

ONTOLOGY

FOR THREE CHOIRS

ATBB

SATB

SSAT

CHRISTOPHER DUNN-RANKIN

TEXT FROM "THE BLACK RIDERS, AND OTHER LINES"

BY STEPHEN CRANE

Performance Notes:

Ontology is designed to be performed in a medium-to-large concert hall where the antiphonal nature of the music and the resultant sound of the choirs can be optimized. The choirs should be spaced along a wide arc, equidistant from each other, with the conductor approximately equidistant from each.

Notes with x noteheads are to be audibly aspirated. Passages in male voices notated in treble clef are to be sung in falsetto.

All extended pitches and breath sounds in the beginning and ending sections should be attacked and released via slow crescendo and decrescendo, allowing the sound to "move" from choir to choir.

on•to•lo•gy: noun: a branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.

Texts: from *The Black Riders and Other Lines* by Stephen Crane

II

Three little birds in a row
Sat musing.
A man passed near that place.
Then did the little birds nudge each other.

They said, "He thinks he can sing."
They threw back their heads to laugh.
With quaint countenances
They regarded him.
They were very curious,
Those three little birds in a row.

XVII

There were many who went in huddled procession,
They knew not whither;
But, at any rate, success or calamity
Would attend all in equality.

There was one who sought a new road.
He went into direful thickets,
And ultimately he died thus, alone;
But they said he had courage.

XVIII

In heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered, "Oh my Lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all His splendor,
Arose from His throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" He said.

Ontology

for the Oberlin College Choir,
Dr. Hugh Floyd, director

Stephen Crane

C. Dunn-Rankin

Calmato; poco rubato

mp

Alto 1
Tenor 1
Baritone 1
Bass
Soprano 1
Alto 2
Tenor 2
Baritone 2
Soprano 2
Soprano 3
Alto 3
Tenor 3

mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp
mp

H(ee) H(eh)
H(ee) H(eh)
H(ee) H(eh)
H(ee) H(eh)
H(eh)
H(eh)
H(eh)
H(eh)
H(aah)
H(aah)
H(aah)
H(aah)

8

A 1

T 1

B 1

B

S 1

A 2

T 2

B 2

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(aah)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

ih

ih

ih

p

p

p

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece titled 'Ontology'. It features 12 vocal parts, labeled A 1, T 1, B 1, B, S 1, A 2, T 2, B 2, S 2, S 3, A 3, and T 3. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked with a common time signature (C). The score includes vocal lines with lyrics 'H(aah)', 'H(oh)', and 'ih', and piano dynamics 'p'. The vocal lines are arranged in a vertical stack, with A 1 at the top and T 3 at the bottom. The lyrics are written below the notes, and the piano dynamics are written above the notes. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The lyrics 'H(aah)' appear in measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The lyrics 'H(oh)' appear in measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The lyrics 'ih' appear in measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The piano dynamics 'p' appear in measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

15

A 1 *mp* H(oo) ih

T 1 *mp* H(oo) ih

B 1 *mp* H(oo) ih

B *mp* H(oo) ih

S 1 *mp* eh eh

A 2 *mp* eh eh

T 2 *p* *mp* eh eh

B 2 *mp* eh eh

S 2 *p* H(oh) eh

S 3 *p* eh

A 3 *p* eh

T 3 *p* H(oh) eh

23

A 1 *mf* eh

T 1 *mf* eh

B 1 *mf* eh

B *mf* eh

S 1 *mf* ih

A 2 *mf* ih

T 2 *mf* ih

B 2 *mf* ih

S 2 *mp* ih *mf* In(nnn...)

S 3 *mp* ih *mf* In(nnn...)

A 3 *mp* ih *mf* In(nnn...)

T 3 *mp* ih *mf* In(nnn...)

