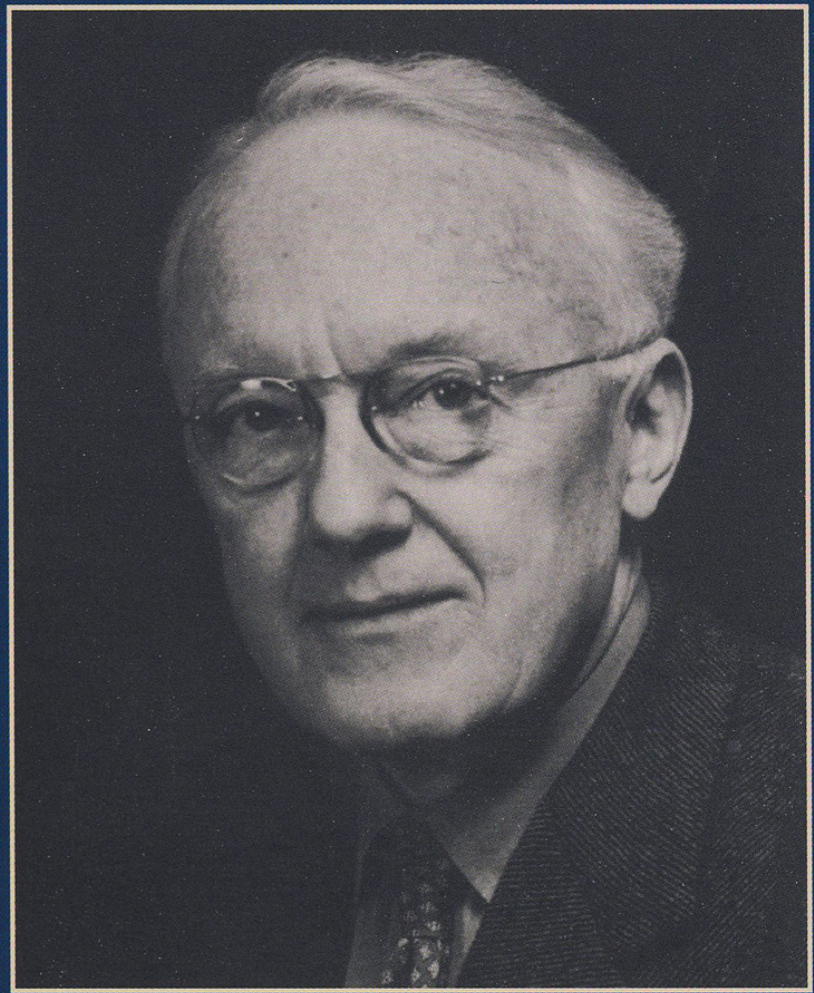


YE SHALL HAVE A SONG

choral music by **Randall Thompson**

The Peaceable Kingdom
Bitter-Sweet
The Best of Rooms
Alleluia
Four Odes of Horace
The Last Invocation

**American Repertory
Singers**
Leo Nestor, Director



Ye Shall Have a Song

Choral Music by Randall Thompson

Notes by Elliot Forbes

Since Randall Thompson (1899-1984) is perhaps America's most famous composer of choral music, it is significant that, at last, a retrospective selection of this music has been recorded. The American Repertory Singers under the direction of Leo Nestor perform, with professional sensitivity, a collection of works that date from 1922 (when Thompson was 23 years old) to 1970 (when the bulk of his choruses had already been written).

Starting with his early masterpiece, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, this offering then leaps to his last style represented by *Bittersweet* of 1970. There follows a series of songs which go backwards in chronological order (with but one exception) to the earliest work, *The Last Invocation*, composed in 1922. As a listening experience, this proves to be a revelation of the creative obsession, in its various stages, which Thompson had with the vocal medium.

A key to the premise that Thompson adopted in writing music is to be found in his view that "a composer's first responsibility is, and always will be, to write music that will reach and move the hearts of his listeners in his own day." To realize this he drew on two sources: first, his love of the contrapuntal and textural procedures of the 16th century — Palestrina, Lassus and their contemporaries; second, his conviction that inspiration springs from "our own genuine musical heritage in its every manifestation, every inflexion, every living example." The fusion of these two sources, the music of America and that of the Renaissance, is to be found in the first selection.

The Peaceable Kingdom (1935)

- I. *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit.*
- II. *Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue till night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operations of his hands.

Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of his hands. Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.

