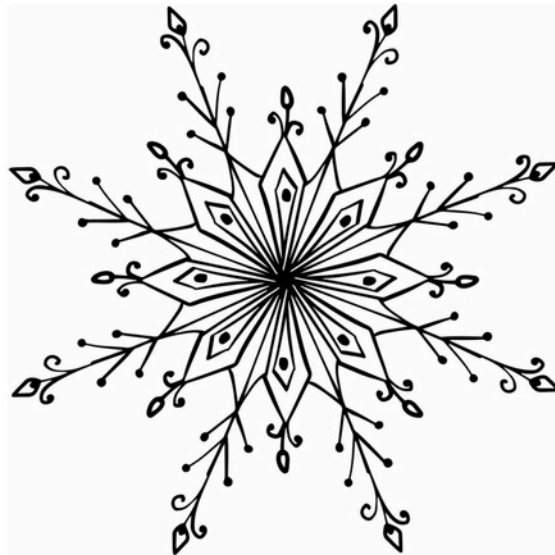


Wonder

for SATB voices (divisi)

Christopher Churcher

(2021)



Composed October 2021, subsequently revised September 2022
First performance: 19 December 2021 by The Bach Choir, conducted by David Hill

Wonder

a carol for SATB voices (divisi)

Before the ice is in the pools —
Before the skaters go,
Or any cheek at nightfall
Is tarnished by the snow —

Before the fields have finished,
Before the Christmas tree,
Wonder upon wonder
Will arrive to me!

~ Emily Dickinson ~

Total duration: ca. 4'

Wonder is one of the first pieces I wrote, composed aged seventeen for the Sir David Willcocks Carol Competition 2021, and subsequently selected as the winning piece. My intention was to write a secular carol which nonetheless had a deep sense of spirituality—a piece that felt spellbinding, gentle, and evanescent. I was drawn to this beautiful early poem by the American poet Emily Dickinson, whose words evoke an understated yet profound sense of wonder at Christmas-time. For some, this wonder may be the miracle of the nativity, the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem; for others, it may speak to a broader, more humanistic sense of awe and reverence.

Musically, the setting begins with a haze of delicate chord clusters, with hushed accompanying lines supporting a gentle, lilting melody. The climactic phrase—“Wonder upon wonder”—is illuminated by a modal shift, lifting into the brightness of A major, before the piece returns to the whispered, spiritual atmosphere of the opening.

Christopher Churcher

Wonder

Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886)

Christopher Churcher

b. 2004

Still ♯ = 54

[illegible]

4 *mp* *p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *rit. mf*

S. - der, won - der up-on won - der

A. - der up-on won - der won -

T. - der won - der won - der

B. - der won - der won - der

Pno.

8 **Tenderly** ♩ = 68

S. *p* *pp semplice*
oh Be - fore the ice is in the

A. *p* *pp semplice*
der oh Be - fore the ice is in the

T. *p* *pp semplice*
oh Be - fore the ice is in the

B. *p* *pp semplice*
oh Be - fore the ice is in the

Pno. **Tenderly** ♩ = 68

12 *p* *cresc.* *fp*
S. pools, be - fore the ska - - - ters go,

A. *p* *cresc.* *fp*
pools, ah be - fore the ska - - - ters go,

T. *p* *cresc.* *fp*
pools, ah be - fore the ska - - - ters go,

B. *p* *cresc.* *fp*
pools, ah be - fore the ska - - - ters go,

Pno.

17

S. *pp*
oh

A. *pp*
oh

T. *pp* *p*
oh or a - ny cheek

B. *pp*
oh
oh
cheek

Pno.

22

S. *pp* *mp* *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*
cheek at night - fall is tar - nished by the snow

A. *pp* *mp* *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*
cheek at night - fall is tar - nished by the snow

T. *mp* *p cresc.* *mf*
at night - fall is tar - nished by the snow

B. *p* *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*
at night - fall is tar - nished by the snow

Pno.

27

S. *p* *pp* *mp*
ah oh Be -

A. *p* *pp*
ah oh

T. *p* *pp* *mp*
ah oh Be -

B. *p* *p*
ah oh

Pno.

32

S. *mf* *mp cresc.*
fore the fields have fi - nished Be-fore the

A. *mp* *mf* *mp cresc.*
fore the fields have fi - nished ah Be-fore the

T. *mf* *mp cresc.*
fore the fields have fi - nished ah Be-fore the

B. *p cresc.* *mf* *mp cresc.*
the fields have fi - nished Be-fore the

Pno.

37

S. *mf* Christ - - - mas tree, - - -

A. *mf* Christ - - - mas tree, - - -

T. *mf* Christ - - - mas tree, - - -

B. *mf* Christ - - - mas tree, - - -

Pno.

41

S. *f* Won - der, - - - won - der, - - - won - der, - - - *mf* der, - - - *ah* - - - //

A. *f* Won - der, - - - won - der, - - - *mf* won - der *mp* ah - - - //

T. *f* Won - der, - - - won - der, - - - *mf* won - der *mp* ah - - - //

B. *f* Won - der, - - - won - der, - - - *mf* der, - - - *mp* ah - - - //

Pno.

44 *rit.* *p sub.* *A Tempo* *pp* *mp*

S. won - der u - pon won - der, will ar - rive to

A. won - der u - pon won - der, will ar - rive to

T. won - der u - pon won - der, will ar - rive to

B. won - der u - pon won - der, will ar - rive to

Pno. *rit.* *A Tempo*

48 *p dim.* *rit.* *pp*

S. me to me oh

A. me oh oh

T. me to me oh

B. me oh to me oh

Pno.