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Communion Meditation on Psalm 139

John G. Barr

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Communion Meditation
on Psalm 139

“You Are Before Me Lord”

By John Barr

Organ

AMP-37

Azoro
MUSIC
PUBLISHING

Commissioned by Dr. Rudolf Zuiderveld for the inauguration of the Brombaugh organ (Op. 35)
at First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, IL and dedicated to Rudolf Zuiderveld and David Shane

Communion Meditation on Psalm 139 "You Are Before Me Lord"

Text included for illustration:
Ian Pitt-Watson, 1973, 1989

SURSUM CORDA; Alfred Morton Smith, 1941
Setting by John G. Barr (b. 1938)

①* Sw.

♩ ≈ 54

* See page 10 for registration suggestions.

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AMP-37

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The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some grace notes. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines.

You are be - fore me, Lord, you are be - hind,

Gt.

The second system features a vocal line on a single staff in treble clef, with lyrics "You are be - fore me, Lord, you are be - hind,". The vocal line is simple, using quarter and eighth notes. Below it is a piano accompaniment with two staves (treble and bass clefs) in the same key signature, providing a steady harmonic support.

And o - ver

Gt.

Sw.

The third system contains piano accompaniment for two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and features a melodic line with some chords and a fermata. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a steady accompaniment. The tempo marking "Sw." (Ad libitum) is present at the beginning of the system.

me you have spread out your hand;

Sw.

The fourth system features piano accompaniment for two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a fermata. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a steady accompaniment. A circled number "2" is written above the lower staff in the second measure, indicating a second ending. The tempo marking "Sw." (Ad libitum) is present at the end of the system.

Such know - ledge is
Gt.

Musical score for the first system. It consists of three staves: a grand piano (Gt.) staff with treble and bass clefs, and a separate bass clef staff. The music is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The guitar part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

too won - der - ful for me,

Sw.

Musical score for the second system. It consists of three staves: a grand piano (Gt.) staff with treble and bass clefs, and a separate bass clef staff. The music is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The guitar part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. A 'Sw.' (Swell) marking is present above the piano staff.

Too high to grasp, too great to un - der - stand.

Gt.

Musical score for the third system. It consists of three staves: a grand piano (Gt.) staff with treble and bass clefs, and a separate bass clef staff. The music is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The guitar part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Then from your spirit where, Lord, shall I go;

(Gt.)

Musical score for the fourth system. It consists of three staves: a grand piano (Gt.) staff with treble and bass clefs, and a separate bass clef staff. The music is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The guitar part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

And from your presence where, Lord, shall I fly?

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a whole rest followed by a series of eighth notes. The middle staff is in treble clef and contains a piano accompaniment of chords and moving lines. The bottom staff is in bass clef and provides a steady bass line.

If I ascend to heaven you are there,

The second system of music consists of three staves. The top staff continues the melodic line from the first system. The middle and bottom staves continue the piano accompaniment with various chordal textures and rhythmic patterns.

The third system of music consists of three staves. The top staff features a more active melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The middle and bottom staves continue the piano accompaniment, with the middle staff showing some chromatic movement.

The fourth system of music consists of three staves. Above the first staff, there is a tempo marking: $\text{♩} \approx 54$ Sw. The music continues with a piano accompaniment. A circled number '3' is placed above a measure in the middle staff, indicating a triplet. The system concludes with a final chord in the bottom staff.

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some grace notes. The middle staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, providing a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, containing a simple bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

The second system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the melodic line. The middle staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, featuring a guitar part indicated by the label "Gt." above the staff. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the bass line from the first system.

The third system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the melodic line. The middle staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the bass line.

The fourth system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the melodic line. The middle staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, continuing the bass line. Below the middle staff, the lyrics "And still are with me if in hell I lie." are written in a serif font.

Sw. ④ Gt.
If I should

take my flight in - to the dawn, If I should dwell on o - cean's

far - thest shore, Your migh - ty hand will rest up - on me still,

rall. Sw.
And your right hand will guard me ev - er - more.

