## ATTEND TO THE MUSICK DIVINE (2012)

## Program notes:

Attend to the Musick Divine is a setting of the 134<sup>th</sup> Psalm, as translated and "adapted to the divine service" by the English poet Christopher Smart in 1765. Smart is perhaps best known as the author of "Jubilate Agno", which Benjamin Britten used as the source material for his wonderful cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb*. As the psalm itself is only one stanza in length in most translations, it is clear that Smart has taken many liberties with the text, despite which it makes for a beautiful and balanced poem. I was looking for a text suitable for an anthem that would be performed as part of a Christian service, but I also wanted something that had an interfaith flavor, and could potentially be used in a variety of Judeo-Christian religious or even secular settings. The Psalms are generally good source material for broadly Judeo-Christian messages, which do not lean too heavily in the direction of one faith or the other. This is certainly one such text, and aside from the use of the name "Jehova" (one of many attempts to flesh out the tetragrammaton, or Hebrew name of the God of Israel – Jews do not pronounce the name of God), and the prevalent use of the "Hosanna" (although derived from Hebrew, not a word typically used in Jewish services), it serves this purpose well.

This anthem is suitable for general use within a Christian context, but it is also quite appropriate for Palm Sunday or other kingly holidays.

Attend to the Musick Divine was written for the Huntingdon Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir of Huntingdon, PA.

## Text of anthem:

Attend to the musick divine Ye people of God with the priest, At once your Hosanna combine As meekly we bow to the east.

Ye servants that look to the lights Which blaze in the house of the Lord, And keep up the watch of the nights To bless each apartment and ward,

-Christopher Smart, 1765

The holy of holies review, And lift up your hands with your voice, And there sing your anthems anew, In praise to Jehova rejoice.

The Lord that made heav'n and earth, Which rules o'er the night and the day, His blessing bestow on your mirth, And hear you whenever ye pray.

<u>Instrumentation</u>: SATB Chorus and Piano <u>Duration</u>: 3:40 <u>Premiere</u>: April 1, 2012, the Huntingdon Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir, Gabriel Gould, Director.