

Commissioned by and dedicated to the Central Bucks High School-West Chamber Choir; Dr. Joseph Ohrt, conductor
With support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington, DC
Premiered at the National Gallery in Washington DC, Jan. 2008

NORTHERN LIGHTS

For SATB Chorus, a cappella

Duration: Approx. 4:35

Oslo, Jan., 2008

Text from
SONG OF SOLOMON

Music by
OLA GJEILO

p ♩ = 63

Soprano
Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, ___

Alto
p
Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me -

Tenor
p
Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me -

Bass

Keyboard
(for rehearsal only)
p ♩ = 63

Copyright © 2010 Walton Music Corp.
A Division of GIA Publications, Inc.
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

A *mp* a - mi - ca me -

mf a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca me - a, su - a - vis et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je -

mp a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca

mp Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca

A *mp*

mf

mp

mf **B** a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca me - a, su - a - vis et de - co - ra si - cut Je -

ru - sa - lem, Pul - chra es, su - a - vis et de - co - ra si - cut Je -

mf me - a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca me - a, pul - chra es, a - mi - ca

mf me - a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca me - a, pul - chra es, a - mi - ca

B *mf*

13

mp *p*

ru - sa - lem, Pul - chra es, pul - chra

mf *mp*

ru - sa - lem, et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je - ru - sa - lem, et de - co - ra si - cut Je -

mp *p*

me - a, pul - chra es, pul - chra

mp *p*

me - a, pul - chra es, pul - chra

mp *p*

13 *mp* *p*

17

mp

es, ter - ri - bi - lis

ru - sa - lem,

es,

es,

mp

17

ut cas - tro - rum a -

mp Pul - chra es, pul - chra es,

mp Pul - chra es, pul - chra es,

mp Pul - chra es, pul - chra es,

mp

21

- ci - es or - di - na - ta.

pul - chra es, pul - chra,

pul - chra es, pul - chra,

pul - chra es, pul - chra,

pul - chra es, pul - chra,

25

29

mf

Pul - chra es, pul - chra

f

A - ver - te o - cu - los tu - os a me,

mf

Pul - chra es, pul - chra

mf

Pul - chra es, pul - chra

mf *f* *mf*

29 *mf*

33

es, pul - chra es, a -

qui - a ip - si me a - vo - la - re

es, pul - chra es, a -

es, pul - chra es, a -

33

37

mi - ca me - a.
fe - ce - runt, a -
mi - ca me -

37

41

mi - ca me - a.
ca me - a.
a.

ff

41

45

C *p*

Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca

p

Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca

p

Pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, ___ pul-chra es, ___ a - mi - ca

45

49

D *mp*

me - a, Pul - chra es, ___ a -

mf

me - a, Pul - chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, ___ su - a - vis

mp

me - a, Pul - chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, su - a - vis

mp

Pul - chra es, ___ a - mi - ca me - a, su - a - vis

D *mp*

mf

mp

49

52

mi - ca me - a, Pul - chra es, a - mi - ca
 et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je - ru - sa - lem. Pul - chra
 et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je - ru - sa - lem. Pul - chra
 et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je - ru - sa - lem. Pul - chra

55

me - a, su - a - vis et de - co - ra si - cut Je - ru - sa - lem, Pul - chra
 es, a - mi - ca me - a, et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je -
 es, a - mi - ca me - a, Pul - chra
 es, a - mi - ca me - a, Pul - chra

59

es, pul - chra es, pul - chra
 ru - sa - lem, et de - co - ra fi - li - a Je - ru - sa - lem, et de - co - ra si - cut Je -
 es, a - mi - ca me - a, pul - chra
 es, pul - chra es, pul - chra

59

63 *mp* **poco meno mosso** *p*

mp **poco meno mosso** *p*
 es, Pul - chra es,
mp *p*
 ru - sa - lem.
mp *p*
 es, Pul - chra es,
mp *p*
 es, Pul - chra es,
poco meno mosso
mp *p*

63

67 **meno mosso**
pp

pul - chra es. _____

pul - chra es. _____

pul - chra es. _____

pul - chra es. _____

meno mosso
pp

67

About the Work

Northern Lights is my most Norwegian production in years; composed in an attic outside of Oslo at Christmas time in 2007, it's one of the few works I have written in Norway since I moved to New York in 2001. The US is my home now, so I guess my work has been increasingly reflecting my love for American music, writing and scenery. Most of all, this piece and its text is about beauty. About a "terrible," powerful beauty, although the music is quite serene on the surface:

*Pulchra es amica mea,
suavis et decora sicut Jerusalem,
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.
Averte oculos tuos a me
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.*

Thou are beautiful, O my love,
sweet and comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army set in array.
Turn away thy eyes from me,
for they have made me flee away.

Looking out from the attic window that Christmas in Oslo, over a wintry lake under the stars, I was thinking about how this "terrible" beauty is so profoundly reflected in the northern lights, or *aurora borealis*, which, having grown up in the southern part of the country, I have only seen once or twice in my life. It is one of the most beautiful natural phenomena I've ever witnessed, and has such a powerful, electric quality that must have been both mesmerizing and terrifying to people of the past, when no one knew what it was and when much superstition was attached to these experiences.

Northern Norway is one of the areas where *aurora borealis* is easiest to spot, thanks to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream, which makes the area habitable. At www.visitnorway.com, you can find incredible pictures of the *aurora borealis* phenomenon, pictures that also greatly inspired this piece.

– Ola Gjeilo