

W. Jay Sydeman

The Gospel According to John
SATB a cappella and Speaker
(c. 1984)

“In the beginning was the Word...” and is the “Word” the primordial sound (vibration) from which all creation springs? In any event this text with all its ambiguities has spoken to me strongly enough to want to set it to music, in this case an a cappella choral work with solo speaker. The style of music is also somewhat ambiguous, from the cluster-like sounds of the 20th century avant-garde to simpler tonal settings – all, I believe, in service of this most mystical of Gospels.

– W. Jay Sydeman, November 2015

W. Jay Sydeman’s life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan’s Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. “Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques,” wrote the New York Times, “but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right.”

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

“Around 1980,” he has written, “I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician.”

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of “Music Now”

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer", 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: circa 11:00

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The Gospel According to John

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W. Jay Sydeman
(c. 1984)

Adagio ♩ = c. 44

p *mp* *ppp* *mp*

Soprano
In in the be - gin - ning was the Word,

Alto
In in the be - gin - ning was the Word,

Tenor
In in the be - gin - ning was the Word,

Bass
In in the be - gin - ning was the Word,

Speaker
In the beginning was the Word,
and the word was with God,
and the Word was God.

Piano
for
rehearsal
only
p *mp* *ppp* *mp*

4

rit. - - - a tempo

pp

mf *ppp*

p

and the Word was with God, was God.

pp

mf *ppp*

and the Word was with God,

mf *p*

was with and the Word was God.

mf *p*

was with and the Word was God.

pp

mf *ppp*

p

[illegible]

a tempo *p sub.* *accel.* ----- *a tempo* *mf*

13

light of men. And the light shin - eth in the dark - ness; and the

p sub. *mf*

light of men. And the light shin - eth in the dark - ness; and the

p sub. *p* *mf*

light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark; and the

p sub. *p*

light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark;

p sub. *p* *mf*

light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark;

p sub. *p* *mf*

light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark;

rit. ----- *a tempo* *accel.* ----- *ppp*

16

p sub. *mp* *ppp*

dark - ness com - pre - hend - ed it not not.

p sub. *mp* *ppp*

dark - ness com - pre - hend - ed it not not.

p sub. *mp* *ppp*

dark - ness com - pre - hend - ed it not not.

p sub. *mp* *ppp*

dark - ness dark - ness it not not.

p sub. *mp* *ppp*

dark - ness dark - ness it not not.