- III. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt. They shall be afraid: pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed at one another; their faces shall be as flames.*
- IV. *Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art dissolved.*
- V. *The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.*
- VI. *But these are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands.*
- VII. *Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?*
- VIII. *Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord.*

— from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

In 1934 a painting entitled "The Peaceable Kingdom" by Edward Hicks, the preaching Quaker of Pennsylvania, was acquired by the Worcester Art Museum. Thompson saw the painting and reacted to its inscription from Isaiah which ends: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." With characteristic thoroughness

in choosing texts for musical setting, he read all sixty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah and copied out all passages that might be feasible for his purpose. His purpose, the fulfillment of a long-held dream, was to write a sequence of sacred choruses based on the unfolding dramatic narrative.

The first chorus encapsulates the conflict. The opening tenor melody ("Say ye..."), *pianissimo* in major key, is answered by the melodic figure ("Woe unto the wicked...") in inversion, *fortissimo* in minor key. Contrasts between the rewards of the righteous and those of the wicked continue in quick succession ("Behold my servant...").

The next three choruses elaborate the plight of the wicked: Chorus II through fierce recitative; Chorus III through a series of chordal crescendos, punctured with sforzandos and increasing clash of dissonance, which leads to a powerful final crescendo into Chorus IV, a brilliant double chorus to be sung at a furious pace.

The relationship of Chorus IV to the one that follows is a wonder of thematic manipulation. Here are the textual elements: in Chorus IV (a) "howl" and (b) "dissolv'd," and in Chorus V (c) "shall wither." "Howl ye" opens with a leap downwards of an octave. Thereafter a process of inversion is at work. As the sopranos climb, the basses descend in the common motor rhythm comprised of long-short-short-long-short-short pulses. Then the "howl" becomes riveted around one pitch, with the same rhythmic propulsion, alternating with a step above and a step below, again against its inversion — sopranos and tenors versus altos and basses — two thematic vehicles with a single rhythmic figure. During the development of these two figures, a prophetic descent acts as a counter theme on the words "thou art dissolv'd." In the final section of Chorus IV, the rhythmic fury subsides as the "dissolv'd" theme takes over, again with its inversion. This sets the stage for Chorus V with the expression of "withering;" *allegro assai* has given way to *adagio*; predominant *forte* gives way to *pianissimo*. The composer has given the melody to the tenor; against this, miraculously, the second "howl" figure transformed into slow motion sounds in the treble voices with its inversion taken by the basses. The rising and falling in stepwise motion that follows recalls, and is derived from, the music for dissolution heard before. But now the art of inversion is more transparent; for nine measures, ending on "and be no more," the inversion continues literally between the outside voices, creating an aural equivalent of reflection emanating from the brook.

For the beginning of the resolution of this canny interconnection between movements, Thompson was influenced by an American source, namely the music of the *Sacred Harp* singers. Most of the tunes in the original *Sacred Harp*, while British in origin, had been

brought to New England and gradually taken down the Appalachian Range to the South. Folk songs had become hymns; and Thompson, in studying this music, was particularly struck by the role given the tenor of carrying the tune.

Chorus VI starts with a recitative which, as it were, dismisses the plight of the wicked, sung by men's voices *fortissimo*; whereupon contemplation of the reward of the righteous begins *lento* for double chorus, triple *piano*. The mode has moved from modal to tonal. As the pace quickens at the words "clap their hands," ingenious use of chorus answering chorus at close quarters illustrates this action in overlapping three-note figures sung *staccato* throughout. This is a musical carpet to a single soprano and single tenor who sing sustained notes *pianissimo*, introduced by a leap upwards of an octave: the final inversion of the original "howl."

Chorus VII is an introduction to the final Chorus VIII, from whence comes the title of this recording. Considering the extent of the drama that has brought one to this point, it is to Thompson's great credit that the "song" which follows forms a resounding climax, a full culmination to what has gone before. Two strategies set this up. The first is that the divided choruses now have distinguishing colors: women versus men. The second is that there is an overall build-up in intensity. The treble chorus opens exceedingly slow, with sweetest quietude (*pp dolcissimo*), and is answered by the lower chorus, echo-like, with quietest mystery (*ppp, mistico*). "Ye shall have a song" receives its answer: "and gladness of heart." The composer sets up a long-range crescendo, created by overlapping statements, made by the men, echoed by the women, in which, plateau-like, the volume is increased notch by notch. The final verse, "as when one goeth with a pipe..." interrupts this build-up twice over, with a more light-hearted section marked *più mosso*. The second time round it comes to an inconclusive standstill on a giant fermata-silence, as with Handel; then a majestic cadence of overpowering intensity brings the music to a triumphant resolution.

