

You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows



for double choir and organ

One of the most devastating effects of sexual abuse is that it is so often characterised by betrayal. For those who have experienced it in a church context, the betrayal is compounded with hypocrisy. What has been done to them in secret is so completely at odds with what others see that victims become silenced by fear and shame. Many carry the secret burden of a guilt that is not theirs for years or decades. The church has not always responded well, institutionally or individually, to those who find the courage to speak about what happened to them. Their stories have sometimes been disbelieved, their experiences minimised, their complicity assumed or insinuated, their needs given less consideration than the status of those responsible for the abuse. For some, this second betrayal is at least as devastating as the first. What links the two experiences is that in combination they often reinforce the sense of worthlessness from which many survivors suffer.

The gospels suggest a very different response. In Matthew 10 and Luke 11-12 Jesus addresses the evils of betrayal and hypocrisy directly. Both passages record his insistence that all wrongdoing will be exposed, his encouragement not to fear those who can harm the body but not the soul, and his analogy of the sparrows, which, though they are sold for very little, are not beyond God's care. 'So do not fear,' he concludes; 'you are worth more than many sparrows' (Matthew 10.31; Luke 12.7).

What if the church honoured these words? What would it be like for survivors of abuse if they were met by a church whose responses were in keeping with this statement? What transformations might then be possible? What might the church recognise in survivors' stories if it could see them through the lens that Jesus holds up in this verse?

This piece is a musical attempt to envisage such an encounter. It is based on two songs of the white-throated sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) and one verse of J. M. Neale's translation of the hymn *Aeterna Christi munera* attributed to St Ambrose (c. 340–97). It might be best not to think of it as a piece of music at all. Imagine instead a forest, an unbuilt space, a place where those who have been exiled by fear and shame can be met with humility and respect, where their voices are not silenced, and where their songs remind us of other songs we have long known.

The composer was a victim of sexual abuse in a church context, and of hostile responses by the church when the abuse was disclosed. The piece is dedicated to all who have suffered similar things, and to those who love and support them.



You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows

David Creese

The musical score is arranged for a choir and organ. It features five vocal parts: Soprano I, Alto I, Tenor I, Bass I, and a second set of Soprano II, Alto II, Tenor II, and Bass II. The organ part is at the bottom. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 44. The Alto I part has a 'SOLO' marking and a dynamic of *mp*. The lyrics for Alto I are: 'Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, —'. The organ part begins with a dynamic of *p* and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

6

la - la-la, la - la-la

FULL

Ah, _____

SOLO *mp*

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

11

SOLO *mp*

Ah, ——— la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la

FULL

Ah, ———

16

FULL

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____

20

SOLO *mp*
Ah, _____

SOLO *mp*
Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

No Ped.

24

la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, —

FULL

la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, —

FULL

(No Ped.)

30

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____

SOLO *mp*

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

34

Ah, _____
Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la,

FULL

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la
la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

FULL

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

Piano accompaniment for the final system, measures 42-45, consisting of chords and sustained notes in both hands.

38

— la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

SOLO *mp*

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____

(No Ped.)

43

8

Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la,

FULL

Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la

8

la - la-la, la - la-la

SOLO

mp

Ah, —

47

la - la - la

Ah, _____

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la,

la - la-la, la - la-la

50

mf
Ah, _____ la - la-la,
mf
Ah, _____
la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la
mf
la - la-la Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la,
FULL *mf*
Ah, _____

53

la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la

mf

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

mf

Ah, _____ la - la-la,

mf

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

mf

Ah, _____

la - la-la

la - la-la

la - la-la

la - la-la

56

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la,

la - la-la Ah, _____

Ah, _____

la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, _____

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la

60

Ah, _____ la-la-la Ah, _____

_____ Ah, _____ la-la-la, la-la-la

la-la-la, la-la-la Ah, _____ la-la-la, la-la-la

_____ la-la-la, la-la-la

la-la-la, la-la-la Ah, _____ la-la-la

_____ la-la-la, la-la-la Ah, _____

Ah, _____ la-la-la, la-la-la Ah, _____ la-la-la,

_____ Ah, _____ la-la-la

Ah, _____ la-la-la

64

la - la - la, la - la - la Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la,

