

THE UNPUBLISHED CHORAL COMPOSITIONS OF
ROBERT MORTON BEADELL (1925–1994):
A CONDUCTOR’S GUIDE

by

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The Unpublished Choral Compositions of Robert Beadell: A Conductor's Guide

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The unpublished choral compositions of Robert Beadell span the entirety of the composer's admirable and successful career as an educator at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Beadell's unpublished choral *oeuvre* includes short octavos that are accessible for the developing choral ensemble, short compositions that are technically challenging enough for the advanced ensemble, and extended works suitable for even the most advanced choral ensembles. This diverse collection of choral music has not been widely performed. In fact, even the majority of Beadell's works that were written, premiered and subsequently published after performances in Nebraska during his lifetime, are no longer available in print or have long been neglected by American choral conductors. The accessibility, beauty, historical context and unique learning opportunities present in the composer's unpublished works indicate that a renewal in the interest of all of Robert Beadell's works is long overdue.

This study presents an accurate list of the unpublished choral compositions of Robert Beadell. In addition to this task, editions of these works have been prepared via *Finale* to provide accessibility of these works to choral directors. Furthermore, a general guide to Beadell's compositional style is included to assist the choral conductor who plans to perform his choral compositions.

PREVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The unpublished choral compositions of Robert Beadell span the entirety of the composer's admirable and successful career as an educator at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Beadell's unpublished choral *oeuvre* includes short octavos that are accessible for the developing choral ensemble, short compositions that are technically challenging enough for the advanced ensemble, and extended works suitable for even the most advanced choral ensembles. This diverse collection of choral music has not been widely performed. In fact, even the majority of Beadell's works that were written, premiered and subsequently published after performances in Nebraska during his lifetime, are no longer available in print or have long been neglected by American choral conductors. The accessibility, beauty, historical context and unique learning opportunities present in the composer's unpublished works indicate that a renewal in the interest of all of Robert Beadell's works is long overdue.

This study presents an accurate list of the unpublished choral compositions of Robert Beadell. In addition to this task, editions of these works have been prepared via *Finale* to provide accessibility of these works to choral directors. Consideration will be taken in submitting these editions for publication with permission from the executrix of Beadell's estate in order to generate a renewed interest in his choral compositions. Furthermore, a general guide to Beadell's compositional style is included to assist the choral conductor who plans to perform any of his choral works.

This study focuses solely on the unpublished compositions of the composer. Perhaps, a future study will explore the numerous successes that Beadell experienced in arranging popular music and composing for choral/orchestral forces. It is also worthwhile to note that the spellings, word choices and notational conventions made by Beadell in his original compositions have been retained to facilitate authentic interpretation and performance of his works. Additionally, it has been my intention to defend Beadell's artistic licenses while adhering to the standards set forth in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, D. Kern Holoman's *Writing about Music: A Style Sheet*, and Gardner Read's *Music Notation: A Manual of Modern Practice*.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The first point of reference in locating Beadell's unpublished manuscripts was a copy of his last curriculum vitae provided by his widow, Mrs. Lorraine Beadell-Love. This curriculum vitae lists several of Beadell's unpublished pieces. I subsequently found the majority of the mentioned unpublished manuscripts in the Robert Beadell archival collection at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln library. First-Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, where Beadell served as composer-in-residence, is also another excellent example of an organization that has maintained and catalogued all of the works that they commissioned Beadell to compose. Upon further investigation, I discovered that Beadell's last curriculum vitae did not list all of the composer's unpublished original works. In fact, after verification from several organizations, I found that several pieces

have been lost (i.e. *Proper for the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost*, *Night Song*, and *121st Psalm*). Most of the compositions that Beadell was commissioned to write became the sole property of the commissioning organization, and not all have survived. A complete list of published and unpublished choral compositions is provided in the appendices.

Transcripts of the interviews with Carolee Curtwright and with James Hejduk, former faculty colleagues of the composer at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln are included in the appendices of this document. The personal memories of Beadell-Love combined with the professional experiences of Curtwright and Hejduk, will provide a well-rounded perspective of the composer and man, Robert Beadell in order to contextualize his compositional style.

The purpose of the interview with Lorraine Beadell-Love was to collect biographical data not already contained in other sources. The information that Beadell-Love provided assisted in further characterizing her late husband's compositional style since she was involved as a choral singer and soloist in the premieres of many of his works. The interview with Carolee Curtwright provided insight into Beadell's career as a teacher of composition. Curtwright was a student of Beadell's, worked alongside him on the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and commissioned several of Beadell's later unpublished pieces. As the conductor to premiere such works, she provided profound insight into the stylistic characteristics of several pieces and expounded on the challenges facing a choral conductor who is preparing Beadell's works. Mr. James Hejduk provided insight into Beadell's academic career as a colleague on the faculty of

the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, as well as highlights of his experiences having performed some of Beadell’s works. Transcripts of these interviews are included in the appendix section of this document.

