

Aquam Refectionis

for

SATB Choir and Organ

by

John Burge

*Beside the still waters,
Infant-pure,
God is, in flesh.
Now the skies soar*

*With song. Heaven utters.
In a white blur
Lost, in a rush
Caught up, we hear.*

-Margaret Avison (1918-2007)

About the music...

Aquam Refectionis, for choir and organ, was commissioned by the Royal Canadian College of Organists, the Northeast Region of the American Guild of Organists, and the Canadian International Organ Competition, for the 2017 Montréal Organ Festival's opening service, held at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, and performed by the Choir of St. Andrew and St. Paul with organist, Jonathan Oldengarm, and conductor, Jean-Sébastien Vallée.

This work is one of many pieces that John Burge has composed that draws upon the poetry of Margaret Avison (1918-2007). Indeed, John Burge was the first composer to receive permission from Margaret Avison to set her words to music with his 1987 unaccompanied choral work, ***Sunblue—Three Images of Canadian Spring***. The great Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye described Avison as one of Canada's first truly distinctive English Canadian poets, emphasizing the way that she supplanted the vestiges of Canada's colonial heritage and fixed poetic forms. She was a devoutly spiritual person often finding her religious inspiration mirrored through the imagery and metaphor of Canadian nature and landscape. The short eight-line poem used in this work is the first of five short poems originally titled, "The Christian's Year in Miniature," and it begins with the line, "Beside the still waters." With this opening, Avison is perhaps making reference to familiar words of Psalm 23 ("He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul"). The equivalent Latin phrase for "still waters" in the vulgate bible is "Aquam refectionis." These two Latin words are often translated as "refreshing water" and are a fitting title for the work. As Avison's poem blossoms through such phrases as, "Now the skies soar with song," so to does the music for choir and organ grow in volume and rapture.

About the composer...

Canadian composer John Burge (b. 1961) has been a professor of Composition and Theory at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario since 1987. In recognition of his work as a composer, he received one of the University's 2013 Awards for Excellence in Research and in 2014 he was inducted as a Fellow in the Royal Society of Canada. A Juno-award-winning composer, John Burge has written a large body of vocal, chamber, and orchestral compositions as well as a chamber opera entitled, ***The Auction***. He is particularly well known for his finely crafted choral compositions.

During his undergraduate studies in composition and theory at the University of Toronto, Burge switched from piano lessons to a year of organ studies and learned just enough to feel a certain element of confidence in composing for the instrument (although truth be told, he remains in awe of the technical proficiency displayed by the organists that he has had the pleasure to work with over the years). His solo organ compositions include two ***Prelude and Toccatas***, a number of choral preludes and two, multi-movement works entitled ***St. Peter's Sonata*** and ***Departure Point***. He has also composed works for organ and other instrument(s) including solo alto saxophone, solo violin, solo cello and woodwind quintet. His magnum opus for organ at this point is ***Cathedral Architecture***, a five-movement work, which exists in three versions: for organ and orchestra, for organ and brass band, and for organ and piano.

More information on these works and other compositions by John Burge can be found at: www.johnburge.ca

Duration: Approximately 6 Minutes

Commissioned by the Royal Canadian College of Organists, the Northeast Region of the American Guild of Organists,
and the Canadian International Organ Competition, for the 2017 Montréal Organ Festival.

Aquam Refectionis

Words: Margaret Avison
Music: John Burge

With simplicity ♩ = 60

Solo - *espr.*

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features the organ with a 'Sw.' (Swell) pedal and dynamics of *p*, *mp*, and *p*. A lower staff indicates '(soft 8', 16')'. The second system (measures 5-7) continues the organ part with dynamics of *mf* and includes fingerings (5, 6, 3, 3). The third system (measures 8-11) features a vocal line with lyrics 'Be - side the still wa -' and dynamics of *p dolce* and *mp*. The organ accompaniment in the third system includes triplets and a *p* dynamic.

Aquam Refectionis

13 *p dolce* *mp* *p* *mp*

S Be - side the still wa - ters, Be - side the still wa -

A *p* *mp* *p*
ters, in - fant pure, in -

T *p dolce* *mp*
Be - side the still wa -

B *p*
in -

13

18 *p* *p* (no cresc.) *poco cresc.*

S *p* *p* (no cresc.) *poco cresc.*
ters, in - fant pure, in - fant pure,

A *mp* *p* *p* (no cresc.) *poco cresc.*
- fant pure, in - fant pure, in - fant pure,

T *p* *p* (no cresc.) *poco cresc.*
ters, in - fant pure, in - fant pure,

B *mp* *p* *p* (no cresc.) *poco cresc.*
- fant pure, in - fant pure, in - fant pure,

18

[Add]

