

Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius
SSATBB, a cappella

Timothy C. Takach

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Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius

for SSATBB a cappella choir

Commissioned by the 2009-2010 Cherry Creek High School Meistersingers (Denver, CO), Sarah Harrison, director



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From the Composer:

I loved the chance to set this text, the words appealed to me on many levels. Pliny's descriptions are so vivid and poetic, and appropriately so, since he was there when Vesuvius erupted. I loved the idea of setting the original Latin, even though the immediate meaning of the words would be obscured to just about every listener, because it gave me the chance to capture the colors, gestures and images of the words without feeling like I was painting the text too obviously. The feelings and emotions evoked here are real - this isn't a myth or folk tale. This event actually happened to real people. Some escaped with their lives, many did not. I hope that this music captures the awful beauty of this dreadful eruption.

- Timothy C. Takach, 2009

Text:

Nubes oriebatur.
(Praecesserat per multos dies tremor terrae.)

*A cloud was ascending.
(There had been noticed for many days before a trembling of the earth.)*

Nubes oriebatur, cuius similitudinem et formam non alia
magis arbor quam pinus expresserit.

*A cloud was ascending, the appearance of which I cannot give you
a more exact description of than by likening it to that of a pine tree.*

Nam longissimo velut trunco elata in altum quibusdam ramis
diffundebatur, credo quia recenti spiritu evecta.

*For it shot up to a great height in the form of a very tall trunk,
which spread itself out at the top into branches of a sort; Because, I
believe, it was occasioned by a sudden gust of air that impelled it.*

Nubes atra et horrenda, ignei spiritus tortis vibratque
discursibus rupta, in longas flammaram figuras dehiscibat;
fulguribus illae et similes et maiores erant.

*A black and dreadful cloud, broken with rapid, zigzag flashes,
revealed behind it variously shaped masses of flame: these last
were like sheet-lightning, but much larger.*

Candida interdum, interdum sordida et maculosa
prout terram cineremve sustulerat.

*It was sometimes clear and bright and sometimes dark and
spotted, according to whether it had picked up earth or cinders.*

Nec multo post illa nubes descendere in terras, operire maria;
Iam cinis, adhuc tamen rarus.

*Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea.
The ashes now began to fall upon us, though it was still sparse.*

Mox dies verus; sol etiam effulsit.
Occursabant trepidantibus adhuc oculis
mutata omnia altoque cinere tamquam nive obducta.

*Soon the real day returned, and even the sun shone out. Every
object that presented itself to our faltering eyes seemed changed,
being covered deep with ashes as if with snow.*

*- Pliny the Younger, Letters to Tacitus, 61-112 AD
- Adapted by Timothy C. Takach*

*- Translated by William Melmoth,
with revisions by Anne Groton*

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Pliny the Younger

Timothy C. Takach

Ominous $\text{♩} = 66$
f

Soprano
Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur.

Alto
mf
Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur, cu - ius si - mi - li -

Tenor
mf
Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur, cu - ius si - mi - li -

Bass

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A cloud was ascending, the appearance of which I cannot give you a more exact description than by likening it to that of a pine tree.

6

S
ar - bor quam pi - nus

A
tu - di - nem et for - mam non a - li - a ma - gis ar - bor quam pi - nus

T
tu - di - nem et for - mam non a - li - a ma - gis ar - bor quam pi - nus
mp

B
(Prae - ces - se - rat per mul - tos di - es tre - mor ter - rae.)

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(There had been noticed for many days before a trembling of the earth.)



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10

S ex - pres-ser - it. Nam lon-gis - si - mo ve - lut trun - co

A ex - pres-ser - it.

T *mp* ex - pres-ser - it. Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur. Nu - bes o - ri - e -

B *mp* Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur. Nu - bes o - ri - e -

For it shot up to a great height in the form of a tall trunk,

14 *f* *poco rit.* **Eerie and beautiful** ♩ = 56-63

S *f* e - la - ta al - tum qui - bus a - dif - fun -

S *f* e - la - ta tum qui - - - mis - de -

A *f* e - la - ta in dam fun - - -

T *p* ba - tur. Nam lon-gis-si - mo - ve - lut trun - co e - la - ta in al - tum qui -

B *p* ba - tur. Nam lon-gis-si - mo - ve - lut trun - co e - la - ta in al - tum qui -

which spread itself out at the top into branches of a sort;

19 *mf*

S ba - cre - qui - a — cen - spi - tu vec - - ta.