$\text{♩} \approx 48$

⑤ +16' *mp*

If I should say "Let dark - ness cov - er me,

mf

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It includes a rehearsal mark ⑤ and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The bottom staff is the vocal line, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics "If I should say 'Let dark - ness cov - er me," are written below the vocal staff. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the vocal staff.

And I shall hide within the veil of night," Surely the darkness is not dark to you;

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The piano accompaniment continues in the top staff, and the vocal line continues in the bottom staff. The lyrics "And I shall hide within the veil of night," Surely the darkness is not dark to you;" are written below the vocal staff.

The night is as the day the dark - ness light.

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The piano accompaniment continues in the top staff, and the vocal line continues in the bottom staff. The lyrics "The night is as the day the dark - ness light." are written below the vocal staff.

$\text{♩} \approx 56$

-16' ⑥ *p*

Detailed description: This system contains the final two staves of music. The piano accompaniment continues in the top staff, and the vocal line continues in the bottom staff. A rehearsal mark ⑥ and a dynamic marking of *p* are present. The tempo marking $\text{♩} \approx 56$ is at the beginning. The system ends with a double bar line.

mp Search me, O God, search me and know my heart;

Gt.

This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the guitar accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are written below the guitar staff.

(Gt.)
Try me, O God, my

This system contains the next two staves of music. The top staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the guitar accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the guitar staff.

mind and spi - rit try;

This system contains the next two staves of music. The top staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the guitar accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the guitar staff.

Keep me from an - y path that gives you pain,

This system contains the final two staves of music on the page. The top staff is the piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the guitar accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the guitar staff.

rall.

And lead me in the ev - er -

last - ing way.

rit.

Suggested Registration and Piston Configuration Piston changes are indicated in circles: ①

Gen. 1 Great: Principal 8'
 Swell: Viole de Gambe 8', Viole Celeste
 Pedal: Gedacktbass 16', Bass Flute 8'

Gen. 5 Swell: Bourdon 8', Prestant 4',
 Basson-Hautbois 16'
 Pedal: Subbass 16', Octave 8', Choralbass 4',
 Basson 16'

Gen. 2 Great: Principal 8', Super Octave 2'
 Swell: Bourdon 8', Flute a bec 2'
 Pedal: Gen. 1 + Flute 4'

Gen. 6 Great: Principal 8', Octave 4'
 Swell: Viole de Gambe 8', Voile Celeste 8',
 Bourdon 8', Flute Harmonique 4'

Gen. 3 Great: Gen. 2 + Octave 4'
 Swell: Gen. 2 + Prestant 4'
 Pedal: same as Gen. 2

 Pedal: Subbass 16', Gedacktbass 16',
 Bass Flute 8'

Gen. 4 Great: Rohrflote 8', Gt->Gt 4'
 Swell: Bourdon 8', Flute Harmonique 4'
 Pedal: Same as Gen. 3

If a given organ has separate Swell, Great, and Pedal pistons, the registration given for generals 4 and 5 could be registered on divisional pistons, allowing the use of four generals rather than six.

John Barr



JOHN BARR was born in Myrtle Point, Oregon in 1938. After taking piano lessons since the age of six, he began organ and composition study in college. He graduated in 1960 from Manchester College in northern Indiana, receiving a B.S. in Music Education. He received master's and doctor's degrees in sacred music from the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where his teachers included Donald Coats and Robert S. Baker for organ and Joseph Goodman for composition.

Dr. Barr was music teacher at Hillcrest School for Missionary Children in Jos, Nigeria, 1962-65; Organist/Choir Director at University Presbyterian Church, Madison, WI, 1965-68; and Professor of Organ and Piano at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA, 1968-2003 retiring as Professor Emeritus. Most of this time he has also been organist at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, a position in which he continues to serve.

He has given a number of organ recitals, mainly in Virginia, and has numerous organ preludes published by publishers including Warner Bros., H.W. Gray, and Wayne Leupold Editions. He and his wife, Ann Lootsma, have two grown children, one son-in-law, and one grandson.

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