

Choral Reviews:

- [**Caritas abundant in omnia**] The singers and accompaniment present Hildegard's text hauntingly. [**Verbum caro factum est**] is ... soberly effective (Organists' Review)
- The work of Randall Giles is particularly impressive. **Verbum caro factum est** ... is haunting. ... The effect is fresh and perfectly suited to the mystical nature of the text. (Journal of the Royal Canadian College of Organists)
- [**Ubi caritas est vera**] the effort to do it well will be most rewarding. ...wonderful Eucharistic settings (Modern Liturgy)
- [**Ave Verum Corpus**] creates an ethereal, somewhat removed mood. (The Diapason)
- [**Verbum caro factum est**] well written and highly adaptable ... A good addition to music for men's voices. (Cross-Accent—the Journal of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians)
- [**There Is No Rose**] this refreshing setting of the well-known sixteenth century English carol will challenge our finest women's groups. ... Excellent women's choirs will be rewarded for their efforts with this fine piece (Choral Journal)
- [**Ave Maria, gracia Dei plena; There is no rose; A Carol for Peace: Jesu for thy mercy endless**] They are all "push the envelope" pieces (especially the second), and for that reason are worth a look by composers who are interested in seeing some of the current "outer limits" for church and choral music. As for performance, they are for advanced church groups or college choirs only. Not for the timid! (Association of Anglican Musicians *Journal*)
- [**Ave verum corpus**] a beautiful quasi-organum setting for SAB, reminiscent (to me) of Stravinsky's Pater Noster and Ave Maria. ... the Ave Verum is the most accessible to average groups, and is worth serious consideration by many directors.
- **Rorate Caeli** is equally elegant and sophisticated, with spare harmonies that find their true rest in octaves and open fifths. It is a lovely setting in carol form, with its winning refrain opening, closing and separating two stanzas. (AAM *Journal*)
- Easily the most difficult music of this lot is Randall Giles's stunning [**Four Motets and a Chorale**] **quia id quod accidit** and **Vinea mea electa** are unaccompanied pieces of uncompromising dissonance and difficulty; **Attolite portas** and **Christus factus est** are accompanied works with triadic harmony. In the former, the energy of the counterpoint gives off a glistening intensity, whereas in the latter unrelated major and minor chords are juxtaposed like primary colors to create the sensuous vibrancy of a Gustav Klimt canvas. The original accompaniment of these movements is for organ and brass sextet, which may be rented from Paraclete Press. Mr Giles was kind enough to submit the chorale, [**Crux fidelis**] It's a beauty, and (as our families say about the good people we date) it's a keeper! (AAM *Journal*)
- [**Word of God who spoke through whirlwinds**] This beautiful, useful, inspiring anthem belongs in the libraries of all choirs that love beautiful lines and can sing in four parts. (AAM *Journal*)
- **And Make Me New** (John Donne's Holy Sonnet "Batter my heart, three person'd God") has so successfully penetrated and internalised the text that it gives new life to it and brings deeper meaning. I am particularly taken by the contrast between the solo reed figurations and the expansive choral writing; the reed recitatives dart and stutter like an anguished soul, while the choir sings of an even more intense passion. By contrast, Giles's setting of George Herbert's '**Antiphon**' (Let all the world in every corner sing) begins very simply, with clear,

common-practice block chords; there is even a small homage to Ralph Vaughan Williams' setting in the Five Mystical Songs: "My God and King" is set to hemiola. What looks deceptively simple on paper is, in fact, a very sophisticated piece. The spacing and voicing of the simple chords are perfectly calculated to "ring", and the organ grows so imperceptibly in intensity and complexity that the piece reaches its grand conclusion seamlessly. (*AAM Journal*)

- [**A Hymnary**, 1968-1997] It is a great privilege to write of the work of these two illustrious composers, one an applicant for membership in the AAM [Randall Giles], the other a long-time member of the association [David Ashley White]. Both of their publications are highly recommended and should be at least in the reference library of all. ... He has a gift for writing hymn tunes which envelop and embrace the texts, even while refusing to let them fall into pat bits of rhythmic verse. ... the more I know Giles' music, the more I know he is that rare thing: an individual voice speaking in and through great beauty. (*AAM Journal*)
- ... I have no less enthusiasm for Randall Giles' 27-measure jewel, **Adoramus te, Christe**. Although much more accessible by comparison [with other pieces in this review] it demands no less from the singers and rewards the listeners to an equal degree. (*AAM Journal*)
- Randall Giles' two works are what we have come to expect and treasure: Uncompromising visions of clarity and intensity which will call for the best of singers and call forth the best in those singers. ... while they are not for the faint hearted, they are, nonetheless richly rewarding. The two carols may be the more useful of the three, and their strophic form is perhaps more inviting... **Jesu, fili virginis** has the timeless sound of genius about it, (*AAM Journal*)
- In **O magnum mysterium**. the chromaticism of the Alleluia is a moment of transcendent beauty. Those who can sing this music should. (*AAM Journal*)
- Randall Giles' fetching **Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis** is an ideal addition to Lessons and Carols (either Advent or Christmas) where it will bring freshness and originality to the Annunciation reading. Veni, veni Emmanuel ... is, quite simply, the stuff of choral dreams: it does everything and more than we can either desire or pray for this beloved tune and text. (*AAM Journal*)
- Randall Giles has two more settings of great beauty, **Jesu dulcis memoria** (So perfect for the feast of the Holy Name) is given on of those quintessential settings that Randy does so well. ... This should be required repertory for all major choral situations. **To many a well** is a glowing setting ... This stunning music which demands a great deal of both singers and listeners, but-like all great art-its demands spring from its integrity and represent only a small token of what its creation must have cost its author. We can only continue to be enormously grateful to Randy for his gifts to our life and worship. (*AAM Journal*)
- Randall Giles has kept the tradition of alternatum in his delicious setting of **Jesu, dulcis memoria**. ...A cosmic-shifting "Amen closes this particularly glorious setting. (*AAM Journal*)
- "...Among the many other selections, I particularly admire modern composer Randall Giles's '**Sancta Maria, Ora pro Nobis**,' an old English carol setting that weaves a wondrous tapestry of sound, with its quasi-modal harmonies flavored by ingenious, non-grating dissonances..." (American Record Guide)