

BRYAN W. CHRISTIAN

# SANCTA MEMORIA

for four solo voices and orchestra

2009

Commissioned by Ohio Northern University  
Lloyd Butler and Nils Riess

## INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb 1

Clarinet in Bb 2

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2

2 Horns in F

*straight mute*

Trumpet in C

*harmon mute*

Trombone

*whisper mute (or solotone), plunger mute*

Tuba

Percussion 1

*crotales (2 octave chromatic set), bass marimba, large bass drum (shared with Percussion 2)*

Percussion 2

*vibraphone, chimes, large bass drum (shared with Percussion 1)*

Percussion 3

*steel pans (cello pan), medium diameter tam-tam, large diameter tam-tam*

Percussion 4

*4 pitched Thai gongs*



*, 32" timpani*

Soprano solo

Alto solo

Baritone solo

Bass-Baritone solo

Violin 1 (3 and 2 part divisi, by stand)

Violin 2 (3 and 2 part divisi, by stand)

Viola (2 part divisi, by stand)

Cello (2 part divisi, by stand)

Double Bass (2 part divisi, by stand)

## PROGRAM NOTE:

*Sancta memoria*, meaning “sacred memory,” is the name of the technique of contemplative meditation used by medieval Cistercian monks. When composing sermons or prayers, the monks would imagine the architecture of a cathedral or tabernacle (one that did not physically exist) for which the measurements, ordering, and attributes of the space were directly linked to Christian theology. The locations the monks passed in their memory, infused with symbolism, would act as reminders of the ideas they wanted to convey. The process of searching the stores of their memory, allowing unseen connections of the mind to be exposed, was an essential component of monastic rhetoric and composition. As an act of meditation, the monks saw this as a way to experience a connection with the Divine.

During the composition process for *Sancta memoria*, I sought to emulate the monks’ technique of contemplative meditation. Despite using complex mathematics to describe the space instead of cathedral interiors, the locations in my memory and mental architecture acted in a similar way to those of the medieval monks; rather than project my ideas through written or spoken words, I projected my ideas through music.

The text is comprised of three short excerpts from St. Augustine’s tenth book of his *Confessions* (Augustine, *Confessions* X.12.19, X.24.35). The English translations below were generously made for this project by Monte Ransome Johnson.

## TEXT

*ecce quantum spatiatum sum in memoria mea quaerens te, domine, et non te inveni extra eam.*

*item continet memoria numerorum dimensionumque rationes et leges innumerabiles, quarum nullam corporis sensus impressit, quia nec ipsae coloratae sunt aut sonant aut olent aut gustatae aut contrectatae sunt.*

*ubi enim inveni veritatem, ibi inveni deum meum, ipsam veritatem...*

## TRANSLATION, by Monte Ransome Johnson

Behold how large an expanse in my memory I am searching for you, Lord, and have not found you outside it.

Memory contains innumerable computations and laws of numbers and dimensions, none of which have been impressed on any corporeal sense, since they are neither colorful nor sonorous nor odorous nor flavorful nor tangible.

Where I found truth, there I found my god, truth itself...



REMAINDER OF SCORE UNAVAILABLE TO PREVIEW

for a full score, please send a request to  
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