Bittersweet (1970)

Ah, my deare angrie Lord, Since thou dost love, yet strike;
Cast down, yet help afford; Sure I will do the like.

I will complain, yet praise; I will bewail, approve;
And all my sowre-sweet dayes I will lament, and love.

— George Herbert

This choral song is perhaps the most personal statement by Randall Thompson. His grandchild Katie had died recently and the music is dedicated to her memory. George Herbert's poem was suggested to him by Thomas Dunn, who conducted the first performance. The poet's message matched the composer's mood.

The choice of this piece to follow *The Peaceable Kingdom* is fortuitous. Once again there is a text with sharp contrasts: "Lord dost love, yet strike," "I will complain, yet praise," "bewail, approve," "lament, and love." The difference, of course, is the conciseness of the text here, and its close personal direction, pitting the Lord against "I." The alternation between harsh dissonance and resolution is almost instantaneous; sharp jabs of pain alternate with lyrical spinning out, for which Thompson is famous.

This song is in two parts to match Herbert's two stanzas. The strivings for tonal resolution take place at a mercurial pace to match textual gyrations. The consummate ease with which tonal writing is grafted on to chromatic manner is convincing. Rare are the points of clear sonority in the major mode; they come precisely with key words: "Sure I" ("will do the like"), "praise," "approve," "love." Indeed, the drawing out of the conflict between "lament" and "love" in the final cadence creates a penetratingly moving moment.

The Best of Rooms (1963)

Christ, He requires still, wheresoe'er He comes, To feed, or lodge, to have the best of rooms: Give Him the choice; grant Him the nobler part Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.

— Robert Herrick, from *Christ's Part* (1647)

On sabbatical from teaching at Harvard, January, 1963 found Thompson at his favorite retreat, Gstaad, Switzerland, where he could compose in peace. During this period he was much concerned with settings of religious texts, of which Robert Herrick's verses from his *Christ's Part* is a good example.

One overall mood is expressed by the four lines of poetry, and the music reflects two lines receiving twice the amount of music as the first. In the first section the soprano melody, starting on the fifth degree, E-flat, climbs up stepwise to an octave above and then falls back gracefully to the tonic, A-flat, in between. This single long phrase is facilitated by use of a sequential figure in the inner voices, and its climax at the two-thirds mark reaches a maximum marking of *mezzo forte*. The second section starts again *pianissimo*, but this time the soprano ascends higher and, with increased momentum, twice over reaches a fourth higher, to the top A-flat *fortissimo*, before falling to cadence on the last

line, "The best of all's the heart." But this is deceptive. A coda follows which, in its further descent in pitch and dynamics, repeats the last line as solemn reverence. Not only does the tempo return to the original *adagio intimo e devoto*, but also, in a final three-measure *molto lento*, with a hush of triple *piano*, there is an Amen-like effect, using one of Thompson's favorite progressions in his later music: a penultimate chord based on the lowered seventh degree to precede the tonic, to the words, "the heart."

Alleluia (1940)

The story of the origin of *Alleluia* is well known. For the first opening exercises of the Berkshire Music Center on July 8, 1940, Serge Koussevitzky requested from Randall Thompson a choral fanfare. But since this was at the time of the fall of France to the Nazis, Thompson felt in no mood to produce a chorus that was celebratory.

Since the word *Alleluia* has as one of its definitions "a song of praise to God," he felt comfortable with this one word as text, and he fulfilled his commission between July 1st and 5th. The copies of the manuscript arrived but a short time before the projected performance, and conductor G. Wallace Woodworth had less than an hour to prepare his chorus of Tanglewood students. His first words to them, approximately, were, "You will have no problem with the text; it is but one word." And this famous piece has been a part of the Center's opening ceremony each year since.

Choir directors, upon opening the score, are immediately disabused from the idea of making this a kind of joyful *Hallelujah!* It opens in a hushed (triple *piano*) *lento* (very slowly). The haunting beauty of this inspired work stems, first of all, from its mood of subdued sorrow combined with hope.

Remarkable is the fact that an opening phrase of thirteen measures supplies the whole thematic material for seventy-eight measures of music. The climax at top pitch of intensity, at roughly the three-quarters mark, has been prepared by a series of sweeping phrases which culminates in accent marks, acting like hammer blows, both on and off the main pulse. This leads to one of the greatest releases of tension to be found in the Thompson canon, in which the quickening pace preceding has been checked, controlled and guided back to the initial hushed *lento* with which the piece began.

