PAUL WINCHESTER

23RD PSALM

SATB chorus unaccompanied

Notes

This piece was the first piece I ever had performed as a composer. I had recently completed a summer at Interlochen Center for the Arts and had just joined the best choir I had ever sung in. I had been experimenting with writing music for a couple of years, but had only ever heard them played back in poor MIDI renderings through Finale. But, when I approached my choir director to see if he was interested in premiering a piece of mine, I was shocked and delighted when he agreed, and I presented him with this piece.

23rd Psalm showcases much of what I was experiencing and imbibing in my my newfound foray into choral music being done at an excellent level. I had been singing works by Eric Whitacre and other, similarly approachable, living composers, introducing me to "pleasant dissonances" such as add9 chords and diatonic clusters. I had also just sung and been very struck by Bruckner's Os Justi and this piece follows its form almost exactly: with an overall ABA form with a very active contrapuntal section in the middle.

While this piece was written before I had really received much formal training, what it may lack in maturity, it makes up for as an earnest and naively passionate expression from a young person who still had no idea what the full career path of a composer looks like and all of the complications of determining one's own harmonic language, fitting into a crowded landscape, making a living by writing music and all the other stresses. It's a pure expression of joy in music.

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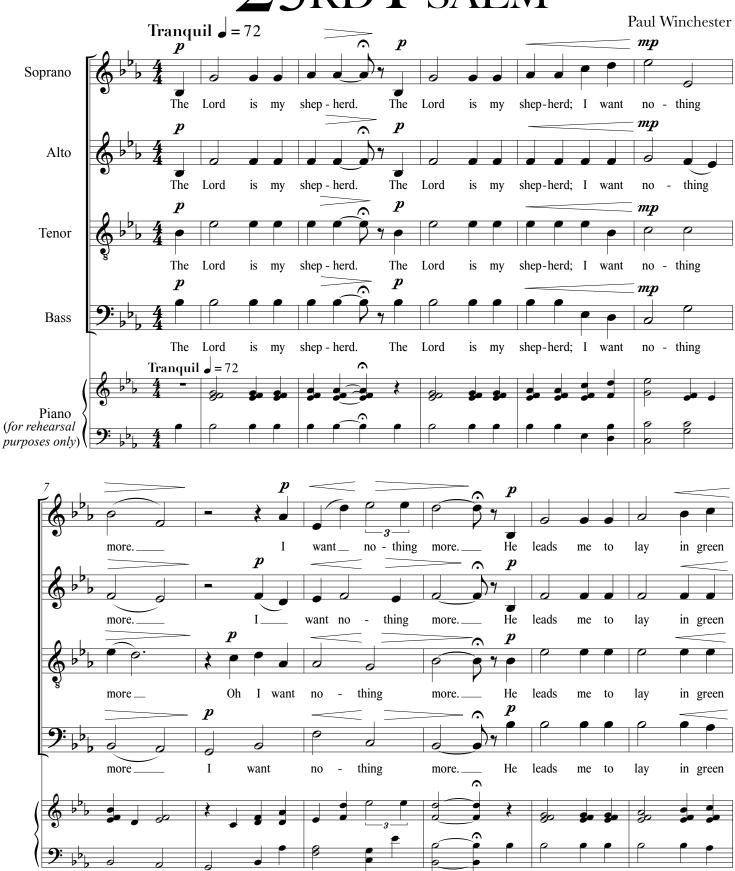
Text

The Lord is my Shepherd. I want nothing more. He leads me to lay in green pastures and He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil when You are at my side. Your rod is my comfort and Your staff is my hope.

You prepare a table for me before my enemies. My cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long!

23RD PSALM





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