S - tur, do — re - - - e - vec - - ta.

A — — — — — ti ri - - - - vec - ta.

T bus - dam ra - mis dif - fun - de - ba - tur, cre - do qui - a re - cen - ti spi - ri - tu e - vec - ta. —

B bus - dam ra - mis dif - fun - de - ba - tur, cre - do qui - a re - cen - ti spi - ri - tu e - vec - ta. —

Because, I believe, it was occasioned by a sudden gust of air that impelled it.

Agitated ♩ = 104

25 *pp*

S Nu - - - bes a - - - tra

A *pp* Nu - - - bes a - - - tra

T *pp* Nu - - - bes a - - - tra

Bar. (hushed, with intense diction) *p* Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

B *pp* Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da, ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi - bra - tis - que dis -

A black and dreadful cloud, broken with zigzag flashes,

30

Bar. ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi - bra - tis - que dis - cur - si - bus

B cur - si - bus — rup - ta, in lon -

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32 *mp*

T *p* fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat; ful -

Bar. *p* rup - ta, in lon - gas flam - ma - rum Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da, ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi -

B *mp* gas flam - ma - rum fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat; ful -

revealed behind it variously shaped masses of flame: these last were like sheet-lightning, but much larger.

36 *p* **Suspenseful, building tension**

S Can - di - da in - ter - dum,

A Can - di - da in - ter - dum,

T *mf* *p* It was sometimes clear and bright and sometimes dark and spotted,

Bar. *mf* gu - ri - bus il - lac et sim - i - les et ma - - - io - res e - rant.

B *mf* bra-tis-que dis-cur-si - bus rup - ta, in lon-gas flam-ma - rum fig - u-ras de-his-ce-bat;

B gu - ri - bus il - lac et sim - i - les et ma - - - io - res e - rant.

40 *mp* *mf*

S Can - di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et

A *mp* *mf* Can - di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et

T *mf* se - rat tre - mor ter - rae.) flam - ma - rum

Bar. *mp* *mf* *mp* (Prae-ces - se - rat ter - rae.) Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da, ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi-bra

B *mp* (Prae-ces - se - rat tre - mor O (open'o')

46

Fiery!

f

S ma - cu - lo - sa prout ter - ram cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at.

A ma - cu - lo - sa prout ter - ram cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Can-
according to whether it had picked up earth or cinders.

T *mf* O (open 'o') *f* O Can-

B tis - que dis-cur - si - bus rup - tas in lon - gas flam - ma - rum fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat;

50

S Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

A di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et ma - cu - lo - sa prout ter - ram

T *f* di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et ma - cu - lo - sa prout ter - ram

B Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

53

ff

S Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

A *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

T *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

B *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

With stunning beauty ♩ = 56-63

57

mf

S il - la nu - bes o - pe - ri - re ma - ri - a;

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

A Nec mul - to post o - pe - ri re ma -

mf *p* *mf*

T Nec mul - to post il - la nu - bes des - cen - de - re in ter - ras, ma - ri - a;

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

Bar. Nec mul - to post des - cen - de - re in ter - ras, ma -

mp

B O O

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Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea;
The ashes now began to fall upon us, though it was still sparse.



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62

mp

S Iam ci - nis, il - la nu - bes

mf

S Iam ci - nis, ad - huc ta - men ra -

mf *mp*

A ri - a; ci - nis, il - la nu -

mp *p* *mp*

T Iam ci - nis, il - la nu - bes

mp *p*

Bar. - ri - a; il - la nu -

mf *p*

B ma - ri - a; il - la

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The return of light / With new eyes

67 *f* *mf* ♩ = 72-80

S — des - cen - de - re in - ter - ras, di-es ve-rus;

S nu - bes - des - cen - de - re in - ter - ras, Mox di - es ve-rus;

A bes des - cen - de - re in ter ras, Mox di - es ve-rus;

T 8 des - cen - de - re

Bar. bes des - cen - de - re

B des - cen - de - re

Soon the real day returned,



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74 *f* *mp*

S — sol

S sol e - ti - am ef - ful - sit.