19

The musical score consists of five systems. The first system has four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. The first measure of each staff contains a half note with a fermata. The second measure contains a half note. The third measure contains a half note. The fourth measure contains a half note. The fifth measure contains a half note. The sixth measure contains a half note. The seventh measure contains a half note. The eighth measure contains a half note. The ninth measure contains a half note. The tenth measure contains a half note. The eleventh measure contains a half note. The twelfth measure contains a half note. The thirteenth measure contains a half note. The fourteenth measure contains a half note. The fifteenth measure contains a half note. The sixteenth measure contains a half note. The seventeenth measure contains a half note. The eighteenth measure contains a half note. The nineteenth measure contains a half note. The twentieth measure contains a half note. The twenty-first measure contains a half note. The twenty-second measure contains a half note. The twenty-third measure contains a half note. The twenty-fourth measure contains a half note. The twenty-fifth measure contains a half note. The twenty-sixth measure contains a half note. The twenty-seventh measure contains a half note. The twenty-eighth measure contains a half note. The twenty-ninth measure contains a half note. The thirtieth measure contains a half note. The thirty-first measure contains a half note. The thirty-second measure contains a half note. The thirty-third measure contains a half note. The thirty-fourth measure contains a half note. The thirty-fifth measure contains a half note. The thirty-sixth measure contains a half note. The thirty-seventh measure contains a half note. The thirty-eighth measure contains a half note. The thirty-ninth measure contains a half note. The fortieth measure contains a half note. The forty-first measure contains a half note. The forty-second measure contains a half note. The forty-third measure contains a half note. The forty-fourth measure contains a half note. The forty-fifth measure contains a half note. The forty-sixth measure contains a half note. The forty-seventh measure contains a half note. The forty-eighth measure contains a half note. The forty-ninth measure contains a half note. The fiftieth measure contains a half note. The fifty-first measure contains a half note. The fifty-second measure contains a half note. The fifty-third measure contains a half note. The fifty-fourth measure contains a half note. The fifty-fifth measure contains a half note. The fifty-sixth measure contains a half note. The fifty-seventh measure contains a half note. The fifty-eighth measure contains a half note. The fifty-ninth measure contains a half note. The sixtieth measure contains a half note. The sixty-first measure contains a half note. The sixty-second measure contains a half note. The sixty-third measure contains a half note. The sixty-fourth measure contains a half note. The sixty-fifth measure contains a half note. The sixty-sixth measure contains a half note. The sixty-seventh measure contains a half note. The sixty-eighth measure contains a half note. The sixty-ninth measure contains a half note. The seventieth measure contains a half note. The seventy-first measure contains a half note. The seventy-second measure contains a half note. The seventy-third measure contains a half note. The seventy-fourth measure contains a half note. The seventy-fifth measure contains a half note. The seventy-sixth measure contains a half note. The seventy-seventh measure contains a half note. The seventy-eighth measure contains a half note. The seventy-ninth measure contains a half note. The eightieth measure contains a half note. The eighty-first measure contains a half note. The eighty-second measure contains a half note. The eighty-third measure contains a half note. The eighty-fourth measure contains a half note. The eighty-fifth measure contains a half note. The eighty-sixth measure contains a half note. The eighty-seventh measure contains a half note. The eighty-eighth measure contains a half note. The eighty-ninth measure contains a half note. The ninetieth measure contains a half note. The ninety-first measure contains a half note. The ninety-second measure contains a half note. The ninety-third measure contains a half note. The ninety-fourth measure contains a half note. The ninety-fifth measure contains a half note. The ninety-sixth measure contains a half note. The ninety-seventh measure contains a half note. The ninety-eighth measure contains a half note. The ninety-ninth measure contains a half note. The hundredth measure contains a half note.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came
as a witness, to bear witness of the light that all men might believe.
He was not the light, but sent to bear witness of that light.

B **Con moto** ♩ = c. 105

21 *p* *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *p sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

25 **C**

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. in the world the world,

29

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. He

f

D

32

He came un - to His

f He came un - to His own,

f He came un - to His

mf came un - to His own, to His own, un - to His

37 *mp sub.* *pp*

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

mp sub. *pp*

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

mp sub. *pp*

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

mp sub. *pp*

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

mp sub. *pp*

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y

39 *rit. - - - a tempo* *p*

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

p

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

p

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

p

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

41 *mf* *rit.* *p* **Agitato** ♩. = c. 85 *f*

come the sons of God, e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

come the sons of God, e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

come the sons of God, e - ven to them e - ven to

come the sons of God, _____

mf *p* *f*

45

e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

them that be - lieve on His name: to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name: _____

E Andante ♩ = c. 75

48 *pp*

p

which were born, not out of blood, _____

p

which were

which were born not of blood
nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but of God.

pp

p

53

out of blood, out of blood

born, not out of blood, out of blood

mp

which were born, not out of blood

mp

57

blood, blood, nor of the will of the

blood, blood, nor of the will of the

blood, blood, nor of the will of the

which were born, not out of blood, nor of the will of the

mp *ff* *ff*

accel. *Più mosso* ♩ = c. 82 *rit.*

Poco meno mosso

62 *a tempo* *p*

flesh, _____ of the flesh, of the flesh, but of

flesh, _____ nor of the will _____ of man, _____

flesh, _____ nor of the will of _____ man, _____

flesh, _____ but of

mf *mp*

mf *mp*

66 *p sub.* *pp*

God _____ of God. _____

p sub. *pp*

God. _____

p sub. *pp*

of God of of God. _____

p sub.