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece titled 'Ontology'. It features 11 vocal parts, each on a separate staff. The parts are labeled A 1, T 1, B 1, B, S 1, A 2, T 2, B 2, S 2, S 3, A 3, and T 3. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). Lyrics are written below the staves, including 'eh', 'ih', and 'In(nnn...)'. The musical notation includes staves, notes, rests, and slurs. The score is numbered 6 at the top left and 23 at the top left of the first staff.

31

f *ff*

A 1 In Hea - - - - -

f *ff*

T 1 In(nnn...) Hea - - - - - ven, _____

f *ff*

B 1 In(nnn...) Hea - - - - - ven, _

f *ff*

B In(nnn...) Hea - - - - - ven, _

f *ff*

S 1 In(nnn...) _____ Hea - - - - -

f *ff*

A 2 In(nnn...) _____ Hea - - - - -

f *ff*

T 2 In(nnn...) _____ Hea - - - - -

f *ff*

B 2 In(nnn...) _____ Hea - - - - -

f *ff*

S 2 In(nnn...) _____ Heh... _____

f *ff*

S 3 In(nnn...) _____

f *ff*

A 3 In(nnn...) _____ Heh... _____

T 3 _____

36 *mf*

A 1 ven, _____ Some

T 1 *mf* Some

B 1 *mf*

B *mf*

S 1 *mf* ven, _____ Some

A 2 *mf* ven, _____

T 2 *mf* Some

B 2 *mf* Some

S 2 *mf* *f* Three _____ lit - tle birds in a row

S 3 *f* Three _____ lit - tle birds in a row

A 3 *mf* *f* Three lit - tle birds in a row

T 3

The musical score is for a piece titled "Ontology". It consists of 10 vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are labeled A 1, T 1, B 1, B, S 1, A 2, T 2, B 2, S 2, S 3, A 3, and T 3. The piano part is labeled B. The score is in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked with a quarter note. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The lyrics are: "ven, _____", "Some", "Three _____ lit - tle birds in a row", and "Three lit - tle birds in a row".

41

A 1 lit - tle blades of grass blades _____ of grass

T 1 lit - tle blades of grass

B 1 Some lit - tle blades _____ of grass

B Some lit - tle blades _____ of grass

S 1 lit - tle blades of grass Blades _____ of grass

A 2 Some lit - tle blades _____ of grass

T 2 lit - tle blades of grass

B 2 lit - tle blades of grass

S 2 Three lit-tle birds in a row

S 3 Three lit-tle birds in a

A 3 Three lit-tle birds in a

T 3 *f* Three lit-tle birds in a row

46

ff *mp* *fff* G.P.

A 1 stood be - fore God sat mu-sing. "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

T 1 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

B 1 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

B stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

S 1 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *mp* *fff* G.P.

A 2 stood be - fore God sat mu-sing "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

T 2 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

B 2 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

S 2 stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

ff *mp* *fff* G.P.

S 3 row stood be - fore God sat mu-sing. "What did you do?"

ff *mp* *fff* G.P.

A 3 row stood be - fore God sat mu-sing. "What did you do?"

ff *fff* G.P.

T 3 Stood be - fore God "What did you do?"

54 *mp*

A 1 Then all save one

T 1 *mp*
8 Then all save one

B 1 *mp*
Then all save one _____

B *mp*
Then all save one

S 1

A 2

T 2 *f*
8 A man, a man passed near that place.

B 2 *f*
A man, a man passed near that place.

S 2 *mp*
Then all save one _____

S 3 *mp*
Then all _____ save one _____

A 3 *mp*
Then all _____ save one _____

T 3 *mp*
8 Then all save one

mf 3 passed near that

f 3 passed near that place.

59

A 1 *f* be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

T 1 *f* be - gan, be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

B 1 *f* be - gan be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

B *f* be - gan be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

S 1 *mp* *f* be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

A 2 *mp* *f* be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

T 2 *mp* *f* be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

B 2 *mp* *f* be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

S 2 *f* be - gan be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

S 3 *mp* *f* place. be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

A 3 *f* be - gan be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

T 3 *f* be - gan be - gan ea - ger - ly to re - late the mer - its of their lives.

