

Choral Reviews

diversity in the harmonies. There is brief divisi in soprano and bass parts, and there is a slight tonal shift 3/4 of the way through the piece that tends to stray from the tonic of B^b. Benham cleverly brings the dominant/tonic relationship back into play within the span of only four measures. This piece is accessible to a variety of ensembles, including church, collegiate, and high school choirs.

Quint Harris
qharris@vhumc.org

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen/Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming/Det är en ros utsprungun

SSAATTBB, unaccompanied
Mårten Jansson (arr.)
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The image shows a musical score for eight voices: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, and Bass 2. Each part is written on a five-line staff with a treble or bass clef. The notes are simple, mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 6/8.

Swedish composer Mårten Jansson has produced two stunning arrangements of this Medieval German Christmas carol and Marian hymn: a 2011 version for six-part women's chorus in A-flat major and this more recent 2015 version arranged for mixed chorus, expanded to eight parts and set in the key of F major. Both arrangements provide the text in three languages—German, English, and Swedish—all of which are interchangeably lyrical.

The work is structured in an ABA format corresponding to the three verses of the original German carol. In the first A section, Jansson establishes 6/8 with a bell-like ostinato in the bass I and both tenor parts but then introduces the melody above in dotted eighth notes, creating a vertical hemiola between the upper and lower voices. The rhythmic features of the piece are further complicated when the ostinato expands in mea-

sure 10 to accommodate a new idea in the soprano II part and when the alto II part finally appears in measure 16 with repeated notes tied across the barline.

Whereas the tonal language of both A sections is completely diatonic (although colored by numerous unresolved suspensions), the B section brings considerable tonal variety. Most of the B section remains in a climactic and unsettled state, moving through a firestorm of varying meters, syncopations, and dissonances before eventually settling back into the familiar material of the A section for the third and final verse.

Although a few helpful Swedish pronunciation tips appear at the bottom of the first page, they apply only to the repeated words of the chiming ostinato and not to the text of the verses. Nevertheless, it is a cleanly edited score with an efficient layout with considerable detail about the source of the text, translations, and original music provided at the beginning. Jansson has given this frequently arranged carol a fresh, modern, and dramatic treatment, with musical content substantial enough to challenge ensembles of even above-average ability. It should make the 2017 Christmas lists of many advanced church and professional chamber choirs.

D. Jason Bishop
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