

*Dedicated to The Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College
in Celebration of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial*

FOR THE PEOPLE

an oratorio for brass band, soprano, tenor, bass-baritone, and woodwind octet

John William Jones

ASCAP

- 1. Liberty and the Law (overture)**
- 2. God (recitative)**
- 3. Death (aria)**
- 4. Conflict (rallying songs)**
- 5. Emancipation (spiritual)**
- 6. Hope (recitative)**
- 7. Melancholy (aria)**
- 8. President's Ball (quadrille)**
- 9. Thanksgiving (hymn)**

The Spires Brass Band

Kathleen Sasnett, soprano

Jeffrey Fahnestock, tenor

Roosevelt Credit, bass-baritone

Stephen Lang, narrator

The Sunderman Conservatory of Music Woodwind Octet

The Victorian Dance Ensemble

*The Forty-Eighth Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture
on the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
The Majestic Theater Gettysburg, Pennsylvania November 19, 2009*

INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano
Tenor
Bass-Baritone

Flute 1& 2
Oboe 1& 2
Bb Clarinet 1& 2
Bassoon 1& 2

Eb Soprano Cornet
Bb Solo Cornet
Bb Repiano Cornet
Bb Cornet 2 & 3

Flugelhorn
Eb Solo Tenor Horn
Eb Tenor Horn 1& 2

Bb Baritone Horn 1& 2
Trombone 1& 2
Euphonium
Bass Trombone

Eb Bass
Bb Bass

Timpani
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Mallet Percussion

Dance Ensemble

FOR THE PEOPLE

Endorsed by the National Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Support provided by the Pennsylvania Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the Civil War Institute, the Gettysburg Festival, Gettysburg College, the Sunderman Conservatory of Music, the Adams County Arts Council, and Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts

Texts on quotations of Abraham Lincoln from "Of The People, By The People, For The People" edited by Gabor S. Boritt, popular songs of the day, and biblical verse.

1. LIBERTY AND THE LAW - overture

Address at Sanitary Fair in Baltimore, Maryland (recitation)

April 18, 1864

The world has never has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one. We declare for liberty: but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing ... The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was the black one. Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures...

The Lyceum Address (recitation)

January 27, 1838

Let every America, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of this country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in Primers, spelling books, and in Almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit.

2. GOD - recitative

Letter to John D. Johnston (tenor solo)

February 12, 1851

He notes the fall of the sparrow and the number of hairs on our head, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him.

3. DEATH – aria

From "My Childhood Home I See Again" part 1 (soprano and bass-baritone duet)

September 18, 1846

I hear the loved survivors tell

*How naught from death could save,
Till every sound appear a knell,
And every spot a grave.*

*I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms,
And feel (companion of the dead)
I'm living in the tombs.*

4. CONFLICT - rallying songs

That's What's The Matter (vocal trio)

We Are Coming, Father Abraam

Stephen Foster (1862)

*We live in hard and stirring times, Too sad for mirth, too rough for rhymes:
For songs of peace have lost their chimes, And that's what's the matter!
The men we held as brothers true, Have turn'd into a rebel crew;
So now we have to put them thro', And that's what's the matter!*

*Oh! Yes, we thought our neighbors true, Indulg'd them as their mothers do;
The storm'd our bright Red, White and Blue, And that's' what's the matter!
We'll never give up what we gain, For now we know we must maintain
Our Laws and Rights with might and main; And that's what's the matter!*

CHORUS

*That's what's the matter, The rebels have to scatter;
We'll make them flee by land and sea, And that's what's the matter!*

*The rebels thought we would divide, And Democrats would take their side;
They then would let the Union slide, And that's what's the matter!
But when the war had just begun, All party feeling soon was gone;
We join'd as brothers ev'ry one! And that's what's the matter!*

*The Merrimac, with heavy sway, Had made our fleet an easy prey-
The Monitor got in her way, And that's what's the matter!
So health to Captain Ericsson, I cannot tell all he has done,
I'll never stop when once begun, And that's what's the matter!*

*We are coming, coming, our union to restore,
We are coming Father Abraam, with three hundred thousand more.
We've heard of Gen'ral Beauregard, And thought he'd fight us long and hard;
But he has played out his last card, And that's what's the matter!
So what's the use to fret and pout, We soon will hear the people shout,
Secession dodge is all play'd out! And that's what's the matter!*

5. EMANCIPATION - spiritual

Eulogy on Henry Clay (bass-baritone solo)

July 6, 1852

Pharaoh's country was cursed with plagues, and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea for striving to retain a captive people who had already served more than four hundred years. May like disasters never befall us!

