here and now, in the joys and tragedies of everyday life, in the grit and mire of human existence”.\(^{78}\)

Traces of this idea are evident in the choral work, *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, where MacMillan attempts to come to terms with the violence and dramatic point of the events on the cross as well as to meditate on their spiritual significance. In a 2008, interview with Mandy Hallam, MacMillan mentions that the composers who inspired him the most in creating the work were Messiaen, Schnittke and those involved in the Catholic faith.

…..whether they are Catholic or not, composers have inspired me, Messiaen, in particular, has been a great beacon for the rest of us. Schnittke’s religion is never really talked about, but I think I’m right in saying that he and Sofia Gubaidulina\(^ {79}\) have had this relationship with Catholicism; maybe they converted or something, but they are very interested in Catholicism…..\(^ {80}\)

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\(^{79}\) A profoundly spiritual person, Gubaidulina defines "re-ligio" as re-legato or as restoration of the connection between oneself and the Absolute.  
Seven Last Words from the Cross was commissioned by BBC Television and first screened in seven nightly episodes during the Holy Week, March 26 to April 1, 1994. It was performed by Cappella Nova and the Scottish ensemble directed by Alan Tavener. However, in his 2008 interview, MacMillan revealed that he wanted the piece performed in a single concert rather than seven.

“This is very interesting thing because, in a sense, the televised version has been left behind. In my mind, Seven Last Words always was singular piece in seven movements, which have to be encountered as a unity, a completeness, but the way that the BBC decided to broadcast it – and I was aware of this right from the beginning – was they would put one movement per night on BBC2 during Holy Week. It started on Palm Sunday and finished on Saturday; it was still all within Lent. So actually, that did have a bearing on the first piece; because as I knew it was going out on Palm Sunday, I used Palm Sunday text in number one, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’. But I was very aware that it was a very incomplete and unsatisfactory way of presenting the piece: it amounted to little five to seven minute programmes between the new and the cricket or something.”

The first complete performance was on March 30, 1994 at the St. Aloysius Church in Glasgow featuring the same performers. A video of the performance won the Royal Philharmonic Society’s award for best music video of the year, and it was nominated as a finalist for the Mercury Prize at the Edinburgh International Festival. When MacMillan received his commission from the BBC in late 1993, he found it difficult to start composing, but he was able to complete the work just two months before the concert. On the experience he recalls:


\[82\] The Edinburgh International Festival is an annual performing arts festival of Scotland. The festival director invites world-class musicians, dancers, and actors from throughout the globe to perform.
“I dried up and it felt like a creative block. *Seven last words* was the next piece – deadlines were looming. By October into November of that year (1993) not a note had been written although I had been thinking about it. The commissioner and performers were getting worried. Suddenly those seven movements came very quickly and by January it was finished.”

For Christians, the events of Holy Week and particularly Good Friday have a very special significance. Though there are many dramatic and violent moments in MacMillan’s work, one is constantly brought back to a sense of silence. In this respect the strings have an important role to play as they are not treated as accompaniment, but rather provide significant interludes and linking passages that support, comment on and amplify the choir’s contribution. Its aura of deep melancholy is intermittently amplified by moments of thorny grief, occasionally relieved by passages of soul-comforting beauty. MacMillan fleshes out the stark brevity of Jesus Christ’s final sentences in this piece with assorted traditional sacred Latin texts, which is mostly translated into English and includes Tenebrae responsories for Good Friday. MacMillan sets this piece in the style of Bach’s great Passions, using the chorale to present commentary and reflection.

Overall, MacMillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross* is a combination of old and new compositional styles. While this piece might be classified as inaccessible due to the high-level of technical skill required of the singers and string players, these same skills contribute to the uniqueness of the work. For example, though MacMillan writes an *ostinato* in the strings, a

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84 Lindsay Koob, American Record Guide 69 no.2 (2006) p 123
technique that is rooted in Baroque music, he requires modern string bowing techniques such as *col legno battute ricochet*,\(^{85}\) *sul ponticello*\(^{86}\) and *flautando*.\(^{87}\)

MacMillan was inspired by traditional Scottish instrumental music such as the bagpipes, and depicts this sound in the chorus through grace note trills and use of the high-tessitura. He also looks back to early music styles such as chant singing and punctuated by extended caesura.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the piece is the text used. In a 2009 interview with *Fanfare*, MacMillan says he was aware of the Haydn and Schütz settings of the work, but more influential to him was the liturgical observance of Good Friday that he experienced since childhood. This explains the additional liturgical text that he adds to the work.\(^{88}\)

An interesting aspect of MacMillan’s compositional technique in the *Seven Last Words from the Cross* is his use of ornamentation in a manner that does not disturb the vocal and string lines. He describes this compositional technique writing:

> “This may come from a number of sources; the natural Western tradition, the Baroque style of ornamentation and my interest of Celtic folk tradition of singing, fiddle playing and the bagpipes. The *Pibroch* is a form of bagpipe playing that has a lot of florid ornamentation punctuating the line.”\(^{89}\)

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85 Hit with wood, drooping  
86 Near the bridge  
87 Flute like, bow at the finger board  
Example 10 shows the Scottish traditional *Pibroch*.

MacMillan was also inspired by Gaelic psalm singing from the Hebrides, which is mostly modal, and sounds akin to Semitic or Persian music. During worship, a precentor leads the singing and the voices follow in a canonic design heterophonically covering and ghosting the line. We can hear a bending of the pitches and somewhat expressive *glissandi*. While this might sound unusual, the compositional procedure has continually appealed to Scottish composers, including MacMillan. He said:

“*If I look at my music objectively I can see the Celtic influence: a solid line punctuated by little flurries of ornaments.*”

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The compositional techniques MacMillan uses in this work create an overwhelming effect. Some of the passages deliver a feeling of the Scottish lament, especially the long instrumental postlude concluding the last movement.

MacMillan tried to balance what is ugly and painful about the story of Crucifixion against the beauty of its more transcendental spiritual aspects. He says;

‘Sometimes I look for a simple idea that could either be repetitive or form patterns that go round in circles. This can focus attention and create atmosphere giving a bed rock of sound from which other things emerge. It could be a repeated set of chords or a melodic phrase. That sense of focusing on a thought is good because it allows you to narrow your material down. I try to make the most out of limited resources, which is not to say it’s minimalist.’\(^91\)

Thus, when we listen this piece, MacMillan gives us moments of jagged torment, pain, and despair that makes us want to run and hide from the cross. But later he draws us back with more comfortable, yet just as piercing episodes of loveliness and sacred beauty. \(^92\)

In MacMillan’s music, especially the *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, one will hear realistic expressions and heightened emotions emphasized through drastic dynamic changes and contrasting textures.

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\(^91\) Ratcliffe. p38
\(^92\) Koob, Lindsay *American record Guide*; Sep 2009: 72, 5, p139
The Passion story chronicles the last week of Jesus's life, from his way to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to his crucifixion on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Sunday. The texts are excerpted from the Gospel messages as they are deserving of independent and individual thought, particularly during Holy Week. “The seven last words” in particular, is a significant ceremonial expansion celebrated once a year, on Good Friday. The Passion story is also one of the few stories that is told through all four Gospels however, all of “The seven last words” cannot be found in any one of the gospel narratives. As a result, they provide an interesting pietistic attempt to blend the story present in every one of the four. Settings of the Passion have been routinely celebrated in ceremonial services for quite a long time, yet since they are expected from the Gospels, they are only presented from an Evangelist's point of view. Musical settings of the seven last words are substantially more uncommon than settings of the Passion story. Denis Arnold and Basil Smallman comments on this development in their article on Passions in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music*:

Early in the 16th century there evolved a further type of setting (described as through-composed) in which the entire account is drawn, in compressed form, from all four gospels and set in continuous choral polyphony. Usually sections of the traditional chant are woven into the choral texture and distinctions between individual and crowd utterances created by the disposition of the voice parts. The earliest known example is a Latin St Matthew Passion (so called, but based on all four gospels) by Antoine de Longueval (fl 1507-22), who served as maître de chapelle to Louis XII of France. This form was subsequently cultivated by numerous minor composers, Catholic and Protestant, including Johannes Galliculus, Jacob Regnart, and Bartholomäus Gesius. Invariably these settings comprised several (from three to five) partes, the last
of which embraces all the Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross.\(^\text{93}\)

Even though the text setting of “The seven last words” is related to the Passion, they are not in fact Passion stories, despite the fact that they would normally be introduced or composed during Passion Week Settings of “The seven last words of Jesus Christ” consequently constitute their own particular artistic and musical genre.