63

A 1 *p* A -

T 1 *p* Then did the lit-tle birds nudge nudge nudge nudge each o-ther. *p* A -

B 1 *p* A -

B *p* A -

S 1 *mp* This one stayed a small way be - hind, *p* A -

A 2 *mp* This one stayed a small way be - hind, *p* A -

T 2 *mp* This one stayed a small way be - hind, *p* A -

B 2 *p* This one stayed a small way be - hind, *p* A -

S 2 *p* Then did the lit-tle birds nudge nudge nudge nudge nudge each o-ther. *p* A -

S 3 *p* nudge nudge nudge nudge each o-ther *p* A -

A 3 *p* A -

T 3 *p* A -

68

f

A 1

shamed.

There were ma - ny ____ who went ____

f

T 1

shamed.

There were ma - ny ____ who went ____

f

B 1

shamed.

There were ma - ny ____ who went ____

f

B

shamed.

There were ma - ny ____ who went ____

mf

S 1

shamed.

M-n-m-n-m-n-m-n - m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n Ma - ny ____ m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n

mf

A 2

shamed.

M-n-m-n-m-n-m-n - m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n

mf

T 2

shamed.

M-n-m-n-m-n-m-n - m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n

mf

B 2

shamed.

M-n-m-n-m-n-m-n - m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n - - - m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n

S 2

shamed. ____

S 3

shamed ____

A 3

shamed. ____

T 3

shamed. ____

73

A 1

— in hud - dled pro - ces - sion, They knew not

T 1

8 — in hud - dled pro - ces - sion, They knew not

B 1

— in hud - dled pro - ces - sion, They knew not

B

— in hud - dled pro - ces - sion, They knew not

S 1

m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n Hud - dled pro - ces - sio - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

A 2

m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n Hud - dled pro - ces - sio - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

T 2

8 m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n Hud - dled pro - ces - sio - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

B 2

m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n Hud - dled pro - ces - sio - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

8

[illegible]

79

A 1
suc - cess ____ or ca - la - mi - ty ____ e - qua - li - ty ____

T 1
8
suc - cess ____ or ca - la - mi - ty ____ e - qua - li - ty ____

B 1
suc - cess ____ or ca - la - mi - ty ____ e - qua - li - ty ____

B
suc - cess ____ or ca - la - mi - ty ____ e - qua - li - ty ____

S 1
m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n ca-la-mi-ty ____ would at-tend all in e-qua-li-ty ____ *ff* There was one _

A 2
m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n ca-la-mi-ty ____ would at-tend all in e-qua-li-ty ____ *ff* There was one _

T 2
8
m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n ca-la-mi-ty ____ would at-tend all in e-qua-li-ty ____

B 2
m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n m-n-m-n-m-n ca-la-mi-ty ____ would at-tend all in e-qua-li-ty ____

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

84

A 1

T 1

B 1

B

S 1

A 2

T 2

B 2

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

mf

mf

N - m - n - m -

N - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

There was one who sought a new road.

There was one who sought a new road.

ff

There was one, There was one who sought a new road.

ff

There was one, There was one who sought a new road.

f

They said,

f

They said,

88 *mf*

A 1 N-m - n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m N-m-

T 1 *mf*
8 N-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m - n-m-n-m-n-m N-m-n-m - n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m

B 1 n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m N-m-n-m-n-m-n-m - n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m

B N-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m N-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m N-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m-n-m

S 1 He went in - to dire - ful thick - ets,

A 2 He went in - to dire - ful thick - ets,

T 2 *mf*
8 He went in - to dire - ful thick - ets,

B 2 He went in - to dire - ful thick - ets,

S 2 "He thinks he can sing!"

S 3 "He thinks he can sing!"

