

Four Psalms

for a cappella SATB and SSA choruses

Text from the Scottish Psalter of 1650

Duration: c. 10'00"

RUSSELL NADEL

2002

Performance Notes:

These four psalms may be freely performed as a set or individually.

If the pieces are to be performed as a set, the composer's recommendation for the order of the pieces is as follows:

- I. Psalm 23
- II. Psalm 100
- III. Psalm 121
- IV. Psalm 130

Since the texts are entirely ecumenical, any religious denomination should find them appropriate for a variety of religious occasions. Congregations should feel free to perform any one or more piece from the set without feeling obligated to perform the other complimentary pieces.

— *Russell Nadel*

Psalm 23

for a cappella SATB choir

RUSSELL NADEL

(2002)

Text from the Scottish Psalter of 1650



Performance Notes:

The meter and tone of this setting of Psalm 23 is meant to evoke the pastoral feel of the “pastures green” in the text. While the tempo marking is listed as $\text{♩} = 36$, the piece should be conducted in a three-beat pattern ($\text{♩} = 108$); the written tempo marking indicates that, as in a one-beat pattern subdivided into three beats, the performer should put more stress on the first beat and less on the other two. Thus, the first beat of every measure should have a slight feeling of *tenuto*, while beats two and three should be almost entirely unaccented. This performance practice, combined with very smooth (but intense) dynamic change, should bring a feeling of restfulness and calm to the performance.

— *Russell Nadel*
August 2002

Text:

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for His own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill,
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

Thy table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

His goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forever more
My dwelling place shall be.

Psalm 23

Text from the Scottish Psalter

RUSSELL NADEL

♩ = 36, dolce e sempre legatissimo

SOPRANO
p The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want, He makes me down to

ALTO
p The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want, He makes me down to

TENOR
p The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want, He makes me down to

BASS
p The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want, He makes me down to

♩ = 36, dolce e sempre legatissimo

Piano (for rehearsal only)
p

A

8

mf lie In pas - tures green; He lead - eth me The qui - et wa - ters

mf lie In pas - tures green, He lead - eth me Qui - et wa - ters

mf lie In pas - tures green, He lead - eth me Qui - et wa - ters

mf div. lie, In pas - tures green, Wa - ters

p

29

p sub.
 ness, E - ven for His own name's sake.
p
 - ness, For His own name's sake.
p
 ness, For His own name's sake.
p
 ness, For His own sake.

34

D Poco largamente *mp*

mp
 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I
mp
 Yea, though I walk in death's vale Yet will I
mf
 Walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I
mp unis.
 Yea, I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I

Poco largamente
mp *mf*

Psalm 100

for a cappella SATB choir

RUSSELL NADEL

(2002)

Text from the Scottish Psalter of 1650



Performance Notes:

This setting of Psalm 100 is meant to be simple, light and joyous, and should have the same bounce as a Christmas carol. As this piece is based on call-and-response, the play of one or two voice parts against the full chorus should be brought out. The performance should always have a lot of life, even in the slower and more legato section. The *poco rit.* indications should not be too exaggerated, and diction must be particularly clear to make sure all the words are heard clearly.

— *Russell Nadel*
August 2002

Text:

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord in cheerful voice:
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed:
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto:
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why the Lord our God is good;
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

Psalm 100

Text from the Scottish Psalter

RUSSELL NADEL

♩ = c. 104, allegro con gioia **f** **A**

SOPRANO
ALTO
TENOR
BASS

All peo - ple that on

p Sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, *f* sing!

p Sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, *f* sing!

♩ = c. 104, allegro con gioia **f** **A**

Piano (for rehearsal only)

6 *poco rit.*

earth do dwell, Sing to the Lord in cheer - ful voice. Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell;

mf Sing to the Lord in cheer - ful voice. Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell;

mf Sing to the Lord in cheer - ful voice.

mf Sing to the Lord in cheer - ful voice.

poco rit.

11 **a tempo**

mf Come ye be - fore Him and re - jice. *p* Sing to the Lord,

Come ye be - fore... Him and re - jice. *p* Sing to the Lord,

mf Come ye be - fore Him and re - jice, *p* come ye be - fore Him and re - jice. *so* *voce* Re -

mf *div.* *p* *unis.* *div.* Come ye be - fore Him and re - jice, come ye be - fore Him and re - jice.

a tempo

16 **B** *f* *mf*

sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing! With -

sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord, sing! With -

cresc. *f* jice, re - jice, re - jice! Know that the Lord is God in - deed: With -

mf *unis.* With -

B *mf*

21

a tempo

poco rit.

mf

out our aid He did us make;

And for His sheep He

out our aid He did us make; we are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He

out our aid He did us make; we are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He

out our aid He did us make; we are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He

div.

unis.

poco rit.

a tempo

mf

26

molto rit.

p

doth us take, for His sheep He doth us take.

p

doth us take, for His sheep He doth us take.

mp

doth us take.

Sing to the Lord,

div.

p

doth us take.

Sing to the Lord,

molto rit.

p

Psalm 121

for a cappella SSA choir

RUSSELL NADEL

(2002)

Text from the Scottish Psalter of 1650



Performance Notes:

This setting of Psalm 121 should be performed very smoothly and quietly, and should always have the soothing feel of a lullabye. The singers should concentrate on blend and unity of sound, and should always keep the dynamic level of the performance fairly restrained, even singing the passages marked *forte* without the accentuation that marking usually implies. The *poco rit.* markings must not be too exaggerated. Most importantly, this piece should always be performed simply, and without too much interpretation.

— *Russell Nadel*
August 2002

Text:

I to the hills will lift mine eyes;
From whence doth come mine aid?
My safety cometh from the Lord
Who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot He'll not let slide,
Nor will he slumber that thee keep.
Behold, He that keeps Israel,
He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade
On thy right hand doth stay.
The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day.

