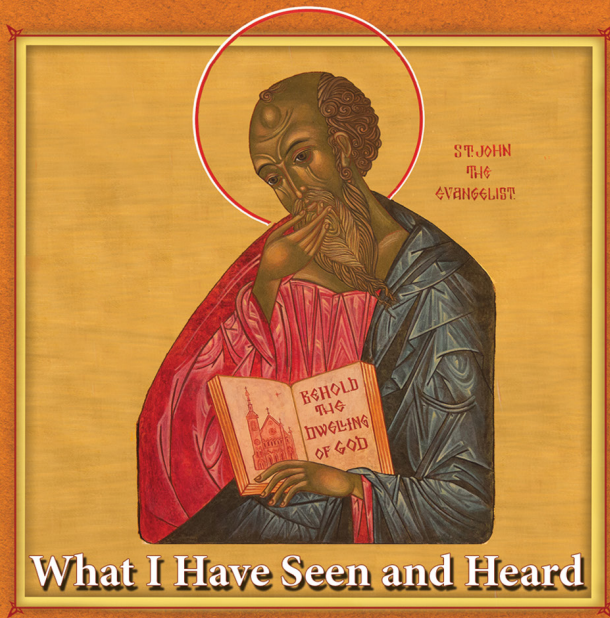


Sebastián Modarelli



VocalEssence Ensemble Singers - Philip Brunelle, conductor

WHAT I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD

for choir a cappella

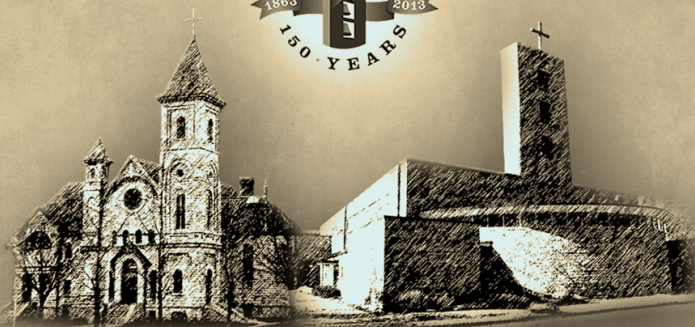
by Sebastián Modarelli (b. 1972)

Commissioned by
The Church of St. John the Evangelist,
Rochester, Minnesota,
on the occasion of the 150th anniversary
of its foundation (1863-2013)

World Premiere by the
VocalEssence Ensemble Singers
On November 9, 2013
Philip Brunelle, conductor

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*Icon on front cover by Sister Clairvaux McFarland
(Church of St. John the Evangelist)*



The Church of
St. John the Evangelist
(1863 - 2013)

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VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

At the heart of choral music in the United States, Minnesota has a long-standing tradition of developing, nurturing and promoting this beloved music genre. So it is no surprise that Minnesota is home to one of the true international gems in choral music — the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers. This 32-voice professional chorus, directed by VocalEssence founder Philip Brunelle and associate conductor Sigrid Johnson, is a national treasure that has been enjoyed by millions in Minnesota, around the country, and indeed, around the world.

for their “superbly blended sound” (Birmingham Post, UK) and “exemplary technique” (Minneapolis Star Tribune) and lauded by the Times of London as “polished, bright and brilliantly balanced.” The Ensemble Singers were declared by the Oxford Times (UK) to “have a blend that could — and should — be the envy of every choir in the business.”



Philip Brunelle
conductor

Philip Brunelle, artistic director and founder of VocalEssence, is an internationally renowned conductor, choral scholar and visionary. He has made his lifelong mission the promotion of the choral art in all its forms, especially rarely heard works of the past and worthwhile new music. Under his leadership, VocalEssence has commissioned more than 175 works to date. Philip has conducted symphonies (New York Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and Minnesota Orchestra among others) as well as choral festivals and operas on six continents. He is editor of two choral series for Boosey & Hawkes and chairman of the review committee for Walton Music.

Philip holds five honorary doctorates and has been recognized for his commitment to choral music by Norway (Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit), the United Kingdom (Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire), Hungary (Kodály Medal), Sweden (Royal Order of the Polar Star) and Mexico (Ohtli Recognition Award).



Sebastián Modarelli
composer

Sebastián Modarelli studied at the National Conservatory of Music in his native Buenos Aires, Argentina, earning his degree as salutatorian of his class. After being awarded the First Prize in the triennial Composers' Contest of the National Academy of Arts in Argentina, he was offered a scholarship from the Argentinean Mozarteum and a second one from the Italian government to study and compose at the conservatory "Giuseppe Verdi" in Milan. Besides earning an additional degree in Composition, Europe gave him the opportunity to participate in seminars and master classes with renowned composers from all over the world.

