

HEAVEN & EARTH:

⌘ A Celtic Mass ⌘

For mixed chorus, Celtic band
solo quartet, and organ or strings

by

Ben Allaway

⌘ The Co-Commissioning Project

American composer Ben Allaway, known for his original music influenced by world cultures from Africa to Australia, explores his own ethnic Scottish heritage in *CELTIC MASS*, a major work-in-progress for choir, Celtic band (adaptable, choose from among fiddle, tin-whistle, guitar, mandolin, accordion, Irish or Scottish harp, Irish pipes, flute, the Celtic drum called the bodhran), solo quartet, and organ or strings. It will also be published in a version with piano accompaniment.

The work acknowledges the pan-Celtic experience of the various peoples of the British Isles, those who lived out their lives in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England and continue to do so, and others who journeyed from those places to America in search of greater opportunities. Ben is working with choirs across the United States—so far in Oregon, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and New Jersey—each group commissioning a movement and having their Celtic connection expressed in the piece. The connection may be the heritage of their conductor, their town, or that of a particular choir member, or a conductor may have a particular interest in some aspect of Celtic spirituality, music or culture. This brochure will give many details about how the work is conceived and what opportunities are still available for choirs to help shape individual pieces and bring the complete work into existence.

⌘ The Texts: Sacred and Secular Meet

For those who left, the immigrant experience was fraught with uncertainty. They leaned heavily on their faith and on each other. Since Celtic spirituality has strong themes and imagery of place, home, family, community, the land and the cosmos, most of the movements of *CELTIC MASS* tell the story or expresses the essence of an individual or family experience and something of their setting. In a couple of cases it is the collective experience of a city or a nation, as in *Agnus Dei*; *The Lambs of Belfast*. These stories are told drawing direct inspiration—cues, if you will, or commentary—from the Latin text of

the Ordinary of the Mass, which is incorporated in its entirety. If we look at the Mass as God's response to the human condition, each movement has an emotional landscape. The stories are being chosen to fit the human experiences and emotions that each part of the mass was written to address.

A gifted lyricist and poet, Ben has created the texts for over 50 published works. He is creating the texts for much of the work based on his travels, genealogy work and research in the UK and throughout the U.S. Ben is married to a gifted poet, Julianne Allaway, a frequent collaborator, and Julianne has contributed significantly to the Agnus Dei movement. She has helped find a way to give voice to the hope-filled spirit of children, that shows us that love is the only way through such pain and grief and enmity, that healing will happen when we allow ourselves to love.

Other poets involved include Jabez Van Cleef, who turned has turned one of St. Patrick's stories into evocative verse for the last movement, PACEM: Find Love. Mairead Maguire champions St. Patrick as Ireland's first non-violent peace activist, pointing out his saying, "In Christ there is no killing." Welsh poets Grahame Davies, Gwyn Thomas and Eurig Salisbury have been commissioned to provide three distinct poems, partly in Welsh, for BENEDICTUS: Wigley's Blessing. This movement is based on the life experiences which molded the career path of Dafydd Wigley, two-time Member of Parliament from Wales and former head of the Welsh National Party and cousin of Paul Wigley, a Minnesota choral director and friend of Ben's. The poems extol the beauty of the Welsh language; portray a march by unemployed slate quarry workers, showing the need for social and economic justice in any nationalist policies; mourn the flooding of the Tryweryn Valley by the City of Liverpool, which galvanized Dafydd's generation to advocate for Wales' interests in the political arena with new force. Dafydd's wife, renowned harpist Elinor Bennett, will be honored with the inclusion of harp in the scoring of this movement.

An example of how the Latin text triggers points in the story is found, for instance, in the *Gloria in the Highlands* movement, when "*in excelsis*," or "in the highest," becomes "in the highlands" as this family with roots in the Scottish Highlands settles at the foot of Mt. Adams in the high country of the Columbia River Valley. The word "*terra*" is connected to talk of the land that is now so important to the young couple, carrying with it the auspicious blessing of "peace and goodwill" for their time on it:

The smoke was in the mountain,
the sleet was on the bay—*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*
My heart burst open, a fountain
That sang a roundelay—
I from my boat, I saw
The sun break o'er the highland—*Terra, terra, et in terra*
Aye, docked and broke into
A run for your and my land—*Terra, terra, et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis*

Another passage shows the integration of work, life and faith:

Hard on ourselves and easy on each other
Laying out our fleece in the highlands—*tu solus altissimus (you alone are the most high)*
Our Father in the morn, and with Christ, our brother—*Jesu Christe*
Tillin' by the Spirit in the highlands!—*cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris (Father)*

