

Vesper Umbra
for SATB choir, soloists, organ and handbells

8 minutes

Brooke Joyce (2010)

Commissioned and premiered by Lutheran Summer Music, 2010

Program Note:

Vesper Umbra (Evening Shade) is a contemplative work that draws on many musical and literary sources to create a sonic tapestry that encourages listeners to reflect on both their faith as well as their own mortality. Intermittently throughout the piece, the choir sings John Leland's 1792 hymn "The Day is Past and Gone" (also known as "Evening Shade" in the shape note tradition), while the solo quartet responds with fragments of chant, various settings of Martin Luther's hymn "Aus tiefer Not" ("Out of the Depths I Cry to You"), and the first verse of H.A.C. Malan's hymn "Je dois mourir" ("Yes, I must die").

Ideally, the following words should be printed in programs/bulletins:

Solo:

Origo recensetur non substansia revocatur

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return—Tertullian (ca. 160 – ca. 220 A.D.), De resurrectione carnis

Choir:

The day is past and gone,
The evening shades appear;
O may we all remember well
The night of death is near.

We lay our garments by,
Upon our beds to rest;
So death will soon disrobe us all
Of what we've here possessed. (*John Leland*)

Quartet: Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir

Choir: Out of the depths I cry to you

Quartet: Herr Gott, erhoer' mein rufen

Choir: O Savior, hear my calling

Quartet: Dein gnädig' Ohren kehr zu mir
Incline your ear to me (Martin Luther)

Choir:
Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears;
May angels guard us while we sleep,
Till morning light appears. (*Leland*)

Quartet:
Je dois mourir :
Mais, Jésus ! que mon âme est calme !
Déjà je vois la sainte palme
Qu'en t'adorant je vais saisir ! (*H.A.C. Malan*)

*Yes, I must die.—Through Thee alone,
Jesus, my ransomed soul is calm ;
By faith I see Thee on the Throne,
And wear the crown, and wave the palm. (trans. Jane E Arnold)*

Choir:
And when we early rise,
And view the unwearied sun,
May we set out to win the prize,
And after glory run.

And when our days are past,
And we from time remove,
O may we in thy bosom rest,
The bosom of thy love. (*Leland*)

Quartet:
Origo recensetur non substansia revocatur