Thompson's imaginative use of a single word is a model of flexibility. Al-le-lu-ia may be sung: (1) with equal emphasis on all four syllables, in quarters, in eighths as rhythmic diminution, or in halves as augmentation; (2) with the first two syllables acting as up-beat

to a longer, held “lu,” which may be a held note or a flowing melisma; (3) with all three beginning syllables as up-beat to a prolonged “ia,” (4) with a drawn-out emphasis on both “al” and “lu.” These various treatments are woven together so that at a given moment there may be each of the four voices with a different rhythmic treatment, or three against one, or two against two. What marks the return of the slow tempo (*Lento*) is that for the first time all four voices move as one over an extended stretch. The alto’s whisper before the final *Amen* points out this contrast.

With the concentration on but one word in its ever-changing rhythmic manner, this aural experience comes to the verge of absolute music, expressed in choral terms.

The Odes of Horace

Having received a three-year composition fellowship in 1922 at the American Academy in Rome, Thompson moved to Italy in the fall of that year. Settled at the Academy, he was urged by a fellow student to read the works of the Latin poet, Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65–8 B.C.), better known as Horace.

Another influence at this time was his meeting with composer Francesco Malipiero, who at that time was beginning to edit the works of Monteverdi. Specifically, Malipiero persuaded the young composer that to write for the vocal medium was a road to the highest purpose in artistic creation.

His urge to compose came into focus as he studied the poet’s greatest work, the three volumes of Odes written in 19 B.C. In April, 1924, Thompson began work on five of these odes, of which three are included in this collection. (A sixth setting, *Felices ter*, was written thirty years later.) They represent a stunning and relatively unknown part of Thompson’s output, combining the influence of his elder contemporaries, Malipiero and Respighi, with his newly found energy, stimulated by the late Renaissance style of Monteverdi.

O fons Bandusiae (1924)

*O fons Bandusiae, splendidior vitro,
dulci digne mero, non sine floribus,
cras donaberis hædo
cui frons turgida cornibus*

O Bandusian stream, brighter than crystal,
worthy of sweet wine and flowers,
tomorrow you shall be honored with a young goat,
whose brow, with horns just budding,

*primis et venerem et prælia destinat.
frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi
rubro sanguine rivos
lascivi suboles gregis.*

*te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculæ
nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile
fessis vomere tauris
præbes et pecori vago.*

*fies nobilium tu quoque fontium,
me dicente cavis impositam ilicem
saxis, unde loquaces
lymphæ desiliunt tuæ.*

foretells of love and strife.

But alas! in vain: for your icy waters
shall be dyed with the red blood
from this sportive offspring of the flock.

The terrible blazing season of the Dog-Days
cannot touch the lovely coolness you give
to oxen fatigued with the ploughshare
and to the roaming flocks.

You, too, shall become a celebrated stream,
made famous by my words about the oaks
planted over your grotto
whence your loquacious waters leap.

Thompson visited the alleged site of the Font Bandusia, the subject of Horace’s thirteenth ode in Book III. While the poem contains four 4-line stanzas, the music follows the textual meaning, whereby the first five lines, to the word “*destinat*,” form a first section, a lovely revolving between G tonal and G modal.

The second section takes the remaining lines of stanza two, lines five to eight, and repeats the last line. With the beginning word “*frustra*,” the mood darkens with initial sforzandos. The original opening melody, with its alternating thirds, now is in the minor, transposed down a fourth, a striking change of mood.

Section three, devoted to the full third stanza, is a trio: the tenor has the text in quasi-recitative, while the treble voices soar on the syllable “A.” The effect is reminiscent of passages in the madrigals of Marenzio and Monteverdi: floating counterpoint makes possible, step by step, a slow descent, with triadic emphasis, successively, on F-sharp, E, and then D.

Thompson has saved the sound of the basses, now divided, to introduce the denouement, the nobility of the fountain. We are back on G. The return of the opening theme is marked *con dignita*. The original melodic answer becomes the thematic basis for an extended final section, on the words, “*unde loquaces lymphæ desiliunt tuæ*” (“whence thy babbling clear waters leap down”). To suggest the babbling waters, the theme has been transformed into a running figure in eighth notes, rising and then falling. The texture has been expanded to six voices, three women versus three men, whereby the full glory of Monteverdian sonority can be recalled. In the last five measures, the texture thins out,

and the alto line, with a rise and fall worthy of William Byrd, leads in a re-emphasis of the Mixolydian mode with which the chorus began.

