

## About The Work

The Alchemist in the City is a single movement piece written for Baritone and mixed chamber ensemble. The piece sets the poetry of Gerard Manly Hopkins and depicts an alchemist who has reached the end of his life, and is lamenting the fact that he has failed to accomplish the two primary goals of alchemy; to turn metals into gold, and to create an elixir of immortality. He also reflects on the modernization of the city around him, where he sees that alchemy no longer has a place. With this realization, the Alchemist cannot decide whether to blame the city and modernization for turning him into this anachronism, or the pursuit of alchemy itself for leading him down a path destined for defeat. Despite being written in 1865, the themes found in The Alchemist in the City, such as failure, relevance in society, and the surpassing of old ideas, still resonate with readers today. It was for this reason that I was attracted to the poem and feel that it should have a life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The piece was performed in Griswold Hall and conducted by Alan Buxbaum.