

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

by Kevin McChesney

PERFORMANCE NOTES

I've found meaningful and life-changing inspiration in my spiritual walk through the simple and elegant writings of St. Francis of Assisi (1181 or 1182 – 1226). This friar and patron saint found a deep, lasting connection to God through living a life of simplicity and service. He exemplifies the highest ideals of joy in life and fitness for service through prayer, meditation, and an intelligent, rational view of life as the spiritual experience that it is intended to be. His principles are ideas and methods to live by and offer hope through finding a simple, powerful connection with God in our daily living.

In the "St. Francis Suite," I offer a series of scenes that reflect my emotions in responding to this astonishing spiritual mentor's extraordinary words. Just as the music can be related to not one but several of St. Francis' prayers, there are a number of possibilities for performance of this work through several versions:

Handbell Choir alone
Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra
Handbell Choir and Flute Choir
Classical Guitar, Handbell Ensemble, and Chamber Orchestra

Here is the list of original works that, in various configurations, make up the St. Francis Suite in its several incarnations:

Fountains of Light
Interlude #1 ("Interlude" for full handbell choir versions)
Interlude #2 (only included in the guitar and handbell ensemble version)
Make Me An Instrument Of Thy Peace
Psalm
Sonnet
Tempest
Toccata #1
Toccata #2
Toccata #3

The most meaningful of St. Francis' prayers for me personally is widely-known and is titled simply "Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi." It reads (the line numbers are my addition to facilitate these performance notes, connecting line numbers to individual pieces on the following page):

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

- (1) Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
- (2) where there is hatred, let me sow love;
- (3) where there is injury, pardon;
- (4) where there is doubt, faith;
- (5) where there is despair, hope;
- (6) where there is darkness, light;
- (7) where there is sadness, joy.
- (8) O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
- (9) to be understood, as to understand;
- (10) to be loved, as to love.
- (11) For it is in giving that we receive,
- (12) it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
- (13) and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

These lines are sometimes added after line (3) -

- (3a) where there is discord, harmony;
- (3b) where there is error, truth;

The essential structure of the St. Francis Suite is six movements long, representing lines 2 through 7 of this prayer, but I offer options for extended presentations, adding line (1) and/or lines (3a) and (3b). The tone of each movement is expressive of my thoughts and feelings concerning these lines, and often the juxtaposition of the words (hatred/love, injury/pardon, etc.) are also represented by contrasts in the music.

The selections of the movements in this version of the Suite are detailed on the following page.

Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra:

Chamber Orchestra Instrumentation –

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin I

Viola

Oboe

Bassoon

Violin II

Cello

(2) **Toccata #1** – Handbell Choir (Jeffers Handbell Supply JHS9352); Orchestra Score and Parts (Sonology Music SM14-04)

(3) **Interlude** – Handbell Choir (Sonology Music SM14-01); Orchestra Score and Parts (Sonology Music SM14-05)

(4) **Toccata #2** – Handbell Choir (Jeffers Handbell Supply JHS9408); Orchestra Score and Parts (Sonology Music SM14-06)

Changes to bell part:

play beat one of m. 63 (treble ring as dotted half note, lower treble and bass mallet), tacet (do not play) the rest of m. 63 through m. 74

play beat one of m. 85 (treble ring as dotted half note, bass mallet), tacet the rest of m. 85 through m. 96

m. 97 - bass mallets as written, omit C5 and treble chords beat one

(5) **Sonnet** – Handbell Choir (Sonology Music SM14-02); Orchestra Score and Parts (Sonology Music SM14-07)

Change to bell part:

do not play (tacet) m. 50-52

(6) **Fountains of Light** (originally titled "Fountains") – Handbell Choir (Ringling Word Publications MRW8193) or Handbell Quartet/Ensemble (STEP (The Solo To Ensemble Project) STEP14-08); optional solo flute part is part of the download from STEP or is available as MRW8193F.