The choral compositions in this study have been analyzed from a tonal/modal, rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and motivic perspective for the choral conductor and thereby highlight implications for the choral rehearsal and performance.

After extensive examination of Beadell’s extant works, Finale files of the unpublished choral compositions were created. Since most of Beadell’s manuscripts were in unusable states (i.e. difficult to read and/or contained errors in notation), the time-consuming task of editing them was begun. I am grateful to Dr. Kurt Knecht for his expertise in this area and relied heavily upon the clues presented in Beadell’s published works to formulate a concrete sense of what were common practices for the composer in his compositional craft. The entire editorial process lasted approximately sixteen months from beginning to end and continued until the day of publication of this study.

Through editions of these previously unpublished choral compositions, a conductor’s analysis of Beadell’s compositional style, and in a brief biography, this study will encourage future performances of Beadell’s “unknown” choral compositions and generate an interest in the composer’s *oeuvre*.

Primary Sources

Though available primary sources in this study were limited, this document will incorporate manuscripts and transcripts of interviews with those familiar with Beadell and his choral output. Despite the lack of primary sources, these interviews and manuscripts serve as viable substitute. As of the writing of this document, Mrs. Beadell-Love cannot provide any primary sources such as diaries or written correspondence between her husband and other professionals. As executrix of Beadell's estate she donated all the material that she possessed related to Beadell's work to the archives at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where they are currently housed. Upon further investigation of the Beadell Archive, I found only two letters dating from 1949–1950, neither relating to his choral music.

Recordings of performances of these unpublished works, either during Beadell's lifetime and/or under his advice, are also extremely few in number. There are no surviving program notes relating to the unpublished choral works. While therefore not a major source, the recordings were consulted to assist in analysis and performance implications.

Secondary Sources

Very little secondary source material exists with regard to Robert Beadell, either from a biographical viewpoint or as scholarly studies of his music. The exception to this is Scott Root's D.M.A. dissertation (see bibliography) focusing on Beadell's four operas and the subsequent publication of the same dissertation into book form in 2004; and

Charles Smith's D.M.A. dissertation (see bibliography) particularly focusing on Beadell's stage work *Out to the Wind*. While neither the Root or Smith texts nor any other secondary sources (such as newspaper articles) discuss in any depth Beadell's published or unpublished choral works beyond a general listing or announcement, they still serve as a source from which to create an accurate catalogue of the composer's choral works. A complete listing of secondary sources is provided in the bibliography section of this document.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Scholarship

This document focuses solely on the eleven unpublished choral works of the composer. While this study represents an investigation into the compositional style of the composer, it should be remembered that the eleven unpublished choral works comprise roughly ten percent of the composer's entire compositional output. Therefore, it is more than appropriate for future research to tackle an exhaustive study of all of Beadell's works-both choral and instrumental to reach the definitive explanation of the composer's compositional style.

Due to the scarcity in primary sources, I had to rely heavily upon the manuscripts, personal interviews and what text sources were, in fact, available to formulate conclusions. This topic presented me with an exciting opportunity to examine what was a virtually untouched area of research.

This document is a practical guide for choral conductors. It is not an in-depth theoretical or historical treatise pertaining to Beadell's style or a lengthy discussion of American choral history. Therefore, the information included in this document will serve as a resource for future researchers interested in defining American choral compositional style on a broader scale and will be a resource for conductors when they are interested in performing Beadell's choral music.

This document is information in written format. It is not what perhaps would familiarize choral conductors with Beadell's music in the easiest and quickest manner: live performance. To that end, I am planning to program Robert Beadell's music with my own choirs and I intend to submit the material herein for publication and inclusion to academic journals and symposiums dedicated to this subject area.

CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHY

Born on 18 June 1925, in Chicago, Illinois, Robert Morton Beadell received his early music education in the public school setting. From a divorced home, Robert was raised by maternal grandparents, the Bakers, in Crestwood, Illinois. The Bakers created a very loving home and remained concerned about his education, and especially about cultivating his love for music and reading. Despite the harsh economic climate of the Great Depression, the Bakers made sure young Robert took clarinet lessons and always had plenty of books to read. By the seventh grade, Beadell was active as a clarinetist in his school band, and by his high school years, he was performing as a professional saxophonist and clarinetist with several dance bands active in the Midwest. Always an avid reader and as a gifted youngster, Beadell graduated from Blue Island High School in 1941 at the age of sixteen.¹