The Lord shall keep thy soul;
He shall preserve thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in,
God keep forever will.

Psalm 121

Text from the Scottish Psalter

RUSSELL NADEL

♩ = c. 56, dolcissimo e molto tranquillo *mp* *poco rit.*

SOPRANO I
From whence doth come mine

SOPRANO II
p I to the hills will lift mine eyes; From whence doth come mine

ALTO
p I to the hills will lift mine

Piano (for rehearsal only)
p *mp* *poco rit.*

4 *p* *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *pp sub.*

aid? My safe-ty com-eth from the Lord Who hea-ven and earth hath

p *mp* *mf* *pp sub.*

aid? My safe-ty com-eth from the Lord Who hea-ven and earth hath

p *mp* *mf* *pp sub.*

eyes; My safe - ty from the Lord Who hea-ven and earth hath

a tempo

p *mp* *mf* *pp sub.*

A

8

f *p sub.* *poco rit.*

made. Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will He slum - ber that thee

made. Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will He slum - ber that ___ thee__

made. Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will he slum - ber that thee

f *fp* *p*

f *p sub.* *poco rit.*

11

a tempo *f* *mf* *poco rit.* *a tempo*

keep. Be - hold, He ___ that keeps_ Is - ra - el He slum - bers not, _ nor__

keep. Be - hold, He ___ that keeps_ Is - ra - el He slum - bers not, nor__

keep. Be - hold, He that keeps_ Is - ra - el He slum - bers not, _ nor__

a tempo *f* *mf* *poco rit.* *a tempo*

f *mf* *p* *mf*

15 *p* *Solo mp* **B** *< mf*

sleeps. The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade On thy right hand doth

p *Solo mp* *< mf*

sleeps. The Lord thy shade On thy right hand doth_

div. *p* *Solo mp* *< mf*

sleeps. On thy right hand doth

p *mp* **B** *mf*

mp

19 *mf* *p*

stay. The moon by night thee shall not smite, Nor yet the sun by

mf *p*

stay. The moon by night thee shall not smite, Nor yet the sun by

mf *p*

stay. The moon by night thee shall not smite, Nor yet the sun by

mf *p*

Psalm 130

for a cappella SATB choir

RUSSELL NADEL

(2002)

Text from the Scottish Psalter of 1650



Performance Notes:

The meter and tone of this setting of Psalm 130 is meant to evoke the steady hymnal feel of a Bach chorale rooted in ancient plainsong. The piece should always flow smoothly, maintaining a slow *legato* pulse throughout. The melody should always be slightly emphasized, and fermatas should be observed as written. (Note that all fermatas, except the very first, should be immediately followed by a breath before continuing the phrase in time.) Singers should stagger-breathe as necessary in the longer phrases.

— *Russell Nadel*
August 2002

Text:

Lord, from the depths to Thee I cried:
My voice, Lord, do Thou hear:
Unto my supplication's voice
Give an attentive ear.

Lord, who shall stand, if Thou, O Lord,
Shouldst mark iniquity?
But yet with Thee forgiveness is,
That feared Thou mayest be.

I wait for God, my soul doth wait;
My hope is in His word.
More than they that for morning watch,
My soul waits for the Lord.

I say, more than they that do watch
The morning light to see,
Let Israel hope in the Lord,
For with Him mercies be.

Redemption also plenteous
Is ever found with Him:
And from all their iniquities
He Israel shall redeem.

Psalm 130

Text from the Scottish Psalter

RUSSELL NADEL

♩ = 63, calmo e sempre legatissimo

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

pp *p*

Lord, from the depths to Thee I cried: My voice, Lord, do Thou hear: Un -

Piano (for rehearsal only)

pp *p*

♩ = 63, calmo e sempre legatissimo

T.

B.

mp **A**

Lord, who shall stand, if

mp

to my supp - li - ca - tion's voice Give an at - ten - tive ear. Lord, who shall stand, if

Pno.

A

mp

11

Thou, O Lord, Shouldst mark in - i - qui - ty? But yet with Thee for - give - ness is, That

Thou, O Lord, Shouldst mark in - i - qui - ty? But yet with Thee for - give - ness is, That

mf **B**

A. I wait for God, my soul doth wait; My hope is in His

T. *>, mf* feared Thou may - est be. I wait_ for God, my soul doth wait; My hope_ is_ in His_

B. *>, mf* feared. Thou may - est be. I wait for God, my_ soul doth wait; My hope is in His

Pno. **B** *mf*

S. *mf*

A. *div. > mf* word. More than they that for mor - ning watch, my soul_ waits for the_ Lord. I_ for the Lord.

T. *>, mf* word. More_ than_ they_ that for_ mor - ning watch, my soul waits for_ the Lord. I

B. *>, mf* word. More than they that_ for mor - ning watch, my soul_ waits for the Lord. I_

Pno. *mf*

26

C

say, more than they_ that do watch The mor - ning light to see, Let Is - ra - el hope_

say, more_ than they that do_ watch The mor - ning light to see, Let Is - ra - el hope

say, more than they_ that_ do watch The mor - ning light to_ see, Let Is - ra - el hope

say, more than they_ that do watch The mor - ning light to see, Let_ Is - ra - el hope

unis.

31

D

in_ the Lord, For with Him mer - cies be. Re - demp - tion_ al - so_ plen - te - ous Is

in_ the_ Lord, For_ with_ Him_ mer - cies_ be. Re - demp - tion_ al - so plen - te - ous Is_

in_ the Lord, For with Him mer - cies_ be. Re - demp - tion al - so plen - te - ous Is

in_ the Lord, For with Him mer - cies be. Re - demp - tion al - so_ plen - te - ous Is

div. *f*

unis.