The texts of the seven last words of Jesus Christ are all taken from the first four books of the New-Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). These four gospels each recount the life and death of Jesus from different perspectives.

MacMillan took the basic text of the seven last words of Jesus Christ on the cross from the gospels of the New-Testament, however, in the first, third, fifth and sixth movements, he added additional text taken from the Palm-Sunday exclamation, Good Friday Responsory for Tenebrae and Good Friday liturgy, alternating the texts in a complex manner that still allows each to resonate. His devout Catholicism informs the piece, giving the setting added drama and resonance. For MacMillan, the combination of those texts stemmed from both practical and artistic considerations. He says:

> When I realized I’d committed myself to making 45 minute piece around seven sentences I was horrified! Then I began to think. Some of them could be done on their own, a starkly repetitive setting maybe, but there was also scope for amplification. So I found words from the service of Tenebrae, the Good Friday liturgy, that could act either as a reflection on the words or as a direct

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counterpart-like the versicle Ecce lignum Crucis (Behold the Wood of the Cross).94

In MacMillan’s Seven Last Words from the Cross, these additional texts provide commentary on the main text. For example, in the first movement the original text setting according to the Bible is “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” from Luke 23:34, to this text he adds “Hosanna filio David benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine Rex Israel, Hosanni in excelsis” from the Good Friday Responsories for Tenebrae, also traditionally used for a ‘Palms blessing’.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis

In 1991, MacMillan composed *Tuireadh*, for clarinet quintet or solo clarinet and string ensemble, to commemorate the victims of the Piper Alpha disaster and their families. On the evening of July 6th 1988, a fire broke out on the Piper Alpha off-shore oil and gas platform located in the North Sea. With the blaze out of control and evacuation virtually impossible, the disaster became the world's deadliest ever oil rig accident and resulted in 167 deaths. Shortly after, a ceremony was held for the families and friends of those lost; MacMillan attended this event and drew inspiration for a musical composition.

*Tuireadh* is Gaelic for a lament (or requiem) for the dead, and the piece was written as a musical complement to the memorial sculpture created by Sue Jane Taylor and performed in Aberdeen. MacMillan was inspired by a letter sent to him by the mother of one of the dead workers in which she wrote movingly of her visit to the memorial service. *Tuireadh* attempts to musically capture this outpouring of grief and makes allusions to the intervallic and ornamental archetypes of various lament-forms from Scottish traditional music. Three years later MacMillan composed *Seven Last Words from the Cross*.

It is important to know about *Tuireadh*, because MacMillan borrows musical ideas found here with *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, including use of solo instruments and the rhythmic patterns of both strings and voices.

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In *Seven Last Words from the Cross* and *Tuireadh*, MacMillan drew on his knowledge of Scottish folk music for some of his expressive devices. Usually Gaelic folk songs and instrumental music are especially rich in emotionally charged melodic ornamentation. A unique feature in analyzing this piece is examining the concepts MacMillan borrows from early music, especially from the Renaissance period. Although most of MacMillan’s choral compositions are written in tonal harmony, this work differs in that it cannot be analyzed in functional harmony. However, it is possible to analyze the stylistic melodic line and techniques that MacMillan uses, as well as the sources of melodies.

In this analysis the musical term “pentatonic scale” refers to Scottish traditional pentatonic as the term is used by ethnomusicologists.

4-1 I. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do

The first movement begins with a figure derived from the middle of the 1 section, measures 133- of *Tuireadh*, which is repeated as the rest of the piece unfolds. The first violins begin with a sustained F-sharp, which becomes a pedal tone, as the other string parts lend support with a repeated two bar cadential ostinato called a “weeping cadence” an idea that came from *Tuireadh* (Examples 11 and 12). This passage creates a feeling of sorrow with a deep sigh. The *ostinato* suggests the learned style, and MacMillan uses this short motivic pattern throughout the movement to unify and create a sorrowful feeling throughout the movement.
After seven measures of introduction, atop the string ostinato, the first word of Jesus Christ “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” begins in the women’s voices. The sopranos are imitated by the altos and each syllable of text matches a single note with ascending motion. As MacMillan was influenced by Scottish traditional music especially Celtic
folk music, he treats this text using a pentatonic scale, which is characteristic of Celtic folk music. As discussed in chapter two, the bagpipe scale can sound three pentatonic scales beginning on A, G and D. This is particularly valid for Pibroch, which ordinarily utilizes of the pentatonic scales out of the nine possible notes.

Example 13 shows the pentatonic scales;

![Example 13: first theme, measures 15-20. I 'Father, forgive them.](image)

A new texture emerges with the men’s voices in measures 23 and 25 as they sing the interpolated text that MacMillan added from the Palm Sunday exclamation, “Hosanna filio David benedictus qui venit ....” He treats this text with aggressive fanfares to depict Jesus Christ’s triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, including the parade of the assembled people holding palms (Example 14).

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1. on A: A-B-C#-E-F#-A
2. on G: G-A-B-D-E-G-A
3. on D: A-B-D-E-F#-A
98 As the term is used by ethnomusicologists
Examples 14 illustrate Fanfare effect;

Example 14: Fanfare effect, measures 23 and 25. *I ‘Father, forgive them.....’*

In measure 25, the first violins begin to play independently after 24 measures of sustaining the F-sharp pedal. This is very similar to the patterns MacMillan used in his earlier work *Tuireadh*. In *Tuireadh*, the solo clarinet is used like the first violin in this movement. Both instruments seem to depict murmurs from beyond; MacMillan even writes, *‘like distant murmurs’* in measure 137 on the score of *Tuireadh*. As seen in the examples 15 and 16, the rhythmic patterns, dynamics and role of other instruments (the *ostinato*) are very similar between the two pieces.
Additionally, both pieces use trills and tremolos in the solo instruments (Example 17).
While the men’s chorus sings *Hosanna filio David*, part of the women’s chorus joins the *ostinato* in measure 25. The sopranos continuously sing syllabic pentatonic⁹⁹ scales while the first and, second violins play independent lines at measure 25 and 29. Compared to the other parts including the choruses, the two violin parts stand out for their use of a high tessitura, with rhythmic density and frequent leaps. MacMillan treats these two violin parts with a variety of dynamics from *pp* to *ff* and utilizes techniques including tremolos, accented notes, syncopated triple motion and use of very high tessitura. This creates the image of Jesus Christ on his way into Jerusalem surrounded by people shouting “*Hosanna filio David….Rex Israel…*” as in Matthew 21:9 ("Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"). The men join the women’s *ostinato*, singing ‘*Hosanna filio David*’ and eventually their cries of ‘*Rex Israel*’ dominate at measure 30. When the men’s chorus sings out ‘*Rex Rex Israel*’ MacMillan treats this text as the Scottish traditional instrument, the bagpipes by adding ornamentations at the word ‘*Rex*’ with ‘*ff*’ and an accented note on ‘*Israel*’ is harmonically Pandiatonic, which shows the scene of chaos with people around Jesus (Example 18).

⁹⁹ As the term is used by ethnomusicologists
MacMillan’s preparation for the end of movement is reminiscent of Renaissance music including the responsories and the offertories of Gregorian chant. He writes passages in chant singing, usually with one or two main reciting tones and repetition of a short phrase. In this case, MacMillan chooses to use F-sharp as a reciting tone and repeats the phrase through to the end of the movement. In measure 42, the sopranos begin to sing a monotone chant-like passage on the new text from one of the Good Friday Responsories for Tenebrae (Example 19). At this point, the activity of the movement starts to gradually stable. The men’s chorus begins to move in unison, eventually joining the ostinato figure. At measure 47 the entire chorus joins the ostinato except the sopranos.
Example 19 illustrate chant-like passage

Example 19: Soprano monotone, measures 42-45. *I ‘Father, forgive them..'*

After the sopranos begin singing the final chant-like theme, the opening theme originally sung by the sopranos is heard in the viola and violoncello. Thus, the opening pentatonic theme occurs throughout the entire movement in either the chorus or the strings.