At other times, the Latin will comment on or respond to the action, as in the opening *Kyrie on "Logan Dell,"* when the choir's "Kyrie eleison" or "Lord have mercy" foreshadows and then laments the untimely passing of a young father:

Alas, my song is stilled;
Yon meadow lies untilled.
Kyrie eleison

Pacem: Find Love, the *Dona nobis pacem* movement, commissioned by the Harmonium Choral Society, will describe the foundation for peace that has been laid and resolute peace that has been holding fast in Northern Ireland since the Peace Process was ratified by both sides of the conflict. The accord has recently stood the test of a violent attack by an extremist group which claimed the lives of two police officers and a third official. Leaders of both sides stood together and urged the people not to retaliation, and none was made.

Ben travelled to Belfast in September and was given a tour of sites of the "troubles" by Nobel Peace Prize-winning activist Mairead Maguire and Peace People president Gerry Grehan. It was a powerful and moving time, and Ben is working hard to create something of lasting value to be supportive of the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland. All are urged to look forward and hold fast to the vision of a peaceful land and people that has been holding for over a decade. Keep Northern Ireland in your prayers.

The Harmonium Choral Society, Madison, NJ, has chosen to tell this story, this good news of a long and bloody battle finally resolved. They also wanted to highlight the talent of a young neighborhood violinist who is an International Irish Fiddle champion.

What story might you and your choir like to tell?

⚔ The Music

Ben has always enjoyed exploring and absorbing a particular style and then creating original music within that style, as opposed to doing arrangements of existing songs. So he is writing original tunes and lyrics in the Celtic style, and creating songs which tell stories in the tradition of the great Celtic ballads, both tragic and exuberant. He has played and listened to Celtic music over the years, but has recently immersed himself, playing with local Celtic musicians and listening to recordings of The Chieftains, Tommy Sands, Tony McManus, Carreg Lafar, Llan de Cubel and others. He travelled to Ireland, Scotland and Wales in September of 2009 to soak up as much about the music and spirituality as he can, as well as to meet with musicians, visit possible venues for the UK premieres, and research some family histories for the stories to be told.

TOMMY SANDS and his IRISH BAND have committed to coming to Des Moines to be the core group for the World Premiere and Tour. (www.tommysands.com) Celtic bands-- and this is especially true of Tommy's band-- have a lot of variety, and many musicians play more than one instrument. So a group of three or four versatile musicians can add six or eight wonderful colors to a larger work. Ideally there would be six players in the band for *CELTIC MASS* so that in the bigger moments of the work there would be a substantial sound. A bass instrument is notably missing from the typical Celtic ensemble, but the organ will give that foundational support when the music requires it for bigger moments.

Celtic music itself centers around a strong melody that gets passed around the group, played either by a soloist or in unison. Several short tunes in related keys are often strung together in a medley. The melodies can be very simple or very intricate, and are played above rhythm instruments such as guitar, harp, or accordion playing chord progressions. Most communities have the basic talent to muster a good group if there isn't a working Celtic band in your city. A good violinist is important. Many violinists enjoy playing fiddle music, and most of the traditional melodies are available in print so that any good violinist can learn the tunes. The bodhran, the flat, round hand drum that is played with a wooden "tipper," gives an audible authenticity to a group. It is somewhat difficult to learn to play, but a good drummer should take to the challenge and be able to play pretty well after some concentrated practice. Ben is a big fan of the sound of Irish pipes, a smaller, more versatile cousin of the Scottish bagpipes. These also give a haunting and distinctive sound to a group, but players are harder to come by and less essential. If you have a local bagpipe player, see if you can get them to take up the Irish pipes. Perhaps the local band director could help a student learn them.

Most of these instruments can be purchased on-line (Elderly Instruments is a reputable supplier) or ordered from your music retailer. On-line video resources can help interested musicians and conductors learn much about these instruments. Simply go to youtube.com and search "how to play bagpipes." It is obviously better to find a real teacher, and Ben can be helpful in doing that if you need ideas.

⌘ Project Schedule

2009-2010 season—Separate movements completed and premiered locally with Ben Allaway involved in rehearsals and first performances.

2010-2011 season—WORLD PREMIERE APRIL 2, 2011, First Christian Church, Des Moines. **Produced by Iowa Public Television. June 2011 - UK Tour-below!**

2011-2012 season—**Various American premieres.** Joint performance possibilities with commissioning choirs in Minneapolis, Des Moines, Kansas City, Omaha, Oregon and New Jersey.