_____ Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la, oh _____

8 Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la, la - la - la

_____ Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la

_____ Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la

_____ la - la - la, la - la - la Ah - la - la,

8 la - la - la Ah, _____ la - la - la, la - la - la, oh _____

_____ Ah, _____ la - la - la,

cresc. poco a poco

68

oh Ah, Ah-la-la, oh Ah-la-la, oh Oh

f *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

Ah-la-la, oh oh Oh la-la-la, oh

f *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

mf *mp*

(No Ped.)

74

mp
la - la-la, la - la-la, oh

mf
Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la,

8
Oh

Oh

mf *mp*
Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la, oh

mf *mp*
Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la, oh

mf
Ah, la - la-la,

Oh

79

mf Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la, oh *mp*

mp oh Oh

mf Ah, la - la-la,

mf Ah,

mf Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la

mp la - la-la, oh

Oh

84

mf
Ah, _____

mf
Ah, _____ la - la-la,

mp
la - la-la, oh _____

Oh _____

la - la-la, la - la-la

mp
Oh _____

mf *mp*
Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la Oh _____

Oh _____

88

la - la-la, la - la-la

mp

la - la-la Oh

mf *mp*

Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la Oh

Oh

Ah,

mf

Ah, la - la-la,

Oh

92

mf
Ah, —
mf
Ah, — la - la - la,
mf
Oh

la - la - la, la - la - la
mp
la - la - la Oh
mf
Ah, — la - la - la, la - la - la Oh
mf
Oh

mf
Ped.

96

mf
'Twas thus the yearn-ing

mp
la - la-la, la - la-la, oh

mp
la - la-la Oh

mp

mf
'Twas thus the yearn-ing

mp
la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

mp
Oh

mp

Solo

mp

mf

99

faith of saints, The un-

mf Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la

mp Oh

Oh

Detailed description: This system contains the first four staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'faith of saints, The un-'. The second staff is another vocal line with lyrics 'Ah, la - la-la, la - la-la' and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line with lyrics 'Oh' and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The bottom staff is a bass line with lyrics 'Oh'. The music is in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

faith of saints, The un-

The un-

Oh

Oh

Detailed description: This system contains the next four staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics 'faith of saints, The un-'. The second staff is another vocal line with lyrics 'The un-'. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line with lyrics 'Oh'. The bottom staff is a bass line with lyrics 'Oh'. The music continues in the same key and time signature as the first system.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two staves of music. The top staff is a piano accompaniment line. The bottom staff is a bass line. The music concludes in the same key and time signature.

103

con-quired hope that ne - ver faints,

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la,

8

con-quired hope that ne - ver faints,

con-quired hope that ne - ver faints,

mf

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

Oh _____

107

f
The love of Christ that knows not shame,

mf
la - la-la Oh

f
The love of Christ that knows not shame,

f
The love of Christ that knows not shame, Ah, *mf*

f
The love of Christ that knows not shame,

f
The love of Christ that knows not shame,

f
Ah,

mf
Oh

111

mf
The prince of this world

mf
The prince of this world

mp
Oh

la - la-la, la - la-la

mf
The prince of this world

mf
The prince of this world

mf
The prince of this world

mp
Oh

la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

mf
The prince of this world

114

o - ver - came. —

o - ver - came. —

SOLO *mf*

8 — Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

o - ver - came. —

o - ver - came. —

o - ver - came. —

o - ver - came. —

SOLO *mf*

o - ver - came. — Ah, —

o - ver - came. —

Sw.

119

SOLO

mf

Ah, _____

SOLO

mf

Ah, _____ la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

la - la-la, la - la-la, la - la-la

dim. poco a poco

No Ped.

la - la-la, la - la-la

Ah, ___

mp

Ah, ___ la - la-la, la - la-la

mp

129

la - la-la, la - la-la Ah, — la - la-la, la - la-la