Flight and Revelation

(2006)

for mixed choir, jazz-rock quartet, and alto solo

Derek Keller

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Flight and Revelation (2006) was commissioned by the Upsilon Phi Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the Epsilon Pi Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota, and the Mostly Live Composers Society of Truman State University.

This piece was composed for Cantoria, Mark Jennings, Dir, who premiered the work on October 26, 2006 in the Ophelia Parrish Performance Hall at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri.

Flight and Revelation (2006) for choir and jazz/rock quartet is the first piece produced as part of an opera I am developing and represents my continuing interest in hybrid musical genres. The piece embodies a scene change between a bar in Tijuana to a Las Vegas casino. The leading man and woman are fleeing Tijuana so that they can start their lives over in Las Vegas. The first half of the piece establishes a groove through which the choir describes the characters' flight and also asks, "Who are these that fly like clouds, like doves to their nests?" referring to the two characters' flight out of Mexico. In the second half of the work, the leading woman has fallen asleep and in a nightmare implores, "Who will give me wings like a dove? I would fly and be at rest" (in Spanish). After each question there erupts an improvisation from the jazz/rock combo. Each of these three cycles is completed with the choir offering a vision of the woman being given two wings of eagle "that she might fly into the desert, unto her place." For texts I have chosen rather esoteric verses from the Bible that for me characterize the scene:

Choir:

Exodus 13:21

Latin: Dominus autem praecedebat eos ad ostendendam viam per diem in columna nubis et per noctem in columna ignis ut dux esset itineris utroque tempore

English Translation:

By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

Isaiah 60:8

English: Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?

Spanish: ¿Quiénes son estos que vuelancomo nubes y como palomas a sus ventanas?

Latin: qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas

Alto Solo:

Psalm 55:6

Spanish: ¡Quién me diese alas como de paloma! Volaría yo, y descansaría.

English Translation:

Who will give me wings like a dove? I would fly away and be at rest.

Choir:

Revelation 12:14

Spanish: Pero se le dieron a al mujer las dos alas… para que volara… al desierto, a su lugar.

Latin: et datae sut mulieri duae alae…ut volaret in desertum in locum

English: And there were given to the woman two wings…, that she might fly into the desert, unto her place.

Flight and Revelation is dedicated to Sarah and James Lee