Aquam Refectionis

23

S in - fant pure, — God is, in flesh. *mf dim.*

A in - fant pure, — God is, in flesh. *mf dim.*

T in - fant pure, — God is, in flesh. *mf dim.*

B in - fant pure, — God is, God is, in — *mf (no dim.) (mf)*

23

solo

[Add]

28

S Now the skies soar, — *p cresc. poco a poco*

A Now the skies soar, — *p cresc. poco a poco*

T Now the skies soar, — *p cresc. poco a poco*

B flesh. — Now the skies soar, — *f p cresc. poco a poco*

28

p

[Add]

Aquam Refectionis

32 *accel. poco a poco*

S
now the skies soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

A
now the skies soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

T
8
now the skies soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

B
now the skies soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

32 *accel. poco a poco* [Add] [Add]

37

S
soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

A
soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

T
8
soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

B
soar, _____ now the skies soar, _____ now the skies

37 [Add] [Add]

rit. **Più mosso** ♩ = 76

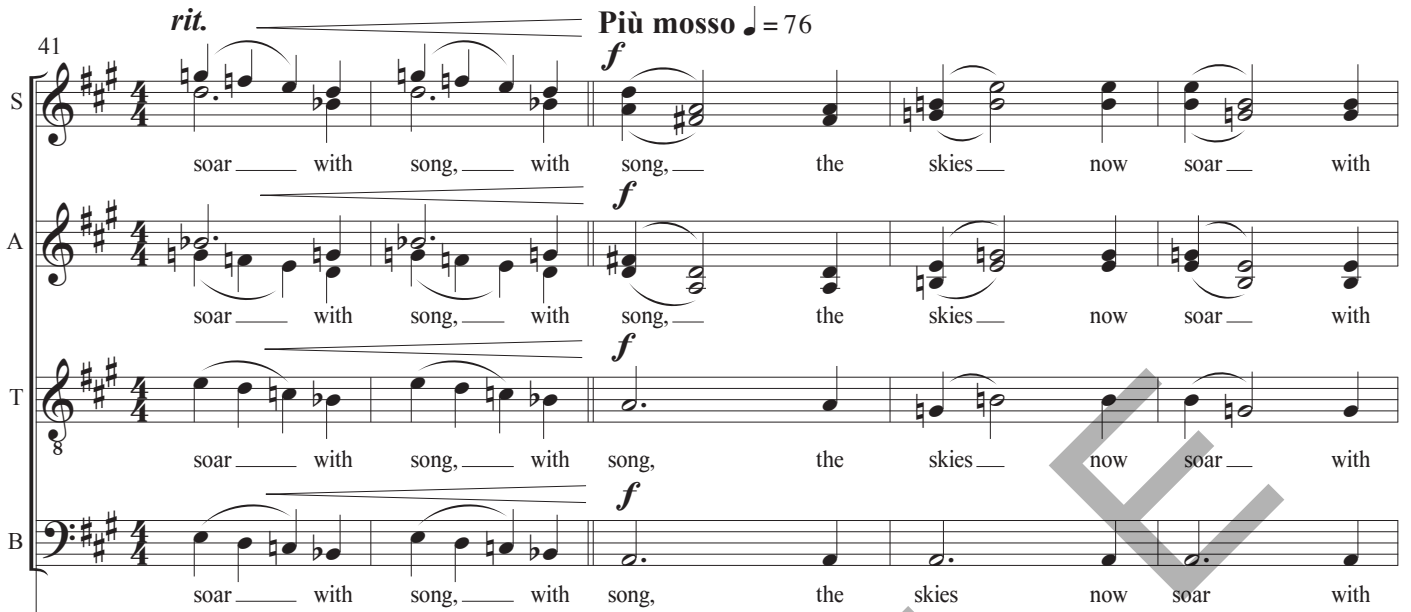
f

S
soar with song, with song, the skies now soar with

A
soar with song, with song, the skies now soar with

T
soar with song, with song, the skies now soar with

B
soar with song, with song, the skies now soar with



Più mosso ♩ = 76

rit. **f**



rit.

S
song, the skies now soar with song. Heav-en ut-ters.

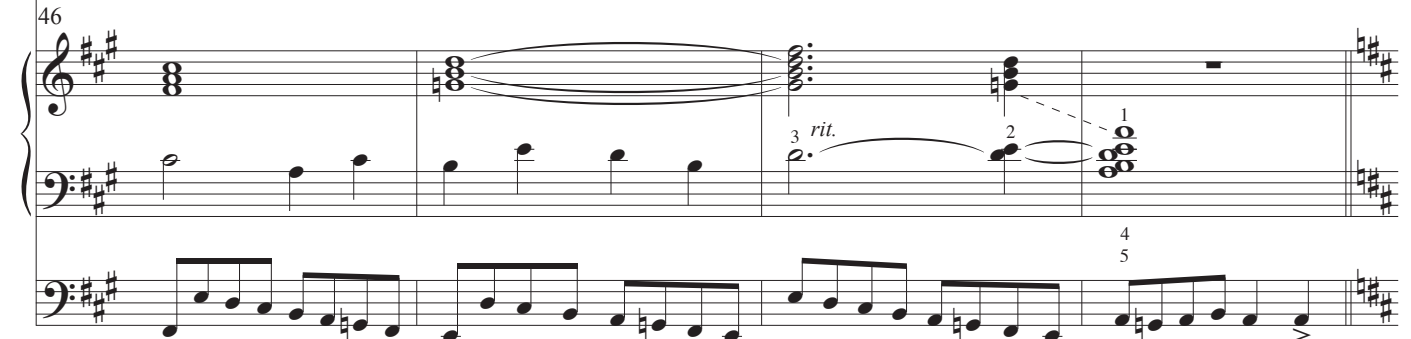
A
song, the skies now soar with song. Heav-en ut-ters.

