Commissioned by First United Church of Christ, Northfield, Minn.

Christopher Brunelle, Director of Music

Birth of Christ

for SATB Choir and Handbells (2012)

DAVID WOLFF



Birth of Christ

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Performance Time: ca. 3:15



BIRTH OF CHRIST

from Rainer Maria Rilke's Das Marien-Leben (Life of the Virgin Mary), translated by Stephen Spender

Were you not simple, how could that have happened to you, which now illumines all our night? God, who raged over nations in his might, in you is mild, and to the world descends.

Is he less great than you'd imagined?

What is greatness? Cutting through all measures which he crosses, goes his line of fate.

Straighter his path even than are stars.

Behold, the kings who have come here are great,

and, for you, they drag treasures out to set

upon your lap: the greatest, as they hold. Perhaps you are astonished at so much. Then look down into your shawl's fold, see how already he has surpassed each.

All such amber shipped from far off, such

gold ornaments and aromatic spices spreading a blurred dazedness in the mind: these were all but of a rapid shortness and maybe regretted in the end.

But (as you will see): He brings joy.

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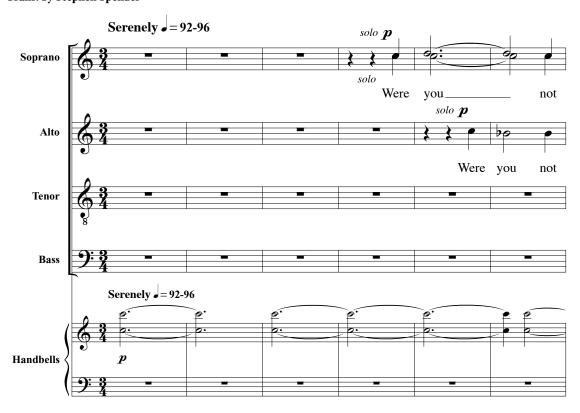
Performance Notes

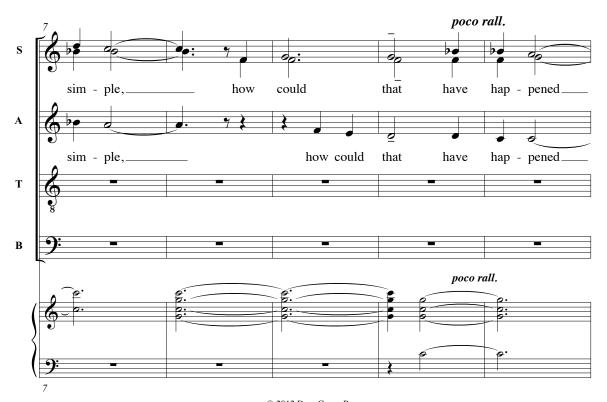
- 1.Accidentals carry through the measure, applying only to the register and part they appear in.
- 2.Metronome markings are only approximations.
- 3. Passages notated should be sung *divisi* within a section.
- 4.Passages notated should be balanced across sections accordingly.

Birth of Christ

RAINER MARIA RILKE Trans. by Stephen Spender

DAVID WOLFF















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