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TOUR of the CELTIC CATHEDRALS

Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland, June 16-26, 2011

- ⌘ Premiere *CELTIC MASS* at Cathedrals across the UK, June 16-26, 2011, with commissioning choirs combined into Celtic Mass Festival Choir. Tour by ACFEA Itinerary and costs now available from ACFEA Tour Consultants, www.acfea.com
- ⌘ Collaborate with prominent Celtic musicians Tommy Sands and His Irish Band, hopefully a member of The Chieftains or two, and other prominent artists
- ⌘ Separate performing options for groups that wish to perform apart from the Mass
- ⌘ Small group options for choir members who want to come if their entire group can't
- ⌘ Perform in the best cathedrals and venues, drawing on the connections of all the different conductors, composers, poets and musicians involved
- ⌘ Iowa Public Television will film the US premiere and will add UK footage to create a one-hour program on the work.

Joining the Project ⌘⌘⌘

Choirs wishing to participate will pay the creative fee for their movement. Please call Ben Allaway directly to discuss the fees for the available movements. It is standard practice when commissioning a work to pay half down before the work is begun, and the other half on delivery. There is a contract executed so that everyone's expectations and roles are very clear. As the commissioning choir, the choir's name and that of the director will appear above the title in the published score, along with any dedication the group wishes to make.

Commissioning a new piece of music has many benefits for a choir. Your members get to be part of creating a new work which can potentially be sung by any choir in the world, but they will be the first. That sense of pride and excitement carries over into all of their singing. You also raise your profile in the community. Commissioning gives you something special to promote, and often you can get grants or donations to pay some or all of the fee. Bringing the composer in to work with your choir is a very meaningful time, and many choral composers can also give the choir helpful feedback on their other music.

First Steps ⌘⌘⌘

Below is an outline of the entire work, noting which movements are spoken for, and which are still available. There are eight movements in all. Five are completed. At this writing, seven have been commissioned and one, the Up the Mountain: Hosanna is available, and can still be written to your specifications

- ⌘ Read this information to get a sense of the entire work.
- ⌘ E-mail Ben Allaway at benlmnop@aol.com to receive pdfs of the completed music
- ⌘ Decide what movement you might be interested in. Perhaps you have already thought of what your "story connection" is.
- ⌘ Call Ben, share your ideas and ask questions. 515-720-1038

Status of Celtic Mass ☸☸☸ by Ben Allaway

Kyrie on “Logan Dell” (completed) *Irish, Irish-American*

Commissioned by the Opus 24 Chamber Choir, Milt Scott, director, Decatur, Illinois

Features tenor solo, violin solo, and choir

A memorial piece for Brian Curwin, choir member, tenor soloist and violinist, father of three young children. Ben’s original Celtic-style tune “Logan Dell,” written for the Des Moines Celtic band Tapestry, was the perfect melody for a memorial ballad in ancient Celtic style. Brian was Irish-American and worked out on the land for the highway department. “Logan Dell” became the place where Brian’s story was told, with the text of the Kyrie under the tragic story. Completed in 2000, published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing. See and hear it at www.sbmp.com by finding Ben’s list of works under Composers, and for a performance by Hood River Valley High School Chamber Singers go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxaTwYIbdqM>

Gloria in the Highlands (completed) *Scottish-American*

Commissioned by the Hood River Valley High School Chamber Singers, Mark Steighner, director, Hood River, Oregon

Features soprano solo, and violin, whistle, flute or pipes, and of course, choir

Across the Columbia River from Hood River, Oregon, is the little town of Trout Lake, Washington, where Walter C. Allaway and his sister Elizabeth Allaway, the composer’s Great-great-great uncle and aunt, homesteaded a farm at the foot of Mt. Adams. The Latin “*in excelsis*” becomes “in the highlands” in this epic tale of one family’s success putting down new roots while preserving their culture. It is interesting that when the composer visited his newly found relatives, still on the Allaway farm, they sang their table blessing in much the same way that Ben’s own family does, evidence that these kinds of traditions die hard in new places, and are perhaps even vital to the survival of the people who practice them.

Credo: St. Patrick’s Breastplate *Irish*

Commissioned by St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines Text is finalized.