God of God of

p sub. *pp*

God. _____

p sub. *pp*

God. _____

F Andante ♩ = c. 74

71

The musical score is for a piece in F major, Andante tempo, with a tempo marking of ♩ = c. 74. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has four staves: three treble clefs and one bass clef. The second system has two staves: one treble and one bass clef. The music is in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (F major). The lyrics are: 'And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us - and we beheld His Glory - the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father - full of grace and truth.' The score includes a double bar line after the first system and a repeat sign at the beginning of the second system. The dynamics *mf* are indicated in the bass staves of both systems.

mf

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us -
and we beheld His Glory - the Glory as of the only
begotten of the Father - full of grace and truth.

mf

76

mf

And the

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us and dwelt a - mong us a - mong us a -

82

mp sub.

Word was made flesh, and dwelt a - mong us and dwelt a -

mp sub.

mong us a - mong us and the Word was made flesh, and

87

mf

And the Word was made

mf

mong us a - mong us,

dwelt a - mong a - mong us,

And the Word was made

mf

And the

92

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, and dwelt and dwelt a - mong us,

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, and the Word was

Word the Word was made flesh and dwelt a - mong us us,

p

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, and the Word was

97 *mf*

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt a -

and dwelt a - mong us and the Word be -

made and the Word was made

And the Word was made

101

mong us, and dwelt a - mong us, a - mong us, a -

came flesh and dwelt a - mong us

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us.

flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, a - mong us.