T
song, the skies now soar with song. Heav-en ut-ters.

B
song, with song, Heav-en ut-ters.



rit.



Aquam Refectionis

Tempo più mosso ♩ = 76

50

S

A

T

B

f

In a white

f

In a white

50

Gr.

più f [Opt. solo]

Gr. to Ped.

vo

53

S

A

T

B

f

ff

ff

mf

In a white blur

blur lost,

f

ff

ff

mf

blur lost,

53

[Opt. solo ends]

vo

Aquam Refectionis

56 *mf* *ff*
S lost, in a white blur lost,
A in a white blur, in a white
T 8 lost, in a white blur lost,
B in a white blur, in a white

56
Piano accompaniment (Piano and Bass clefs)

59 *mf* *ff* *mf*
S in a white blur lost, in a rush
A *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf*
blur, in a rush caught up, in a rush
T *mf* *ff* *mf*
8 in a white blur lost, in a rush
B *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf*
blur, in a rush caught up, in a rush

59
Piano accompaniment (Piano and Bass clefs)

Aquam Refectionis

62 *ff*
S caught up,
A caught up,
T caught up,
B caught up,
ff

62 *ff* *mf*

66 *mf* *ff* *mf*
S In a white blur lost, in a rush caught up, in a white blur
A *mf* *ff* *mf*
T *mf* *ff* *mf*
B *mf* *ff* *mf*
In a white blur lost, in a rush caught up, in a white blur

66

Aquam Refectionis

70

S *ff* (no dim.)
lost, in a rush caught up,

A *ff* (no dim.)
lost, in a rush caught up,

T *ff* (no dim.)
8 lost, in a rush caught up,

B *ff* (no dim.)
lost, in a rush caught up,

74

S *f* *più f* *mf* *f* *mp*
In a white blur, a white blur lost, a rush caught

A *f* *più f* *mf* *f* *mp*
In a white blur, a white blur lost, a rush caught

T *f* *più f* *mf* *f* *mp*
8 In a white blur, a white blur lost, a rush caught

B *f* *più f* *mf* *f* *mp*
In a white blur, a white blur lost, a rush caught

74

[Less] [Less]

Aquam Refectionis

79

S up, we hear. *p mp rit.*

A up, we hear. *p mp*

T up, we hear. *p mp*

B up, we hear. *p mp*

79

[Less] [Less]

rit. pp

84

S *p dolce* Now the

A *p dolce* Now the

T *p dolce* Ah

B *p dolce* Ah

(rit.)

84

(rit.)

3

Aquam Refectionis

Tempo primo ♩ = 60

molto cresc. *accel.* *ff*

S
skies _____ soar with song, _____ now the skies soar with song. _____

A
molto cresc. *ff*
skies _____ soar with song, _____ now the skies soar with song. _____

T
molto cresc. *ff*
Now the skies _ soar with song, _ now the skies _ soar with song, _ now the skies soar.

B
molto cresc. *ff*
Now the skies _ soar with song, _ now the skies _ soar with song, _ now the skies soar.

88 Tempo primo ♩ = 60

accel. *f*

92 *Agitato* ♩ = 100

S
A
T
B

92 *Agitato* ♩ = 100

solo *cresc.*

Aquam Refectionis

Maestoso ♩ = 50

molto rall.

97

ff

S In a rush caught up, we hear,

A In a rush caught up, we hear,

T In a rush caught up, in a rush caught up,

B In a rush caught up, in a rush caught up,

97

Maestoso ♩ = 50

molto rall.

ff

[Solo ends]

101

S in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we

A in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we

T in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we

B in a rush, a rush caught

101

[Add]

Aquam Refectionis

104

S
hear, in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we hear

A
hear, in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we hear

T
8 hear, in a rush caught up, we hear, in a rush caught up, we hear

B
up, in a rush caught up, in a rush caught up, in a rush, we hear

104

[Add]

108

S
the skies in song.

A
the skies in song.

T
8 the skies in song.

B
the skies in song.

108

[Add]

rit.