

M. E. Valverde

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Comfort and Joy
for SATB chorus and piano

About the Poet

Poet, author, composer, and speaker Charles Anthony Silvestri has worked with other artists from all over the world to create texts tailor-made for their commissions and specific artistic needs. He enjoys the challenge of solving these creative problems and has provided custom choral texts, opera libretti, program notes and other writing for composers including Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo, Kim Arnesen, and Dan Forrest, and for ensembles ranging from high schools to the Houston Grand Opera, from the King's Singers to the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, from Westminster Choir College to Westminster Abbey.

As a clinician, Silvestri speaks to choirs, classes, and concert audiences about his works, the creative process, the marriage of words and music, and about his collaborative relationships with composers. He is the author of three books, including *A Silver Thread* (GIA 2019), a retrospective of almost 20 years of his lyric poetry. He teaches Ancient and Medieval History at Washburn University and lives in Lawrence, KS.

*In the little winter town, beneath the glass,
A child alone, in a pale blue coat,
Arms stretched out to greet the swirling snow,
Dances in comfort and joy.*

*The snow falls sure and steady here;
Ever new this bed of purest white.
All have fled inside, except the child
Dancing in comfort and joy.*

*What songs fill her fragile sphere?
What long dreaming do they tell?
The many paths she could have taken,
The women she could have become,*

*This forever girl, gazing upward,
Frozen in this snowy moment
All wrapped up in palest blue,
And dancing in comfort and joy...?*

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Composer's Notes

Though secular, "Comfort and Joy" is an original song in the spirit of a Christmas carol. Charles Anthony Silvestri who authored the text was inspired by the momentous connection between a woman who never knew a girlhood and a girl who never knew a womanhood.

The musical narrative begins with a nod to Claude Debussy's "La fille aux cheveux de lin," and with melancholic sweetness, its melody unfolds describing the world of the "eternal girl" in two realms — the outside and the inside of a snow globe. The first two verses, sung in major mode, frame the perspective from outside the wintry scene. Then the glass cracks open, shattering the illusion of time and exposing the universe within. The final verses, sung in minor mode, offer a glimpse from the grounds of her most heartfelt memory. Ultimately, the story ends in a resounding question, for we can only imagine the magic of her dreams fulfilled.

This work was commissioned in 2020 by the Love Like Lily Foundation (www.LoveLikeLily.org) and premiered by the University of South Carolina Concert Choir under the direction of Dr. Alicia Walker for their in-person concerts titled "A Holiday Garland of Choirs" in December 2021.

Performance Notes

The shifts from 2/4 to 6/8 at mm. 24, 51, and 91 are proportional so that, following the *ritardandi*, the pulse of the eighth note is consistent. Please observe the *caesura* following m. 27. Take care and allow the pianist to play the rolls freely and expressively, rather than strictly in rhythm, including at m. 99, where the piano roll overlaps sustained voices. Accordingly, the conductor may be compelled not to conduct the piano at mm. 1, 28, and 57.

dur. = ca. 4'30"

Commissioned by the Love Like Lily Foundation for
the University of South Carolina Concert Choir, Dr. Alicia Walker, conductor

Comfort and Joy

for SATB chorus and piano

Charles Anthony Silvestri

b.1965

Mari Esabel Valverde

b.1987

Serenely, poco adagio ♩ = ca. 60

Piano

p slowly rolled

S
A
T
B

p gently

In the lit - tle win - ter town, be - neath the

p gently

In the lit - tle win - ter town be - neath the

p gently

In the lit - tle win - ter town be - neath the

p gently

In the lit - tle win - ter town be - neath the

Pno.

pp

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12

S
glass,

A
glass,

T
8
glass, A child a lone, in a pale blue

B
glass, A child a - lone, in a pale blue

Pno.
delicato
Pia.

18

S
poco a poco cresc. Arms stretched out to greet the swirl - ing snow,
poco a poco cresc.

A
Arms stretched out to greet the swirl - ing snow,

T
8
coat, Arms stretched out to greet the swirl - ing snow,
poco a poco cresc.

B
coat, Arms stretched out to greet the swirl - ing snow,

Pno.
molto rit. (♩ = ♩)

A tempo ♩ = ca. 40

24

S *mf* Danc-es incom-fort and joy. — *mp* Danc-es incom-fort and joy. —

A *mf* Danc-es incom-fort and joy. — *mp* Danc-es incom-fort and joy.

