

# Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil

program note

Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil was commissioned by Marta McCarthy for the University of Guelph. Marta suggested the Old Testament words of the prophet Micah; the poetry by George Whipple was my choice. Micah's voice is unfortunately not out of date; I am struck by the fact that we are often in danger of justifying our actions as appeasing some god or another, when what is really required is to live justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. Whipple's poetry puts the searchlight on the problem—the god who requires rivers of oil is actually the one we see in the mirror (Whipple's words are: “What we've done is ... changed God to man...). Material sacrifice is not required by Micah's God; our own us-god requires this sacrifice, to lubricate an often aggressively achieved and similarly maintained privileged lifestyle. Again, Whipple's poetry distills that fact.

In its four movements, the texts of this work (1) ask a fundamental lifestyle question (Micah), (2) put before us the historic reality of forcefully gained advantage (Whipple), (3) call us to consider love as the true generating energy of our world (Whipple), and (4) present a way forward, through justice, mercy, and humility.

For myself, as a composer living in a privileged society, there is simply no escaping the profound ironies in all of this. While I had events such as the Gulf War(s) on my mind during this project, the month of completion (May 2010) was also the time of a major oil well rupture and potential ecological disaster in another gulf, that of Mexico. These events are part of the complex tragedy that supports my lifestyle.

While I am thankful to my institution, Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo, for the composition sabbatical in winter of 2010, I am especially grateful for the two periods of composition residency in January and May 2010 in the Leighton Colony at the Banff Centre for the Arts, a wonderful and inspiring haven maintained by oil-rich Alberta. This was a gift of time and seclusion. Still, and always, *Kyrie eleison*.

Leonard Enns  
Cardinal Studio, Leighton Colony  
Banff Centre for the Arts  
17 May 2010

premiered by the University of Guelph Choirs, Marta McCarthy conductor, 27 November 2010, Guelph, Ontario

with thanks to:

- Conrad Grebel University College, for granting the sabbatical that made this project possible.
- the Banff Centre for the Arts, where I was a Leighton Colony Artist in January and May of 2010. Much of the work on this project was conceived and completed there in the Cardinal Studio.
- Marta McCarthy, whose convictions, encouragement, inspiration and determination started the whole project.
- George Whipple, whose poetry has been music for me, and whose words have been new doorways to enduring truths. Thanks for allowing me to muddle with your work, George.

## First Movement

“With what shall I come”

With what shall I come before the Lord  
and bow down before the exalted God?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
--Micah: 6:6&7 (biblical: public domain)

## Second Movement

“The Price of Oil”

What we've done  
is past recall-  
changed God to man  
to children dying for  
the price of oil.

Compounding the offence,  
the more the dead  
are confined up  
the more must die  
in recompense

while bombs outbid  
the body for the soul  
of him who can  
no longer battle for  
the price of oil.  
--George Whipple (used by permission of GW)  
from *Swim Class and Other Poems*

## Third Movement

“Evolution”

How did the world evolve  
from rock to leaf  
to cells with souls  
except by love?

How did loam become a rose  
and the scent thereof  
like rising prayer evolve  
except by love;

and how do those  
in ghetto graves evolve  
into transparent souls  
entering gift homes above  
except by love?

--George Whipple (used by permission of GW)  
from *The Colour of Memory and Other Poems*

## Fourth Movement

“O people”

O people,  
what does the Lord require of you?  
I have shown you what is good.  
To live justly, to love mercy  
and walk humbly with your God.

--based on Micah: 6:8 (biblical: public domain)

*Commissioned by the University of Guelph*

performance duration: 25 minutes

all performance materials are available from

**Monarda Music**  
63 Dorset Street  
Waterloo, Ontario  
Canada N2L 3M1  
email <info@monardamusic.ca>

Score

for *Marta McCarthy*

# Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil

text:  
Micah 6:6&7

for choir, organ, flute, oboe, cello, timpani, percussion (gong, bass drum, glockenspiel), harp

Commissioned by the University of Guelph  
through the generosity of Dr. James C. E. Fuller (1927-2008)

## First Movement

### With what shall I come?

Leonard Enns

choir, organ, flute, oboe, cello, timpani, gong

Andante ♩ = c. 72

Flute

Oboe

Cello

2 Timpani

Gong

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ

Total duration: ca. 25'

First Movement duration: ca. 6'

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3

Fl.

