PARADOXA
(1548/1998)
for SATB singers in multiples of four

Text: *The Enigma of Bologna* (supposedly ancient inscription on Bolognese tomb, first reported in 1548 by Marius L. Michael Angelus of Venice.)

Music: Joey Bargsten (1998)

Text:

I.
Ae-li-a | Lae-li-a | Cris-pis, (ne-que vir) | nec mu-li-er, nec an-dro-gy-na, nec pu-el-la, nec iu-ve-nis, nec a-nus, nec cas-ta, nec me-re-trix, nec pu-di-ca, sed om-ni-a.

II.
Sub-la-ta | ne-que fa-me, nec fer-ro, nec ve-ne-no, sed om-ni-bus. Nec coe-lo, nec a-quis, nec ter-ris, sed u-bi-que | ia-cet.

III.
Lu-ci-us | A-ga-tho | Pri-sci-us, nec ma-ri-tus, nec a-ma-tor, nec ne-ces-sa-ri-us, ne-que moe-rens, ne-que gau-dens, ne-que flens, hanc ne-que mo-lem, nec py-ra-mi-dem, nec sep-ul-chrum, sed om-ni-a.

IV.
Scit et ne-scit, (quid) cu-i po-su-er-it.
(Hoc est sep-ul-chrum, in-tus ca-da-ver non habens.
Hoc est ca-da-ver, sep-ul-chrum ex-tra non ha-bens.
Sed ca-da-ver i-dem est et sep-ul-chrum si-bi.)

V.
Ae-li-a | Lae-li-a | Cris-pis, (ne-que vir) | nec mu-li-er, nec an-dro-gy-na, nec pu-el-la, nec iu-ve-nis, nec a-nus, nec cas-ta, nec me-re-trix, nec pu-di-ca, sed om-ni-a.

Translation:

Aelia Laelia Crispis, neither man nor woman, nor androgyne, nor maiden, nor boy, nor crone, nor chaste, nor whore, nor virtuous, but all.

Carried away neither by hunger, nor by sword, nor by poison, but by all. Neither in heaven, nor in water, nor in earth, but everywhere is her resting place.

Lucius Agatho Priscius, neither husband, nor lover, nor kinsman, neither mourning, nor rejoicing, nor weeping, (raised up) neither mound, nor pyramid, nor tomb, but all.

He knows and knows not (what) he raised up to whom.

(This is a tomb that has no body in it. This is a body that has no tomb around it. But body and tomb are one).

Aelia Laelia etc.

Performance Notes

Multiples of four performers (each a quartet of SATB voices) are distributed around the periphery of the performance area. If space and acoustic permit, they should surround a performance area rather then address it from a stage.

Each singer is listening to the individual pre-recorded .mp3 file of his or her part via headphones and either sequential-mode .mp3 player, or portable CD player (with .mp3 file burned to a disc The conductor gives a signal when the groups should start the .mp3 players and also signals the end of the piece. Throughout the performance, the conductor's role is to regulate dynamic balance of the ensemble.

Reading the Score

The text is divided into five sections. In each section there are three to five pitches (I outsource the transcription of these pitches to performers, if they desire that additional notation). Following the instructions on the tape, sing the first pitch to the first syllable of each word, the second pitch to the second syllable, etc. The syllable count of each word determines its melodic contour.

As an example of this, in Section IV, the soprano would sing:

in - tus   ca - da - ver   non   ha - bens

The only exception to this rule is the last held note of the entire piece, on the "a" of "om-ni-a": all performers (in all antiphonal groups) hold the final pitch until given a signal from the conductor to stop.

On the .mp3 files, each text phrase (marked by commas or bars [||]) is first sung/played by the narrator, then repeated. The singers listen to the phrase the first time, then sing along with the phrase the second time.

If more than one quartet is performing, half the quartets should begin their .mp3 files when the first quartet begins singing "Aelia", creating an antiphonal effect. All quartets should end together.

The text should be sung in ecclesiastical Latin, rather than classical Latin. But don't get bent out of shape over how the Latin is pronounced - this we leave to the hardcore academics.

Duration of PARADOXA is 6:50

For an extensive analysis of the text, its symbols, and hidden meanings, one must read the chapter devoted to The Paradoxa in Carl Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (*Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. XIV).

--JB (v.98; rev.19.vi.07)