105 *rit.* ----- **Adagio** ♩ = c. 50

f

mong us. And we be-held His glo-ry, And we be-

f

a-mong us. And we be-held His glo-ry

f

And we be-held His glo-ry, And we be-

f

and we be-held His glo-ry glo-ry,

f

108

held His glo - ry, ———

glo - ry, ———

And we be - held His glo - ry, ———

held His glo - ry ———

And we be - held ——— His ———

And we be - held His glo - ry, ———

And we be - held His glo - ry, ———

Poco meno mosso

111

Solo *mf* and we be-held His glo-ry,

Tutti *pp* the

Solo *mf* and we be-held His glo-ry,

Tutti *pp* the glo-ry glo-ry

8 ry,

pp the glo-ry glo-ry as

pp the glo-ry

Soli *mf* 3

Tutti *pp*

114

ppp glo-ry the

glo-ry glo-ry

glo-ry as of

as of as of

glo-ry glo-ry glo-ry as of

mp

mp

Poco più mosso ♩ = c. 65

117 *mp*

the on - ly be got - ten of the fa - ther,

mp

the on - ly be got - ten of the fa - ther,

8 of

mp

of the fa - ther the on - ly be - got - ten

121 *mp*

the on - ly be - got - ten of the fa - ther,

mp

the on - ly on - ly of the

mp

the on - ly fa - ther,

son

mp

of the fa -

124

rit.-----a tempo

mf *p* *mp*

full of grace and truth

the on - ly be - got - ten of — of — the fa - ther full of grace and truth

full of grace truth full of

ther, full of grace and truth

mf *p* *mp* *mf*

mf *p* *mp* *mf*

127

rit.-----a tempo *rit.-----a tempo* *rit.-----a tempo*

mf *mf* *p*

full of grace and truth — truth — and truth. —

full of grace and truth — truth — and — truth. —

grace and truth of grace and truth — truth — and — truth. —

mf *mp* *mp*

and truth — and truth — full of grace — and — truth — full of grace — and truth,

Meno mosso ♩ = c. 124

135 *mp* is pre-ferred — And *mp*

mp is pre-ferred — *mp* And of His full -

mp is pre-ferred be - fore me for He was be - fore me for He was *p*

p that com - eth He that

p He that com - eth af -

mp *p* *mp*

142

of His full - ness have all we re - ceived we

ness have have all we re - ceived we all have

8 be - fore me fore me be - fore me be - fore me

com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred

- ter me is pre - ferred He

||

149

re - ceived His full - ness have all we re -

re - ceived His full - ness we re - ceived

8 be - fore me be - fore me be - fore

He that come af - ter me is

that eom - eth af -

155

ceived _____ and _____ of _____ his _____ full -

_____ and _____ of His _____ full - ness _____ have _____

me _____ for He _____ was be - fore _____ me _____ he _____ was _____ be -

pre - ferred _____ He that com - eth af - ter me _____

ter _____ me _____ is _____ pre - ferred _____ He _____

||

162

ness have all we re - ceived and of His full -

all we re - ceived and of His full -

fore me He was be - fore me He was be - fore

is pre - ferred He that com - eth af - ter me

that com - eth af - ter me is

169

ness have all we re-ceived and of His

- ness all we re-ceived and of His

me he was be-fore me He was be-fore me He

is pre-ferred is pre-ferred He that come af-ter

pre-ferred He that come af-ter me is pre-ferred

He that come af-ter me is pre-ferred

176

full - ness have all we re - ceived all have we
full - ness have all all we re - ceived and of His
was be - fore me He was was be - fore me
me is pre - ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre -
ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred He

183

all have we re - ceived all

full - ness have all we have all we all we have re - ceived

He was be - fore me He was be - fore me he was be -

ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred

that com - eth af - ter me

190

of His full - ness we have re -

of His full - ness we have re -

fore me of His full - ness we have re -

and of His full - ness we have re -

of His full - ness we have re - ceived have re -

196

f *p sub.*

ceived and grace for grace

mf *p sub.*

ceived and grace

mf *p sub.*

ceived and grace

ceived and

ceived and

f *p sub.*

ceived and grace

rit.

203

203

The musical score is written for a choir and piano. It features five vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, and Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are: "grace for grace for grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

grace for grace for grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. Solo grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

H **Allegro** ♩ = c. 125

208 Soprano Tutti *ff* *mf* *mf rit.*

For the law was giv - en by

Alto Tutti *ff* *mf* *mf*

For the law was giv - en by

Tenor Tutti *ff* *mf* *mf*

For the law was giv - en by

Bass Tutti *ff* *mf* *mf*

For the law was giv - en by

Tutti *ff* *mf* *mf*

a tempo
Meno mosso ♩ = c. 100

215 *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Mos-es; for the law was giv - en by Mos - es

Mos - es; for the law was giv - en by Mos - es

Mos-es; for the law was giv - en by Mos - es

Mos - es; for the law was giv - en by Mos - es

Tutti *mp*

221

pp *ppp* *p* *rit.* *a tempo*

by Mos - es; but grace and truth comes

pp *ppp* *p*

by Mos - es; but grace and truth comes

pp *ppp*

by Mos - es;

pp *ppp*

by Mos - es;

pp *ppp* *p*

pp *ppp*

228

The musical score is for the song "The Christmas Song" (also known as "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire"). It is written for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, and Tenor 2) and piano accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and the key of F major. The lyrics are: "by Je - sus Christ but grace and truth comes by but grace and truth". The piano part features a prominent bass line with a walking bass pattern. The vocal parts are arranged in a harmonized fashion, with the Soprano and Alto parts often carrying the melody. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano), and phrasing slurs. The score is divided into two systems, with a double bar line indicating the end of the first system.

by Je - sus Christ

by Je - sus Christ

by Je - sus Christ but grace and truth

comes by but grace and truth

by Je - sus Christ but grace and truth

234

mf *rit.* *ppp*

but grace and truth

mf *ppp*

but grace and truth

f *p* *ppp*

comes by Je - sus Christ

f *p* *ppp*

comes by Je - sus Christ

comes

f *p* *mf* *ppp* *p*

240

by Je - sus Christ.