Example 20: Violoncello, measure 48 (up) and Viola, measure 60 (down) opening theme. *I ‘Father, forgive them..'*
In the last seven measures of the movement, the *ostinato* in both the choir and strings becomes a single sustained open fifth, comprised of F-sharp and C-sharp over an E pedal tone in the double bass at measure 67. At measure 70, all the music fades away with only the soprano chant remaining audible.

Example 21 shows pedal tone:

![Example 21: Pedal tone, measure 67. I ‘Father, forgive them.’](image)

MacMillan’s preparation for the ending is very similar to the ending of *Tuireadh*. Example 22 shows the last 8 measures of *Tuireadh*. MacMillan uses viola as a solo instrument and selects F as a reciting tone with repetition through the end, while the other instruments sustain their note over an F pedal tone or harmonic drones in the double bass.
The first movement is a combination of early and contemporary musical styles with some Scottish traditional ideas as well as many ideas that come from his earlier work, *Tuireadh*. Harmonically it is difficult to determine if this movement is in C major or D major; however, according to a score analysis of first movement, MacMillan selects F-sharp as a pitch centricity\(^{100}\) and it creates unity of the movement. All 72 measures of the first movement contain F-sharps either in the chorus part or the instrumental part and the movement begins and ends on F-sharp.

---

4-2 II. Woman, behold thy Son!…Behold, thy Mother!

‘Woman, behold thy Son!…Behold, thy Mother!’ is traditionally also called the word of relationship, and refers to the moment when Jesus introduced his mother Mary to the disciples. The main characteristic of this movement is MacMillan’s use of a chorale figure, similar to what J.S. Bach used in his Passions. Chorales have a tendency to be basic, singable tunes with texts that are frequently sung to a rhyming plan. The text is organized in a strophic structure and most chorales follow A-A-B form just like German chorale. MacMillan seems to follow these basic principles along with contemporary stylistic techniques.

The last note of the previous movement, F-sharp, becomes the leading tone in the first chord of the second movement. As the movement begins we can hear a strong, half note G major chord. The basic structure of the second movement is a three measure theme which is repeated eleven times in a cadential figure.

The chorus begins singing without accompaniment in a ff dynamic level, compared to the quiet opening of the first movement, this is a drastically contrasting expression. While Bach included a fermata after each phrase of his chorales, MacMillan writes a lengthy caesura, lasting about three or four measures. This creates a forceful, dramatic silence. During this time the chorus must keep in mind their last notes so that they can reenter after the caesura.
Example 23 shows beginning of second movement

The second movement can be analyzed as a traditional chorale in A-A-B form. MacMillan sets a three measure-long theme, which repeats either with or without accompaniment. In the typical setting of a chorale in Baroque period, the soprano sings the melody along with other lower voices. It is important to examine the soprano part because MacMillan uses the pentatonic scale\textsuperscript{101} differently in each phrase. MacMillan’s five note melodic selections is G - F# - E - D - C.

\textsuperscript{101} As the term is used by ethnomusicologists
Table 1 is structure of the second movement:

Table 1: Structure of II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Measure 1-30</td>
<td>Measure 31-72</td>
<td>Measure 73-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Woman, behold thy Son!...’</td>
<td>‘Behold, thy Mother!’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Base, Tenor only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of pentatonic motive</td>
<td>Use of weeping motive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast of accompaniment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘A’ section begins at measure 1 with a descending pentatonic scale\(^{102}\) without accompaniment.

Example 24: Measures 1-6, II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’

The second phrase starts at measure 7 without accompaniment.

Example 25: Measures 7-13, II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’

The third phrase starts at measure 14, and at measure 16 the lower strings begin accompanying with a gently sustained C-sharp.

\(^{102}\) As the term is used by ethnomusicologists
Example 26: Measures 14-16, *II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’*

The fourth phrase starts at measure 19.

Example 27: Measures 19, *II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’*

The fifth phrase starts at measure 27.

Example 28: Measures 27, *II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’*

The A section ends at measure 30 and the soprano melody comprised of pentatonic scales\(^{103}\) rotates, the first note of each phrase is ordered G - F# - E - D - C and the ending note of each phrase is marked ↓ in the same order.

Similarly, the next A section begins at measure 31; however, it contains more string accompaniment in a very contrasting way. Here, the strings begin playing slow and relatively straightforward material which gradually builds in fervor and complexity, growing in intensity and speed (Example 29) until the movement evaporates on the words “Behold, thy Mother!”

\(^{103}\) As the term is used by ethnomusicologists
The B section starts at measure 73 and with the word “Behold thy Mother!” and MacMillan introduces new vocal material. MacMillan uses the weeping motive in this section to create a crying sound and uses certain techniques to enhance this effect, such as quarter tone inflections.
Example 30 shows a weeping motive;

Example 30: Weeping motive, measures 73-74, II. ‘Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!’

MacMillan’s weeping motives can also be found in the chorus part. As the string accompaniment fades away, the tenors and basses sing a chant-like passage in half step motion
(B-flat to A) to the text “Behold thy Mother”. This half-step motion is also used for solo clarinet in *Tuireadh*.

**Example 31**: tenor & bass, measures 75-76, *Tuireadh*.

"Woman, behold thy Son!... Behold, thy Mother!"  

**Example 32**: solo clarinet, measures 80-82, *Tuireadh*

There is not much use of traditional Scottish tunes in this movement, while there are a few measures in which MacMillan uses grace notes, it is difficult to clearly link these passages to the Scottish tradition.

Additionally, the second movement begins with a full chorus singing a cappella followed by a long caesura. MacMillan uses a similar chorale figure in the middle of *Tuireadh* (Example 33) with a fermata followed by a grand pause.
Example 33: Strings, measures 65-70, Tuireadh

Throughout the second movement the chorus and accompaniment seem to depict two different aural worlds. The role of the chorus consists of a simple repetition of a three measure motive, while the string accompaniment consists of dense layers of sound which do not support the chorus part.

4-3 III. Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise

The third movement is the longest movement of the piece, with 117 measures, and is also structurally the most distinguished of the seven. In this movement, MacMillan introduces tonal harmony in both the chorus and accompaniment for the first time in the piece. Even though the third movement is titled “Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” this text does not appear until the very end of the movement, sung in a high tessitura by a soprano and violin duet. The rest of the movement is a setting of the Good Friday Antiphon ‘Ecce lignum
crucis’. During the liturgy, this text is typically sung three times by soloists, each time a little higher and each time they are answered by the full choir or congregation, also at a gradually higher pitch as the cross is slowly unveiled and revealed to the congregation in three stages.

Table 2 shows the structure of the movement.

**Table 2: Structure of III. “Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A’</th>
<th>B’</th>
<th>A”</th>
<th>B”</th>
<th>Interlude</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-17</td>
<td></td>
<td>17-29</td>
<td>30-46</td>
<td>46-58</td>
<td>59-76</td>
<td>77-87</td>
<td>88-105</td>
<td>106-117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>A - <em>Ecce Lignum Crucis in quo salus mundi pependit</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - <em>Venite adoremus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral Texture</td>
<td>Duet Bass</td>
<td>Tutti Bass</td>
<td>Duet Tenor</td>
<td>Tutti Tenor, Bass</td>
<td>Duet Alto</td>
<td>Tutti Alto, Tenor, Bass</td>
<td>Duet Soprano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>Violoncello Double Bass</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>Violoncello Double Bass</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>Viola Violoncello Double Bass</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>Viols</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sections A, A’ and A” are using the same materials, all duets with the low strings. The text ‘*Ecce Lignum Crucis in quo salus mundi pependit*’ comes from the liturgy of Good Friday Antiphon (Gregorian chant). These A sections always begin with a duet and the melody is the same. MacMillan borrows the melody of the A sections from the Gregorian chant melody; however when he transcribes the passage from the original chant melody, he adds some traditional Scottish ideas.
Example 34 shows the original chant score including the ‘Omnes’ (‘B’ sections).

Example 34: Ecce Lignum Crucis in quo salus mundi pependit, Gregorian chant

Example 35: bass duet, measures 1-15. III. “Verily, I say unto thee...”
The melody in bass I in Example 35 is an imitation of the chant melody seen in Example 34. The role of low strings during the A sections is very limited and gently accompanying, and MacMillan uses the violoncello, double bass and viola only in A” (measure 59-76).

