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Ah! Sunflower

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Ah! Sunflower
for SATB Choir (divisi)

Music by
Michael Austin Miller

Text by
William Blake

Choral Works by Michael Austin Miller

Ah! Sunflower

*Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the travelers journey is done.*

*Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.*

by William Blake
(1757 – 1827)

Performance Notes

Concluding Consonants: Singers should place concluding consonants on the rests that immediately follow.

Tenuto Marks: In this piece, tenuto marks indicate words that should be emphasized but without a full accent.

About the dedication

This piece is dedicated to a fun-spirited nature-lover who grows the most beautiful sunflowers I have ever seen.

About this piece

Sunflowers spend their lives following the sun as it makes its perpetual journey across the sky from east to west. As one who has moved from the east coast to the west coast to pursue my aspirations, this poem spoke to me. Symbolizing humankind, these flowers yearn to climb higher until at last their journey is done. For a myriad of reasons, not all sunflowers attain the height they wish. The second stanza speaks to those unfulfilled desires: the loss of youth, wasted potential, and relinquished goals. Though their goals may have been pined away, there is still hope, for even the dying sunflower releases seed that might resume the climb next spring.

The music serves to depict the climb, the struggle, the loss, the death, and the hope that is inherent to life whether that be of humankind or that of the beautiful sunflower.

Michael Austin Miller
Snohomish, WA
April 2013

About the composer

Michael Austin Miller (b. 1974) resides in Snohomish, WA, a suburb of Seattle, and has experience directing choirs in various environments including churches, community choirs, and colleges. He holds a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Winthrop University with post-graduate doctoral course work at the University of Washington. He has held choral and instrumental teaching positions from elementary to university level. In addition to composing and arranging, he enjoys serving as guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator for school, church, and honor choirs.

dedicated to a fun-spirited nature-lover who
grows the most beautiful sunflowers I have ever seen.

Ah! Sunflower

William Blake

Michael Austin Miller
(2013)

Andante ♩ = 100

SOPRANO *mp* Sun - flow - er,

ALTO *mp* Sun - flow - er,

TENOR *mp* * See note *gliss.* Ah,

BASS *mp* Ah,

for rehearsal only

Andante ♩ = 100

S Sun - flow - er,

A Sun - flow - er,

T *gliss.* Ah,

B Ah,

Pno. *gliss.*

* The glissando is optional (but preferred). When employed, it should only occur during beat three.

A

9

S Sun - flow - er, wear - y of

A Sun - flow - er, wear - y of

T Ah! wear - y of

B Ah! wear - y of

Pno.

rit.

B ♩ = 85
mp
mf

13

S time; wear - y, wear - y, wear - y of time, Who count-est the

A time; wear - y, wear - y, wear - y of time, Who count-est the

T time; wear - y, wear - y, wear - y of time,

B time; wear - y, wear - y, wear - y of time,

Pno.

19

S
steps of the sun, who count-est the steps of the sun, who

A
steps of the sun, who count-est the steps of the sun, who

T
8
who count-est the steps of the sun, who

B
who

Pno.
mf

23

♩ = 90 accel.

C

♩ = 90

S
count - est the steps of the sun, Seek - ing af - ter that gold - en climb;

A
count - est the steps of the sun, Seek - ing af - ter that gold - en climb;

T
8
count - est the steps of the sun,

B
count - est the steps of the sun,

Pno.
mf

27

S seek - ing af - ter that gold - en climb, climb, climb,

A seek - ing af - ter that gold - en climb, climb, climb,

T seek - ing af - ter that gold - en climb, climb, climb,

B

Pno.

