

The Tyger

(SSAATTBB, unaccompanied)

Notes from the Composer

Prior to writing my first musical note of “The Tyger” in January 2013, I had yearned to compose music to this poem for seven years. One barrier I faced was that I was in love with other composers’ settings, particular Sir John Tavener’s. I was also not spiritually mature enough to fully understand the poem. Upon learning of the NDSU Edwin Fissinger Choral Composition Contest here in my home state of ND, a fire began to burn inside me (no pun intended) to set this text I had wholly revered but not dared to touch with the musical pen for nearly a decade. I began to re-read the text and analyze it’s theology, cross-referencing other resources (especially Milton’s “Paradise Lost,” as Blake was fascinated with the book and even did some illustrating for it) that cite the angel Lucifer, the archangel Michael, and the story of Satan’s banishment to hell. I will probably never know all the hidden secrets within this poem, but I can say in general that it takes the listener through the forests of night where evil and shadows lurk, into the blacksmith’s (the creator) shop where hammers and fire shape metal, and finally into the inquisitional/spiritual plane, where one of the greatest theological questions of mankind is posed. All the while, the flame burns bright through the ostinato! This piece should be performed with a thorough understanding of the text.

Poem by William Blake
Music by Andrew Miller

Boldly ♩ = 60

The musical score is for a choral setting of William Blake's poem "The Tyger". It is written for a mixed choir (SSAATTBB) and piano. The tempo is marked "Boldly" with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score consists of five systems. The first four systems are for the vocal parts: Soprano (Sop.), Alto (Alto), Tenor (Ten.), and Bass (Bass). The fifth system is for the Piano. Each vocal part has lyrics: "Ty - ger! Ty - ger! burn - ing bright." Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). There are rehearsal markings: "1 *f*" at the start of the first vocal line, and "2", "3", "4", "5", "6", "7" above the vocal lines. A large watermark "FOR REVIEW ONLY" is overlaid on the score.

THE LAMB, P1509, also by Andrew Miller is the partner to this composition.

P1508

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8 *mp* burn - ing bright,* burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright,

mp burn - ing bright,* burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing

pp

pp

mp

10 *pp* burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright,

pp bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing

mp ominous, looming what im-mor - tal hand or

mp In the for - ests of the night, what im-mor - tal hand or

mp ominous, looming

*The "T" consonant in the word "bright" should be deliberately sounded, to emulate the crackling of a fire!

burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, _____
 burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, burn-ing bright, _____

mf
 bright, _____ could _____ *frame _____ thy _____ fear - ful _____

mf
 eye _____ could _____ frame _____ thy _____ fear - ful _____

mf
 eye _____ could _____ frame _____ thy _____

a tempo
 15 In what dis - tant deeps or skies _____
 16 *p* In what dis - tant deeps or skies _____
 17 _____

pp
 sym-me - try? _____ In what dis - tant deeps or skies _____

pp
 sym-me - try? _____ In what skies

pp
 sym-me - try? _____ In what skies

a tempo

*Alto II (melody) should be brought out slightly above the other parts.

18 *mp* burnt the fire ^{*} ****[jə]** of thine eyes? — Burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright,

19 *pp* burnt the fire ^{*} ****[jə]** of thine eyes? — Burn - ing bright, burn - ing

20 *pp* burnt thine eyes? — On what wings _____ dare he as -

21 *pp* burnt thine eyes? — On wings he as -

22 *pp* burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing _____ fire? _____

23 *f* bright burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing fire? _____

pire? _____ What the ^{*} hand _____ dare seize the fire? _____

no breath pire, what ^{*} hand seize the fire? _____

*See Performance Notes, page 12.
**The word "fire" should be pronounced "fah-yuh."

animato, rigoroso

24 25 26 *subito p*

And what shoul - der, and what art could twist the

And what shoul - der, and what art could twist the

And what shoul - der, and what art could twist the

And what shoul - der, and what art could twist the

subito p

subito p

subito p

subito p

animato, rigoroso

subito p

27 28 29 *mf*

sin - ews of thy heart? And when thy heart

sin - ews of thy heart? And thy

sin - ews of thy heart? And when thy heart

twist thy heart? And thy

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

Broaden

30 *subito p* *f*

be - gan to beat, what dread feet? _____

heart beat, what dread feet? _____

be - gan to beat, what dread hand?_ and what dread feet? _____

heart beat what dread hand?_ and what dread feet? _____

mp *f*

subito p *mp* *f*

a tempo

33. Ty - ger! 34. Ty - ger! 35. Ty - ger! 36. Ty - ger!

What the ham-mer? What the chain? In what fur-nace was thy brain?