Sections B, B’ and B” are settings of the ‘Omnes’ (Example 34) portion of the chant, which is sung by the full chorus or congregation as a response, ‘Venite adoremus’. MacMillan uses tutti strings in the B sections with a beautiful arpeggio technique and rising solo violin melody. The chorus part in the B sections has an additive feature; the chorus parts increases by one part in each section except for the recently included chorus part. The repetition of the B section forms a thoughtful echo of the Good Friday liturgy, during which the cross is slowly revealed to the congregation.
Example 36 shows the B” section.

Example 36: B” section, measures 77-79. III. “Verily, I say unto thee…”
The first violin melody in the B section comes from the original chant in augmentation. MacMillan uses this melodic style in all B sections in the first violin and in the last section of the first soprano line.

Example 37 and 38 illustrates the first violin melody and original chant melody.

After introducing the A and B sections three times each, MacMillan writes a short interlude section (measures 88-105) for the tutti string orchestra, just before Jesus’s next words. This 18 measure-long string interlude section consists of learned compositional techniques, such
as the drone in the double bass, but it also includes many grace notes, arpeggios, and dynamic variety which suggest traditional Scottish ornamentation techniques. This section is full of energy and dramatic expression, which greatly contrasts the words of Jesus in the next section.

MacMillan explains his intent for the string interlude:

……I think that was the reason why, suddenly, the direction has been interrupted. The direction is still going on towards the final statement, the Versicle is complete, so there’s a vacuum that could be filled with something else before moving on, hence the quite emotional string interlude, compared to the detachment of what comes before and after. There’s a liturgical detachment from the three statements previous to it and the last one, and there’s subjectivity that fills the gap. It moves in to a kind of mental space for that string interlude.\footnote{Mandy Hallam, Conversation with James MacMillan, \textit{Tempo} 62 no.245 (2008), 20}
Example 39 shows a portion of interlude section.

Example 39: Interlude, measures 88-90. III. “Verily, I say unto thee…”

The last section forms the conclusion of the movement in which the actual words of Jesus Christ are sung by a soprano duet accompanied by two violins, immediately following the string interlude. The soprano duet is set in a high tessitura and for this section virtuosic vocal techniques are required. Similarly, the two violins also play in a high range which they sustain until the end of the movement. The first soprano melody comes from the portion of Gregorian chant which is indicated in Example 34.
Example 40 and 41 illustrates the comparison of first soprano and original chant.

Example 40: Original plain chant.

Example 41: First soprano melody, measures 106-117. III. “Verily, I say unto thee...”

Structurally, the third movement is well-organized and the music from each section is easily identifiable. The development process is clear in both the chorus and string parts, because MacMillan adds the parts one by one in each section. The use of both Latin and English texts in this piece is a unique feature of the movement; however it is nearly impossible to distinguish the text due to the high tessitura in the sopranos.
4-4 IV. Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani”, is probably the most frequently heard movement of the seven. The text humanizes Jesus, showing his weakness before death. In this movement MacMillan chooses to use imitation and canon, which usually occur in early Renaissance motets. Robert Carver (1485-1570) was a Scottish monk and sacred music composer, considered as Scotland’s greatest composer of the sixteenth-century and best known for his motets and masses. The characteristics of Carver’s choral music include a gradual build-up of musical ideas and a highly ornamented style which occurs in MacMillan’s choral music too. The fourth movement is full of imitation, canonic motion and ornamentation.

The fourth movement can be divided into three sections A-B-C. Table 3 shows the whole structure of the movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>1-48</td>
<td>48-67</td>
<td>68-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani</td>
<td>Polyphony section</td>
<td>Canonic motion (S-A-T-B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>-Alternative chorus entrance</td>
<td>-Tutti string except double bass (play only six times of pizz.)</td>
<td>-Tutti string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Alternative strings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Imitation in chorus part</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Gradual development of music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section A starts with a very dark timbre and a low register. An imitative figure emerges with the parts entering in the order of double bass -violoncello - basses - tenors - altos - sopranos. The pattern gradually rises from low to high and then descends into the dark timbre again.

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Example from 42 to 45 illustrates a point of imitation;


Example 43: Tenor entrance, measure 19. IV. ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani’

Example 44: Alto entrance, measure 30. IV. ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani’

Example 45: Soprano entrance, measure 39. IV. ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani’
MacMillan treats the text ‘Eli’ with an ascending step-wise motion from the low range however, when he treats the text ‘sabachthani’ he puts ornamentation on it with descending motion.

Example 46 illustrates ornamented descending motions of the basses and tenors.

Example 46: Ornamented texts on ‘sabachthani’. basses (measures 20-21), tenors (measures 27-29) and altos (measures 72-75). IV. ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani’

At the end of the ‘sabachthani’ phrase, MacMillan puts a glide-technique (Example 46, ↓), which can be found in the string part too. We can also find this technique in his motet *Pascha nostrum immolates est* (Example 47 from The Strathclyde Motets).
After the imitative section A, the music continues to the B section, which MacMillan describes as an impassioned, full-throated lament above which the strings float and glide. Section B consists of an ornamented note, imitation, iso-rhythmic motion, and is through composed.

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Example 47: Ornamented descending motion with gliss. soprano, measure 7-14, *Pascha nostrum immolates est*

---

Example 48 illustrates the beginning of the chorus part of section B.


While the chorus part is loudly singing the lament, the string parts are accompanying in soft and gentle ways. Although they are playing in a high register, MacMillan keeps the strings
under the lament. For that reason, MacMillan writes *flautando* in the *p* level, which prescription a soft flute like sound effect (Example 49) through the use of harmonics as well.

![Example 49: Accompaniment of ‘B’ section, measures 57-58. IV. ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani’](image)

The final section C consists of descending canonic motion in both the chorus and string parts (Example 50). The sopranos begin singing the descending melodic line followed by the altos, tenors and finally basses who finish the movement. The string parts also move in a descending canonic motion that is staggered from the violin, viola, violoncello and double bass. For the strings, MacMillan uses a short note to long note value pattern. Because of the descending canonic motion of the chorus and strings, the last section begins to go back into the dark timbre and also mirrors the beginning of the movement. This mirror structure occurs in early motets such as those by Machaut.
The most unique feature of this movement is the use of Renaissance materials despite the fact they are difficult to analyze in tonal harmony. For chorus parts, finding their pitches is the key as the same pitches are not doubled in the string parts. The chorus lines sometimes take on
highly ornamented and melismatic figures, which may be linked back to the Scottish traditional heritage.

4-5 V. I thirst

The fifth movement is musically and texturally the shortest of the seven. MacMillan uses texts in English and Latin. ‘I thirst’ (John 19:28) is treated in a long note values in a slow tempo with focus on the perfect 5\textsuperscript{th} interval. Additional text written in Latin comes from the Good Friday Reproaches ‘Ego te potavi aqua salutis de petra: et tu me potasti felle et aceto.’ This text is set to a chant in a fast monotone similar to those in the early Renaissance period and seems to mimic a person whispering.

Example 51 shows the beginning of the movement.

Example 51: Beginning, measures 1-6. V. ‘I thirst’
To create the effect of thirst, MacMillan requires that the chorus whisper the Latin text in a fast monotone chant. While the chorus whispers the text, the string accompaniment is minimized, thereby amplifying the whispering effect to the audience. This whispering technique creates the sensation of thirst and paints an aural picture of the scene of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Example 52 shows whispering effect;

Example 52: ‘Whisper’ section, measures 23-25. V. ‘I thirst’

In measure 35, MacMillan introduces a musical technique from the Renaissance period ‘falsobordone’ (or falsobordoni). This is a chordal recitation based on root position triads, with the form and often the melody of a Gregorian psalm tone. Falsobordone consists of two sections;
a recitation on a chord, followed by a cadence. MacMillan’s falsobordone is incomplete because there is no cadence after the recitation; instead there is a continuation of the chord. ‘II. Dixit Dominus’ Vespers 1610 by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) is great example of falsobordone (Example 53 and 54)

Example 53: MacMillan’s recitation, measure 35-38. *I thirst*

Example 54: Monteverdi’s Falsobordone, measures 43-47. *Vesper 1610*
The final section is an impressive instrumental postlude, which occurs right after the Altos and Tenors sing a major 2\textsuperscript{nd} interval on the text ‘I thirst.’ The postlude begins with a sustaining note in the double bass while the other strings start to play a \textit{ppp} tremolo, which gradually crescendos up to \textit{ffff} like a violent shuddering, before it gradually decrescendos going back to \textit{ppp}.

