



Martha Sullivan
Tyger, Tyger!

Four Part Mixed Chorus with Divisi and Soloists

Program Notes

Blake often used the image of blacksmithing as a metaphor for Creation; in his own personal mythology, Los is the blacksmith Creator-God, and sometimes a stand-in for Blake himself. Such a god would naturally forge a creature as dangerous and full of fire as the tiger (the spelling “Tyger”, archaic even in Blake’s day, adds a tinge of danger and mystery). The pivotal question here is “Did he who made the Lamb make thee?” the music highlights it by setting it at the end of a soaring but slightly slower section for solo soprano. Neither the poem nor the music answers that question, since it’s up to the individual to come to his or her own conclusions. As for the music, I wrote it mostly to be fun to sing. The music had to be challenging but manageable. The challenges come from thick harmonies and fleet rhythms. All the notes fall within an unchanging mode (called Lydian Flat 7, or the Harmonic Series Mode), but this mode is a bit unusual and creates a few odd harmonies. Since the mode does not change, I reasoned, the notes should not be too difficult to get; a steady common-time meter also makes the music manageable, as does a catchy melody. I honored the strangeness of the text by using odd harmonies (the mode allows for minor/major sevenths and augmented/major sevenths) and an unsettled canon at the end, before finishing with a chord that simply lays an E major right on top of a D major chord in the same voicing ... this is a nod to Blake’s ambivalence about beauty and danger being knit into the same sinews by the same Creator.

Tyger! Tyger!

For C4: The Choral Composer/Conductor Collective

William Blake (1757-1827)

Martha Sullivan

♩ = 112, with driving rhythm

p

Soprano
Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger!

Alto
Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger!

Tenor
Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger!

Bass
Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! —

♩ = 112, with driving rhythm

p

Piano

5 *mf* *sfz* *p*

S.
Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! burn - ing — bright

A.
Ty - ger! —

T.
mf *sfz* *p*
Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! burn - ing — bright

B.
mf *sfz*
Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

5 *mf* *sfz* *p*

Pno.

Tyger! Tyger!

9
S. In the for - ests of the night, What im - mor - tal hand or eye Could
A. What im - mor - tal hand or eye Could
T. In the for - ests of the night, What im - mor - tal hand or eye Could
B. What im - mor - tal hand or eye Could
Pno.

13
S. *mf* frame thy fear - ful sym - met - ry? *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger!
A. *mf* frame thy fear - ful sym - met - ry? *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger!
T. *mf* frame thy fear - ful sym - met - ry? *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger!
B. *mf* frame thy sym - met - ry? *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger!
Pno. *mf* *p*

17

S. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! —

A. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! —

T. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! In — what dis - tant deeps or — skies

B. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! — In — what dis - tant deeps or — skies

Pno.

21

S. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! —

A. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! — On — what wings — dare he — as - pire?

T. Burnt the — fire — of thine eyes? On what wings dare he — as - pire?

B. Burnt the — fire — of thine eyes? On what wings dare he as - pire?

Pno.

Tyger! Tyger!

Swing like a blacksmith!

25 *mf* *sfz* *mf*

S. What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoul - der

A. What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoul - der

T. What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoul - der

B. What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoul - der

Pno. *mf* *sfz* *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the first 25 measures of the score. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'What the hand dare seize the fire? And what shoul - der'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *sfz* (sforzando). The tempo/style marking is *Swing like a blacksmith!*

Swing like a blacksmith!

