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MATINS

SATB \$2.95

CME Conductor's Choice

Matins

John Burge

Doreen Rao's
choralMUSIC
-experience-

BOOSEY & HAWKES



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PROGRAM NOTE

Matins is a setting of a poem written by the Canadian poet, Eugene McNamara. The work is scored for choir and piano and was commissioned by The Windsor Classic Chorale, Richard Householder, Music Director. For many people, the word, "matins," will be familiar as the name for the first of the seven canonical hours, properly beginning at midnight but sometimes starting at daybreak. The Anglican Church uses the term interchangeably for their service known as Morning Prayer. A more secular interpretation can be found when the word is used to simply describe a morning song, as in bird song. McNamara's poem captures all of these meanings in lines that can be interpreted from viewpoints both secular and spiritual. There is even an obvious sacred reference when the poem emphatically states, "and we shall gather at the river," which alludes to the opening question of the famous hymn, "Shall we gather at the river."

A prominent feature of the music is the opening melodic gesture that the choir sings to the words, "Bells in far off steeples summon." This musical motive is heard throughout the work, often in the piano accompaniment. To have set this poem without incorporating the melody of the hymn, "Shall We Gather At The River," would have been a lost opportunity on the composer's part and John Burge does not disappoint the listener here.

THE TEXT

MATINS

Bells in far off steeples
summon and birds announce
morning—

bellsong birdsong—

Come and walk with me my
love listen to what my eyes
sing to you: I will not
let you go—

As a man carries a glass
of water to his child in
the night-not a drop will
fall the bough will not
break and we shall gather at
the river—

Remember the dry light
over the ocean and the
long grass in morning
light and wild ponies
running on the beach
plunging in the surf
their manes shaking
in the wind?

Remember the prairie
swift seen between
the freight cars?

The prairie will be there
when the trains long gone
the ponies will be there
when we return—

Here are trees shaking
swaying in the wind and
staying in calm silence—

Train horns in the hills
the hoarse muttering of
the river where it falls—

What I hold in my hands—
not a drop will spill and
the bough will not break
and we shall gather at
the river and I will not
let you go—

— Eugene McNamara
(used by permission of the poet)

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

John Burge was born in Dryden, Ontario, in 1961. He holds degrees from the University of Toronto (B.Mus and M.Mus) and the University of British Columbia (D.M.A.) where his composition professors included John Beckwith, Walter Buczynski, Stephen Chatman, John Hawkins and Derek Holman. Since 1987 he has been teaching at the School of Music, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Burge's compositional output is marked by a number of major choral works including **Thank You God**, for children's choir and chamber orchestra (available on rental from Boosey & Hawkes). Other individually published titles include, **I Thank You God** (M-051-46748-8), **O Lord, Hear My Voice Today** (M-051-46749-5), **Love Divine** (M-051-32880-2), and **Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue** (M-051-47125-6). **Simple Songs** is published separately as: **The Coat** (M-051-47295-6), **Silverly** (M-051-47296-3), **Secrets** (M-051-47297-0), and **Epilogue** (M-051-7298-7).

PERFORMANCE TIME

ca. 14 minutes

A complete and comprehensive choral performance curriculum for beginning choirs can be found in the music textbook **WE WILL SING!** published by Boosey & Hawkes (M-051-80810-6). •

MATINS

for SATB Chorus & Piano

Words by
Eugene McNamara*

Music by
John Burge

With solemnity (♩ = 50)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Bells in far off steeples summon

With solemnity (♩ = 50)

Piano

mp

Ped. (sustain until bar 13)

5

Bells in far off steeples summon

Bells in far off steeples summon

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p and

p *mp* *mf*

Bells _____ in far off stee-ples _____ sum-mon, _____ sum-mon, _____ sum-mon. _____

12

p

birds an-nounce morn - ing, _____ birds an - nounce - morn -

birds an-nounce morn - ing _____ birds an-nounce morn - ing,

p

p

birds an-nounce morn - ing, _____ and birds an-nounce morn -

p (sotto voce)

Red. * *Red.* *

15 *mp* > *p* *cresc. e molto accel.*

ing, morn - ing, bell - song, bird - song,

bird an-nounce morn - ing, bell - song, bird - song,

birds an-nouce morn - ing, bell - song, bird - song,

ing, bell - song, bird - song,

cresc. e molto accel.

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* *

19 *rit.*

bell - song, bird - song, bell - song, bird - song, bell - rit. song,

bell - song, bird - song, bell - song, bird - song, bell - rit. song,

bell - song, bird - song, bell - song, bird - song, bell - rit. song,

bell - song, bird - song, bell - song, bird - song, bell - rit. song,

rit.

simile

Maestoso (♩ = 60)

22

f
Come and walk _____ with me my love _____ lis-ten _____ to

f
Come and walk _____ with

f
Come and walk _____ with me my love _____ lis-ten _____ to

f
Come and walk _____ with

Maestoso (♩ = 60)

f

25

what my eyes say _____ to you, what my eyes say to you: I

me my love _____ lis-ten _____ to what _ my eyes _____ say _ to you: I

what my eyes say _____ to you, what my eyes say to you: I

me my love, _____ lis-ten _____ to what _ my eyes _____ say _ to you: I

28 *più f*

will not let you go, I will not let you go, — I will not let you

più f

will not let you go, I will not let you go, I will not let you

più f

will not let you go, I will not let you go, — I will not let you

più f

will not let you go, I will not let you go, I will not let you

31 *ff* *rit. e dim.*

go, let you go, I will not let you

ff *rit. e dim.*

go, let you go, I will not let you

ff *rit. e dim.*

go, let you go, I will not let you

ff *rit. e dim.*

go, let you go, I will not let you