Example 55 illustrates an instrumental postlude

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example55.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Example 55: Postlude, measures 52-63. ‘I thirst’}
MacMillan describes the fifth movement as “deliberately bare and desolate”. In this short movement, MacMillan shows a stark contrast in the dynamics of the music, preferring extremely loud or soft indications rather than those in between.

He writes a very soft and gentle sound and then rapidly changes the dynamic up to **ffff**. MacMillan’s treatment of the additional text is a unique feature, and the fast monotone, chant-like, and sometimes whispering text creates a dramatic effect which is meant to depict Jesus Christ trying to speak when his mouth is completely dry. The role of the strings in the fifth movement is stable with mostly sustained long notes.

4-6 VI. It is finished

The previous movement, ‘*I thirst*’ ends with a dynamic level of **ppp**. In the sixth movement, MacMillan changes the color and breaks the mood with a violent string stroke in an accented **ff**, which is hammer-stroke or bow-stroke. This aggressive nine measures repeats sharp cluster chords containing all 12 chromatic notes and is meant to dramatically represent the nails being smashed into Jesus Christ’s hands and feet. The nine measures of hammer strokes opens gradually into a rhythmic heterophony texture.

This heterophonic texture is frequently a characteristic of *gamelan* music which is also characterized by the simultaneous variation of a single line. As mentioned previously MacMillan also studied ethnomusicology and was especially interested in the traditional music

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109 Margaret J. Kartomi and Maria Mendonça, “*Gamelan*” Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online
of East Asia such as the *gamelan* of Indonesia. There are two possible sources for the hammer-strokes idea: the *gamelan* or *The Rite of Spring* (1913) by Igor Stravinsky, who was one of the most influential composers to MacMillan. MacMillan uses this hammer stroke technique in his earlier work, *Tuireadh* too.

Table 4 illustrates the hammer strokes chord spelling in MacMillan’s selection of the nine notes in *VI. It is finished, Tuireadh* and Stravinsky’s selection in melodic order.

**Table 4: Hammer strokes chords selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Notes selection</th>
<th>(Notes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>VI. It is finished</em> by MacMillan</td>
<td>C - C# - D - D# - E - F - F# - G - G# - A - A# - B</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tuireadh</em> by MacMillan</td>
<td>C - D - Eb - E - F# - G - Ab - Bb - B</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Rite of Spring</em> by Stravinsky</td>
<td>Cb - Db - D - Eb - E - Fb - F - Gb - G - Ab - Bb - B</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example from 56 to 58 shows the similarities of these three pieces.

Example 56: Opening. measures 1-3. *VI. It is finished*

Example 57: Measures 80-82. *Tuireadh*
After the nine measure violent opening, the sopranos sing ‘My eyes were blind with weeping’ which is additional text from the Good Friday Responsories for Tenabreae. MacMillan treats this additional text in the sopranos only, delivering a beautiful comforting continual melody based on the soprano line of the first movement. The other vocal parts repeatedly sing Jesus’s words ‘It is finished’. MacMillan treats the choral part mostly unaccompanied throughout.
Example 59 shows the entrance of the sopranos.

MacMillan treats Jesus’s three words ‘It is finished’ in alto, tenor and bass parts as accompaniment or back-ground to the soprano melody in the absence of a string accompaniment. MacMillan uses a repeated weeping cadence *ostinato* just as in the first movement.
Example 60 illustrates the role of alto, tenor and bass parts.

Example 60: Text treatment of Jesus’s words in Alto, Tenor and Bass, measures 48-57.

VI. It is finished

As the movement ends, the alto, tenor, and bass parts stop singing at measure 67, but the soprano alone repeats Jesus’s question; ‘Is there any sorrow like my sorrow?’ The string hammer strokes resume at measure 68.
Example 61 illustrates the beginning of the ending section.

Even though the soprano stops singing, MacMillan keeps the hammer strokes for another two measures, meaning the nailing effect with all chromatic notes is heard five times. Perhaps, MacMillan wants the audience to experience Jesus’s crucifixion in which nails were driven through his hands and feet, while a crown of thorns was placed on his head and a sword pierced his side.
Example 62 illustrates the last two measures of the movement.

Example 62: Last ending of the movement, measures 76-77. VI. It is finished

4-7 VII. Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit

In some of the Requiems throughout history, composers reuse material written in earlier movements. For example, in Mozart’s Requiem K626, the last two movements Lux Aeterna and Cum sanctis tuis, have reused music materials from the first two movements. In Ein deutsches Requiem Op.45 by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), the first movement and last movement also shares musical materials.
Traces of reused materials can be found in this piece too. In the last movement, the musical materials from the second movement reappear. The structure of movement seven is A-B. Section A includes the last words of Jesus Christ sung mostly a cappella by the chorus; this material is shared with the second movement. Section B is an instrumental postlude, which comprises the majority of the movement. Since Seven Last Words from the Cross is a choral work, the structural setting of the last movement is unusual. MacMillan says of the last movement:

“In this final movement, with its long instrumental postlude, the liturgical detachment breaks down and gives way to a more personal reflection: hence the resonance here of Scottish traditional laments music”\(^{110}\)

Section A begins with extremely painful shouting chords on the word ‘father’ which is repeated three times. MacMillan treats this repeated ‘father’ the same as ‘Woman, behold thy Son!’ in the second movement. Here, it is still a descending pentatonic scale,\(^{111}\) but in augmentation with a lengthy caesura. MacMillan uses whole notes with fermatas rather than short notes and the sustained chord on ‘father’ draws a parallel to the final cry of Jesus on the cross. After three repetitions, the chorus fades through a long decrescendo on the text ‘into Thy hands I commend my Spirit.’ The descending melody ends on F-sharp, the same note as the opening of the piece. MacMillan describes this final chorus section as “the music descends in resignation”\(^{112}\)


\(^{111}\)As the term is used by ethnomusicologists

\(^{112}\)James MacMillan. Program note from recording: Seven last words from the cross. London, p.9, 1994
Example 63 illustrates the music descends in resignation.

Example 63: The music descends in resignation, measures 1-18. VII. “Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit”
Here again MacMillan uses the pentatonic scale of G-F♯-E-D-C in the soprano line and descends to an F-sharp ending note while the other chorus parts sing an E major chord at measure 16. The sopranos begin and end the piece with an F-sharp. The B section of the instrumental postlude begins at measure 15, when the soprano sings their last note. The music moves in a very peaceful motion and from measure 19, two violins continue the lament in a canonic texture with ornamentation.

Example 64 illustrates the middle of the instrumental postlude.

Example 64: Violin duet, Postlude, measures 32-39. VII. “Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit”

At measure 40, other instruments join, however the violin duet keeps playing in a very high register while other strings play just two measures of a sustained note. At measure 69, all strings except the violin duet fade out and MacMillan begins to depict the last moments of Jesus
Christ on the cross. As seen in the example 65 below, the violin duet plays long chords that gradually become shorter with more space in between.

Example 65: The last breath sounds of Jesus Christ, measures 69-82. VII. “Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit”
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

There are many ways in which artists have addressed the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross, including painting, film making, writing books, and music; these mediums allow people to indirectly experience Jesus’s final moments on the cross. One question one might ask is “does the person who is depicting Jesus’s last moments on the cross transmit his or her religious faith?”

The choral music of James MacMillan is infused with the spiritual aspects of his Catholic faith. *Seven Last Words from the Cross* represents one of his sacred works in which he tries to come to terms with the violence and drama of the occasion as well as meditating on its spiritual significance. It is one of his longest pieces lasting approximately forty-seven minutes. Because the Biblical text of “The Seven last words” is short, MacMillan includes in some movements additional texts from the Palm Sunday Exclamation, Good Friday Responsories for Tenebrae, Good Friday Versicle and Good Friday Reproaches, some in Latin, some in English.

