

Seth Houston, choral composer

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O Vos Omnes

for chamber chorus
(SATB divisi)
a cappella

Seth Houston
www.sethhouston.com
2006

Notes

The text *O Vos Omnes* is attributed to the prophet Jeremiah, who uttered the words in reference to the desolation of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Captivity. The words are recorded in the first chapter of Lamentations, verse 12. Liturgically, the text is used in the liturgy of Holy Saturday (the night before Easter), and in other contexts. While the sorrow Jeremiah expresses is related to a particular historical event, the text is used to convey deep sorrow concerning a variety of themes.

My setting of *O Vos Omnes* was inspired, in part, by a performance by vocalist Dawn Upshaw and the chamber ensemble Eighth Blackbird. The soprano line, in particular, draws on the passionate gestures of Upshaw's performance. The piece should be performed expressively and with emotional intensity. Gb may be substituted for high Bb in measures 18 and 22 if necessary. The sopranos may shift registers, from the high Bb to mid-low Gb in measure 22. The piano reduction, to be used for rehearsal only, should be very legato.

O Vos Omnes was composed in San Francisco in 2006.

<i>O vos omnes</i>	O all you
<i>qui transitis per viam</i>	who pass along this way
<i>attendite et videte</i>	behold and see
<i>si est dolor</i>	if there is any sorrow
<i>sicut dolor meus.</i>	like unto my sorrow.

Translation courtesy of Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, vol. I: Sacred Latin Texts* (Corvallis, OR: Earthsongs, 1988), p. 182.

About the Composer

Seth Houston is a choral director, composer, and performer living in Boulder, Colorado. Currently completing a master's degree in choral conducting at the University of Colorado, Houston also holds degrees in composition and religion from Oberlin College. Houston has been teaching middle school and high school choirs in Waldorf schools since 2001, and also founded and directed the youth chorus *Big Sky*. Houston's choral compositions are widely performed and have been featured on *A Prairie Home Companion*, in *Sing Out!* magazine, and in the choral collection *Northern Harmony*.

O Vos Omnes

for chamber chorus

Seth Houston, 2006

Molto appassionato, ♩ = 72

mp

The image shows a musical score for a chamber chorus and piano reduction. The top section is for the chamber chorus, consisting of four staves (three vocal parts and one bass part). The bottom section is a piano reduction, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in a key with three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Molto appassionato' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The dynamic is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets. The lyrics 'O, O, O,' are written below the vocal staves. The piano reduction includes a note for rehearsal only: '(Piano reduction is for rehearsal only.)'.

mp

mp

Molto appassionato, ♩ = 72
(Piano reduction is for rehearsal only.)

mp

O Vos Omnes

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The second system contains the piano accompaniment. The music is in a key with three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and starts with a 3/4 time signature, which changes to 4/4 in the second measure of each system. The tempo is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The vocal parts feature melodic lines with slurs and accents, and the piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The lyrics "O, O, O, O," are placed below the vocal staves. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets.

O Vos Omnes

more broadly, ♩ = 66

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The second system contains the piano accompaniment for the second system. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked 'more broadly' with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano). The vocal parts feature long, flowing lines with various ornaments and a triplet in the final measure of each system. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with sustained chords and moving lines in both hands.

O Vos Omnes

a tempo (♩ = 72), *with intensity*

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts begin at measure 13 with the lyrics "vos om-nes, O,". The piano accompaniment features a treble and bass clef with a piano (p) dynamic. The second system contains two piano accompaniment staves (treble and bass clef) with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The tempo and intensity markings are repeated at the start of the second system.

13 *mf*
vos om-nes, O,
mf
vos om-nes, O,
mf
vos om-nes, O,
mf
vos om-nes, O,
a tempo (♩ = 72), *with intensity*
13 *mf*
13 *mf*

O Vos Omnes

poco rit.

Musical score for the piece "O Vos Omnes", page 5, measures 17-20. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking is *poco rit.* (slightly ritardando).