Vitas hinnuleo me similis (1924)

*Vitas hinnuleo me similis, Chloë,
quærenti pavidam montibus aviis,
matrem non sine vano
aurarum et silvæ metu.*

*nam seu mobilibus vepri inhorruit
ad ventos foliis, seu virides rubum
dimovere lacertæ,
et corde et genibus tremat.*

*atqui non ego te tigris ut aspera
Gætulusve leo frangere persequor:
tandem desine matrem
tempestitiva sequi viro.*

You shun me, Chloe, like a fawn
that seeks its mother over trackless hills,
filled with needless terror
of the woods and breezes.

If the briar rustles in the wind
with its moving leaves, or if green lizards
push aside the bramble,
its [the fawn's] knees and heart shiver.

Yet my purpose is not to crush you
like a savage tiger or Gaetolian lion.
Cease at last to follow your mother,
now you are ripe for a man.

This chorus is remarkable in many ways. Thompson has chosen a text (Book I, 23) which is violent and purposeful, and he meets the challenge brilliantly. Each of the three stanzas has its own mood, and the musical setting enhances it. The first concerns the desire for Chloe, who clings like a fawn to her mother to escape danger; the second elaborates this fear by suggestive specific perils from nature; the third clarifies the desire: the conquest is not to be an act of savagery, leave thy mother, thou art ripe for a mate.

The rapid changes in tempo (*Agitato, Allegro, Ritenuto, Moderato*) and in meter are dictated by the rhythm and meaning of the individual words. Accents, rise and fall of sound, fast changing dynamics, all contribute to the mercurial shifts in expression, word by word.

Dissonant clashes abound, not only in mid-phrase but also at cadences. Uncharacteristically, the final cadence leaves for the ear the unresolved sonority of two superimposed fourths, crescendo-diminuendo, on the telling last word "viro" ("man"). Musical reaction to the text takes place at break-neck speed. To give two examples, which occur consecutively, we draw in the second stanza from the end of the first line to the beginning of the second. One, the terror of "inhorruit" is expressed by the repeated soundings of two sets of minor ninths simultaneously, B-C and E-F (already established four measures earlier

on the word "metu"); two, with the words "ad ventus" ("in the wind"), the voices create an eerie effect by the pairing of alto and tenor in octaves against soprano and bass two octaves apart, in imitation; a sailing passage with swells starts *pianissimo* and ends in a crescendo to *forte*. The marvel is that, with these fast-moving effects, the chorus as a whole has a compelling coherence.

Montium custos (1924)

*Montium custos nemorumque, Virgo,
quæ laborantis utero puellas
ter vocata audis adimisque leto,
diva triformis,*

*imminens villæ tua pinus esto,
quam per exactos ego lætus annos
verris obliquom meditantis ictum
sanguine donem.*

Guardian of hill and grove, O Virgin Goddess,
who, invoked three times, attends to young mothers
in labor, and rescues them from death,
Goddess of triple form,

yours be the pine tree that overhangs my house,
that through the passing years I may gladly kill
a young boar practicing its first sidelong thrusts
and make an offering of its blood to you.

The lapping melody of the Bandusian Font led to the head-strong desire of the song to Chloe. Now we come to a "Dedication of a Pine Tree to Diana." Although the ode (Book III, 22) is an invocation, in both stanzas the level of suggestion shifts suddenly from the lofty to the earthy. Meanwhile the music is a study in thematic concentration, a quintessential example of Thompson's contrapuntal craft. It is a masterpiece created with an economy of means.

As in "The Paper Reeds by the Brooks" from *The Peaceable Kingdom*, mirror writing (a melodic figure against its inversion) comes to the fore. But the figures are shorter and lend themselves also to imitation between voices at an intense level, thematic manipulation often through augmentation, diminution, and fragmentation.

Indeed, every note written for the four voices drives from one of four melodic germs. The second phrase of the soprano, starting with the words, "quæ laborantis utero puellas ter vocata audis," states them in succession: (1) repeated notes, as in a chant ("quæ laborantis utero pu-"); (2) three notes in slow motion rising stepwise ("el-las"); (3) a telling leap up a fourth, followed by a graceful fall, down by a step, then by a third, and again by step ("ter vo-ca-ta"); (4) a concluding drop of a third ("au-dis"), an augmentation of the drop of a third immediately preceding.