A sol e - ti - am ef - ful - sit.

T 8

B

mf legato Oc - cur - sa - bant tre - pi - dan - ti - bus ad -

mf legato Oc - cur - sa - bant tre - pi - dan - ti - bus ad -

and even the sun shone out. Every object that presented itself to our faltering eyes seemed changed,

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80

f *mp*

S mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que tam-quam

f *mp*

A mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que tam-quam

f *mf*

T huc o - cu - lis mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que ci - ne - re

f *mf*

B huc o - cu - lis mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que ci - ne - re

86

p

S ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

p

A ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

mp *p*

T ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta.

mp *p*

B ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta.

being covered with ashes as if with snow.

92

ritard *pp*

S ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

pp

A ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

pp

T ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ni - - - ve

pp

B ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ni - - - ve



Reviewed as “gorgeous” (Washington Post) and “stunning” (Lawrence Journal-World), the music of Timothy C. Takach has risen fast in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines and rich, intriguing harmonies, Takach has received commissions from the St. Olaf Band, Cantus, Pavia Winds, Lorelei Ensemble, VocalEssence, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, The Rose Ensemble, and numerous other organizations. His compositions have been performed on A Prairie Home Companion, The Boston Pops holiday tour, multiple All-State and festival programs and at venues such as the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. He is a co-creator of the theatrical production of All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914, by Peter Rothstein.

Takach studied music composition at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, where he graduated with honors. He has frequent national work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, clinician and lecturer. He is a full-time composer and lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.

Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

Mixed Voices

A Depth We Cannot Sound		SATB, vibraphone, marimba, large tom
A Worshipper and a Man		SATB a cappella
And I Saw		SATB div. a cappella
As the Sunflower Turns on Her God		SSAATBB div, Sop. solo, SSATB soli, a cappella
The Darkling Thrush	(earthsongs)	SATB, SAT soli, a cappella
Fragile		SATB, hand drum
Listen to the Apples		SATB div. a cappella
Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers	(Graphite Publishing)	SSATBB a cappella
Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius		SSATBB a cappella
One Boy Told Me		SATB, piano
Su Rahva Koda (The House of Your Kindred)		SSAATTBB a cappella
This Alien Landscape		SATB, crotales, suspended cymbal, bass drum
This Amazing Life		SA(T)B, piano
We Are Lost, We Are Lucky		SATB, piano
We Sing of Home (Finlandia)		SATB a cappella

Treble Voices

And I Saw		SSAA div. a cappella
Cassiopeia		SSA a cappella
Goodbye, Then		SSA choir, Bb clarinet, piano
Home on the Range (arr. American Folk Song)	(Graphite Publishing)	2-part treble, piano
Queen of the Range	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
Serenade	(Graphite Publishing)	SSAA a cappella
The Streets of Laredo (arr. American Folk Song)	(Graphite Publishing)	Unison, TTB, piano
There is No Rose	(Lorelei Ensemble)	SSAA, SS soli, a cappella
Torn Map	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
Twenty Questions		2-part treble, piano

Men's Voices

Empty		TB (opt. div), piano, opt. djembe
Goodbye, Then		TBB choir, Bb clarinet, piano
I Will Howl		TBB choir, piano or cello
Kin		TB, piano
Luceat Eis		TTTBB a cappella
Mad		TB, piano
Original Harmony	(Colla Voce)	TTBB a cappella
Rough Beast	(Jeremy D. Jones Male Choral Series)	TTBB, percussion
Salve Regina	(Graphite Publishing)	TBB semi-chorus, TTBB a cappella
Things I Didn't Know I Loved	(Graphite Publishing)	TTBB a cappella

Large Works

We Made a Grave For Him, And Her Smoke Rose Up Forever (ca. 10')		TTBB a cappella
The Longest Nights (ca. 21')		SATB, piano or string quartet
Where Beauty Comes From (ca. 16')		TBB, 2-part, SSAA, SATB; piano