What the ham-mer? What the chain? In what fur-nace was thy brain?

Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

What the ham-mer? What the chain? In what fur-nace was thy brain?

Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

a tempo

Broaden

37 38 39

What the an - vil? What dread grasp dare its dead - ly ter - rors

What the an - vil? What dread grasp dare its dead - ly ter - rors

Ty - ger! Ty - ger! dare

What the an - vil? What dread grasp dare

Ty - ger! Ty - ger! dare

40 41 42

clasp? *ff* *Very broadly* *cresc.* *fff*

clasp? When the stars threw down and

clasp? *f* *cresc.* *fff*

clasp? When the stars threw down their spears, and

clasp? When the stars threw down their spears, and

clasp? When the stars threw down their spears, and

ff *cresc.*

ff *cresc.*

43 44 *rit.* 45

wa - tered heav - en

wa - tered heav - en

fff *maintain intensity* *pp*

wa - tered heav - en, wa - tered heav - en with their tears.

fff *maintain intensity* *pp*

wa - tered heav - en with their tears.

fff *rit.*

Slower, pensively 46 *molto rubato* *pp* *molto rit.*

He make

pp

Did He smile His work to see? Did He who made the Lamb make

Did He smile His work to see? Did He who made the Lamb make

Did He smile? Did He make

Did He smile? Did He make

Slower, pensively *molto rubato* *molto rit.*

*See Performance Notes, page 12.

**Alto (melody) should be brought out slightly above the other parts.

49 *ppp* $\text{♩} = 55$ 50 51

thee? Burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright,

ppp thee? Burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing

ppp thee? _____

thee? _____

ppp thee? _____

thee? _____

$\text{♩} = 55$

52 53 54

burn - ing bright burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing

bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright,

haunting, ominous

Ty - ger! Ty -

Ty - ger! Ty -

haunting, ominous

55
bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright,
burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing
ger! Burn - ing
ger! Burn - ing



58
burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright. _____
bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright, burn - ing bright.
bright. _____
bright. _____
poco rit.
poco rit.



Andrew Miller is a choral conductor, clinician, vocalist, composer, arranger and educator. A native of Minnesota, Andy earned a bachelor's degree in vocal music education from Bemidji State University and a master's degree in choral conducting from Minnesota State University, Mankato. In 2007 he founded the Minnesota-based professional vocal ensemble, "From Age to Age," which performs across the upper-Midwest. Miller is currently the director of choral activities at Bismarck State College. In Bismarck he also conducts the vocal chamber ensemble he founded, "Inspiraré," and the choir at Evangel Church. Miller's first published choral composition was released in 2010, and his portfolio is growing rapidly. In 2013, this composition, "The Tyger," won first place in the North Dakota State University Edwin Fissinger Choral Composition Contest.



Jo Ann Miller has served in numerous capacities in the American Choral Director's Association, including North Dakota state president, and is currently the national treasurer and member of the Executive Board. As Director of Choral Activities at North Dakota State University, her choirs tour regularly overseas and throughout the United States. The Concert Choir has been invited to perform at national, regional and state music conventions. They have most recently been invited to perform at the 2012 North Central American Choral Directors Association conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Dr. Miller is the artistic director of the NDSU Baroque Festival and the chorus master of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra. She was recently named a University Distinguished Professor, the highest honor awarded to faculty at North Dakota State University.



Performance Notes

1. Ms. 18 for SA (the word, "fire") and Ms. 22 for TB (the word, "hand") - the half-step dissonance should be sung with no vibrato in order to create the desired effect.
2. Ms. 44 for TB - the transition from measure 43 to 44 lends itself to slowing down and getting quiet because of the stratification change and also how powerful measure 43 is. Be careful to remain full and not to add time to the measures.



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