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Robert was swept up in the strong current of patriotism flowing through the United States, and in early 1942 was given permission from his father to enlist in the Marine Corps. Originally enlisted as an infantryman and destined for the Pacific Theatre, Beadell was sent to Honolulu, Hawaii, to await his deployment. While stationed there, a superior officer took note that Beadell was a musician and had considerable experience performing with dance bands. The officer arranged for Beadell to become the director of the local company dance band and

¹ Beadell-Love, Lorraine. Private Interview with author. Lincoln, 11 February 2010.

to serve his time during the war at this post in Honolulu. It was during this time that Beadell began to compose and arrange for the main company band and several other small ensembles charged with providing military music and entertainment on base.²

At the resolution of World War II and Beadell's subsequent discharge from the Marine Corps, the composer enrolled as a student at Northwestern University. Taking advantage of the new GI Bill, Beadell intended to study woodwind instruments and pursue a career as a jazz performer. During this period of American history, Northwestern University and the surrounding Chicago area was a creative and inspirational environment for young artists. Classmates of Beadell at Northwestern included Charlotte Rae, Claude Akins, and Cloris Leachman. Beadell, and his later-to-become famous classmates, often lent their musical talents and acting skills to the regular "WAA-MU" (the annual Northwestern University Student Council musical revue) productions held on campus during this period.³ After one of his early compositions was featured on a student composition recital, Beadell was encouraged by his teacher, Dominick DiCaprio, to pursue study in composition.⁴

In 1949, after taking a year's leave of absence from school to work, Beadell returned to Evanston and completed his Bachelor of Music degree. In the spring of 1950,

² Beadell-Love, 2010.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Root, Scott L. *An Examination of Robert Beadell's (1925-1994) Four Major Works for the Lyric Stage*. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004. 13.

Beadell was awarded the Master of Music degree in composition having studied with Robert Delaney and Anthony Donato.⁵

For two years, from 1950-1952, Beadell taught at Central Methodist College in Fayette, Missouri, and travelled to Chicago on a regular basis to study composition with Leo Sowerby at the now-defunct, American Conservatory.⁶ In 1950, Beadell's first work to achieve national attention, *Introduction and Allegro*, was awarded the Thor Johnson Award in this national contest of compositions for brass ensemble. In 1954, Beadell was persuaded to join the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln as an instructor.⁷

While on the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Beadell's teaching responsibilities were primarily composition courses, but included arranging courses as well. Throughout his career at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Beadell was to teach courses more frequently assigned to specialists in other areas (e.g. Counterpoint, Form and Analysis, Music Theory, Sixteenth-century Polyphony, Orchestration, Twentieth-Century Music, Comprehensive Musicianship and Jazz History) in addition to his regular assignments in composition, choral and instrumental arranging, and theses direction.⁸

In 1957, Beadell was granted the rank of Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. In 1959, Beadell's *Elegy for a Dead Soldier* was the United States entry for the *Prix Italia*. Although this work was not awarded in the competition, the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Beadell, Robert. "Curriculum Vitae (1994?)." (photocopy). Private Document of Lorraine Beadell-Love.

⁷ Root, 2004, 14.

⁸ Beadell, Robert. Curriculum Vitae.

honor afforded excellent exposure to Beadell's work. Also in 1959, Beadell was awarded a Ford Foundation Grant to work as a visiting composer in the New York City Center's American Opera Season.⁹

Tenure and the rank of Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln followed in 1960. During the summers of 1962 and 1963, Beadell was granted a Woods Foundation Faculty Fellowship to study composition in master classes with Darius Milhaud at Mills College in California.¹⁰ In 1965, Beadell was made a full Professor and in 1966, was commissioned to write the first of his six stage works, *The Number of Fools* for his alma mater, Northwestern University. In 1967, after the success of what Beadell described as “[his] second most ambitious work,”¹¹ a work for chorus and orchestra, *Mirage Flats: Homage to Sandoz*, Beadell was awarded the first of his many awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) for creativity and advancement of American music that he would receive throughout his career.¹²

The period from 1970 to 1980, allowed Beadell opportunity to focus on his teaching at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and to complete many commissioned works for various groups. The choral work *Trilogy* for chorus and brass was commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association in 1973 and published by Associate Music Press shortly thereafter. Beadell's arrangement of “Send in the Clowns” from Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* was published in 1973 and to this day

⁹ Beadell, Robert, Curriculum Vitae.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Spence, Holly. “Beadell is a Quiet Man Full of Music.” *Lincoln (Neb.) Journal-Star*. 3 November 1974.

