

**Warren Gooch:**

# ***JOHN 1: THE WORD***

**For SATB Choir**

Duration: ca. 7 minutes

## PROGRAM NOTES

*This seven-minute work is a choral setting of selected passages from the first chapter of the Book of John (verses 1-5 and 10-14). Providing an appropriate setting for this profound and dramatic text was indeed an exciting challenge. The selected verses have elements of mystery, timelessness, majesty and invoke a full spectrum of human emotions—from anger and despair (“...And the world knew Him Not!”) to awe and assurance (“...And we beheld His glory.....full of grace and truth.”). In order to capture some of these qualities of the text, I chose to employ sound mass and other nontraditional vocal techniques. Word painting and symbolism have also been heavily incorporated. The opening solo recitative passages float over choral dissonances, as if each soloist were a single voice crying in the wilderness (a reflection of John the Baptist, who is also introduced in this chapter). “And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not” is presented by two groups of voices that never achieve synchronization. The texture created by the repetition of the “i” sound at the end of the word “not” recalls Christ’s rejection by humankind—He was mocked and spit on prior to His crucifixion. The conflict between the will of man and that of God is voiced through a chorus of steadily intensifying murmurs. The triumphant conclusion is also a direct reflection of the message of hope embodied in the text. JOHN I: THE WORD was composed for the Morgan park High School Choir of Duluth, Minnesota.*

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

- *No prior experience with contemporary musical styles and notation is required of the singer in order to perform this piece successfully.*
- *The score is NOT spatially notated. Instead, the conductor is simply granted considerable freedom with respect to tempo and note durations throughout. For this reason, metric indications and note values are often omitted from passages in the score. The conductor should be constantly aware of the dramatic continuity of the piece as reflected in the meaning of the text and the flow of the words. The music should move naturally from one section to the next, and the notated silences between sections should be carefully thought out.*
- *This is above all a dramatic, atmospheric piece! The choir and soloists should sing expressively, being careful that sustained pitches reflect desired volume levels and balance at all times. Staggered breathing should be employed whenever necessary.*
- *Vibrato is desirable, although the conductor may wish to experiment with non-vibrato singing in certain passages (at rehearsal H, for example).*

**As if suspended in time**

*Solo (S or A)*

sing in free, spoken rhythm

*mf*

Musical score for five voices: Solo, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The Solo part begins with a triplet of notes and the lyrics "In the be-gin-ning was the Word, \_\_\_\_\_". The other voices enter with sustained notes, marked *mp* (sustain indicated pitch). The Soprano part includes the lyrics "mummm.....". The Tenor part includes the lyrics "mummm.....". The Bass part includes the lyrics "mummm.....". The score concludes with a "silence" marking for each voice line.

**(A)**

**Faster, with closer entrances**

*Solo (T or B)*

sing in free, spoken rhythm

*f*

*Slower*

*mf*

Musical score for five voices: Solo, Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The Solo part begins with the lyrics "and the Word was with God, \_\_\_\_\_". The other voices enter with sustained notes, marked *fp* (sharply!). The Soprano part includes the lyrics "Tooooo..... sharply!". The Alto part includes the lyrics "Tooooo..... sharply!". The Tenor part includes the lyrics "Tooooo..... sharply!". The Bass part includes the lyrics "Tooooo..... sharply!". The score concludes with a "silence" marking for each voice line.

**with motion and growing intensity**

**(B)**

Solo (T)

The same was in the be - gin - ning - with - God. *f* All things were made by Him, *short pause*

*warmly mf* God.... *short pause*

*warmly mf* with God.... *short pause*

*warmly mf* God.... *short pause*

*warmly mf* with God.... *short pause*

*warmly mf* God.... *short pause*

*warmly mf* with God.... *short pause*

God....

*Slower*

**Faster**

and with-out Him was not an - y - thing made that was made.

*f* by Himmm.... *mf* In Him was life(ff)....

*f* by Himmm.... *mf* In Him was life(ff)....

*f* by Himmm.... *mf* In Him was life(ff)....

*f* by Himmm.... *mf* In Him was life(ff)....

God....

(C)

Solo

S (mmm)....

A (fff)....

T (fff)....

B (fff)....

and the life... was the light... of... men.