T *mf* Danc-es incom-fort and joy. — *mp* Danc-es incom-fort and joy.

B *mf* Danc-es incom-fort and joy. *mp* Danc - es incom-fort and joy.

Pno. *mp* *dim.* *p* *dim.*

(♩ = ca. 60)

28

Pno. *p* slowly rolled

33 *p*
 S The snow falls sure and stead - y
 A The snow falls sure and stead - y
 T The snow falls sure and stead - y
 B The snow falls sure and stead - y
 Pno. *pp*

39
 S here; Ev - er new this bed of pur - est
 A here; Ev - er new this bed of pur - est
 T here;
 B here;
 Pno. *delicato*
 Ped. *

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45 *poco a poco cresc.* **molto rit.**

S white. All have fled in - side, ex - cept the child

A white. All have fled in - side, ex - cept the child

T *poco a poco cresc.* All have fled in - side ex - cept the child

B *poco a poco cresc.* All have fled in - side ex - cept the child

Pno.

A tempo ♩ = ca. 40

51 *mf* *mp*

S Danc - ing in com - fort and joy. Danc - ing in com - fort and joy.

A *mf* *mp* Danc - ing in com - fort and joy. Danc - ing in com - fort and joy.

T *mf* *mp* Danc - ing in com - fort and joy. Danc - ing in com - fort and joy.

B *mf* *mp* Danc - ing in com - fort and joy. Danc - ing in com - fort and joy.

Pno. *mp* *dim.* *p* *dim.*

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Pno.

(65) (L.H.)

mf espress.

S

A

T

B

Pno.

mp

mp

mp

mp

p like fragmenting glass

What songs fill her fra - gile sphere?

What songs fill her fra - gile

What songs fill her fra - gile sphere?

What songs fill her fra - gile

molto rit.

poco a poco cresc.

65

S What long dream - ing do they

A sphere? What long dream - ing do they

T What long dream - ing do they

B sphere? What long dream - ing do they

Pno. *mp* *cresc.*

A tempo

p inwardly

69

S tell? The man - y

A tell? *f* The man - y *p inwardly*

T tell? *f* The man - y

B tell? *f*

Pno. *mf* *mp*

75

S paths she could have tak - en, The wom - en she could have be -

A paths she could have tak - en, The wom - en she could have be -

T she _____ could have be -

B she _____ could have be -

Pno. *pp* like falling snow

pp *leg.* * *leg.* * *leg.* *

76

S *mp* come, This for - ev - er girl, gaz - ing up - ward, *poco a poco cresc.* *opt. div.*

A *mp* come, This for - ev - er girl, gaz - ing up - ward, *poco a poco cresc.* *opt. div.*

T *mp* come, This for - ev - er girl, gaz - ing up - ward,

B *mp* come, This for - ev - er girl, gaz - ing up - ward,

Pno. *p* *mp*

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79 *fp*

S Fro - zen in this snow - y mo - ment,

A *fp* Fro - zen in this snow - y mo - ment,

T *fp* Fro - zen in this snow - y mo - ment,

B *fp* Fro - zen in this snow - y mo - ment,

Pno. *sub. p*

85 *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* *molto rit.*

S All wrapped up in pal - est blue, And

A *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* All wrapped up in pal - est blue, And

T *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* All wrapped up in pal - est blue, And

B *mp* *poco a poco cresc.* All wrapped up in pal - est blue, And

Pno.

A tempo ♩. = ca. 40

91 *f* *opt. div.* *mf*

S danc - ing in com - fort and joy...? danc - ing in com - fort and

A danc - ing in com - fort and joy...? danc - ing in com - fort and

T danc - ing in com - fort and joy...? danc - ing in com - fort and

B danc - ing in com - fort and joy...? danc - ing in com - fort and

Pno. *mf* *dim.* *mp*

94 *p*

S joy...? And danc - ing in com - fort and *p*

A joy...? And danc - ing in com - fort and *p*

T joy...? And danc - ing in com - fort and *p*

B joy...? danc - ing in com - fort and *p*

Pno. *pp*

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Musical score for voices and piano. The score is in 2/4 time and A major. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "joy...? and joy...?". The piano part includes markings for *mp freely* and *mf*. A circled number 97 is in the top left corner of the vocal staves.

Soprano (S): joy...? and joy...?
Alto (A): joy...? and joy...?
Tenor (T): joy...? and joy...?
Bass (B): joy...? and joy...?
Piano (Pno.): *mp freely* *mf*

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