Speech at Peoria, Illinois

October 16, 1854

Our Republican robe is soiled, and trailed in the dust. Let us repurify it. Let us turn and wash it white, in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution ... Let north and south - let all Americans - let all lovers of liberty everywhere - join in the great and good work. If we do this, we will not only have saved the Union; but we have so saved it, as to make, and to keep it forever worthy of the saving. We shall have so saved it, that the succeeding millions of free happy people, the world over, shall rise up, and call us blessed, to the latest generations.

Psalm 106

*He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry;
And he led them through a deep as through a desert.
So he saved them from the hand of a foe,
And he delivered them from the power of an enemy.
And the waters covered their adversaries;
Not one of them was left.
Then they sang his words;
They sang his praises.*

Psalm 114

*The sea looked back and fled.
Jordan turned back.
The mountains skipped like rams,
The hills like lambs.*

6. HOPE - recitative

Temperance Address on the 110th anniversary of George Washington's birth

February 22, 1842 (bass-baritone recitation)

They teach hope to all – despair to none.

By the Washingtonian's, this system of consigning the habitual drunkard to hopeless ruin, is repudiated. They adopt a more enlarged philanthropy. They go for present as well as future good. They labor for all now living, as well as all hereafter to live. ... While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return.

Fragment on Free Labor

September 17, 1859 (soprano recitation)

The power of hope upon human exertion, and happiness, is wonderful.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The slave-master himself has a conception of it; and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will task him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope, for the rod. And yet perhaps it does not occur to you, that to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system, and adopted the free system of labor.

Letter to Joel Park, Governor of New Jersey

July 25, 1863 (tenor recitation)

This expression of hope, however, must not be construed into a promise.

No draft from New Jersey, other than for the above quota, will be made before an additional draft, common to the States, shall be required; and I may add, that if we get well through this draft, I entertain a strong hope that any further one may never be needed.

Your Obt. Servt. A. LINCOLN.

7. MELANCHOLY - aria

From "My Childhood Home I See Again" part 2 (vocal trio)

September 6, 1846

*And when at length, tho' drear and long,
Time soothed thy fiercer woes,
How plaintively thy mournful song
Upon the still night rose.*

*I've heard it oft, as if I dreamed,
Far distant, sweet, and lone __
The funeral dirge, it ever seemed
Of reason dead and gone.*

*To drink its strains, I've stole away,
All stealthily and still,
Ere yet the rising God of day
Had streaked the Eastern hill.
Air held his breath; trees, with the spell,
Seemed sorrowing angels round,
Whose swelling tears in dew-drops fell
Upon the listening ground.*

8. PRESIDENT'S BALL

The Victorian Dance Ensemble

Procession, Quadrille, and Galop - with quotations of Lincoln family favorites

Grand Marche from "The Huguenots" (Myerbeer)

The Last Rose of Summer (von Flotow)

We Are Coming, Father Abraam (Foster) - reprise

9. THANKSGIVING - hymn

"Give Thanks, All Ye People" (vocal trio)

known as **The President's Hymn** on the first Thanksgiving in America

William Augustus Muhlenberg

Harper's Weekly, Vol. VII. No. 362

December 5, 1863.

*Give thanks, all ye people give thanks to the Lord,
Alleluias of freedom, with joyful accord:
Let the East and the West, North and South roll along,
Sea, mountain, and prairie, one thanksgiving song:*

CHORUS

*Give thanks, all ye people, give thanks to the Lord,
Alleluias of freedom, with joyful accord.*

*For the sunshine and rainfall, enriching again,
Our acres in myriads, with treasures of grain;
For the Earth still unloading her manifold wealth,
For the skies beaming vigor, the winds breathing health:*

*For the Nation's wide table, o'erflowingly spread,
Where the many have feasted, and all have been fed,
With no bondage their God-given rights to enthrall,
But Liberty guarded by Justice for all:*

Let us purify, o Lord.