*f*

*rit.*

silence

silence

silence

silence

silence

(D) quickly, with anger

S *ff* ssssss.....

A *ff* and the light shin-eth in dark-ness

T *ff* and the light shin-eth in dark-ness

B *ff* and the light shin-eth in dark-ness

and the dark-ness com-pre-hend-eth it not...

*ff*

*sssss*.....

*sssss*.....

*sssss*.....

*sssss*.....

*sssss*.....

*Performance Instructions*

Repeat this short passage many times. Tempo should be very steady, but the time lapse between entrances of the ATB and S parts should decrease with each repetition until the entrances overlap (S enters before ATB have finished their phrase and vice-versa). When this occurs, there should be no rest between repetitions in each individual part.

**E** with intensity

(Sop. div.)

S *mf* He was in the world \_\_\_\_\_ and the world \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

A *mf* He was in the world \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ made, \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

T *mf* He was in the world \_\_\_\_\_ and the world \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

B *mf* He was in the world \_\_\_\_\_ and the world \_\_\_\_\_ made, \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

**F** with motion

S1 *ff* made \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_ and the world knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ not, \_\_\_\_\_ and the world \_\_\_\_\_ knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

S2 *ff* made \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_ and the world knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ not. \_\_\_\_\_ He came \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

A *ff* made \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_ and the world knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ not. \_\_\_\_\_ He came \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

T *ff* made \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_ and the world knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ not. \_\_\_\_\_ He came \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

B *ff* made \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ Him. \_\_\_\_\_ and the world knew Him \_\_\_\_\_ not. \_\_\_\_\_ He came \_\_\_\_\_ *ff*

rit. ----- slower

S1  
not  
His own re - ceiv'd Him - not.

S2  
*fp*  
un - to His own - re - ceiv'd Him not.

A  
*fp*  
un - to His own re ceiv'd Him not.

T  
*fp*  
un - to His own re - ceiv'd Him not.

B  
*fp*  
un - to His own re - ceiv'd Him not.

(G)

repeat "r" sound randomly

S  
strict rhythm  
but as ma - ny as re - ceiv'd Him (mmm)....  
*f* strict rhythm

A  
to them He gave pow'r (rr)....  
*f* strict rhythm

T  
to be - come the sons (sss)....  
*f* strict rhythm

B  
of God, e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name;  
*f* strict rhythm



(H)

Solo (T or B)

*f* free tempo

Solo

which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

S  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
*p* 000

A  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
*p* 000

T  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
*p* 000

B  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
*p* 000

sempre cresc. all parts

13

S  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
will of man, will of man, will of

A  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
man, will of man, will of man, will

T  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
of man, will of man, will of man,

B  
meandering pitches, steady rhythm  
will of man, will of man, will of

*fff* silence

*fff* silence

*fff* silence

*fff* silence

**majestically**  
*ff*

**lightly, joyfully!**  
*mf*

**rit.**

Soprano and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (and we be-held His glo-ry, and we be-held His glo-ry, and we be-held His glo-ry, and)

Alto and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (and we be-held His glo-ry, and)

Tenor and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (and we be-held His glo-ry, and)

Bass and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (and)

**triumphantly!**  
*f*

S glo-ry, and we be-held His glo-ry, His glo-ry, the glo-ry as of the on-ly be-got-ten of the Fa-ther)

A we be-held His glo-ry, and we be-held his glo-ry, the glo-ry as of the on-ly be-got-ten of the Fa-ther)

T glo-ry, and we be-held His glo-ry, His glo-ry, the glo-ry as of the on-ly be-got-ten of the

B we be-held his glo-ry, and we be-held his glo-ry, the glo-ry as of the

**molto rit.**  
**warmly**

The musical score consists of four staves, labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass) from top to bottom. Each staff begins with a *mp* dynamic marking and a hairpin crescendo. The lyrics are: "full of grace and truth." for S, A, and T; and "Fa - ther) on - ly be - got - ten of the Fa - ther)" for B. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and breath marks. The Soprano and Alto parts end with a *n* (nasal) marking and a wavy line. The Tenor and Bass parts end with a *n* marking and a wavy line. The lyrics are: "full of grace and truth." for S, A, and T; and "Fa - ther) on - ly be - got - ten of the Fa - ther)" for B.