

RDH Music Series

R. Douglas Helvering

Principia Verum
(Elements)

*For Vinny and Chaequan
For Peace in Our Time*

For 16 voices in 4 unaccompanied quartets



At the end of May and beginning of June 2020, America was gripped with turmoil and trouble. The Coronavirus pandemic had just reached 100,000 domestic deaths as a result of the virus. Amid the struggles of the pandemic, ethnic, economic, cultural, and social tensions reached a fevered pitch as policing practices, systematic oppression, and economic aid continued to disproportionately traumatize communities of color, native communities, and the impoverished and working poor. The choral music community was also coming to terms with the reality that ensemble singing, in the midst of a pandemic with a highly transmissible virus, may not be a safe and sustainable activity for many months. The art form that tends to most profoundly bring people together at a time when we most need coalitions of broad and diverse communities, singing, was not available to us.

Principa Rerum was conceived out of creative necessity. As the pandemic ebbs, choral ensembles will start to return. Transitioning from a furlough of ensemble singing to the return of full ensembles will likely happen in stages. To that end, **Principa Rerum** was written for four different quartets, allowing small groups of singers to assemble and sing together. The piece can be rehearsed and performed with as few as sixteen singers, with only four singers at a time coming in close contact with each other. The quartets are divided this way:

Choir 1: SSAA

Choir 2: SATB

Choir 3: SATB

Choir 4: TTBB

Each choir represents one of the four basic elements: earth, air, fire, and water. The piece is written with a steady, unwavering pulse. Antiphonal motifs and interplay between quartets abound throughout. Ensembles may enter the piece in a fully live performance as they are accustomed, making use of a large acoustically reverberant space. Or, ensembles may record each quartet in isolation, eventually bringing forth a robust virtual performance.

The symbolism in the work is centered on cohesion and the nexus of independent and interdependent forces. Each element is singularly powerful and profound. Yet, when the elements interact and work toward a common goal, new heights and ever more profound results emerge. The compositional process reveals that, only when these powerful forces start to work collaboratively instead of independently, surprising and profound shifts of perspective and understanding start to emerge. As the American people are faced with many of our society's blatant and multi-generational sins, it is my hope that our individual gifts can be harnessed and channeled for community, state, and national healing and reconciliation. The work is dedicated to Vinroy Brown and Chaequan Anderson, my brothers in choral music, cherished colleagues, and important emerging voices in the 21st century choral art.

R. Douglas Helvering, June 2, 2020

Principa Rerum

Terra.	<i>Earth</i>
Caeli.	<i>Air</i>
Ignis.	<i>Fire</i>
Aqua.	<i>Water</i>
Principa Rerum.	<i>Elements</i>
Pax usque in aeternum.	<i>Peace Evermore.</i>
Pacem.	<i>Peace.</i>

Dr. R. Douglas Helvering, DMA (b. 1977) is a composer, arranger, conductor, and educator. His music has been featured at major national, regional, and state conventions as well as at prestigious venues worldwide including the historic Carnegie Hall in New York. He has taught as Associate Professor at the famed Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ. He has studied composition with composers L. Randall Stroope, Morten Lauridsen, Stefan Young, and James Barnes. His music has been widely acclaimed by performers, scholars, and audiences around the world for its artistry and emotional appeal. His work is published by GIA Music, Hal Leonard, Morningstar, Alliance, Colla Voce, Lorenz, Choral Arts Guild, Amber Waves, and through his own label, RDH Music. For more information about Dr. Helvering's work, visit www.rdouglashelvering.com.

For Vinroy and Chaequan
For Peace in Our Time

Principa Rerum

(elements)

R. Douglas Helvering

Bel Canto (♩=60)

Choir 1
SSAA

Choir 2
SATB

Choir 3
SATB

Choir 4
TTBB

cae - li. cae - li. cae

cae - li. cae - li.

ter - ra. ter - - - ra.

ter - ra. ter - - - ra.

ter - ra. ter - - - ra.

7 - li. cae - li. cae - li. cae - li. cae - li.

Ch. 1
cae-li. cae-li. cae - li. cae - li.

cae - li. cae - li. cae - li. cae - li.

Ch. 2
ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.

ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.

Ch. 3

Ch. 4
mp ter - ra. ter -

mp ter - ra. ter -

The image shows a musical score for four channels. Channel 1 (Ch. 1) has two staves with lyrics 'cae-li. cae-li. cae - li. cae - li.' and 'cae - li. cae - li. cae - li. cae - li.'. Channel 2 (Ch. 2) has two staves with lyrics 'ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.' and 'ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.'. Channel 3 (Ch. 3) is empty. Channel 4 (Ch. 4) has two staves with lyrics 'ter - ra. ter -' and 'ter - ra. ter -'. Dynamic markings include 'p' and 'mp'. A large blue watermark 'Reference Score' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

13

Ch. 1

Ch. 2

Ch. 3

Ch. 4

cae - li. cae - li.

cae - li. cae - li.

ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

mp
a - qua a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua.

mp
a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua.

mf *mp*
- ra. ter - ra. - ra. - ra.

mf *mp*
- ra. ter - ra.

Ch. 1

17

p cae - li. cae - li.

mp cae - li.

p cae - li. *mp* cae -

cae

Ch. 2

ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.

ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.

Ch. 3

qua. - qua. a - qua.

a - qua.

mp ter - - - ra. ter - - - ra.

mp ter - - - ra. ter - - - ra.

22 cae - li. cae - li. *p*

Ch. 1

li. cae - li. cae - li. *p*

Ch. 2

mf

ig-nis. ig-nis. ig-nis.

