

*The Language
Of Insects*

For SATB choir
Music by Robert Adámy Dúisberg
Text by W.S. Merwin

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In the 1990's, at a reading he gave on an island near my home, I had the honor of a conversation with the great laureate poet W.S. Merwin, in which I impertinently asked his permission to set some of his text to music. To my surprise, he smiled warmly, saying, "That is simply between you and the poetry." Ten years later, at another reading in Seattle, I humbly presented a score to him, expressing doubt he'd remember his generous permission. Warmly again, fixing me with his penetrating eye contact, he said, "Of course I remember!"

This motet sets the text of his poem entitled *After the Alphabets*, and the voices of insects are heard high in the piano, in distant tonalities disregarding the keys in which the humans sing. So, while people may sing in awe that "They can sing with wings!" the insects seem to be almost mocking them.

More music, information and contact information can be found at:

<https://www.robduisberg.org>

The Language of Insects

Music: Robert Adámy Duisberg

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(used by permission of the poet)

Gently ♩ = 64

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Piano

2 4

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

p *mp* 6 8

We are try - ing to de - ci - pher the lan - guage of

p *mp*

We are try - ing to de - ci - pher the lan - guage of

p *mp*

We are try - ing to de - ci - pher the lan - guage of

p *mp*

We are try - ing to de - ci - pher the lan - guage of

poco rit.

mf

S. *mf* *p*
 in - sects They are the tongues of the fu - ture they des -

A. *mf* *p*
 in - sects They are the tongues of the fu - ture they des -

T. *mf* *p*
 in - sects They are the tongues of the fu - ture they des -

B. *mf* *p*
 in - sects They are the tongues of the fu - ture they des -

poco rit.

p

Pno. *p*

a tempo ♩=64

14

mp

mf

16

S. *mp* *mf*
 crite build-ings as food they can de-pict dark wa-ter and the veins of

A. *mp* *mf*
 crite build-ings as food they can de-pict dark wa - ter and

T. *mp* *mf*
 crite build-ings as food they can de-pict dark wa - ter and

B. *mp* *mf*
 crite build-ings as food they can de-pict dark wa-ter and

a tempo ♩=64

Pno. *mp* *mf* *l.h.*

18 *f* *mp*

S. trees they can con-vey what they do not know and what is

A. trees they can con-vey what they do not know and what is

T. trees they can con-vey what they do not know and what is

B. trees they can con-vey what they do not know and what is

Pno. *f* *mp*

22 *mf* *f* *mf*

S. known at a di-stance and what no-bo-dy knows they have terms for mak-ing

A. known at a di-stance and what no bo-dy knows they have terms for mak-ing

T. known at di-stance and what no-bo-dy knows they have terms for mak-ing

B. known at a di-stance_ and what no-bo-dy knows they have terms for mak-ing

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf*

26 28

S. *3*
 mu-sic with legs they can re-count chang-ing in a sleep like death they can

A. *3*
 mu-sic with legs they can re-count chang-ing in a sleep like death

T. *3*
 mu-sic with legs they can re-count chang-ing in a sleep like death they can

B. *3*
 mus-ic with legs they can re-count chang-ing in a sleep like death

Pno. *3* *l.h.*

||

S. *f* **poco rit.** *30* sing with wings they can sing with wings *32*

A. *f*
 they can sing they can sing with wings

T. *f*
 sing can sing with wings they can sing with wings

B. *f*
 they can sing with wings with wings

Pno. **poco rit.**

Slower and freely ♩ = 60

S. *pp* 34 the spea-kers are their own mean-ing 36 own mean-ing.

A. *p* the spea-kers are their own mean-ing.

T. *pp* the spea-kers are their own mean-ing own mean-ing.

B. *p* the spea-kers are their own mean-ing.

Pno. *pp* *8va*

Slower and freely ♩ = 60

S. *mp* 38 in a gram-mar with-out hor-i - zons *mf* *f* 40 they are whol-ly ar- *ff* 3

A. *mp* in a gram - mar with - out hor-i - zons *mf* *f* they are whol-ly ar- *ff* 3

T. *mp* in a gram mar *mf* with - out hor-i - zons *f* they are whol - ly *ff*

B. *mp* in a gram mar *mf* with - out hor-i - zons *f* they are whol - ly *ff*

Pno. *f* *ff*

S. *p* *mp* 42 *mp*
 ti-cu - late_ they are ne-ver im-por - tant_ they are e - v'ry - thing_ they are

A. *p* *mp*
 ti - cu - late_ they can sing_ with wings_ they are

T. *p* *mp*
 ho - ly they are ne-ver im-por-tant they are e - v'ry- thing_ they are

B. *p* *mp*
 ho - ly they are_ e - v'ry-thing

Pno. *p* *mp*

44 *mf* *f* **rallentando.**

S. *mf* *f*
 e - - v'ry - thing_ they can sing with wings they can

A. *mf* *f*
 e - - v'ry - thing_ they can sing with wings_ they can

T. *mf* *f*
 e - - v'ry - thing_ they can sing_ they are

B. *mf* *f*
 they are_ e - v'ry - thing_ they can sing_ with wings_

Pno. *mf* *f* **rallentando.**

46 48

S. sing with wings

A. sing with wings they are e - v'ry - thing

T. e - v'ry - thing they can sing with wings

B. they are e - v'ry thing

Pno.

vd ||

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 7, containing measures 46, 47, and 48. The score is for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part has a long note in measure 48. The Alto part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 46-48. The Tenor part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 46-48. The Bass part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 46-48. The Piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. A dynamic marking 'vd' is present at the bottom of the page.

Robert Adámy Duisberg, formerly on the School of Music faculty at the University of Washington, is a founding director of the West Seattle Community Orchestras (WSCO), where he was conductor and composer in residence. He has had orchestral works performed by the Seattle Symphony and Flagstaff Symphony as well as WSCO. His body of theater music including an opera, an oratorio, and three musicals has been performed been performed and recorded at ACT Theater, Seattle Civic Light Opera, the Village Theater and the UW. His chamber music has been released on Crystal Records, S-342, and his violin sonata has been widely performed. Recently he is devoting himself to choral music. More information about the composer and his music can be found and heard at www.robduisberg.org.