MacMillan’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross* is an inaccessible piece for an amateur group since it requires virtuosic singers and experienced string players. Therefore, for the choral conductor it is a great challenge. Most of MacMillan’s choral works are sung a cappella with diatonic harmonies, but in this case the music is highly dissonant with complex rhythms, suggesting the work was meant for professional groups, notably Cappella Nova and the BT Scottish Ensemble. Cappella Nova was a Scottish based group that MacMillan frequently collaborated with. Scottish Ensemble is a group of 13 string players who don’t normally work with choirs. MacMillan took great care in creating a balance for both groups.
He writes:

In bringing them together I was very aware of the two different worlds. Nevertheless, both groups can produce a sustained sound, and have the facility for purity of sounds. There was a kind of intersection area, I suppose, aesthetically, in the way that the music was imagined, so that there could be certain blends of sounds, brought about subconsciously perhaps, more than simply juxtaposing one sound against the other so that the differences were heard.\textsuperscript{113}

Harmonically, this piece is not a tonal piece but it is also not atonal. In the light of the harmonic ambiguity, the role of the notes or chords chosen by MacMillan is crucial to the general shaping of this piece. MacMillan mostly uses chromaticism which is evident not only in the scalar passages, but also in the frequent use of cluster chords.\textsuperscript{114} He uses chromaticism as a method for building up tension.

MacMillan mentioned regarding his harmonic language;

\begin{quote}
“a sense of a kind of fluid complementarity about the 12 pitches that can shape my harmony… I think I am concerned about a triadic root to my harmony but with sense of colour, a sense of potential of tension within that triad, or within that root……”\textsuperscript{115}
\end{quote}

Therefore harmonically, MacMillan’s \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross} is impossible to analyze in terms of functional harmony; however, it is possible to analyze the timbre of melodic line, the dissonant chords, and the intervallic relationship.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{113} Mandy Hallam, \textit{Conversation with James MacMillan}, \textit{Tempo} 62, no. 245 (2008), p.19
\textsuperscript{114} Don Richard Campbell. \textit{An Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Scottish Choral Music} (1998), 64
\end{flushleft}
Sometimes there are several dramatic and violent moments, which are characterized by the use of dynamics (\textit{ppp} to \textit{ffff}). MacMillan sets off his dramatic moments with meditations and sorrowful thoughts, and while this piece is not a minimalistic work, it delivers a great sense of space.

The role of the string accompaniment is important even though harmonically it never doubles the chorus. The strings do, however, create great images of Jesus’s suffering ambiances. Writing an interlude and postlude supports the piece, and sometimes the strings amplify the chorus’s contribution. The string accompaniment is exceptionally complex due to the rhythms and harmonies, and also the importance of creating sounds and sentiment rather than playing many notes.

One of the interesting facts is that MacMillan uses just simple regular meter throughout the piece. (Table 5)

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textit{I} & \textit{II} & \textit{III} & \textit{IV} & \textit{V} & \textit{VI} & \textit{VII} \\
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Meter chart}
\end{table}

While the meter is very simple, the rhythms in the piece are highly complex both in the chorus and string accompaniment. For instance, in the string part MacMillan uses triple to septuplet rhythms, sometimes with ornamentations, grace notes and syncopation. There are many places MacMillan uses sudden leaps with grace notes that might create a technical issue for both the chorus and strings. For example, in the second movement in the chorus part, the first bass
parts have to sing a quintuplet rhythm against a triple rhythm in the second bass parts. Combining the parts proves an even harder task.

To MacMillan, Scottish traditional music is an important compositional tool for both choral and instrumental works.

MacMillan said:

One of the things I’ve managed to do, one of many, is to try an’ absorb what I call musical vernaculars into the music. That is not in a kind of crossover way, or even a fusion way, but certainly to draw, absorb, on a very deep reservoir of Scottish traditional music, Celtic music, so that it infuses the character of some of the music.\footnote{Fiona Ritchie. Interview with James MacMillan, on \textit{The Thistle and the Shamrock}}

Aspects of Scottish traditional music can be found in this piece and includes, use of the pentatonic scale\footnote{As the term is used by ethnomusicologists} which often occurs in Celtic folk song as well as use of ornamented notes found in bagpipe and fiddle tunes. The most characteristic aspect of traditional Scottish music is the use of harmonic drones, well-known in bagpipe playing.

In MacMillan’s music, this technique is heard particularly in the pedal tones played by the violoncello and double bass in the \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross}, Such techniques as pedal tones or drones are common in MacMillan’s other music like \textit{So Deep} (1992).

In his interview with Richard McGregor, MacMillan explains:

I love drones… I’m writing choral music just now where I just can’t get away from it … It’s something about the rootedness of music that draws me to the importance of drones … The suspension of time which can bring about a cleaning of the ears, a
new impetus to listening, a new way of listening to what is to come.\textsuperscript{118}

In analyzing the piece the \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross}, there are clear stylistic similarities with Stravinsky’s compositions. Both composers are interested in the traditional folk music of their respective countries and incorporate folk tune-like passage into their works. Many of their compositions draw inspiration drawn from Catholic traditions. For example, MacMillan’s devotion to his religious belief is seen in not only his choral music, but also his instrumental music, such as \textit{The World’s Ransoming} and \textit{Veni, veni Emmanuel}. Those compositions are based on religious subjects, derived from plainchant, and correspond with specific liturgical occasions. Similarly, Stravinsky employs Catholic treats\textsuperscript{119} in his sacred works.

One of the key characteristics of contemporary choral music is sheer the variety of compositional and musical styles, which makes it difficult to describe and define in simple terms. For this reason, choral conductors should be aware not only of the technical demands and stylistic influences of the music, but also the historical background of the piece and composer when preparing a choral concert with this repertoire.

In the case of MacMillan’s \textit{Seven Last Words from the Cross}, the technical demands required of the conductor and performers are great because of the complexity of the rhythms and pitches and the importance of the conductor in giving clear beat patterns and cues. When preparing this piece, the conductor should think about who in the ensemble needs what information and plan his gestures and interpretation of the piece accordingly. In addition,

\textsuperscript{118} Richard McGregor. Interview with James MacMillan (2005) p.8
\textsuperscript{119} Such as texts, ideas
knowing MacMillan’s background and influences can enhance and inform the conductor’s interpretation of the music.

MacMillan’s composition *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, though each section is modest in scale, each presents a microcosm of the elements which support his compositional thinking in his much larger works, and particularly those with any kind of overtly religious sentiment such as *Veni Veni Emmanuel* (1992), *St. John Passion* (2007) and the *Magnificat* (1999).

MacMillan’s popularity is still growing and over the past few years, he has written many choral pieces and accepted further commissions, which will hopefully strengthen his place in choral repertoire. I hope that my analysis of the *Seven Last Words from the Cross* by James MacMillan will benefit choral conductors who are preparing this music and encourage scholars to expand on my research and explore other choral works by this important composer.
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## APPENDIX A