¹² Beadell, Curriculum Vitae.

remains Beadell's most popular work. Among the instrumental commissions of this period, *Chicago Dance #1* stands out as the first of two acclaimed pieces for jazz ensemble composed by Beadell. Commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1973, *Chicago Dance #1* was followed by another commission from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 1976, *Variations* for jazz trio, flugelhorn, and strings.¹³

After the production of his only musical theatre piece *Out to the Wind* in 1979, Beadell's compositional activity continued with the completion of several works for the solo voice during the 1980s. In 1985, *Evocations* for mezzo-soprano and piano set to poems by Ted Kooser premiered. In 1987, Beadell set texts by poet Carl Sandburg in *Love Is A Deep And A Dark And A Lonely*, once again for mezzo-soprano and piano. In the same year, Beadell's Symphony No. 2 was premiered, again setting Sandburg texts, showing the continued inspiration of American poetry in his compositional style.¹⁴

Robert Beadell retired from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in the spring of 1991, after serving thirty-seven years as a Professor of Composition. Not interested in giving up composition completely, Beadell was soon recruited as the composer-in-residence for First-Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Lincoln. As was usual during his academic career, Beadell continued to compose at his home drafting table while making time for his family and friends. During these “retirement” years, Beadell arranged numerous works for First-Plymouth Church, including writing for the

¹³ Beadell, Curriculum Vitae.

¹⁴ Root, 2004, 16.

resident brass ensemble, the Plymouth Brass, and for the church's choirs. Beadell also remained active by taking commissions from many ensembles in the Lincoln community.¹⁵

In September of 1993, Robert Beadell was diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer. After several medical procedures and treatment, Beadell ultimately decided upon home care with his wife, Lorraine. Surrounded by his loving family, and remembered by his friends as an “unassuming, laid-back”¹⁶ man, Robert Morton Beadell died on 11 June 1994 at the age of sixty-eight.¹⁷

¹⁵ Beadell-Love, 2010.

¹⁶ Root, Scott. Private interview with author, (telephone), 15 February 2010.

¹⁷ Beadell-Love, 2010.

CHAPTER 2

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUSIC OF ROBERT BEADELL

In his examination of Beadell's stage works, author Scott Root identifies several compositional tendencies that the composer employed so routinely that they defined the composer's style. After my extensive examination of Beadell's stage works, operas, instrumental works and solo vocal compositions, these same tendencies can be found in his unpublished choral compositions.

Root concludes that Beadell's music of all genres is for the most part triadic in nature with an overriding preference for the play between dissonance and consonance that exemplifies Beadell's style.¹⁸ The unique ability to incorporate common-practice-era compositional techniques and a variety of twentieth-century compositional techniques further provided Beadell with a lush palate of musical possibilities.

Among the twentieth-century compositional techniques that Beadell regularly employed in his unpublished choral compositions, the most widely explored was quartal/quintal harmonies. Example 1 from *The Lamb* (see Appendix C, page 161 for full score) is a classic illustration of how heavily Beadell relied upon quartal constructions in his writing:

¹⁸ Root, Scott L. *An Examination of Robert Beadell's (1925-1994) Four Major Works for the Lyric Stage*. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004. 129-132.

S 1
thee?

S 2
thee?

A
thee?

Pno.
24
Faster
♩ = 69 - 71
ff

Example 1: *The Lamb*, mm. 24–28

Beadell's preference for perfect fourths and fifths is so strong in his unpublished choral compositions that there is not one work from among this group that does not have an example of this type of construction. Evoking a sense of "Americana" made popular in the music of composers like Aaron Copland after the Second World War, Beadell often set American texts (e.g. Willa Cather and Emily Dickinson) concentrating on quartal/quintal relationships. This quintessential "American" sound conjures up images of an open landscape inspired by "Manifest Destiny" as in Examples 2 and 3 where Beadell employs harmonic constructions based upon the fifth (quintal) to draw attention to the texts written by Willa Cather in *Prairie Trilogy* (Appendix C, page 82) and *Tribute* (Appendix C, page 185):

35

S
spon - sive — sky. A -

A
spon - sive — sky. A -

T
spon - sive — sky. A -

B
spon - sive — sky. A -

Piano
35
Spirited ♩ = 76
f

Example 2: *Prairie Trilogy*, *Prairie Spring*, mm. 35–40

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano
mf *sempre legato*

Example 3: *Tribute*, mm. 1–4

The second most frequently occurring harmonic device applied by Beadell in his unpublished choral compositions was through the use of extended tertian harmonies.

While not occurring as often as quartal/quintal harmonies, the c-sharp minor chord with an added seventh and ninth in measure 74 of *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (Appendix C, page 102) is a classic illustration of how Beadell's early jazz experience influenced his formal compositional technique:

The image displays a musical score for measures 72 through 75 of the piece *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*. The score is arranged for a choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), B♭ Trumpet, Trombone, and Organ. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "di - a - pa - son clo - sing full on Man." The organ part features a complex harmonic structure in measure 74, characterized by a c-sharp minor chord with an added seventh and ninth, marked with a forte (ff) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 4: *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, mm. 72–75