30 *legato* *marcato* *marcato* *marcato*

S. and what art Could twist the sin-ews of thy heart? And when thy heart be -

A. and what art Could twist the sin - ews of thy heart? when thy heart be -

T. and what art Could twist the sin - ews of thy heart? when thy heart be -

B. and what art Could twist the sin - ews of thy heart? when thy heart be -

Pno. *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the second 25 measures of the score, starting at measure 30. It features the same four vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'and what art Could twist the sin-ews of thy heart? And when thy heart be -'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *legato*, *marcato*, and *mf*. The tempo/style marking is *Swing like a blacksmith!*

34

S. gan to beat, What dread hand? And what dread feet? What What the

A. gan to beat, What dread hand? And what dread feet? What What the

T. gan to beat, What dread hand? And what dread feet? What What the

B. gan to beat, — What dread hand? And what dread feet? What

Pno.

f

ff martellato!

ff

38

S. ham - mer? — what what the chain? In — In what furn - ace —

A. ham - mer? — what what the chain? In — In what furn - ace —

T. ham - mer? — what what what the chain? In In what furn - ace —

B. the ham - mer? what what the chain? In what furn - ace

Pno.

mf legato

f

mf legato

f

Tyger! Tyger!

43

S. was thy brain? What the an - vil?

A. was thy brain? What the an - vil?

T. was thy brain? What the an - vil? What What

B. was thy brain? What the an - vil? What What

Pno.

47

S. What dread grasp Dare its dead - ly

A. What dread grasp Dare its dead - ly

T. dread grasp Dare its dead - ly dead - ly

B. dread grasp Dare its dead - ly dead - ly of thy

Pno.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the song 'Tyger! Tyger!'. It features five parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 43 to 46, and the second system covers measures 47 to 50. The lyrics are: 'was thy brain? What the an - vil?' for measures 43-46, and 'What dread grasp Dare its dead - ly' for measures 47-50. The Soprano and Alto parts have identical lyrics. The Tenor and Bass parts have slightly different lyrics, with the Bass part including 'of thy' at the end of the second line. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

Tyger! Tyger!

51

S. ter - rors clasp? Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

A. ter - rors clasp? Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

T. ter - rors clasp? Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

B. *unis.* ter - rors clasp? Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

Pno.

55 $\text{♩} = 80, \text{Slower}$

Solo When the stars threw down their spears, And

S. *p* Oh! stars threw down their spears, And

A. *p* Oh! stars threw down their spears, And

T. *p* Oh! stars threw down their spears, And

B. *p* Oh! stars threw down their spears, And

Pno. $\text{♩} = 80, \text{Slower}$ *p*

Tyger! Tyger!

59

Solo

wat - er'd heav - en with their tears, Did he smile his work to see? —

S.

wat - er'd heav - en with their tears, Did he smile his work — to —

A.

wat - er'd heav - en with their tears, Did he smile his work — to —

T.

wat - er'd heav - en with their tears, Did he smile his work — to —

B.

wat - er'd heav - en with their tears, Did he smile his work — to —

Pno.

63

Solo

— Did he who made the Lamb make thee? —

S.

see? — Did he who made the Lamb —

A.

see? — Oh!

T.

see? — Oh!

B.

see? — Oh!

Pno.

Tyger! Tyger!

♩ = 120, *With Urgency*

68

Solo

S. *p* *mf*
Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

A. *p* *mf*
Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

T. *p* *f*
Oh! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! burn - ing - bright In - the - for - ests of

B. *f*
Ty - ger! Ty - ger! burn - ing - bright In - the - for - ests of

Pno. *p* *mf* *f*

72

S. *f*
Ty - ger! — What im - mor - tal hand or

A. *f*
Ty - ger! — What im - mor - tal hand or

T. *f*
— the - night, What im - mor - tal hand or eye —

B. *f*
— the - night, What im - mor - tal hand or — eye —

Pno. *f*

Tyger! Tyger!

76

S. eye Dare frame thy fear

A. eye Dare frame thy fear

T. Dare frame thy fear - ful fear

B. Dare frame thy fear - ful fear

Pno.

80

S. ful sym - met - ry? Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

A. ful sym - met - ry?

T. ful sym met - ry?

B. ful sym met - ry?

Pno.

sfz *p*

Tyger! Tyger!

84

S. Ty - ger! —

A. —

T. *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger!

B. — *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

Pno. —

88

S. Ty - ger! — Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

A. *p* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — *f* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

T. Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — *f* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

B. Ty - ger! Ty - ger! Ty - ger! — *f* Ty - ger! Ty - ger! —

Pno. — *f* —