Ob.

Vlc.



6

Fl.

Ob.

Vlc.

Timp.

S

A

T

B

Org.

soft mallets

hard mallets

*p*

*mf* with increasing intensity

With what, with

*mf* with increasing intensity

With what, with

*mf* with increasing intensity

With what, with

*p*

8'

16'

A

Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil: I

10

Fl.

Ob.

Vlc.

Timp.

*mp* *mf* *sub. mp* *mf* *sub. mp* *mf* *f*

S

A

T

B

Org.

what, with what, with what, with what shall I come, with

what, with what, with what, with what shall I come, with

what, with what, with what, with what shall I come, with

what, with what, with what, with what shall I come, with

*mf* *f*

(*mf*) 8' #

Score

text: George Whipple  
"The price of oil"

Second Movement  
**The price of oil**

choir, organ, flute, oboe, cello, timpani, percussion (gong, bass drum), harp

Leonard Enns

Adagio  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$

The first system of the score includes staves for Flute, Oboe, Cello, Timpani, Gong/Bass Drum, Harp, and Organ. The Flute, Oboe, and Cello staves are currently empty. The Timpani staff has a 'C G' marking above the first measure. The Gong/Bass Drum staff shows a single strike in the first measure. The Harp part begins with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a melodic line with a fermata and a '5' fingering, and then a section marked 'L.V.' (Left Hand) with a fermata. The Organ part is also empty.

The second system is a continuation of the Harp part, starting at measure 9. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The dynamics are marked *mf* and *norm.* (normal). The system concludes with a *mf* dynamic. The Harp part is indicated by a double slash at the beginning of the system.

Second Movement duration: ca. 5'40"

19 **A**

Fl. *mf*

Hp.

26

Fl.

Hp.

33 **B**

Fl.

Hp.

33 *mf*

S

What we've done is past-re-call- changed God to man to chil- dren

A *mf* *mp*

Shall I come be- fore him with burnt of-fer-ings, with calves a

T *mf* *mp*

8 Shall I come be- fore him with burnt of-fer-ings, with calves a

B *mf* *mp*

Shall I come be- fore him with burnt of-fer-ings, with calves a

Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil: II

C

40

Fl.

Ob.

Hp.

S

A

T

B

chil - dren dy - - - ing for the price of oil, \_\_\_\_\_

year old with thou-sands of rams, with ten thou - sand riv - ers of oil, \_\_\_\_\_

year old with thou-sands of rams, with ten thou - sand riv - ers of oil, \_\_\_\_\_

year old with thou-sands of rams, with ten thou - sand riv - ers of oil, \_\_\_\_\_

*mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

45

Fl.

Ob.

Hp.

*mf*



# Score

## Third Movement Evolution

text: George Whipple  
"Evolution"

Leonard Enns

choir, glockenspiel (or marimba or xylophone); optional tuned wine glasses (may be played by singers)  
or acappella

Glockenspiel: improvise on these pitches; mostly single notes, any octave;  
include occasional diads; space notes approx. 2 to 5 seconds apart; always just barely audible; this should  
be very peaceful; toward the end of the movement the same pitches are bowed rather than struck.  
Begin at the conductor's cue, while the final note of the previous movement is still sounding;  
improvise for 30 to 60 seconds before the choir begins, and continue for about 30 seconds  
while the choir is singing, gradually increasing time intervals between notes.

Glockenspiel 

(wine glasses [if used] tune to these pitches also)

ca. 30-60 seconds **Adagio**  $\text{♩} = c. 54$   
**mp** warmly and expressively

1

S  
How did the world, the world e - volve, how did the world \_\_\_\_\_

A  
How did the world, the world e - volve, how did the world \_\_\_\_\_

T  
How did the world, how did the world e - volve, how did the \_\_\_\_\_

B  
How did the world, how did the world e - volve, how did the \_\_\_\_\_

5

S  
e - volve from rock to leaf, how, how did the world \_\_\_\_\_

A  
e - volve from rock to leaf, how did the world \_\_\_\_\_

T  
world e-volve, from rock to leaf, how how did the \_\_\_\_\_

B  
world e-volve, how \_\_\_\_\_

Performance NOTE: the wine glasses, if used, are to be "rung" in the normal party fashion, by a wet finger rubbed on the rim. Tune them to the same pitches as the Glockenspiel, with water or wine. The ideal is occasional tones of about 5 - 10 seconds, with comfortable spacing between the individual tones. Different pitches may overlap. Experiment for the best effect.