COMPOSER NOTES

Almost a decade has passed since I first read the 1995 book *Of The People, By The People, For The People* edited by my friend and Professor Emeritus of the Civil War Institute Gabor Boritt. I remember being intrigued with the melodic flow of Lincoln's speeches, letters, and youthful poetry. At the time, I was deeply involved with administrative duties in our music department (soon to become a conservatory) and several commissioned projects. I found myself reviewing the texts again in 2007 and approached Gabor about composing a large-scale composition during a sabbatical leave to celebrate the Lincoln bicentennial in 2009. He enthusiastically supported the idea and I began developing a broad outline of the piece in 2008.

Why an oratorio? Subject material and libretto for early oratorios evolved from sacred sources. Catholic composers based their music on the lives of saints while their Protestant counterparts used biblical stories. Oratorios became more secular at the turn of the 18th century with thematic ideas that included mythological figures and classical heroes. Abraham Lincoln is surely one of the most iconic figures in American history and celebrating the bicentennial of his birth through music seemed particularly appropriate. Arias and recitatives are indispensable elements of the oratorio form. His letters and poetry possess an inherent musicality and, in turn, were easy to set to music as arias. The speeches selected were more declaratory in nature and engage the listener better as spoken recitative.

A word about the instrumentation is necessary. Inherited from our British cousins, American brass bands were a musical staple of 19th century popular culture and thus became a logical choice as the core ensemble for the oratorio. The broad spectral range of colors is indeed impressive and provides myriad scoring possibilities for a composer. I was also very pleased to include four Sunderman Conservatory of Music colleagues and their students (paired flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons) allowing for even more timbral combinations. Four percussionists add their expertise on a dozen different pitched and non-pitched instruments from timpani to temple blocks. It is worth noting that the United States Marine Band earned official status for the first time during Lincoln's administration. A soprano, tenor, and bass-baritone serve as featured vocalists in period dress and are joined by narrator.

During the overture **Liberty and the Law** two speeches are recited. Lincoln's clever story of a shepherd, wolf, and sheep reminds us of how the definition of liberty can be markedly different among individuals. The Lyceum Address excerpt is pure fire and brimstone on the concept of upholding the letter of the law. The musical underscore of the latter address is *Barbara Allen*, a favorite folk song of Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

God is a sung recitative based on a letter to his step-brother John D. Johnston upon hearing of his father's grave illness. Lyrics in the aria **Death** are part of a poem from Lincoln's epic *My Childhood's Home I See Again*. My personal sense of the verses is that they were not so much derived from Lincoln's preoccupation with his demise but more as a melancholy observation of his growing up years in rural Indiana. A quotation of one of many funeral marches from 1865 (this one by G.F. Heath) connects the verses.

The rallying songs of **Conflict** are from the pen of American composer Stephen Foster (1826-64). Both tunes promote the Union cause and one provides needed levity during the hard times of war. Our cornet section joins in with gusto on the chorus of *That's What's The Matter*. **Emancipation** is a spiritual that combines biblical verse from Psalms 106 and 114 with excerpts of Lincoln's eulogy on Henry Clay and a three hour speech at Peoria in 1854 criticizing, in part, the concept of slavery and the value of equality for all people.

Hope consists of spoken recitative from two speeches in 1842 and 1859 and an 1863 letter. Each text speaks to the significance of hope in three disparate areas— temperance, slavery, and the military draft. The woodwind octet accompanies the recitations with the poignant tune *Morning Song* from Kentucky Harmony published in 1816 by Ananias Davisson as the first shape note song book.

Joshua Wolf Shenk's illuminating book *Lincoln's Melancholy* presents a compelling case that Lincoln suffered from clinical depression for much of his life. I was most fascinated with the idea that depression can actually enhance creativity. The second canto from the 1846 poem *My Childhood Home I See Again* is the text for **Melancholy** and alludes to his friend, Matthew Gentry, who suffered from mental illness at a young age. The simple iambic rhythm belies a dark intensity and sense of foreboding.

