

About the Work

Dedicated to Alan Zabriskie and the Texas Tech University Choir, the work sets a small fragment of the poem *The Divine Pilgrim* by Conrad Aiken. The theme of love, both in the now and in the remembrances of long ago establish a sense of imagery that was part of the discussion about writing the work and the thematic idea of the concert on which it would premiere. I had used Aiken's poetry before and loved his use of imagery and musical metaphor. The fragment here takes on a life of its own apart from the larger poem and fits beautifully in what I was looking for in a text about the aspect of lost love and found love. The depths of emotion within a choir setting are explored throughout, with melody and harmonic color equally designed into the music. Contrapuntal and chordal settings are interspersed creating an everchanging sense of choral flow leading to the exclamation point on the last line. The work is set for unaccompanied SATB *divisi* choir.

Take My Hand

Take my hand, then, walk with me
By the white shadowy crashings of a sea
Down miles on miles of glistening mirrorlike sand,—
Take my hand
And walk with me once more by crumbling walls;
Up mouldering stairs where grey-stemmed ivy clings,
To hear forgotten bells, as evening falls,
Rippling above us invisibly their slowly widening rings. . . .
Take my hand: your face is one I know,
I loved you, long ago:
You are like music, long forgotten, suddenly come to mind;
You are like spring returned through snow.
Once, I know, I walked with you in starlight,
And many nights I slept and dreamed of you;
Come, let us climb once more these stairs of starlight,
This midnight stream of cloud-flung blue! . . .
Music murmurs beneath us like a sea,
And faints to a ghostly whisper . . . Come with me!

Conrad Aiken

From *House of Dust* (1916-17), Book III of *The Divine Pilgrim*

About the Composer

Originally from the San Francisco area and for twenty years in the Chicago area, Peter Fischer is currently Associate Professor of Music at Texas Tech University where he teaches composition, computer music, and theory. His works have been performed nationally and internationally. Recent choral and vocal works include

Twilight (SATB *divisi*)

Peace (SATB *divisi* and Piano)

I Would Live In Your Love (SATB minimal *divisi* and Piano)

Echo (SSATB/SSA/SSAA and Piano)

Strange Voices Sing Among the Planets (SSATB/SSA/SSAA and Piano)

Leave It Better (for Richard Bjella) (SATB *divisi*)

O Magnum Mysterium (SSATBB)

The Sea Is Calm Tonight (SATB *divisi* and Piano)

Let It Be Forgotten (SATB *divisi*)

Never Again (SATB *divisi*)

A chamber opera based on Gesualdo—*O D'Amarti O Morire*

(now being developed into a full-length opera)

Barcarole (a song cycle for mezzo soprano and piano)