

Does your passion for music and poetry extend to the visual arts?

Absolutely. I spend a great deal of time in museums. I'm recently into the Fauves, especially early Vlaminck, Derain, and Matisse. And I'm drawn to sculpture. I'm drawn to the innovative use of color by the Fauves. Choral color is an extremely important consideration for me — the various spacings and voicings of chords, the way tightly packed chords, such as those ending certain of the *Madrigali* and *Contre Qui*, *Rose* shimmer as they are held. And the Fauves' innovative use of light and formal shape, fresh — yet grounded in the past.

How do you begin a composition?

I have a composing studio where I do the bulk of my work on a 100-year-old Steinway. I generally try and get a kernel of what the piece is about, whether it's a short melodic cell or melody, a single chord or perhaps a chordal progression, trying to get the language of the piece in focus. Then I try to isolate key words, what I term "trigger-words," and see where that takes me. And then the work gradually unfolds. I compose slowly and am intensely self-critical.

I constantly revise as I go. When rehearsals came for the *Lux Aeterna*, and I heard it sung for the first time, I didn't change one note. But this comes from experience. In some of my early works, especially orchestral works, I occasionally heard passages that required some rethinking. But in the later works, the revision is part of the process. And when it's done, I know it will work... I'm one of the very few composers today who does things the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper and piano.

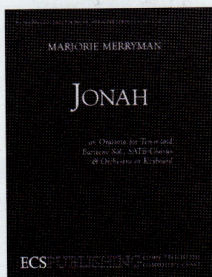
Are there melodic themes that reappear in your work?

Of course. Most composers and other artists have them. Take the 500 paintings of flowers that Monet completed, for example. Although my six vocal cycles are all quite different in their approach, design, and musical vocabulary, signature "Lauridsen chords" (as the students call them), melodic fragments, chordal spacings, treatment of rhythm, etc. may be heard throughout these works in various guises. They're my musical footprints — my identity as a composer.

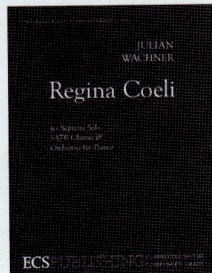
Do you break the rules?

I've never been a musical conformist, and I could care less about musical fashion. It doesn't interest me in the slightest. I've always written what I felt I should be writing, what was my true self, even during those long periods when melodic writing itself was considered terribly unfashionable. I've just been doing very quietly what I've been doing for a long, long time, honing my skills as a composer, continually studying the intricacies of vocal music and poetry. It's important to me that this music connects with my performers and my audience. I deliberately choose universal themes by world-class poets, themes that all of us can relate to in a very personal way. It's this connection, I think, in the context of music that I hope is both beautiful and composed in a sophisticated manner, that has led to the thousands of performances throughout the world and dozens of recordings. ■

Looking for something new? Have a go at these...



Marjorie Merryman
JONAH, an Oratorio
T & Bar Soli, SATB Chorus, Orchestra
2 Fl (Pic), 2 Ob, 2 Clar (BClar), 2 Bsn
2 Hrn in F, 2 Trpt,
Timp, Perc (2-3 players)
Strings
25 minutes



Julian Wachner
Regina Coeli
S Solo, SATB Chorus, Orchestra
Version I: Organ, Percussion & Strings
Version II:
2 Fl, 2 Clar, 2 Ob, 2 Bsn
4 Hrn, 2 Trp, 3 Trmb, 2 Perc
Strings
c. 18 minutes

DAVID MOONEY
Irish Choral Series

Stunning arrangements of Irish folk songs for SATB Chorus, some with harp, optional violin or flute and improvised percussion. Texts are in English or Irish Gaelic. Those in Irish have English phonetic underlay, and IPA translation in front material, as well as non-singing English translation.

Included in the series: • Famine Lament • Rakes of Mallow • Silent O Moyle • The Coulin • The Sally Gardens • Derry Air • She Moved Through the Fair • Wexford Carol (Christmas) • Suantraí na Maighdine (Christmas) • Don Oíche Úd i mBeithil (Christmas) • Ardagh cuain • Dúlaman • Thúgamair fein • Oro s' e do Bheátha Bhaile • and eventually a set for children's choir.

Dr. Mooney is currently Head of the Keyboard Department at the Conservatory of music, Dublin Technical University. A commercial CD entitled "Cor" will be released later this year by ARSIS, featuring Mooney's arrangements sung by a choir from Dublin, Ireland under the direction of Blánaid Murphy.



If these don't strike your fancy, call our performance department at 1-800-777-1919, our staff can set you up with lots of other ideas, including scores & (sometimes) a recording.

ECS PUBLISHING COMMITTED TO THE COMPOSER'S CRAFT

138 Ipswich Street • Boston, MA 02215-3534 • ph 617-236-1935 • fax 617-236-0261 • www.ecspub.com