Features baritone solo and choir

St. Patrick, born in Roman Britain in 387 and died in Downpatrick, Ireland in 466, was a priest credited with spreading Christianity throughout Ireland. His faith statement, called St. Patrick’s Breastplate, is known as the “Celtic Credo” and is best known as a hymn by Charles Villiers Stanford:

*I bind unto myself today The strong Name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same The Three in One and One in Three.*

St. Patrick himself will be singing his Creed as a solo, backed up by his people. Ben will be setting another translation of the text, closer to the Celtic feel of the original, which begins:

*I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the
Trinity, through belief in the Threeness, through confession
of the Oneness of the Creator of creation.*

Sanctus *Irish-American and Irish*

In final stages of commissioning

Alto solo and Choir.

Wigley’s Blessing: Benedictus *Welsh*

Commissioned by Lakeville North High School Choirs, Paul Wigley, director,

Features Baritone, Male Choir and Mixed Choir

Conductor Paul Wigley is famous in Minnesota and Iowa choral circles (Lakeville North High School, University of Minnesota, Luther College, Algona High School, Minneapolis and Mason City Barbershoppers) for his ever-present good humor, energetic spirit and superb musical leadership. Paul’s grandfather’s family emigrated from Wales, so Paul still has close relationships with lots of Wigley cousins in the “old country,” and movers and shakers they be in Welsh society, rumored to know the Prince of Wales (yes, Charles himself!). Hywel Wigley’s wife, Catrin Finch, was designated the Royal Harpist to HRH the Prince of Wales from 2000-2004, and her husband’s mother, Elinor Bennett, is one of the top harpists in the UK. Dafydd and Elinor (Wigley and Bennett) are neighbors of baritone Bryn Terfel (if you don’t know the name google

him—wow!) and are friends with John Rutter, John Taverner, and the late William Mathias. The potential for amazing concerts in Wales is huge! Ben travelled to Wales this Fall to meet this wonderful family and heard Elinor play the Welsh Triple Harp, which will be featured in the work in honor of this harp-loving family and nation. Ben has commissioned three of Wales' finest poets to write texts for *Wigley's Blessing: Benedictus*, which will evoke the feeling of the Welsh style called *Cerdd Dant*, which features two different melodies occurring simultaneously.

Up The Mountain: Hosanna! *English, Scottish?*

Available. *Tell your story, or help Ben tell this one...*

One idea is to tell the story of Ben's great-great-grandfather William Allaway (known in the family as William the First, Ben's nephew Will being William VI in a straight string of six) and his visit by donkey up Mt. Princeton, Colorado to see his new grandson, Ben's grandfather, William Horseford Allaway (William III) in 1900. We've got the pictures! His son, William II, worked in a logging camp. "Hosanna in the highest" is a fitting text for a new grandfather to shout from 14,000 feet, don't you think? William traveled from Kansas City, Missouri where he visited his brother Nimrod (yes, Nimrod!) Allaway (Jr.), the patriarch of the family, who had recently lost two grandchildren to illness. Nimrod encourages William to make the trek to Colorado so that he may know his grandchild. William goes through Clay Center, Kansas, an Allaway stronghold with two sisters and their families who helped send Allaways west on many occasions. My great-great-great grandfather Nimrod Allaway (Sr.) is buried in the historic Elmwood Cemetery near Independence, Missouri along side his son Nimrod and the younger's two grandchildren who preceded him. The movement ends with a big dance celebration in William II's logging camp. The depiction of my grandfather's birth on Mt. Princeton and the ensuing celebration would make for a powerful transition to the agony of the next movement.

Agnus Dei: Belfast (Completed) *Irish*

Commissioned by the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble, Timothy A. McMillin, conductor.

Features solo quartet and choir

There is no more powerful way to understand the tragedy of the conflict in Northern Ireland than to know of its impact on children. The joint Protestant-Catholic peace marches and rallies which finally turned the tide against the violence began because the people could no longer tolerate the deaths of innocent children. Children played a very important role in the peace process: Twenty years after the marches the fighting continued until the Good Friday accord in 1998. The people at an impasse around the negotiating table at the Talks were only able to find the path to agreement after Tommy Sands brought thirty children, 15 Protestant and 15 Catholic, to sing outside Stormont Castle where the Talks were held. One by one the negotiators came out to join in the singing of "Carry On, Carry On" with the children. The agreement was signed the next day, and those at the table were quoted in the media as saying, "After singing with those kids, we knew we had to do something for the generations to come." Tommy Sands will be our mentor and leader of the Celtic band that will accompany us on the tour. Tommy, Moya and Fionan Sands just spent two days in Des Moines performing and sharing with audiences and with the team of musicians and clergy working on Celtic mass here. Celtic spirituality talks of the "thin places" where our world touches the spirit world. In building a lasting peace, it is as though the people of Ireland thrust their strong arms into that part of heaven and laid claim to thick swaths of it, pounding the heavenly ground with their demand for God's help. The *Agnus Dei* echoes with the sound of this clamor.