List of MacMillan’s Choral Works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Missa Brevis</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First complete performance - Capella Nova under Alan Tavener on November 22, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The Lamb has come for us from the House of David</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Schola Sancti Alberti by the composer at St. Peter's, Edinburgh on June 9, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>On Love</td>
<td>Solo/unison trebles, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Chapel of St Albert the Great, Edinburgh on August 18, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>St. Anne's Mass</td>
<td>Unison, Piano or Organ with optional SATB choir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Cantos Sagrados</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>Commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council for the Scottish Chamber Choir. First performance - Old St Paul's Church by Colin Tipple, Edinburgh on February 10, 1990 (1998, with Orchestra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Divo Aloysio Sacrum</td>
<td>SATB, optional organ</td>
<td>First performance - Royal Scottish National Choir and the Edinburgh Festival Ensemble by Christopher Bell at St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh on August 27, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>So Deep</td>
<td>SSAATTBB, optional Oboe, Viola</td>
<td>Arrangement of O my luve's like a red, red rose by Robert Burns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>...here in hiding...</td>
<td>ATTB Soli or Choir</td>
<td>Commissioned by the Hilliard Ensemble First performance - Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow on August 10, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Seven Last Words from the Cross (Cantata)</td>
<td>SSAATTBB, Strings</td>
<td>Commissioned by BBC Television First performance - Capella Nova, Scottish Ensemble by Alan Tavener, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Christus Vincit</td>
<td>Sop. Solo, SSAATTBB</td>
<td>First performance - combined choirs from Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral by John Scott at St Paul's Cathedral, London on November 23, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Máiri</td>
<td>16 part choir</td>
<td>Commissioned by the BBC First performance - BBC Singers by Bo Holten at St John's, Smith Square, London on May 19, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Seinte Mari moder milde</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>Commissioned by King's College, Cambridge First performance - Choir of Kings College by Stephen Cleobury in Cambridge on December 24, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Performance Details</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>A Child's Prayer</td>
<td>Two Soloists, SATB, First performance - Choir of Westminster Abbey by Martin Neary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in Westminster, London on July 4, 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Galloway Mass</td>
<td>Cantor &amp; Choir, SATB, Organ, First performance - Congregation of Good Shepherd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cathedral, Ayr on March 25, 1997</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Halie Speerit's Dauncers</td>
<td>Unison Children choir, Piano, Composed for the Corpus Christi Primary School, Glasgow on April 28, 1997</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Changed</td>
<td>SATB, Organ, Harp String, First performance - Cunninghame Choir and members of the North Ayrshire Youth Band by Dorothy Howden at Walker Hall, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire on December 12, 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Gallant Weaver</td>
<td>SATB, First performance - Paisley Abbey Choir by George McPhee at the Thomas Coats Memorial Church, Paisley on April 14, 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>A New Song</td>
<td>SATB, Organ, First performance - Robert Marshall on March 1, 1998. Composed for the choir of St Bride's Church, Glasgow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Prophecy</td>
<td>Two part choir, Instruments, First performance - children from the Haringey Schools and members of The Philharmonia by Nicholas Wilks, John Cooney and the composer at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London on October 11, 1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Quickening</td>
<td>Soloists, Children choir, SATB, Orchestra, Commissioned by the BBC Proms and the Philadelphia Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - Hilliard Ensemble, the Westminster Cathedral Boys' Choir, the BBC Symphony Chorus, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra by Sir Andrew Davis at the Royal Albert Hall, London on September 5, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Heyoka Te Deum</td>
<td>Three treble voices, Flute, Bells, Piano, Composed for the Brooklyn Youth Chorus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - by Dianne Berkon in New York on May 3, 2001</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Magnificat</td>
<td>SATB, Organ, Commissioned by the BBC for the first choral evensong of the Millennium</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - Choir of Winchester Cathedral by David Hill at Winchester Cathedral on July 15, 2000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Magnificat</td>
<td>SATB, Orchestra, First performance - Wells Cathedral Choir, the St. John's College Choir, and the BBC Philharmonic under the composer at Wells Cathedral, Wells on January 5, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The Company of Heaven</td>
<td>Children choir, Organ, Commissioned by Partick 2000, a grouping of churches and community organizations in the Partick area of Glasgow, to celebrate the Millennium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>SATB, Organ, Commissioned by Westminster Cathedral for the Millennium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Commissioned By</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td><em>Nunc Dimittis</em></td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>Winchester Cathedral</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - Choir of Westminster</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cathedral by Martin Baker at Westminster</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cathedral, London on June 22. 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td><em>The Birds of Rhiannon</em></td>
<td>SATB, Orchestra</td>
<td>BBC Proms</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - Choir of Winchester</td>
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<td>Cathedral by David Hill in Winchester</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cathedral, London on July 15, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Dutch Carol</em></td>
<td>Unison treble,</td>
<td>From traditional Dutch Christmas text</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Nunc Dimittis</em></td>
<td>SATB, Orchestra</td>
<td>BBC Singers and the BBC Philharmonic by the composer at Bridgewater Hall,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manchester on November 16, 2001</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Te Deum</em></td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>Chapel Royal, HM Tower of London</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First performance - Stephen Tilton at the Tower of London on February 3, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Tremunt videntes angeli</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Sir Eduardo Paolozzi in the Resurrection Chapel of St. Mary's Episcopal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cathedral, Edinburgh.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cathedral by Matthew Owens in St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh on May</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>9, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>O bone Jesu</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>The Sixteen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First performance - Harry Christophers at Southwark Cathedral, London on October</td>
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<td>10, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>To My Successor</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Choir of Canterbury</td>
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<td>Cathedral by David Flood at Canterbury</td>
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<td>Cathedral, Canterbury on February 27, 2003</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td><em>Chosen</em></td>
<td>SAATTB, Organ</td>
<td>Netherlands Chamber Choir</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Stephen Layton at St Janskerk, Gouda on December 24, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td><em>Give me justice</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Hymn</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Give me justice, O God</em></td>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>Hymn</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Gospel Acclamation</em></td>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>Chant</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Laudi alla Vergine Maria</em></td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Netherland Chamber Choir</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Choir by Stephen Layton at St Janskerk, Gouda on October 6, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>The Lord is my life my help</em></td>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>Chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>Remember your mercies</em></td>
<td>Unison</td>
<td>Chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td><em>Bless the Lord, my soul</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Psalm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td><em>Nemo te condemnavit</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Commissioned by the Yale Glee Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>First performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Out of the depths</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The Spirit of the Lord</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Factus est repente</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>In splendoribus</td>
<td>SATB, Trumpet, Organ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Sedebit Dominus Rex</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Videns Dominus</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>When he calls to me, I will answer</td>
<td>Unison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>After Virtue</td>
<td>SSAATBB</td>
<td>Commissioned by the Oslo International Church Music Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Invocation</td>
<td>Double choir</td>
<td>Composed for the Oriel Singers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Let the sons of Israel say</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Responsorial Psalm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>O Lord, you had just cause</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dominus dabit</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Mitte manum tuam</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sun Dogs</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Commissioned by Indiana University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Tenebrae Responsories</td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Commissioned by Capella Nova</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>...fiat mihi...</td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Composed for the Bath Camerata</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Our Father</td>
<td>Unison, Organ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>St. John Passion</td>
<td>Solo, SATB, Orchestra</td>
<td>Commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>First performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The Canticle of Zachariah&lt;br&gt;(The Strathclyde Motets)</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on December 2, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>O Radiant Dawn</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - The choir of St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on December 2, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Data est mihi omnis potestas</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on May 14, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Three part choir, Trumpet, String or Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Students of the St. Mary's Music School in Queen's Hall, Edinburgh on June 23, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The Song of the Lamb</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Choir of The House of Hope Presbyterian Church by Andrew Altenbach in St. Paul, Minnesota on March 9, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Pascha nostrum imolatus est</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on March 23, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Os mutorum</td>
<td>Two part, Harp</td>
<td>First performance - Canty at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on June 22, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Lux Aeterna</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on November 2, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them</td>
<td>Three part Choir</td>
<td>First performance - Jeffrey Skidmore at St Paul's Church, Birmingham on December 19, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Jubilate Deo</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Choir of Wells Cathedral by Owens at Wells Cathedral on May 17, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Miserere</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Commissioned by The Sixteen First performance - Harry Christophers in Antwerp on August 29, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Students of St. Aloysius' College in Glasgow on June 21, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Summae Trinitati</td>
<td>SATB, Brass,</td>
<td>First performance - Choir of Westminster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Work Title</td>
<td>Key, Instruments</td>
<td>Performance Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Tota pulchra es</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Choir of the Basilica at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on July 8, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Who are these angels?</td>
<td>TTBBB, Strings</td>
<td>First performance - DoelenKwartet and ensemble amarcord in Laurenskerk, Rotterdam on April 28, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Ave Maria</td>
<td>SATB, Organ</td>
<td>First performance - Boys, Girls and Men of All Saints Northampton by Lee Dunleavy at St George's Chapel, Windsor on July 27, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Lassie, wad ye loe me?</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Sonnet</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Qui meditabitur (The Strathclyde Motets)</td>
<td>SSATTBB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on February 17, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Benedictimus Deum caeli (The Strathclyde Motets)</td>
<td>SSATTB</td>
<td>First performance - Strathclyde University Chamber Choir by Alan Tavener at St Columba's RC Parish Church, Glasgow on May 30, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Think of how God loves you</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Choir of St Columba Church of Scotland, Glasgow by the composer on August 22, 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tu es Petrus</td>
<td>SATB, Brass, Percussion, Organ</td>
<td>Introtit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Since it was the day of Preparation,...</td>
<td>B solo, mixed soli or small chorus and ensemble</td>
<td>First performance - Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh William Conway, August 22, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Credo</td>
<td>SATB, Orchestra</td>
<td>First performance - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Chamber Choir, Northern Sinfonia Chorus, Rushley Singers at Royal Albert Hall, London on August 7, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Hodie Puer Nascitur</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Amsterdam Huelgas Ensemble, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra on April 13, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Children are a heritage of the Lord</td>
<td>SSATB</td>
<td>First performance - The Sixteen at Hatfield House on September 11, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Alpha and Omega</td>
<td>SSSAATTBB</td>
<td>First performance - Rockefeller Chapel Choir and Chicago University Motet Choir at Rockefeller Chapel on June 4, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>I Am Your Mother</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>First performance - Oxford Choir of Blackfriars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>First performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td><em>Missa Dunelmi</em></td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Durham Cathedral on February 27, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>Cum vidisset Jesus</em></td>
<td>SSSSAATTBB</td>
<td>Notre Dame Festival Chorus by Carmen-Hélène Téllez at Leighton Hall, DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, University of Notre Dame on September 15, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>Cecilia Virgo</em></td>
<td>Double choir</td>
<td>Royal Holloway, University of London at Royal Holloway on November 24, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td><em>Deus noster refugium</em></td>
<td>SSAATTBB, Organ</td>
<td>Leeds Festival Chorus by Simon Wright at Leeds Town Hall, on March 29, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td><em>A Rumoured Seed</em></td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>The Kings Singers at Perth Concert Hall on April 2, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td><em>Emitte lucem tuam</em></td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>London Choir of Cardinal Vaughan School at Westminster Cathedral on September 19, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td><em>I will take you from the nations</em></td>
<td>SSAATTBB</td>
<td>Oxford Merton College Choir on June 8, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td><em>Playing the Skyline</em></td>
<td>Children's choir, Marimba</td>
<td>Ex Cathedra at Town Hall, Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td><em>Seven Angels</em></td>
<td>Solo, SATB, Instruments</td>
<td>Ex Cathedra at Town Hall, Birmingham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B