(7) **Toccata #3** – Handbell Choir (Sonology Music SM14-03); Orchestra Score and Parts (Sonology Music SM14-08)

Change to bell part:

play first beat of m. 54 (A major chord) as a rung dotted quarter note, tacet for the rest of m. 54 and for m. 55-60

Additions for extended version:

(1) **Make Me An Instrument Of Thy Peace** – 3-5 octaves, Level II+ – Handbell Choir (Jeffers Handbell Supply JHS9296); use optional parts for two C instruments [flute/oboe, flute/violin, etc.] (JHS9296B). Other instrumental parts are available for brass and/or keyboard; these options may also be used, though these instruments are not used in any of the rest of the Suite.

(3a) **Tempest** – 4-7 octaves, Level VI – Handbell Choir (Jeffers Handbell Supply JHS9257); orchestra tacet

(3b) **Psalm** – 4-7 octaves, Level VI – Handbell Choir (Jeffers Handbell Supply JHS9332); comes with optional solo flute or violin part

Following are two more texts that the St. Francis Suite may be based on. I've listed the titles that match the texts' individual lines after each line.

The Canticle of the Sun

by Francis of Assisi

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. (Toccata #1)

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful. (Interlude #1)

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance. (Tempest)

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure. (Fountains of Light)

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong. (Toccata #2)

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs. (Sonnet)

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned. (Psalm or Interlude #2)

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them. (Toccata #3)

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.

Prayer Before the Crucifix

"Most High, Glorious God, (Toccatà #1)
enlighten the darkness of my mind, (Interlude #1)
give me right faith, (Toccatà #2)
a firm hope and perfect charity, (Sonnet)
sense and knowledge (Fountains of Light)
so that I may always and in all things act according to Your Holy Will. Amen. (Toccatà #3)

alternate wording –

Most High, Glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart,
and give me correct faith,
sure hope and perfect charity,
with understanding and knowledge, Lord,
so that I may fulfill your holy and true command,
Amen.

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

The score is written for a chamber orchestra and a handbell choir. It consists of nine staves. The top four staves are for woodwinds: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Bassoon. The fifth staff is for Handbells, with separate parts for the left hand (LV) and right hand (RV). The bottom four staves are for strings: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 88. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is marked with a large 'PREVIEW' watermark.

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4

Fl. *mf* *ff*

Ob. *mf* *ff*

Cl. *mf* *ff*

Bsn. *mf* *ff*

Hb. R *mf* *ff* LV LV

Vln. I *mf* *ff*

Vln. II *mf* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *ff*

7

Fl. *dim.*

Ob. *dim.* *f*

Cl. *dim.* *mf*

Bsn. *dim.* *mf*

Hb. R LV *dim.* R *mp* LV *mf*

Vln. I *dim.* *f* *mf*

Vln. II *dim.* *f* *mf*

Vla. *dim.* *f* *mf*

Vc. *dim.* *f* *mf*

11

Hb.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. pizz. arco pizz.

14

Hb. *ff*

Mallets or PL R

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. arco *ff*

17

Fl. *mf* *ff*

Ob. *mf* *ff*

Cl. *mf* *ff*

Bsn. *mf* *ff*

Hb. *mf* *ff*

Vln. I *mf* *ff*

Vln. II *mf* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *ff*

20

Hb. *dim.*

23

Hb.

mf

26

Hb.

mp

R

LV

ff LV LV LV LV

Vln. I

mp

ff

Vln. II

mp

ff

Vla.

mp

ff

Vc.

mp

ff

*5, 6, and 7 octave choirs double top note an octave higher in bracketed sections m.27-30.

29

Fl. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Ob. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Bsn. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Hb. *mf* *ff* *mf*
R LV LV LV LV R

Vln. I *mf* *ff* *mf*

Vln. II *mf* *ff* *mf*

Vla. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *ff* *mf*

32

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *ff*

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *ff*

Hb. *ff* LV LV R

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

35

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hb. LV R

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mp LV

mf

dim.

f

mf

dim.

f

mf

dim.

f

mf

dim.

f

mf

38

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hb.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

41

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *ff*

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *ff*

Hb. *ff*

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

44

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hb.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

47

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hb.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