Pacem: Find Love (Completed) *Irish*

Commissioned by the Harmonium Choral Society, Dr. Anne Matlack, conductor, Madison, New Jersey

Features Choir, Fiddle, Irish Pipes, Whistle, Harp, and Bodhran soloists

The peace was hard won, and is still now passionately and vigorously maintained through ongoing talks and negotiations. *Pacem: Find Love* lifts up the tenacious spirit of a people who have waited centuries to know the peace they now have, and will never give up. Through this momentous effort they claim Christ's promise of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing for their people. St. Patrick's words return in this last movement: "In Christ there is no killing," and a story of St. Patrick's gift for reconciling people conveys the ultimate power of Love in the work of healing hurts between people, recounted beautifully in the poetry of Jabez Van Cleef. The Celtic Spirit has prevailed, the darkness lifts, and the Light of the Spirit is shared with all peoples needing encouragement that reconciliation and transformation is possible. Celebration ensues, the work ending with rousing reprises of the main musical themes of the other movements.

About the Composer ❧❧❧

Ben Allaway's music has been featured on programs with such diverse luminaries as Garrison Keillor and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Maya Angelou and Hal Holbrook, Simon Estes and Odetta, Jamie Bernstein and Buffy Sainte-Marie, Richie Havens and Susan Werner, Jean-Michel Cousteau and Thomas Friedman, Hillary Clinton and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Norman Borlaug.

In over 70 commissions, Ben's dramatic and often interactive music challenges artists and audiences alike to examine afresh both their inner gifts and outer resources, and how they can share those gifts with the world in a positive way, whether on the relational level (social, cultural, spiritual) or even more actively in the work for peace and justice for all in the global community. His large work BANDARI: Inside These Walls has been acknowledged as a major contribution to the cross-cultural choral repertoire.

Central to Ben's UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization) –based Thresholds Choral Festivals (www.ThresholdsFestival.com), his eclectic body of work reflects a passion for cross-cultural experiences as well as for the great Western musical traditions. Influences include: his early life amid the colorful cultural palette of California, degrees from St. Olaf College and Westminster Choir College, three years on the Mississippi (Hannibal, MO) teaching high school and later teaching at Waldorf College on the Iowa prairie; performing and sometimes recording with Bernstein, Muti, Masur, Abbado, Marriner, Shaw and Menotti, five years as an Episcopal cathedral choirmaster, tours with the Muungano National Choir of Kenya, and extensive travels including East Africa, Europe, Central America, and throughout the U.S.

Besides numerous publications with Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Augsburg, GIA, Hinshaw, Concordia, his own Thresholds Music Press and Baker's Plays/Samuel French, Ben has written a major chapter on ethnic choral music for *The School Choral Program*, a new secondary methods book in James Jordan's series with GIA. He is also part of the Music That Makes Community project of All Saints Company with The Rev. Donald Schell and The Rev. Rick Fabian, founding priests of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco (www.allsaintscompany.org), promoting the idea of "paperless" music for its benefits for transforming worship into community-building, spontaneous expressions of faith. *Music By Heart: Paperless Songs for Evening Worship* has been published by Church Publishing, the publishing house of the Episcopal Church. This Spring Ben will be teaching MMC workshops in San Francisco January 20-22 (Grace Cathedral), Minneapolis March 3-4 (North Central ACDA convention), Atlanta March 11-13, and Portland, Oregon June 10-12. Come have this face to face music and worship experience!

Ben has also written numerous commercial projects for Kawasaki, GMC, Students Against Driving Drunk, and has had three major projects broadcast on Iowa Public Television. Chuck Offenburger referred to Ben recently as "one of Iowa's cultural icons."

Ben collaborates frequently with his spouse, Julianne Allaway, focusing on themes of community, spirituality, inclusivity, and service. They have created numerous texts for hymns, songs and anthems for choirs and communities, and recently published a book of music, *Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs*. Their work has been heard throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia and Africa. In addition to collaborating on musical projects, Julianne is a published author of devotional writings, lends herself as editor to others, and serves as the Executive Assistant to the Bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa. Ben is Composer-in-Residence and Director of Worship and Fine Arts at First Christian Church in Des Moines, is active nationally in ACDA and as a clinician for workshops and festivals.

Contact ❧❧❧

There are many ways to be involved in the *HEAVEN & EARTH* project.

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