Other Settings of “The seven last words”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Title (Year)</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orlando di Lasso (1530-1594)</td>
<td><em>Septem verba Domini Jesu Christi</em> (?)</td>
<td>Mottets 5 voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)</td>
<td><em>Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz, SWV 478 (1645, revised 1655)</em></td>
<td>Passion setting SATTB soloists SATTB choir Five instruments, B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustin Pfleger (1635-1686)</td>
<td><em>The seven last words from the cross (unknown)</em></td>
<td>Oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovanni B. Pergolesi (1710-1736)</td>
<td><em>Septem verba a Christo in cruce moriente prolata</em> (1730-1736)</td>
<td>STTB soloists Strings (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)</td>
<td><em>Die sieben Worte des Heilands am Kreuz</em> (1743)</td>
<td>Cantata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)</td>
<td><em>Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze, Hob. XX/1:A</em> (1787, String quartet)</td>
<td>Oratorio (1796) SSATB soloists SATB choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Javier (1730-1809)</td>
<td><em>The seven last words of Christ on the cross</em> (1787)</td>
<td>Oratorio SSATB soloists SATB choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francesco Galeazzi (1758-1819)</td>
<td><em>Strofe per le tre ore di agonia di Nostri Signor Gesu Christo</em> (1812)</td>
<td>Oratorio TTB soloist Piccolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian F. H. Uber (1781-1822)</td>
<td><em>Die letzten Worte des Erlösers</em> (1822)</td>
<td>Oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saverio Mercadante (1795-1870)</td>
<td><em>Le sette ultime parole di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo</em> (1838)</td>
<td>Oratorio SATB soloists SATB choir Pianoforte Accompagnamento di quartetto d'archi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gounod (1818-1893)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles de Notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ sur la Croix</em> (1855)</td>
<td>SATB soloists, Choir (pianoforte o organo ad libitum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugene Gautier (1822-1878)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles de Christ</em> (1855)</td>
<td>T solo, Choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>César Franck (1822-1890)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles du Christ sur la Croix</em> (1859)</td>
<td>SATTB soloists SATB choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles du Christ</em> (1867)</td>
<td>Oratorio SATB soloists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer</td>
<td>Work Title</td>
<td>Composition Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolphe Deslandres (1840-1911)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles du Christ</em> (1883)</td>
<td>B solo, Choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernand de La Tombelle (1854-1928)</td>
<td><em>Les sept Paroles de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ</em></td>
<td>String, Organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Hartmann (1863-1914)</td>
<td><em>Septum ultima verba Christi in cruce</em> (1908)</td>
<td>Oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Perosi (1872-1956)</td>
<td><em>Le sette parole di Gesù sulla Croce</em></td>
<td>Solo Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giuseppe Ramella (1873-1940)</td>
<td><em>Le sette parole di Gesù sulla Croce</em> (1908)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Maria Falduti (1897-1937)</td>
<td><em>Le sette Parole dell'agonia di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo</em></td>
<td>Oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luigi Bottazzolo (1845-1924)</td>
<td><em>Le sette parole di Croce</em> (1926)</td>
<td>CTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert James Dvorak (b.1919-)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words</em> (1945)</td>
<td>T solo, choir Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Ridout (1934-1996)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words</em> (1965)</td>
<td>Organ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sofia Gubaidulina (b.1931-)</td>
<td><em>Sieben Worte</em> (1982)</td>
<td>Cello</td>
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<tr>
<td>James MacMillan (b.1959-)</td>
<td><em>Seven Last Words from the Cross</em> (1993)</td>
<td>Cantata Choir Strings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ian Wilson (b.1964-)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words</em> (1995)</td>
<td>Trio Pianoforte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Hill Cobb (b.1951-)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words</em> (1998)</td>
<td>SATB choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idin Samimi Mofakham (b.1982-)</td>
<td><em>Seven Last Words From the Cross</em> (2008)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benjamin Cornelius-Bate (b.1978-)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross</em> (2009)</td>
<td>B. solo, choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawnie Olson</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words from the Cross</em> (2009)</td>
<td>Soloists, SATB choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome Malek</td>
<td><em>Seven Last Words</em> (2010)</td>
<td>Cantata Soloists, choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tristan Murail (b.1947-)</td>
<td><em>Les Sept Paroles for orchestra, chorus and</em></td>
<td>SATB choir Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daan Manneke (b.1939-)</td>
<td><em>Logos</em> (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sascha André Heberling (b.1975-)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Last Words</em> (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Elder (b.1986-)</td>
<td><em>Die sieben letzten Worte</em> (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fabrizio Bastianini</td>
<td><em>Seven Last Words from the Cross</em> (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Texts Translations and Original Chants

I. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do

Original Text

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do

-Luke 23:34

Additional Text

Hosanna filio David benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine
Rex Israel, Hosanni in excelsis

(Tr) Hosanna to the Son of David blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,
The King of Israel, Hosanna in the Highest


The life that I held dear I delivered into the hands of the unrighteous and my inheritance has
become for me like a lion in the forest.
My enemy spoke out against me,
‘Come gather together and hasten to devour him’.
They placed me in a wasteland of desolation, and all the earth mourned for me.
For there was no one who would acknowledge me or give me help.
Men rose up against me and spared not my life.

-The Good Friday Responsaries for Tenebrae (The Liber Usualis 1961, page 704-705)

Chants

\[
\text{Ant. 7} \\
\text{Osâna * fi-li-o Dávid : benedí-ctus qui vé-nit} \\
in nómine Dómi-nil. Rex Is-ra-él : Hosâna in \\
\text{excél-sis.}
\]
II. Woman, Behold Thy Son!...Behold, Thy Mother!

Woman, Behold Thy Son!...Behold, Thy Mother!

*Quia. R. Animam.*
III. Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise

Original Text
Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise

-Luke 23:43

Additional Text
Ecce Lignum Crucis in quo salus mundi pependit
Omnès: Venite adoremus

(Tr) Behold the Wood of the Cross on which The Saviour of the world was hung
Come let us adore him

-Good Friday Versicle (The Liber Usualis 1961, page 735-736)

Chant

IV. Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani

Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani

(Tr) My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

-Matthew 27:46
V. I thirst

Original Text

I thirst

- John 19:28

Additional Text

Ego te potaviaqua salutis de petra:
et tu me postast felle et aceto

(Tr) I gave you to drink of life-giving water from the rock:
and you gave me to drink of gall and vinegar

- The Good Friday Reproaches (The Liber Usualis 1961, page 740)

Chant

VI. It is finished

Original Text

It is finished

- John 19:30

Additional Text

My eyes were blind with weeping, for he that consoled me is far from me:
Consider all you people, is there any sorrow like my sorrow?
All you who pass along this way take heed and consider if there is any sorrow like mine.

- The Good Friday Responsaries for Tenebrae (The Liber Usualis 1961, page 712)

Chant
VII. Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit

Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit

-Luke 23:46