

A PRAIRIE TRIBUTE

No. 2

How I Spent My Summer Holidays

For SA Choir, Clarinet and Piano

John Burge

About this Work:

A Prairie Tribute was commissioned by the Cantaré Children's Choir of Calgary, Alberta, Catherine Glaser-Climie, Artistic Director, in 2008. Having grown up in Calgary, Canadian composer John Burge was keen to accept this commission. Coincidentally, 2008 also marked the 10th anniversary of the passing of novelist W.O. Mitchell, a longtime resident of Calgary. The idea took shape to pay tribute to both the author and the prairies by using the titles of three of Mitchell's novels in which the prairie landscape features prominently as springboards for the composition. The entire set is dedicated to John's mother, Beth Sheppard, who has always loved the writing of W.O. Mitchell.

Scored for SA choir, clarinet and piano, the work is in three contrasting movements. The first movement, *The Vanishing Point*, is a wordless soundscape that captures the vastness and sense of mystery that one feels standing on the prairie terrain. The choir divides into multiple parts to create clouds of chordal sonorities that repeatedly fade into silence while the opening clarinet melody returns in different guises as a kind of unifying thematic gesture. The text for the second movement, *How I Spent My Summer Holidays*, was compiled by John Burge from comments provided by the choir members themselves about things that they like to do on the prairies in the summer. In this movement, the music reflects the carefree quality of the words with an emphasis on syncopated rhythms and an energetically independent clarinet part. The final movement, *Who has Seen the Wind*, is a setting of a poem of the same title by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894). The slow, hymn-like quality of this movement reflects the sacred implications of the text. The choir actually sings the same music for both verses but the differing dynamics and instrumental accompaniment obscures the obviousness of the repetition somewhat. The movement ends by returning to the overlapping chordal texture heard in the choir at the beginning of the work.

About the Composer:

John Burge was born in Dryden, Ontario in 1961. He also holds degrees in Composition and Theory from the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia. Since 1987 he has been teaching at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario where he currently holds the position of Full Professor and is Director of the School of Music. A passionate advocate of Canadian music, he was a member of the executive council of the Canadian League of Composers for fourteen years, serving as President from 1998-2006.

John Burge has written a large body of vocal, chamber, and orchestral compositions. He is particularly well known though, for his choral music, which has been performed by such choirs as The Elmer Iseler Singers, The BBC Singers, The Amabile Youth Choir, The Toronto Children's Chorus and The St. Louis Symphony Children's Choir. Many of these choral works have been published by the American firm, Boosey and Hawkes. His composition, *Angels' Voices*, for choir and orchestra, received the 2006 Outstanding New Choral Composition Award from the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors and was performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall in 2005.

How I Spent My Summer Holidays

Movement 2 of "A Prairie Tribute"

With energy and excitement ♩ = 126

John Burge

SA Choir

Clarinet in B \flat

Piano

p cresc.

mp

[Clarinet cues for rehearsal only]

4

f

p (sub.) cresc.

ff

9

p cresc.

Sum - mer time _ on the prai - ries, sum - mer time _ on the prai - ries,

p cresc.

mp

p cresc.

12

sum - mer time on the prai - ries, sum - mer - ime on the prai - ries

14

f *mp* *p dolce*

is for: Camp - ing and

18

mp *p*

swim - ming and fam - 'ly and friends, Hik - ing and play - ing and

23 *mp* *p* *mp*

set - ting — up tents, ————— Run - ning — and

p *mp*

mp *p* *mp*

27 *mf* *mp*

bik - ing — and just hav - ing fun, Get - ting — up

mf *mp* *p* *mp*

(no cresc.)

31 *p* *mf* *mp* *mf*

ear - ly — and watch - ing — the sun. These are — the things —

mf *mp* *mf* *p*

36 *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

I like to do on the prai - - - ries in sum -

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

mp *mf* *p* *mp* *f*

41 *mf*

- - mer hol - i - days.

mf *p*

mp *mf*

46 *p* *mp* *p*

Pic - nics and pop - si - cles, wa - ter - me - lon too, Camp - fires and

mp *p*

mp *p*

p *mp* *p*

51

mp *p* *mp*

marsh - mal - lows, there's so much to do. _____ Climb - ing on

mp *p*

mp *p* *mp*

56

mf *mp*

hay bales and feed - ing the hens, Chas - ing the

cresc. poco a poco

mf *mp*

60

cresc.

farm cats and tam - ing their kit - tens while watch - ing for

cresc.

64

f *mp*

grand - mo - ther's roo - - - - - ster.

f *mp* *f*

f *mp*

69

mf warmly

Pick - ing - the peas, car - rots, straw - ber - ries too, Let - tuce - and

mp *p* *mp*

mf warmly

74

cab - bage - and big ripe - to - ma - toes, - The plen - ti - ful - ness of - the

79

veg - 'ta - ble patch is — a - maz - - - ing, a - maz - - -

f *mf* *f*

cresc.