As an organist, he held the position of Organist and Music Professor at the Seminary of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, guided by then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (now Pope Francis). He also founded and conducted Scholae Canctorum and choirs in both Buenos Aires and Milan.

In 2005 Modarelli moved to Rochester, Minnesota after being offered the position of Music Director and Organist at St. John the Evangelist Church. His music has been performed and broadcast in different countries, including on MPR in the United States. Some of his noteworthy latest premieres include *Born in Buenos Aires* (for orchestra), *Variations on Picardy* (for oboe and organ), *Duet for Cello and Organ* (premiered by the Svyati Duo, UK), and *What I Have Seen and Heard* (for choir a cappella), premiered by the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, under the direction of Philip Brunelle.

1	In principio (<i>In the beginning</i>).....	[6'09]
2	John and Andrew.....	[2'21]
3	Nicodemus.....	[4'51]
4	The Samaritan Woman.....	[4'12]
5	The Bread of Life.....	[4'23]
6	A Woman Caught in Adultery.....	[4'23]
7	The Man Born Blind.....	[3'50]
8	The Good Shepherd.....	[3'21]
9	Judas	[2'52]
10	The High Priestly Prayer.....	[5'42]
11	The Accusers	[4'14]
12	Mary and John	[2'16]
13	Et resurrexit (<i>and He rose again</i>)	[7'36]

1 In principio (*In the beginning*)

The first words of the Genesis resound at the beginning of St. John's Gospel. The music tries to reproduce the image of this first instant in which, from nothingness, Being gives life to all creation. This introduction goes also through the rejection of mankind to this Light, to finish in the resounding fact of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, which the choir proclaims in the final fortissimo.

In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum.
Hoc erat in principio apud Deum.
Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est.
In ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum:
Et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt.

Erat lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.
In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognovit.
In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt.
Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his qui credunt in nomine eius.
Qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri,

sed ex Deo nati sunt.

Et Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis: et vidimus gloriam eius, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis.

~John 1:1-5, 9-14

Translation (NABRE):

In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came to be through him,
And without him nothing came to be.
What came to be
Through him was life,
And this life was the light of the human race;
The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness has not overcome it.
The true light, which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.
He was in the world,
And the world came to be through him,
But the world did not know him.
He came to what was his own,
But his own people did not accept him.
But to those who did accept him he gave
power to become children of God, to those
who believe in his name,
Who were born not by natural generation nor

by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.

And the Word became flesh
And made his dwelling among us,
And we saw his glory,
The glory as of the Father's only Son,
Full of grace and truth.

2 John and Andrew

The casual encounter with this man, Jesus, awakens curiosity and enthusiasm in the first two disciples. The instability in the time signatures reflects the fervent restlessness they feel, so much that they started to follow him.

[The next day] John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" [which translated means Teacher], "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

[Sections between brackets were omitted in the score]

~John 1:35-39

3 Nicodemus

Nicodemus, the Pharisee who secretly admired Jesus, goes at night to see him, and he struggles to understand how an old man could be born again. The music reflects the fact that we don't know where the Spirit comes from, but we cannot deny the signs of his presence, that is what Nicodemus did see.

(Wind...blows...comes...goes...)

The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

Numquam sic locutus est homo, sicut hic homo.
(Translation: *Never before has anyone spoken like this one.*)

~John 3:8, 12; 7:46b

4 The Samaritan Woman

Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well, where she was looking for water. Jesus sees a deeper thirst in her, unquenched by any of the husbands she had had. Her thirst resonates with the incomparable thirst of Jesus

to give her the only water that can satisfy. The persistent lines and dense harmony carry their intense dialog, that ends up with Jesus staying in her town for two days, where many more come to believe.

"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

"We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

"I have food to eat of which you do not know. My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work."

~John 4:10, 12, 32, 34, 42

5 The Bread of Life

*A*fter having miraculously fed more than five thousand people, Jesus is moved again by the thirst for the Infinite that his followers have, and earnestly tells them that

only His own flesh and blood will satiate their hunger for eternal life. The episode ends up badly, as they couldn't understand how a man that they knew since youth could make such a statement. Jesus challenges also his apostles, and Peter reaffirms their faith in Him.

"Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life."

"What sign can you do, that we may see and believe?"

"Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven (I am the bread of life)."

"Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother?"

"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day."

"Do you also want to leave?"

"Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God (and you have words of eternal life)."

~John 6:26-27a, 30a, 32, 42a, 47, 51a, 54, 67-69

6 A Woman Caught in Adultery

The piece describes the entire story, so there is no need to describe it here. I wrote it on a day in which my sin was particularly weighing on me. It is a miracle to write a four-minute melody from bottom to top, without getting tired of it, as it is a miracle that Someone is able to forgive your sins, and never gets tired of you.

(Stone her...)