A 3 "He thinks he can sing!" With

T 3 *mf*
8 "He thinks he can sing!" With

91

A 1 n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

T 1 8 N - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

B 1 N - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

B N - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m N - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m - n - m

S 1 And ul-ti-mate-ly ____ he died thus,

A 2 And ul-ti-mate-ly ____ he died thus,

T 2 8 And ul-ti-mate-ly ____ he died thus,

B 2 And ul-ti-mate-ly ____ he died thus,

S 2 With quaint coun-te - nan-ces they re-gar-ded him. They

S 3 With quaint coun-te - nan-ces they re-gar-ded him. They

A 3 quaint coun-te-nan-ces they re-gar-ded him. They

T 3 8 quaint coun-te-nan-ces they re-gar-ded him. They

94

f But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

mp a - lone. They said

They said *ff*

He

f threw back their heads to laugh. But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f threw back their heads to laugh. But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f threw back their heads to laugh. But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

f threw back their heads to laugh. But they said he had cou - rage. _____ *mf* 3 Pre-sent-ly God said,

101

ff *mp*

A 1 "And what did you do?" The lit - tle blade an - swered,

ff *mp*

T 1 "And what did you do?" The lit - tle blade an - swered,

ff *mp*

B 1 "And what did you do?" They threw

ff *mp*

B "And what did you do?" They threw

ff

S 1 "And what did you do?"

ff

A 2 "And what did you do?"

ff (tutti) *ff*

T 2 8 thinks he can sing! "And what did you do?"

ff

B 2 "And what did you do?"

ff *mp*

S 2 "And what did you do?" The lit - tle blade an - swered,

ff *mp*

S 3 "And what did you do?" The lit - tle blade an - swered,

ff *mp*

A 3 "And what did you do?" The lit - tle blade an - swered,

ff

T 3 8 "And what did you do?"

107 *p*

A 1 *p*
Oo... —

T 1 *p*
Oo... —

B 1
back their heads to laugh.

B
back their heads to laugh.

S 1 *mf* (solo, plaintive)
"My Lord, me-mo-ry is bit - ter to me,

A 2

T 2

B 2

S 2 *mp*
They threw back their heads to

S 3 *mp*
They threw back their heads to

A 3 *mp*
"He thinks he can sing!"

T 3 *p*
They said, "He thinks he can sing!" Oo... —

[illegible]

117

A 1 *ff* *pp*
a - rose from his throne. "Oh best lit - tle blade of grass," he said.

T 1 *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

B 1 *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

B *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

S 1 (tutti) *ff* *pp*
a - rose from his throne. "Oh best lit - tle blade of grass," he said.

A 2 *ff*
a - rose from his throne.

T 2 *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

B 2 *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

S 2 *ff* *pp*
a - rose from his throne. "Oh best lit - tle blade of grass," he said.

S 3 *ff*
a - rose from his throne.

A 3 *ff*
a - rose from his throne.

T 3 *ff*
— in all his splen-dor, a - rose from his throne.

125

A 1

T 1

B 1

B

S 1

A 2

T 2

B 2

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

p With quaint coun - te - nan - ces they re -

p With quaint coun - te - nan - ces they re - gar - ded him.

p With quaint coun - te - nan - ces they re - gard - ed him.

p With quaint coun - te - nan - ces they re - gard - ed him.

127 *mp*

A 1 *mp*
H(ee) _____

T 1 *mp*
H(ee) _____

B 1 *mp*
H(ee) _____

B *mp*
H(ee) _____

S 1
gar-ded him. They were ve - ry cu-ri-ous Those three lit-tle birds ____ in a row.

A 2 *mp*
They were ve - ry cu-ri-ous Those three lit-tle birds ____ in a row. H(eh) _____

T 2
They were ve - ry cu-ri-ous Those three lit-tle birds ____ in a row.

B 2
They were ve - ry cu-ri-ous Those three lit-tle birds ____ in a row.

S 2 *mp*
H(aah) _____

S 3 *mp*
H(aah) _____

A 3 *mp*
H(aah) _____

T 3 *mp*
H(aah) _____

[illegible]

140

A 1

T 1

B 1

B

S 1

A 2

T 2

B 2

S 2

S 3

A 3

T 3

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)

H(oh)