

JS 030

8 minutes, 25 seconds

howl

SATB, a cappella

Music by

Joshua Shank

Text by

Allen Ginsberg

Note from the composer

The first line of Allen Ginsberg's landmark Beatnik poem, *Howl*, is iconic in American poetry: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." What's lesser known is the fourth and final section of that lengthy poem which Ginsberg subtitled, "Footnote to *Howl*." In it, he describes a multitude of things that are "holy" to him.

As a composer who came up in the choral tradition, I couldn't read Ginsberg's footnote without immediately thinking of the countless settings of the Sanctus text that I've sung over the years. As someone who doesn't come from a particular faith background—as well as a person who exists in society's margins—I connected deeply with the contents of his list of things that are holy. Sacred to Ginsberg are things like his mentally ill mother, his partner of over 40 years (Peter), the body, the soul, the saxophone, the city, and suffering itself. It's a lengthy, beautiful, and embracing list, and I'd encourage anyone who's unfamiliar with the footnote to this epic American poem to seek it out and find yourself in it somewhere.

I titled this piece *howl* as a means of paying tribute to one of my favorite poets of all time (have you heard his one about Walt Whitman?) and the poem that made him (in)famous. However, it's also a reference to the idea that shouting to the heavens that something is holy—which is what I always felt was happening in the Sanctus text—felt like the same long, loud cry Ginsberg references in the title of his poem. So, for all intents and purposes, this is my Sanctus, and it's dedicated with love and admiration to three composers—Frank Martin, Arvo Pärt, and Jocelyn Hagen—whose settings of that text (their "Sancti"?) are among my favorite choral works of all time (and may or may not be quoted in my work).

howl was commissioned by The Choral Project (Daniel Hughes, conductor) and received its premiere on May 8, 2022. It is a movement of a larger work based on mass ordinaries—this work is the "Sanctus"—titled *there's something i have to say*.

Performances notes

- This probably goes without saying but, when the harmonies are closer, shore up the vibrato where possible to let stuff shimmer a bit.
- Where a 3-part division occurs in the SA and/or TB, it's preferable to have an even split between the voices if possible.
- A word about grace notes: they should occur off the beat. Think more like a quick melodic turn rather than anything rhythmic. They should be sung at the last possible instant before moving onto the next pitch.
- Exaggerate the glissandi.

The Text

By Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!

The world is holy!
The soul is holy!
The skin is holy!

Everything is holy!
everybody's holy!
everywhere is holy!
everyday is in eternity!

Everyman's an angel!
...as holy as the seraphim!
the madman is holy
as you my soul are holy!

The typewriter is holy
the poem is holy
the voice is holy
the hearers are holy
the ecstasy is holy!

Holy Peter
holy Allen
holy Kerouac
holy Burroughs

holy the unknown buggered
and suffering beggars
holy the hideous human angels!

Holy my mother in the insane asylum!

Holy the groaning saxophone!
Holy the bop apocalypse!
Holy the jazzbands marijuana hipsters
peace peyote pipes & drums!

Holy the crazy shepherds of rebellion!
Holy New York
Holy San Francisco
Holy Peoria & Seattle

Holy Paris Tangiers Moscow Istanbul!
Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and
pavements!

Holy the cafeterias filled with the millions!
Holy the mysterious rivers
of tears under the streets!

Holy the lone juggernaut!
Holy the vast lamb of the middleclass!

holy the clocks in space
holy time in eternity
holy eternity in time

Holy forgiveness! mercy! charity! faith!
Holy! Ours! bodies! suffering! magnanimity!
Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent
kindness of the soul!

Everybody's holy!
Everywhere is holy!
Everything is holy!

Commissioned by The Choral Project
Daniel Hughes, Artistic Director

howl

(for Frank Martin, Arvo Pärt, and Jocelyn Hagen)

Text by
Allen Ginsberg

Music by
Joshua Shank

quarter = 68

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

mf The

mf The

p ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

p ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, *simile* ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

³ bell tones world is ho ly! The

bell tones world is ho ly! The

simile ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

f *robust*
 Ev - 'ry - thing is ho - ly!

p

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

13 *p*
 ho - ly, ho - ly,

f *robust*
 Ev - 'ry - bo - dy's ho - ly!

