

ISBJØRN!

Nicholas Fairbank



*for children's choir (SA), women's choir (SSAA),
mixed voice choir (SATB) and vocal quintet (SATTB),
piano and percussion*

with texts by Robert Service, Marcus Lund,
Barry Lopez and Nicholas Fairbank

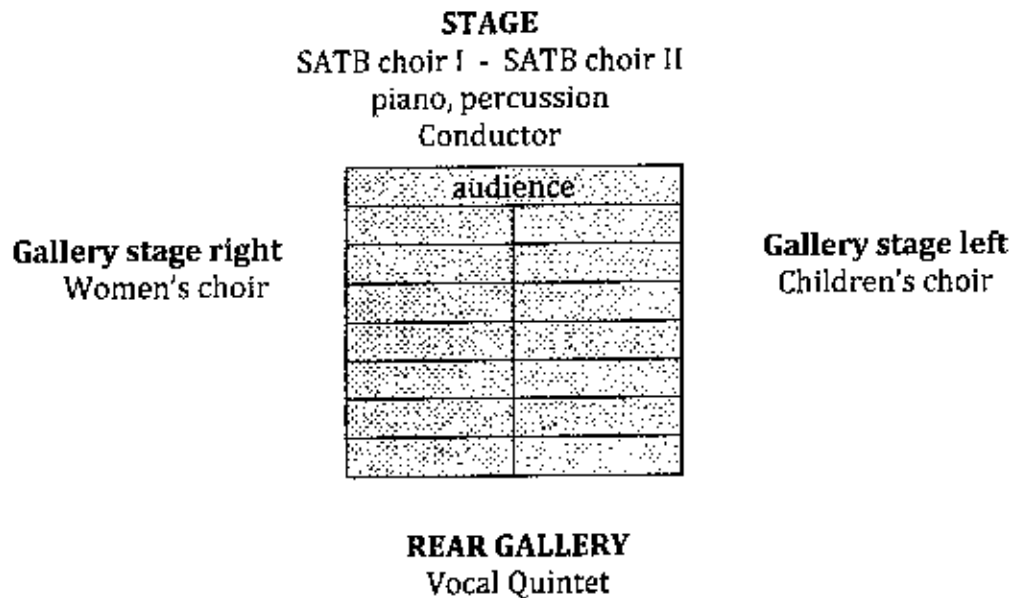
*Commissioned by Via Choralis Chamber Choir, January 2013
with assistance from the B.C. Arts Council*

Duration ca. 15 mins.

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***Isbjørn!* : Performance and programme notes**

Isbjørn! is intended to be performed in a large space, preferably with 1 or 2 seconds of reverberation. The five groups of singers should be grouped in the following way.



If galleries are not available then floor level will have to do, but all singers should be able to see the conductor easily, otherwise sub-conductors may have to be employed.

The five movements should follow one another without a pause, discouraging any applause until the entire piece is finished.

Isbjørn! was conceived during a trip to the High Arctic in the autumn of 2012 and was inspired by the northern landscapes and maritime settings. One was humbled by the grandeur of the land and the open sky, uncluttered by human habitation, and stilled by the almost complete and utter silence. For us on the expedition the polar bear became a mythical creature; we were aware of its existence, we spoke about it frequently, we saw footprints, but it was not until the last few days that we actually encountered one. With the drastic environmental changes resulting recently from global warming, the habitat of the polar bear is at risk, and the future of this magnificent animal is uncertain. *Isbjørn!* is intended, in its small way, as a means of raising awareness of the fragility of the Arctic and its inhabitants.

The first two performances of *Isbjørn!* are scheduled to take place in Victoria, BC. on November 10th and 15th, 2013, with the following performers: Ensemble Laude, Via Choralis chamber choir, Vox Humana chamber choir, Viva Youth Choirs, and Hexaphone, conducted by Nicholas Fairbank.

February 2013

1. Let Us Probe the Silent Places

Robert Service (1874-1958)

Nicholas R. Fairbank

Andante $\text{♩} = 60$
mp

Children
S
Laude
A
S
Vox H.
&
V.C.
T
B
SA
Hex
TTB
Percussion
Piano

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Children (Soprano), Laude (Soprano and Alto), and Vox H. & V.C. (Tenor and Bass). The second system includes Vox H. & V.C. (Soprano and Alto), V.C. (Tenor), and B (Bass). The third system includes Hex (Soprano and Alto) and TTB (Tenor, Alto, Bass). The fourth system includes Percussion and Piano. The score features vocal lines with rests and specific vocalizations: 'Sh' (Children), 'Ss' (Laude), 'Ss' (Vox H. & V.C. Soprano), and '* Whh' (V.C. Tenor). The piano part is mostly silent, with some notes in the bass clef. The percussion part uses suspended cymbal brushes, indicated by a 'p' dynamic and a wavy line with a brush icon.

* "Whh": make a slight whistling sound with lots of air passing through pursed lips.

1. Let Us Probe

Ch

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *mp* Let us probe the si-lent pla-ces, Let us

S

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *mp* si-lent pla-ces,

A

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *mp* *pp* Let us probe the si-lent pla-ces, Let us

T

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *mp* Let us probe the si-lent pla-ces, Let us

B

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *mp* Let us probe the si-lent pla-ces, Let us

Hex

8 *lunga* *mysteriously*

Whh *lunga* *pp* pla-ces,

Perc.

8 Ss *lunga* timpani sticks *mp*

3. Isbjørn

text: Nicholas Fairbank

Maestoso ♩ = 50

Children

ff Is-bjørn. *mf* *mp* *ff* Is-bjørn.

S

Laude

ff Is-bjørn. Is - bjørn. Is-bjørn. *ff* Is-bjørn.

A

S

ff Is-bjørn. *ff* Is-bjørn.

Vox A

&

mf

V.C. T

ff Is-bjørn. Is-bjørn. *ff* Is-bjørn.

B

SA

Hex

ff Is-bjørn. *mf* *ff* Is-bjørn.

TTB

Is-bjørn.

Susp. Cymbal

Bass Drum

ff *P* *ff*

Maestoso ♩ = 50

Piano

ff *ff*

3. Isbjørn

Andante ♩ = 72
mf

Ch
 Pow-er-ful-ly pads a-cross the ice flows, Si - lent-ly swims a-cross the fri - gid seas.

S
 Si - lent swim - mer, fri - gid seas.
mp

A
mp

Pno.
mf

Ch
 Pow-er-ful-ly pads a-cross the ice flows, Si - lent-ly swims a-cross the fri - gid seas.

S
 My - stic crea - ture... My - stic crea - ture...
mp

A
mp

T
 My - stic crea - ture... swims a-cross the fri - gid seas.

B
 My - stic crea - ture... My - stic crea - ture...
mp

Pno.
mp