31

S *gliss.* *f* **D**

A climb, *f*

T climb, *f* *mf* Where trav - 'ler's jour - ney is

B *gliss.*

Pno. *f* **D** *mf*

35 **rit.** *mf* *p*

S where trav - 'ler's journ - ney is done

A where trav - 'ler's journ - ney is done

T *mp* done; *mf* *p* journ - ney is done

B where trav - 'ler's journ - ney is done

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p*

39 **E** **Andante** ♩ = 100

S Sun - flow - er,

A Sun - flow - er,

T *mp* Ah, *gliss.*

B *mp* Ah,

Pno. **E** **Andante** ♩ = 100 *mp* *mp* *gliss.*

43

S
Sun - flow - er,

A
Sun - flow - er,

T
8
Ah,

B
Ah,

Pno.
gliss.

47

S
Sun-flow-er, Sun-flow-er, Sun-flow-er, Where

A
Sun-flow-er,

T
8
Ah! Where the

B
Ah!

Pno.
gliss.

mf ♩ = 90

51

S
youth, where youth, _____ Where the

A
mf
Where youth, _____ where youth, _____

T
youth pined a - way pined a - way with de - sire.

B
mf
Baritones only Where the youth pined a - way *Tutti* pined a -

Pno.

F

55

S
youth pined a - way pined a - way with de - sire. _____ pined a -

A
Where the youth pined a - way pined a - way with de -

T
Ah

B
way with de - sire. Ah

Pno.

F

60 *rit.*

S way with de - sire. Ah

A sire. Ah Ah!

T pined a - way with de - sire, Ah!

B pined a - way with de - sire, *rit.*

Pno.

64 $\text{♩} = 85$

S Ah! *p* And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

A *p* And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

T *p* And the poor vir - gin Shroud-ed, Shroud-ed in

B Ah!

Pno. $\text{♩} = 85$ *p*

69

S *mp*
snow, And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

A *mp*
snow, And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

T *mp*
snow, And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

B *mp*
And the poor vir - gin shroud - ed in

Pno. *mp*

73

Andante ♩ = 90 **poco accel.**

S *p* snow, a - rise from their graves and as - pire, *f* *mf* a -

A *p* snow, a - rise from their graves and as - pire, *f*

T *p* snow, a - rise from their graves and as - pire, *f*

B *p* snow, a - rise from their graves and as - pire, *f*

Pno. *p* **Andante** ♩ = 90 **poco accel.** *f* *mf*

78 **G** ♩ = 115

S rise from their graves and as - pire, a -

A *mf* a - rise from their graves and as - pire, a -

T *mf* a - rise from their graves and as - pire, a -

B *mf* a - rise from their graves and as - pire, a -

Pno. **G** ♩ = 115 *mf*

82 ♩ = 90 *mp* *mf* *rit.*

S rise from their graves and as - pire Where my sun - flow - er wish - ed to

A *mp* *mf* rise from their graves and as - pire Where my sun - flow - er wish - ed to

T *mp* *mf* rise from their graves and as - pire Where my sun - flow - er wish - ed to

B *mp* *mf* rise from their graves and as - pire Where my sun - flow - er wish - ed to

Pno. ♩ = 90 *mp* *mf* *rit.*

85 $\text{♩} = 80$

S *f* go. Where my sun - flow - er wish - es to

A *f* go. Where my sun - flow - er wish - es to

T go.

B *f* go.

Pno. *f* $\text{♩} = 80$

88 **H** *mp* **Andante** $\text{♩} = 100$

S *mp* go. Sun - flow - er,

A *mp* go. Sun - flow - er,

T *mp* Ah, *mf* Ah,

B *mp* Ah, *mf* Ah,

Pno. *mp* **H** *mp* **Andante** $\text{♩} = 100$

92

S *mf*
Sun - flow - er,

A *mf*
Sun - flow - er,

T 8

B

Pno. *mf* *mf*

95

rit.

S *f* *ff*
Sun - flow - er, Ah!

A *ff*
Sun - flow - er, Ah!

T *f* *gliss.* *ff*
Ah!

B *f* *ff*
Ah!

Pno. *f* *gliss.* *f* *ff*