

“Hold You, Enfold You,” is an anthem which looks to the ordinary for meaning: the beauty of a garden to shelter us, the sunlight bouncing off fresh morning dew.

The composition’s structure follows the three stanzas (phrases) of the poem, though each phrase is varied. Subtle harmonic variations, and alterations in the voicings, paint each phrase with slight variants in hue. The varying phrase lengths and cadential gestures, which sometimes remain unresolved, add vibrancy to the musical language. It is as if each phrase begins rooted in a similar fashion, to then bloom and blossom anew with each section.

The second phrase sees a reduction in texture. The melodic line is placed in the Alto, predominantly, and new timbres are created as various pedal notes are sustained above and below the flowing lines. The pedal points musically create interest, as they are a much slower line, and the resulting harmonies, which rub up and against the sustaining notes, create tension and beauty; they also metaphorically act as a call to see and to notice things which go unnoticed. There is something lingering just out of view or, perhaps, in our gaze but unfocused, blurry. The pedal points beg us to look at what is in front of us, to see the beauty in the banal, the mundane: the light which peers through the drapes and dances on the carpet.

The final phrase includes an optional descant line which may be sung as a solo, small group, or divided soprano section. It floats above the familiar music and comments on, responds to, and, at times, joins in homophony with, the ensemble.

The music should be *legato*, and unhurried. Bring out, and explore, the various timbres and voice doublings in the work.

Dr. Matthew Emery is a Canadian composer who “writes with an honesty with enchants” (Vancouver Sun), and whose music is “profoundly beautiful and moving” (CBC Music). His music has been performed in twenty-eight countries, and recent performance venues include: the Great Wall of China, the White House, and the Musikverein. Matthew has received over forty commissions and his music has been performed by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Chamber Choir, Elmer Iseler Singers, National Youth Orchestra of Canada, National Youth Choir of Canada, European Union Youth Orchestra, Orchestra London, the Art of Time Ensemble, Rolston String Quartet, Dennis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra, Erin Wall, Susan Platts, Rena Sharon, Simone Osborne, Leslie Fagan, Tracy Dahl, and the Bach Music Festival of Canada Orchestra.

Dr. Emery studied at the University of British Columbia (B.Mus) and the University of Toronto (M.Mus, DMA). Matthew has received over thirty awards and prizes for his compositions and his work has been included on nineteen albums, including a Juno-nominated disc. His over sixty publications are published by Alliance Music Publications, G. Schirmer, Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard, and many others. Dr. Emery currently teaches at Carlton University and the University of Toronto.

So Would My Love*

Over the wall of your sheltered garden
Sunlight is painting a rainbow of dew;
So would my love, of its warmth and its glory,
Fashion a pathway resplendent for you.

Over the wall of your sheltered garden
Storm-clouds are gathered to herald the rain;
So would my love, from the chill and the shadows,
Bring but new freshness and blooming again.

Over the wall of your sheltered garden
Softly the moonlight descends like a charm,
So would my love, all your bright life enclosing,
Hold you, enfold you, and shield you from harm.

– Frances Ebbs-Canavan [1 878-1 963]

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* one stanza is omitted from the original four-stanza poem