

PROGRAM NOTE

Morning Star is a three-minute motet for a capella chorus commissioned by Emmanuel Music (Boston) in celebration of their Fiftieth Anniversary season. I chose as my text the Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven) prayer set in Latin, with an added interpolation in Latin - “fear not” - that is not in the original prayer. There is an Eastern orthodox feel to the harmony and rhetoric, with a modal inflection embodying a kind of heightened archaism and sensuality. A mordant figure (decoration) runs throughout the piece, appearing first in the male voices and later becoming omnipresent. *Morning Star* was originally designed as a prelude to Johann Sebastian Bach’s cantata *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (*How beautifully the morning star shines*), BWV 1. The motet anticipates the structural harmony of the cantata, the final alleluia and cadence more pointedly so. In preparing the cantata’s atmosphere of cosmic anticipation and brightness, I am underscoring what the new Mother-to-be might experience upon hearing the news of the Annunciation.

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