The tight binding of these melodic motives in consistent development stands in con-

trast to the shifting moods of the text where the goddess as guardian of nature is called to the rescue of young girls, where the poet, in gratitude, dedicates a pine tree by serving up the blood from a boar, exercising animal thrusts, as a gift. The music takes in stride these mercurial changes. The first stanza is consistently elegaic. The music of the second stanza, however, becomes animated, with an acceleration of tempo and a climax in volume and pitch, which melts with ease into a resumption of the original rhythmic gait. Emphasis on “thrust” (“ictum”) gives way to “the giving of blood” (“sanguine donem”), in a beautiful crescendo. Thompson is now ready with one of his most elegant codas, based on the word “donem.” Marked *dolcissimo*, the outer voices treat the essence of the third musical germ in mirror form sequentially; this allows the alto to enter in diminution, the tenor in imitation of the soprano, and the bass in augmentation against the soprano, which has now reached a closing statement of the theme in diminution.

Felices ter (1953)

*Felices ter et amplius,
quos inrupta tenet copula
nec malis divolsus queri moniis
suprema citius solvet amor die.*

Thrice happy they, and even more,
whom a bond unbroken ever binds,
who are not torn apart by evil quarreling,
whose love is dissolved only at death's final day.

In the spring of 1954, Randall's teacher, Archibald T. Davison, retired from the Harvard music faculty. In order to create a tribute for a concert celebrating this event, he turned once again to Horace and found an appropriate text in a fragment (lines 17-20) of Ode 13 from Book I. The polyphony adheres faithfully to the style of 16th century motets, which he had begun studying some thirty-five years earlier. In its seamless flow one senses the love and satisfaction that he had in returning to an aesthetic with which his immersion into choral music began. As the Thompson scholar, David F. Urrows, has written, it “sounds like Palestrina, but it is pure Thompson.”

The Last Invocation (1922)

*At the last, tenderly,
from the walls of the powerful fortified house,
from the clasp of the knitted locks,
from the keep of the well closed doors,
Let me be wafted.*

*Let me glide noiselessly forth,
with the key of softness unlock the locks with a whisper,
Set ope the doors, O Soul!
At the last, be not impatient!
Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh!
Strong is your hold, O love!*

— Walt Whitman

When Thompson returned to Harvard to take up graduate work, he wrote a six-part chorus on a text by Walt Whitman, which he submitted as one of three works for the Prix de Rome.

Its interest is two-fold. First, it shows the early mastery of writing for voices in as many as six parts, extending momentarily to eight as the climax is prepared. The absorption and sure emulation of the drama of the late 16th century informs his build-up to this climax which, after a beat of silence, bursts out with the words, “Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh!”, sung triple *forte*, and adamantly, *non diminuendo* in the score. Then the last line, “O strong is your hold, O Love” is marked simply *piano dolce*. Notice the difference in the dynamics for the repeat of both these lines: the “hold” of flesh starts *mezzo forte*, reaches triple *forte*, then quickly subsides to *piano*. The new feeling of flexibility, of yielding, is there for each listener to interpret on his or her own.

The second interest in this more recently published piece is that it is prophetic in its combination of words and music: an American text is set in the *a cappella* tradition of Renaissance Europe. Thompson's creative journey had started.

Elliot Forbes (Harvard University AB 1941, MA 1947) was, from 1958, a close faculty colleague of Randall Thompson at Harvard University. As Fanny Peabody Professor of Music at Harvard, Prof. Forbes was also conductor of the Harvard Glee Club, the Radcliffe Choral Society, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus. Thus, Prof. Forbes conducted many performances of works by Randall Thompson in the presence of the composer. Now retired, Prof. Forbes still lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and continues to write about music and especially about the musical history of Harvard University.

Leo Nestor, Artistic Director and Conductor, came to Washington, D. C. from Los Angeles in 1984 to assume the position of Music Director at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. A life-long devotee of and participant in the choral art, he pursued study in composition, choral music, conducting and classics at California State University, Hayward, and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, where he received his graduate degrees with highest honors. Under Dr. Nestor's direction, the choir of the Basilica has achieved national prominence and is acclaimed by the Washington Post as "one of Washington's secret treasures." A singer's conductor first, Nestor has envisioned for **ARS** a stylistic and vocal malleability of unparalleled diversity as response to the literature at hand.

The **American Repertory Singers**, Leo Nestor, Artistic Director, is a professional vocal ensemble resident in Washington, D.C. **ARS** singers are selected not only for their vocal ability and sensitive musical understanding, but also for their range of flexibility in matters of ensemble. Although **ARS** performs music of all periods, it particularly espouses American music, especially that of our day.

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