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

15 *f*
 Ev - 'ry - where is ho - ly!

p

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

17 *p*
 ho - ly, ho - ly,
f
 Ev - 'ry - day is in e - ter - ni - ty!
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

19 *f*
 Ev - 'ry - man's an an - gel! ...as
f
 Ev - 'ry - man's an an - gel! ...as
mf
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,
mf
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

21
 ho - ly as the se - ra - phim! the
 ho - ly as the se - ra - phim! the
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

mad - man is ho - ly as
 mad - man is ho - ly as
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, —
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, —

26 quarter = 60

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

25 *molto rit.* *lunga* you my soul are ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly,
molto rit. *lunga* you my soul are ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,
molto rit. *lunga* ho - ly, —
molto rit. *lunga* ho - ly, —

30

B&F Music
in the background
Joshua Shank

29 *mp warmly* ho - ly, The type - wri - ter is ho - ly the po - em is
mp warmly The type - wri - ter is ho - ly the po - em is
in the background ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

33 *mf* consistent dynamic now (no hairpins)

ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, — ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

mf consistent dynamic now (no hairpins)

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

mf warmly

ho - ly the voice is ho - ly the hear - ers are

mf warmly

ho - ly the voice is ho - ly the hear - ers are

37 *p* *lunga* *rit.*

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

p *lunga* *rit.*

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

p *lunga* *rit.*

ho - ly the ec - sta - sy — is ho - ly!

p *lunga* *rit.*

ho - ly the ec - sta - sy — is ho - ly!

40 quarter = 68

mp *simile*

Ho - ly — Pe - ter ho - ly — Al - len ho - ly —

mp *simile*

Ho - ly — Pe - ter ho - ly — Al - len ho - ly —

mp *simile*

Ho - ly — Pe - ter ho - ly — Al - len ho - ly —

mp *simile*

Ho - ly — Pe - ter ho - ly — Al - len ho - ly —

45

48 quarter = 68

p

Ke - rou - ac - ho - ly Bur - roughs (m)

Ke - rou - ac - ho - ly Bur - roughs

Ke - rou - ac - ho - ly Bur - roughs (m)

Ke - rou - ac - ho - ly Bur - roughs

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

49

Soloist or semi-choir: *mp*

ho-ly the un-known bug-gered and suf-fer-ing beg - gars ho-ly the hi-de-ous hu-man an - gels!

TB soloists or semi-choir: *mp*

ho-ly the un-known bug-gered and suf-fer-ing beg - gars ho-ly the hi-de-ous hu-man an - gels!

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”

53 quarter = 48

55 quarter = 68
sub. f

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

Ho - ly the groan - ing

sub. f tutti

Ho - ly the groan - ing

mp tutti

Ho - ly my mo - ther in the in - sane a - sy - lum! Ho - ly the groan - ing

mp tutti

Ho - ly my mo - ther in the in - sane a - sy - lum! Ho - ly the groan - ing

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

57

sax - o - phone! Ho - ly the bop a - poc - a - lypse!

sax - o - phone! Ho - ly the bop a - poc - a - lypse!

sax - o - phone! Ho - ly the bop a - poc - a - lypse!

sax - o - phone! Ho - ly the bop a - poc - a - lypse!

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

64

Ho - ly the jazz - bands mar - i - jua - na hip - sters peace pey - o - te pipes and drums!

Ho - ly the jazz - bands mar - i - jua - na hip - sters peace pey - o - te pipes and drums!

Ho - ly the jazz - bands mar - i - jua - na hip - sters peace pey - o - te pipes and drums!

Ho - ly the jazz - bands mar - i - jua - na hip - sters peace pey - o - te pipes and drums!

70

74 quarter = 60

69 *ff* *rit.* *mp*

Ho - ly the cra - zy shep - herds of re - bel - lion Ho - ly!

ff *rit.* *mp*

Ho - ly the cra - zy shep - herds of re - bel - lion Ho - ly!

ff *rit.* *mp*

Ho - ly the cra - zy shep - herds of re - bel - lion Ho - ly!

ff *rit.* *mp*

Ho - ly the cra - zy shep - herds of re - bel - lion Ho - ly!

79 quarter = 68

76 *poco rit.*

poco rit.

p poco rit. *p*

Ho - ly! ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

p poco rit. *p*

Ho - ly! ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

80 *mf* bell tones

Ho - ly

mf bell tones

Ho - ly

simile

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

simile

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

82

New York Ho - ly San Fran -

New York Ho - ly San Fran -

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

84

cis - co Ho - ly Pe - o - ri - a and Se -

cis - co Ho - ly Pe - o - ri - a and Se -

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,

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86

mp

at - tle

f bring out

at - tle Ho-ly Pa - ris Tan - giers

ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

88

89 *p*

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

Mos - cow Is - tan - bul ho - ly,

ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly,

ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly,

90

mf

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Ho - ly the so - li - tudes of

mf

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Ho - ly the so - li - tudes of

mf

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Ho - ly the so - li - tudes of

mf

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Ho - ly the so - li - tudes of