Ch. 3

a - qua. qua *p*

a - qua. a qua.

Ch. 4

ter - ra. ter - ra. ter - *p*

ter - ra. ter - ra. ter - *p*



27

p

cae - li. cae - li. cae - li.

Ch. 1

p

cae - li. cae - li. cae -

Ch. 2

ig - nis. ig - nis. i - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

ig - nis. ig - nis. i - nis. i - nis. i - nis. ig -

- nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig -

Ch. 3

Ch. 4

- ra. ter - ra. ter - ra. ter - ra.

- ra. ter - ra. ter - ra. ter - ra.



32 *mf* cae - li. cae - li. cae -

Ch. 1 *mf* cae - li. cae - li. cae -

Ch. 2 *mf* - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

Ch. 3 *f* a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua. a - qua.

Ch. 4 *f* ter - ra. ter - ra.

mf ter - ra. ter - ra.

The image shows a musical score for four channels (Ch. 1-4). Channel 1 and 2 are vocal parts with lyrics. Channel 3 is a piano accompaniment for the vocal line 'a - qua'. Channel 4 is a piano accompaniment for the vocal line 'ter - ra'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*. A large blue watermark 'Reference Score' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

39 - li.

Ch. 1

li. cae - - li. cae

Ch. 2

ig - nis. ig - nis.

Ch. 3

a - qua. a - qua.

Ch. 4

ter - ra. ter - ra.

ter - ra. ter - ra.

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *mp*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for four channels (Ch. 1 to Ch. 4). The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: 'li. cae - - li. cae', 'ig - nis. ig - nis.', 'a - qua. a - qua.', and 'ter - ra. ter - ra.'. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. A large blue watermark 'Reference Score' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

46

Ch. 1

li. cae

Ch. 2

ig - nis.

ig - nis.

Ch. 3

a - qua.

a - qua.

Ch. 4

ter - ra.

ter - ra.

mp

Detailed description: This is a musical score for four channels, labeled Ch. 1 through Ch. 4. The score begins at measure 46. Channel 1 consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with lyrics 'li.' and 'cae'. Channel 2 also has two staves with lyrics 'ig - nis.' and 'ig - nis.'. Channel 3 has two staves with lyrics 'a - qua.' and 'a - qua.'. Channel 4 has two staves with lyrics 'ter - ra.' and 'ter - ra.'. The music is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. A dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present in each channel. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and rests. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Reference Score' is overlaid diagonally across the entire page.

52

Ch.1

Ch.1

- li. cae - li. cae - li.

Prin-ci pa Re -

mf

Ch. 2

Ch. 2

ig-nis. ig - nis. nis.

Prin - ci - a

mf

Ch.

Ch.

qua. Prin-ci-pa Re -

Prin - pa Prin-ci-pa Re -

mp *mf*

Ch. 4

Ch. 4

ter - ra. Prin - ci - pa Re -

Prin - ci - pa Prin - ci - pa Re -

mp *mf*

60 *f* Prin - ci - pa - rum. Re - -

Ch. 1

f rum. Re - -

Ch. 2

f ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

f ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

Ch.

f rum.

f rum.

Ch. 4

f rum. Prin - ci -

f rum. Prin - - ci -

63

Ch. 1
rum. Prin - ci - pa

Ch. 2
ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.

Ch. 3
Prin - ci - Re - rum.
Prin - ci - pa Re - rum.

Ch. 4
pa Re - rum.
pa Re - rum.

The image shows a musical score for four channels, labeled Ch. 1 through Ch. 4. The score is written in a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "rum. Prin - ci - pa", "ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis.", "Prin - ci - Re - rum.", and "pa Re - rum.". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f*. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Reference Score" is overlaid across the entire page.

66

Ch. 1

Re - - rum. Pa - cem. *mf*

Ch. 2

ig - nis... ig - nis Pa - cem. Pa - cem. *mf*

ig - nis. ig - nis. ig - nis Pa - cem. Pa - cem. *mf*

Ch. 3

Prin - ci - pa Re-rum. Pa - cem. *mf*

Prin - ci - pa Re-rum. Pa - cem. *mf*

Ch. 4

Prin - ci - pa Re-rum. Pa - cem. *f*

Prin - ci - pa Re-rum. Pa - cem. *mf*

71 *mp*

Ch.1
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

mp
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

Ch. 2
mp
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

mp
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

Ch. 3
mp
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

mp
Pa - cem. Pa - cem. —

Ch. 4
mp
Pax — us-que in ae - ter - num. —

mp
Pax — us-que in ae - ter - num.

78

Ch. 1

Ch. 2

Ch. 3

Ch. 4

The image shows a musical score for four channels (Ch. 1 to Ch. 4). The score is written on a grand staff with four systems. Each system contains two staves (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are "Pa - cem." and are written below the notes in the second and third systems. The first system (Ch. 1) contains whole rests. The second system (Ch. 2) contains notes with lyrics "Pa - cem." and a dynamic marking *p*. The third system (Ch. 3) contains notes with lyrics "Pa - cem." and a dynamic marking *p*. The fourth system (Ch. 4) contains whole rests. A large, diagonal watermark "Reference Score" is overlaid across the entire page.

82

Ch. 1

p Pa - cem.

Ch. 2

p Pa - cem.

Ch. 3

p Pa - cem.

Ch. 4

Pa - cem.

p Pa - cem.

p Pa - cem.

p Pa - cem.

Pa - cem.