

A PASSER BY - BYRON ADAMS

OVERVIEW

"A Passerby is a gem among the great American choral compositions. Byron Adams writes a powerful, yet beautiful arrangement, the only choral work set to this poem by Robert Bridges. The courageous text alongside the harmonies created by the Tenor/Bass chorus unlocks the imagination of a journey across the uncharted waters.



BYRON ADAMS



1993



MUSICAL PERIOD:
20TH CENTURY

1

RHYTHMIC IDENTITY

Adams uses a mixture of simple and compound meters as a rhythmic outlay to resemble the roaring waves of the sea. The meter starts in 3/4 then rotates to 12/8. When learning this piece, isolate the rhythm first, especially the mixtures of triplets and eighth notes.

2

TEXTURE

Throughout the composition, Adams writes the voice parts primarily in homophonic structure. All four parts will share the same or similar rhythm while chanting and singing, which will be beneficial to the learning process.

3

MUSICAL IDEAS

There are important markings already scribed in the score to depict the imagery and the emotion. Be expressive with the dynamics, accents, and tenutos marked by the composer.

4

SYMBOLISM

The "splendid ship" of the poem is a symbol that represents the progression of the human spirit through exultation, fantasy, doubt, courage, and ultimate triumph.

5

PHRASING

There are many challenging phrasing spots, especially the moving triplets that sit on a difficult tessitura for all parts. Place the sound forward and keep the vowels intact while moving air through those difficult passages.