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. So what do you say?"

Jesus bent down and began to write on

the ground with his finger. But when they continued to ask him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

(No one...)

Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more."

~John 8:3-5, 6b-11

7 The Man Born Blind

For some of the Pharisees, the attachment to their ideas becomes more important than the fact that Jesus healed a man who was born blind. Their stubbornness is well expressed in the obstinate rhythmic patterns. At the same time, the healed man has only one thing to say: "One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see".

This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.

"If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see."

How can a sinful man do such signs? Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner. We do not know where this one is from.

Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see? (he's a sinner... we are not blind, surely...)

You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from. You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?

Surely we are not also blind, are we?

~ John 9:16, 19, 24b, 25, 28b-29, 34a, 40b

8 The Good Shepherd

This polyphonic movement expresses the tenderness with which Jesus seeks us, so that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the

gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; I will lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it up again.

John 10:7b-11, 14-17

9 Judas

The diabolic turn in Judas' soul tears up Jesus' heart during his last supper. This passacaglia carries the drama from the moment in which Judas consents to Satan's will until he leaves the room to complete his betrayal.

(After the morsel, Satan entered him...)

Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him. Jesus was deeply troubled, "one of you will betray me."

"What you are going to do, do quickly."
So he took the morsel and left at once.
It was night.

The devil, a liar, the father of lies...

~ John 13:21, 27, 30; 8:44

10 The High Priestly Prayer

Bart Seebach, *tenor solo*

This long chant might be our closest experience of how these words actually came out from Jesus' mouth. Entirely sung in Aramaic, which was Jesus' native language, this prayer reflects the offering of himself that Jesus makes to the Father before his Passion.

(sung in Aramaic)

Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are. When I was with them I protected them in your name that you gave me, and I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of destruction, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you. I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely. I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them

from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.

I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.

~ John 17:1b-26

11 The Accusers

The frenetic action that takes place to capture and condemn Jesus, testifies to the irrationality with which the accusers look for Jesus' death.

After Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him.

Judas got a band of soldiers, Judas got a band of guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." He said to them, "I AM," and they turned away and fell to the ground.

Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head.

They cried out, "Crucify him! Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!"

When the priests and guards saw him they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him! Take him away, take him away!" Priests and people, guards and soldiers, kings and teachers laughed at him.*

"Take him away, take him away!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?"

~ John 13:27; 18:3-5a, 6b; 19:1-2a, 6, 15a

* Not in the original text.

12 Mary and John

Even upon the cross, Jesus receives from the Father the faithful and tender care for his mother Mary and John the apostle, who is staying with her at the feet of the cross.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

~ John 19:26-27

13 Et resurrexit (and He rose again)

The scientific discoveries made in the Shroud of Turin (the linen that covered Jesus' body in his tomb) suggest that a very strong light came from Jesus' resurrected body so that it impressed his image on that cloth. In a similar but different way to how the first piece (creation) started, this last piece starts not from darkness but from light, with the voices of

women first, as also women were the first to see Jesus risen. The final "Yes, I love you" of Peter to Jesus closes this Gospel book as a proof of Jesus' power to free us from sin. It ends with the last words of the Bible: "Come, Lord Jesus."

Simon Petrus videt linteamina posita et sudarium, quod fuerat super caput eius, non cum linteaminiibus positum, sed separatim involutum in unum locum. Maria stabat ad monumentum foris plorans. Dum ergo fleret, inclinavit se in monumentum et videt duos angelos in albis sedentes.

Alleluia, alleluia. Mulier, quid ploras? Alleluia, alleluia. Quia vidimus Dominum. *

Currebant autem duo simul, et ille alius discipulus praecurrit citius Petro.

Dicit ei Iesus: "Maria!". Conversa illa dicit ei: "Rabbuni!"

Dicit ei Iesus: "Iam noli me tenere, nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem."

"Ascendo ad Patrem meum et Patrem vestrum, et Deum meum et Deum vestrum."

Venit Iesus et stetit in medio et dicit eis: "Pax vobis!" Gavisi sunt ergo discipuli,

viso Domino.

Alleluia, alleluia. "Simon Ioannis, amas me?"

"Domine, tu omnia scis, tu cognoscis quia amo te." Veni, Domine Iesu! Amen.

~John 20:4, 6b-7, 11-12a, 16a, 17, 19b, 20b; 21:17a;

Revelation 22:20

* *Not in the original text.*

Translation (NABRE):

Simon Peter saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there.

Alleluia, alleluia. Woman, why are you weeping? (Alleluia, alleluia.) Because we have seen the Lord.

They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter.

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him, "Rabbouni!" which means Teacher.

Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father."

"I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia. "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

Recording Engineer: Cameron Wiley

The commentaries for each piece have been written by Sebastián Modarelli.

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