92

sub. p

sky - scrap - ers and pave - ments! Ho - ly the caf - e - te - ri - as filled with the

sub. p

sky - scrap - ers and pave - ments! Ho - ly the caf - e - te - ri - as filled with the

sub. p

sky - scrap - ers and pave - ments! Ho - ly the caf - e - te - ri - as filled with the

sub. p

sky - scrap - ers and pave - ments! Ho - ly the caf - e - te - ri - as filled with the

94

sub. mf

mil - lions! Ho - ly the mys - te - ri - ous ri - vers Ho - ly the lone *(n)

sub. mf

mil - lions! Ho - ly the mys - te - ri - ous ri - vers of tears un - der the streets! Ho - ly the lone *(n)

sub. mf

mil - lions! Ho - ly the mys - te - ri - ous ri - vers of tears un - der the streets! Ho - ly the lone *(n)

sub. mf

mil - lions! Ho - ly the mys - te - ri - ous ri - vers of tears un - der the streets! Ho - ly the lone *(n)

*Percussive close to 'n'

99 marked (♩ = ♩)

97 *sub. mf* jug-ger-naut! Ho-ly the vast lamb of the mid-dle-class! ho - ly the clocks in_

sub. mf jug-ger-naut! Ho-ly the vast lamb of the mid-dle-class! *f* ho - ly the clocks _____ in

sub. mf jug-ger-naut! Ho-ly the vast lamb of the mid-dle-class! *f* ho - ly the clocks in_

sub. mf jug-ger-naut! Ho-ly the vast lamb of the mid-dle - class! *f* ho - ly the clocks _____ in

101 space _____ ho - ly time in e - ter-ni - ty ho - ly,

space _____ ho - ly time in e - ter-ni - ty _____ ho - ly,

space _____ ho - ly time in e - ter-ni - ty _____

space _____ ho - ly time in e - ter-ni - ty ho - ly, _____

110 quarter = 60

107

poco rit. *lunga* *mf* 3

ho - ly e - ter-ni-ty in time Ho-ly for-give-ness! mer-cy! cha-ri-ty! faith!

poco rit. *lunga* *mf* 3

ho - ly e - ter-ni-ty in time Ho-ly for-give-ness! mer-cy! cha-ri-ty! faith!

poco rit. *lunga* *mf* 3

ho - ly e - ter-ni-ty in time Ho-ly for-give-ness! mer-cy! cha-ri-ty! faith!

poco rit. *lunga* *mf* 3

ho - ly e - ter-ni-ty in time Ho-ly for-give-ness! mer-cy! cha-ri-ty! faith!

112

Ho-ly! Ours! bo - dies! suf-fer-ing! mag-na - ni - mi - ty! Ho-ly the su - per - na-tur - al ex - tra

Ho-ly! Ours! bo - dies! suf-fer-ing! mag-na - ni - mi - ty! Ho-ly the su - per - na-tur - al ex - tra

Ho-ly! Ours! bo - dies! suf-fer-ing! mag-na - ni - mi - ty! Ho-ly the su - per - na-tur - al ex - tra

Ho-ly! Ours! bo - dies! suf-fer-ing! mag-na - ni - mi - ty! Ho-ly the su - per - na-tur - al ex - tra

116 *poco rit.* **f** **119** quarter = 44 *p* *mf*

bril - lian - tin - tel - li - gent kind - ness of the soul! Ev - 'ry - bo - dy's ho - ly!

bril - lian - tin - tel - li - gent kind - ness of the soul! Ev - 'ry - bo - dy's ho - ly,

bril - lian - tin - tel - li - gent kind - ness of the soul! Ev - 'ry - bo - dy's ho - ly!

bril - lian - tin - tel - li - gent kind - ness of the soul! Ev - 'ry - bo - dy's ho - ly!

121 *mp* **127** *mp* *mp* *mp*

Ev - 'ry - where is ho - ly! Ev - 'ry - thing

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Ev - 'ry - where is ho - ly! Ev - 'ry - thing

Ev - 'ry - where is ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Ev - 'ry - thing

Ev - 'ry - where is ho - ly! Ev - 'ry - thing

128

is ho - - - - - ly!
lunga

is ho - - - - - ly!
lunga

is ho - - - - - ly!
lunga

is ho - - - - - ly!
lunga

exaggerated gliss.

exaggerated gliss.

exaggerated gliss.

exaggerated gliss.

lunga

lunga

lunga

lunga

lunga

“This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...”
Cambridge, December 2021

B&F Music
Joshua Shank

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