The War Prayer:  
A Dramatic Setting of Mark Twain's Text

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Music in the
Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By
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The Ohio State University
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ADDENDUM

ABSTRACT

_The War Prayer_ is based on the complete text of Mark Twain’s poem. This piece is primarily a theater piece; it is really the reading of a poem, with a musical background. Musically, the piece is not attempting to be tonal or atonal. Aside from a brief march, all other materials are derived from two Bach chorales: “Jesus, my joy” and “O sacred head.” The ensemble, and the musical materials they perform, function as a parody for the circumstances they represent: marching band, church choir and congregation.
Dedicated to my wife, Lisa
VITA

October 25, 1969.......................... Born, Chicago, IL
1992........................................ B.M. Music Education, Elmhurst College
1996........................................ M.A. Music Theory, The Ohio State University
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Music
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INTRODUCTION

Performance Considerations:

This piece was originally performed "quasi-chamber" style: only one instrument per part, and two singers per part. The choir was amplified, as was the narrator. The performance was moderately successful, but certainly not ideal. Balance was, of course, a problem; however, even overcoming that obstacle with amplification did not achieve the desired effect. It is necessary to have full instrumentation to obtain the timbre required for setting the mood of such a dramatic text. Anything less produces a strained, thin quality. Ideally, the piece should have a full choir and full string sections. The winds should be only doubled, at most. In any case, the narrator should always be amplified.

The timing between the ensemble and the narrator must be worked out in relation to the narrator’s pacing and style. The music is so constructed that the conductor must gauge the tempo in relation to the narrator, and must wait for the narrator to finish certain passages. Only one repeat was necessary during the initial performance, which is marked at measure 120. Beginning at measure 129, when the narrator’s text is rhythmicized, the timing should not be done so slavishly. The narrator should stay with the ensemble, but has a certain amount of flexibility to do justice to the flow of the text.
do not enter at details. The verse 
accordingly a new version of the 
new Testament. On your part, there is 
nothing more to be said. It is not 
possible for us to bring forward the 
arguments we have already presented, 
or any others we could think of, in 
favor of the view that God's will is 
always good.