The score consists of five systems of staves:

- System 1: Voice part, measures 17-20. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17, a vocal line with lyrics "O," in measure 18, and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19.
- System 2: Piano accompaniment, measures 17-20. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17 and a vocal line with lyrics "O" in measure 18.
- System 3: Piano accompaniment, measures 17-20. Includes a vocal line with lyrics "O," in measure 18.
- System 4: Piano accompaniment, measures 17-20. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17, a vocal line with lyrics "O," in measure 18, and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19.
- System 5: Piano accompaniment, measures 17-20. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 17, a vocal line with lyrics "O," in measure 18, and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19.

The score features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and *poco rit.*

The image displays a musical score for the piece "O Vos Omnes". It is divided into two systems. The first system contains four staves: three vocal staves and one piano accompaniment staff. The second system contains two staves for the piano accompaniment. The music is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The tempo and dynamics are marked with *p* (piano). The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, slurs, and triplets. A circled "O" is placed above the first staff of the second system. The page number "6" is in the top left, and the title "O Vos Omnes" is centered at the top.

20 *p*

20 *p*

20 *p*

20 *p*

O

20 *p*

20 *p*

O Vos Omnes

rit. *mf* *p* *p* *slower, ♩ = 54*

O, O vos om- nes, qui
vos om- nes, qui
vos om- nes, qui
vos om- nes, qui

rit. *mf* *p* *p* *slower, ♩ = 54*

23

O Vos Omnes

rit. poco a poco $\text{♩} = 48$

27 *pp*

tran-si-tis per vi-am, qui tran-si-tis per vi - am, qui tran-si-tis per vi-am, at-

tran-si-tis per vi-am, qui tran-si-tis per vi - am, qui tran-si-tis per vi-am, at-

tran-si-tis per vi-am, qui tran-si-tis per vi - am, qui tran-si-tis per vi-am, at-

tran-si-tis per vi-am, qui tran-si-tis per vi - am, qui tran-si-tis per vi-am, at-

rit. poco a poco $\text{♩} = 48$

27 *pp*

The image shows a page of a musical score for the hymn 'O Vos Omnes'. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The music is in 3/4 time and has a tempo of 48 beats per minute. The lyrics are in Latin: 'tran-si-tis per vi-am, qui tran-si-tis per vi - am, qui tran-si-tis per vi-am, at-'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'rit. poco a poco' (rhythmically decreasing). The piano part consists of chords and arpeggiated figures. The vocal parts have melodic lines with some grace notes and slurs. The page number '8' is in the top left, and the title 'O Vos Omnes' is centered at the top.

O Vos Omnes

$\text{♩} = 84$ *rit. poco a poco* $\text{♩} = 66$

30

ten - di - te et vi - de - te si est do - lor si - cut do - lor me - us.

ten - di - te et vi - de - te si est do - lor si - cut do - lor me - us.

ten - di - te et vi - de - te si est do - lor si - cut do - lor me - us.

ten - di - te et vi - de - te si est do - lor si - cut do - lor me - us.

30 $\text{♩} = 84$ *rit. poco a poco* $\text{♩} = 66$

30

O Vos Omnes

♩ = 58
pp

35

O, O,

3 3

3 3

3 3

3 3

3 3

3 3

O Vos Omnes

poco accel.

$\bullet = 63$ *poco rit.*

39

Four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics: O vos omnes.

The vocal staves are arranged vertically. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The music is in 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "O vos omnes." The notes are: Soprano: O (half), vos (quarter), om (quarter), nes. (quarter); Alto: O (half), vos (quarter), om (quarter), nes. (quarter); Tenor: O (half), vos (quarter), om (quarter), nes. (quarter); Bass: O (half), vos (quarter), om (quarter), nes. (quarter). There are fermatas over the final notes of each staff.

poco accel.

$\bullet = 63$ *poco rit.*

39

Piano accompaniment for the vocal staves above, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The lyrics are: O vos omnes.