84

ing, the veg - 'ta - ble patch is — a - maz - - - ing.

mf *f* *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

89

— These are — the things — I like — to do,

p *mp* *p* *mp*

mp

94 *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

these are the things I like to do, these are the

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

99 *f* *cresc.* *rit.*

things I like to do in

p (sub.) *cresc.* *f*

f *cresc.* *rit.*

103 *a tempo* *ff*

sum - mer hol - i - days, hol - i - days,

ff

ff a tempo

107 *mf*

hol - - - i - - - days.

mf *mp*

mf dim.

111 *p*

Run through the

mf *p*

116 *mp* *p*

sprink - ler a - gain and a - gain, Swing on a rope, drop - ping

p *mp* *p*

121 *mp* *p* *mp*

in - to the creek, Raft down the ri - ver as

mp *p* *mf* *mp*

mp *p* *mp*

126 *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

slow as you can, Build - ing a tree fort, no

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

mf *mp* *cresc.*

130

a - dults al - lowed up, un - less they are bring - ing you

134 *f* *più f*

treats. _____ Ly - ing — in tall wheat — and

f *più f*

138

watch - ing — the clouds. Run a - cross o - pen — fields,

f *più f*

142 *cresc.*

feel - ing — my bod - y — just soar - ing — a - way, just

mp cresc. *f*

cresc.

146

feel - ing — my bod - y — just soar - ing — a - way, just

mf *cresc.*

150

ff *mf*

soar - - - ing a - - way.

ff *dim. (poco a poco)*

ff *mf* *dim.*

154

mp

Rid - ing — on hor - ses, — the

p

p *r.h.*

158 *mf* *mp*

wind in — your hair, Mak - ing — them go just — as

p (sub.) r.h. *p* (sub.) *cresc.*

162 *mf* *mp*

fast as — you dare, Breath - ing — in deep - ly — the

p *mf* *p* (sub.) r.h. *mf*

166 *mf* *mp*

cool morn - ing air. Stay - ing — up late and — then

p *mf* *p* *cresc.*

p (sub.) r.h. *p* *cresc.*

170 *mf* *mp*

sleep - ing — 'til noon. The on - ly — re - gret sum - mer's

mf *p (sempre)*

mf *p (sub.)* r.h.

174 *mf* *cresc.*

o - ver — too soon, For — there's so much — to do in — the

mp

p (sub.) r.h. *cresc.*

178 *f (no dim.)*

prair - ries — in sum - mer time — That you'll

mf *f (no dim.)*

f (no dim.)

182 *rall.* *p* *accel.* *cresc.*

ne - ver get ev - 'ry - thing done, Be - fore you

p *cresc.*

rall. *p* *accel.* *cresc.*

187 *a tempo* *mf* *cresc.*

must go back to school, be -

mf *cresc.*

mf *a tempo* *cresc.*

192

fore you must go back to school, be - fore you

197

rall. *a tempo*
ff dim.

must go back a - gain to school.

ff dim.

rall. *a tempo*
ff dim.

202

mp *p*

On the prai -

p

p

208

ries.

mp *cresc.*

cresc. poco a poco

213

Musical score for measures 213-217. The score is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or E-flat minor) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a cello/bass line. The piano part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The vocal line begins in measure 217 with the lyrics "These are just some of the things you can do in the". A dynamic marking of *ff* is present in measure 217.

218

ff marcato

Musical score for measures 218-222. The score continues from the previous system. The piano part features a prominent melodic line with slurs and accents. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "These are just some of the things you can do in the". A dynamic marking of *ff marcato* is present at the start of measure 218.

223

Musical score for measures 223-227. The score continues from the previous system. The piano part features a prominent melodic line with slurs and accents. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "summer time in the prairies." A dynamic marking of *ff* is present in measure 225. The score concludes with a double bar line in measure 227.

II. *How I Spent My Summer Holidays*

[Compiled by John Burge from comments provided by members of the Cantaré Children's Choir, Calgary, Alberta.]

Summer time on the prairies is for:

Camping and swimming and family and friends,
Hiking and playing and setting up tents,
Running and biking and just having fun,
Getting up early and watching the sun.

These are the things I like to do on the prairies in summer holidays.

Picnics and popsicles, watermelon too,
Campfires and marshmallows, there's so much to do.
Climbing on hay bales and feeding the hens,
Chasing the farm cats and taming their kittens while watching for grandmother's rooster.

Picking the peas, carrots, strawberries too,
Lettuce and cabbage and big ripe tomatoes,
The plentifulness of the vegetable patch is amazing.

These are the things I like to do in summer holidays.

Run through the sprinkler again and again,
Swing on a rope, dropping into the creek,
Raft down the river as slow as you can,
Building a tree fort, no adults allowed up, unless they are bringing you treats.

Lying in tall wheat and watching the clouds.
Run across open fields, my body just soaring away.
Riding on horses, the wind in your hair,
Making them go just as fast as you dare,
Breathing in deeply the cool morning air.

Staying up late and then sleeping 'til noon.
The only regret, summer's over too soon,
For there's so much to do on the prairies in summer time
That you'll never get everything done,
Before you must go back again to school.

These are just some of the things you can do in summer time on the prairies.