50

Fl. *fff* *mf*

Ob. *fff* *mf*

Cl. *fff* *mf*

Bsn. *fff* *mf*

Hb. *fff* LV LV LV LV R *mf*

Vln. I *fff* *mf*

Vln. II *fff* *mf*

Vla. *fff* *mf*

Vc. *fff* *mf*

52

Fl. *fff* *mf*

Ob. *fff* *mf*

Cl. *fff* *mf*

Bsn. *fff* *mf*

Hb. *fff* LV LV LV LV R *mf*

Vln. I *fff* *mf*

Vln. II *fff* *mf*

Vla. *fff* *mf*

Vc. *fff* *mf*

54

Fl. *fff*

Ob. *fff*

Cl. *fff*

Bsn. *fff*

Hb. *fff* LV LV LV LV LV LV LV LV

Vln. I *fff*

Vln. II *fff*

Vla. *fff*

Vc. *fff*

56

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hb.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

rit.

R

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Flute

Kevin McChesney

$\text{♩} = 88$

6

18

31

39

44

48

53

56

mf *ff* *mf* *ff*

dim. (*f*) *mf*

ff *mf* *ff*

mf *ff* *mf* *ff*

mf *fff* *mf* *fff*

mf *fff*

rit.

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Oboe

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

The musical score for the Oboe part is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 88. The piece is in 4/4 time. The score consists of 60 measures, divided into systems of five measures each. Measure numbers 6, 18, 31, 39, 44, 48, 53, and 56 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (fff), with some passages marked 'dim.' (diminuendo) and 'rit.' (ritardando). There are several trills and slurs throughout the piece. A large watermark 'Return to Sonology Music' is overlaid diagonally across the score.

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for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Clarinet in B \flat

Kevin McChesney

$\text{♩} = 88$

1 *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

7 *dim.* *mf* **6**

17 *mf* *ff* *mf* **2** **4** **4**

30 *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* **4**

39 *ff*

44

48 *fff* *mf* *fff* *mf*

54 *fff* *rit.*

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Bassoon

Kevin McChesney

$\text{♩} = 88$

mf ff mf ff

7 dim. mf 6

17 mf ff mf

30 ff mf ff mf

39 ff

45 fff

51 mf fff mf fff

56 rit.

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for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Violin I

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

1
ff *mf* *ff* *mf*

5
ff *f* *mf*

11
ff

16
mf *ff*

26
mp *ff* *mf* *ff*

31
mf *ff* *dim.*

36
f *mf*

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40

44

47

50

52

54

56

ff

fff

mf

fff

mf

fff

rit.

The image shows a page of musical notation for Violin I, measures 40 through 56. The music is written on a single staff in treble clef. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo), *fff* (fortississimo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present at the end of measure 56. A large, semi-transparent watermark is overlaid diagonally across the page, reading 'rehearsal copy' and 'copyrighted material to be purchased from stologymusic.com'.

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Violin II

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

ff mf ff mf ff

6 dim. f mf

12 ff

17 mf ff

26 mp ff mf ff

31 mf ff dim. f

37 mf

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41

ff

45

48

fff

51

mf *fff* *mf*

54

fff

56

rit.

for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Viola

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

8 *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

15 *dim.* *f* *mf*

26 *ff* *mf* *ff*

33 *mp* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

40 *dim.* *f* *mf*

45 *ff*

50 *fff* *mf* *fff* *mf* *fff*

56 *rit.*

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for my wife, Tracy

ST. FRANCIS SUITE

I. Toccata #1

for 3-7 Octave Handbell Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Violoncello

Kevin McChesney

♩ = 88

The score is written for a cello in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 88 beats per minute. It consists of ten staves of music, with measure numbers 7, 14, 21, 31, 38, 46, and 54 marked at the beginning of their respective lines. The music features a variety of dynamics including *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *dim.*, *f*, *mf*, *arco*, *pizz.*, *mp*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *fff*, *mf*, *fff*, *mf*, and *rit.*. There are also performance instructions such as *arco*, *pizz.*, and *rit.*. The score includes several rests and dynamic hairpins. A large watermark 'Return to Sonology Music' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

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