

**Mirabile Mysterium** (2007)

SATB w/ divisi

Difficulty rating: 3

Duration: 4'00"

Commissioned by The Greenwich Village Singers

Premiere: Conducted by Mark Mangini, NYC, 12/14/07

*Mirabile Mysterium* was commissioned by The Greenwich Village Singers for its 2007 Christmas concert. The title of the program was in fact "A Wondrous Mystery", the English translation of the title of my work.

Many 19<sup>th</sup>-century composers exploited the "exotic" sound of the augmented chord (two major thirds) to convey a sense of mystery, and I have followed that tradition through much of *Mirabile Mysterium*. There's a bit of text painting as well in the dense chords on the word 'mysterium'. Another conceptual feature of the work is derived from the last line, "...suffering neither mixture nor division." The men and the women remain rhythmically distinct from one another throughout the work until the final words: "neque divisionem." The piece ends as it began, humming, an important element of the opening of the work, where hums morph in and out of the delectable 'M's of the title words.

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Mirabile mysterium declaratur hodie,

innovantur naturae:

Deus homo factus est,

id, quod fuit, permansit,

et quod non erat, assumpsit,

non commixtionem passus

neque divisionem.

--Sophronius of Jerusalem (7<sup>th</sup> c.)

*A wondrous mystery comes to light today:*

*natures are transformed,*

*God has become man.*

*that which was, remains,*

*and that which was not, was assumed,*

*suffering neither mixture nor division.*