Mary Todd Lincoln worked diligently at creating festive activities at the White House. The **President's Ball** features the Victorian Dance Ensemble and seeks to recreate an evening of frivolity and dance. The quadrille was a popular and intricate dance form that originated in Europe during the 17th century. Original music is based on the Pantaloon form (A-B-A-C-A) and is coupled with several songs from Mrs. Lincoln's personal music box – *Grand Marche* from Giacomo Meyerbeer's 1836 opera Les Huguenots and Friedrich von Flotow's *The Last Rose of Summer* from his 1847 opera Martha.

The Rev. Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg composed *Give Thanks All Ye People* in response to Lincoln's 1863 proclamation for the first Thanksgiving that was established in gratitude for so much national sacrifice. **Thanksgiving** is a realization of the tune for full ensemble and vocal trio. The elaborate sheet music and six verses were published in Harper's Weekly just two weeks after Lincoln's celebrated visit to Gettysburg and soon became known as the *President's Hymn*. The language of the verses speaks to hope, the bountiful gifts of our nation, liberty, and reconciliation.

My goal as a composer was to create a portrait of Abraham Lincoln through music using his letters, speeches, and poetry as the libretto. A constant challenge during the process was to maintain an aural landscape of the 19th century while infusing the work with 21st century sensibilities. I am indebted to Gabor Boritt for providing the text that inspired the project and to Gettysburg College for supporting a sabbatical leave for research and the necessary time to create the composition.

JWJ

STEPHEN LANG
For The People
Guest Narrator

Stephen Lang has built a distinguished career on the stage and in film. Whether the role is Hamlet or Babe Ruth, "Stonewall" Jackson or Vaslav Nijinsky, Ike Clanton or Charles Winstead, Lang disappears into the part, creating indelible portraits of characters both historical and imagined.

2009 is a banner year for Lang on screen. He has received glowing reviews for his performance as Special Agent Charles Winstead in Michael Mann's PUBLIC ENEMIES. He plays the key role of General Hopgood opposite George Clooney in THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS, which comes out November 6th. And on December 18th he will be seen on screens worldwide starring as Colonel Miles Quaritch in James Cameron's highly anticipated film AVATAR starring Sigourney Weaver.

Lang's theatre credits are extensive on and off Broadway, as well as nationally and internationally. Premieres include Aaron Sorkin's A FEW GOOD MEN, John Patrick Shanley's DEFIANCE, Steve Tesich's THE SPEED OF DARKNESS, and Arthur Miller's FINISHING THE PICTURE. He has performed leading roles in classics by Moliere, Williams, O'Casey, Beckett, Shaw, Shepard, Sophocles and Shakespeare at some of the nation's finest theatres including, The Goodman, The Guthrie, The New York Shakespeare Festival, Circle in the Square, The Kennedy Center, BAM, and a host of others.

Lang has performed his solo play, BEYOND GLORY, all over the world as well as a critically acclaimed 101 performances at The Roundabout Theatre. He received the Chairman's Medal for Distinguished Service from the NEA for bringing BEYOND GLORY to American troops stationed across the globe. Other nominations and awards include The Tony, Helen Hayes, Joseph Jefferson, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, and Drama Desk Awards.

Lang's work in film has been no less varied and distinctive. For his performance as General "Stonewall" Jackson in GODS AND GENERALS, he received The Grace Prize. Other films include, LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN, TOMBSTONE (Ike Clanton), GETTYSBURG (George Pickett), THE HARD WAY, MANHUNTER, BAND OF THE HAND, TRIXIE, FIRE DOWN BELOW, and many others.

On television he gave a popularly and critically acclaimed performance as Babe Ruth in NBC's BABE RUTH. He was a series regular on Michael Mann's classic CRIME STORY, and was the elusive One-Armed Man in the latest incarnation of THE FUGITIVE.

Lang is in his 30th year of marriage. He and wife Kristina have four grown children.