Third Movement duration: ca. 4' - 5' with instruments; ca. 3'30" acappella

9

Conductor: cue end of glockenspiel *poco rit.*

S e - volve from rock to leaf to cells with

A e - volve from rock to leaf to cells with

T world e - volve from rock to leaf to cells with

B to cells with

12

*piu rit.* *a tempo*

S souls ex - cept by love? How did loam be - come a

A souls ex - cept by love? How did loam be - come a

T souls ex - cept by love? How did loam be - come a

B souls ex - cept by love? How did loam be - come a

15

S rose and the scent there-of like ris - ing pray'r e - volve, how did

A rose and the scent there-of like ris - ing pray'r e - volve, how did

T rose and the scent there-of like ris - ing pray'r e - volve, how did

B rose and the scent there-of like ris - ing pray'r e - volve, how did

19

S  
loam be-come a rose and the scent there - of \_\_\_\_\_ like ris - - - - sing pray'r e -

A  
loam be-come a rose \_\_\_\_\_ and the scent there - of \_\_\_\_\_ like ris - - - - sing pray'r e -

T  
loam be-come a rose and the scent there - of \_\_\_\_\_ like ris - ing pray'r e -

B  
loam be-come a rose and the scent there - of \_\_\_\_\_ like ris - ing pray'r e -

loam be-come a rose and the scent there - of \_\_\_\_\_ like ris - ing pray'r e -

23

S  
volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

A  
volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

T  
volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

B  
volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

volve, \_\_\_\_\_ how, \_\_\_\_\_

mp \* see note below

begin bowed glockenspiel/wine glasses (Bb and F)

mf > p

mf

\*NOTE: a large note-head indicates a brief "blooming" of your note (< mf >).  
The overall effect should be of a sound-stream rising through the texture

# Fourth Movement

## O people

Score

Leonard Enns

text:

choir, organ, flute, oboe, cello, timpani, percussion (bass drum), harp

Micah 6:8

Andante ♩ = c. 92

Flute *mf*

Oboe *mf*

Cello *mf*

Timpani  $E_b$   $G_b$

Bass Drum

Harp

Soprano *mf*  
O, O peo -

Alto *mf*  
O, O peo -

Tenor *mf*  
O, O peo -

Bass *mf*  
O, O peo -

Organ *mp*

*mp*

Fourth Movement duration: ca. 6'15"

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8

Fl.

Ob.

Vlc.

8

S

A

T

B

8

Org.

ple, O peo - ple, O peo - ple,

ple, O peo - ple, O peo - - - ple, what -

ple, O peo - ple, O what does the Lord re - quire

ple, O peo - ple, what does the Lord re - quire of you?

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a choral and instrumental ensemble. The title is 'Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil: IV' and the page number is 37. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Violoncello (Vlc.), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Organ (Org.). The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) have lyrics in English. The instrumental parts (Fl., Ob., Vlc., Org.) provide accompaniment. The score is written in a common time signature. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'ple, O peo - ple, O peo - ple,' and continue with 'ple, O peo - - - ple, what -' (Soprano), 'ple, O peo - ple, O what does the Lord re - quire' (Tenor), and 'ple, O peo - ple, what does the Lord re - quire of you?' (Bass). The Organ part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The Flute and Oboe parts have melodic lines with some rests. The Violoncello part has a bass line with some rests. The page number '8' appears at the beginning of several staves.

15

Fl.

Ob.

Vlc.

15

S

what does the Lord re-quire of you? O \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ peo - ple,

A

\_\_\_\_\_ does the Lord re - quire of you? O peo - ple, \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ peo - ple,

T

8 of you? O peo - ple, \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ peo - ple,

B

O, \_\_\_\_\_ O peo - ple,

15

Org.

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the hymn 'Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil: IV'. The page is numbered 38. It features a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts for Flute, Oboe, Violoncello, and Organ. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'what does the Lord re-quire of you? O \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ peo - ple,'. The instrumental parts include a flute melody, oboe accompaniment, and a cello/bass line. The organ part is a multi-staff arrangement. The score is in a common time signature and features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.