

Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius  
SSATBB a cappella choir

Timothy C. Takach

\$1.00

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## Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius

for SSATBB a cappella choir

Commissioned by the 2009-2010 Cherry Creek High School Meistersingers (Denver, CO), Sarah Harrison, director



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## Text:

Nubes oriebatur.  
(Praecesserat per multos dies tremor terrae.)

Nubes oriebatur, cuius similitudinem et formam non alia  
magis arbor quam pinus expresserit.

Nam longissimo velut trunco elata in altum quibusdam ramis  
diffundebatur, credo quia recenti spiritu evecta.

Nubes atra et horrenda, ignei spiritus tortis vibratisque  
discursibus rupta, in longas flammaram figuras dehiscibat;  
fulguribus illae et similes et maiores erant.

Candida interdum, interdum sordida et maculosa  
prout terram cineremve sustulerat.

Nec multo post illa nubes descendere in terras, operire maria;  
Iam cinis, adhuc tamen rarus.

Mox dies verus; sol etiam effulsit.  
Occursabant trepidantibus adhuc oculis  
mutata omnia altoque cinere tamquam nive obducta.

- Pliny the Younger, *Letters to Tacitus*, 61-112 AD  
- Adapted by Timothy C. Takach.

*A cloud was ascending.  
(There had been noticed for many days before a trembling of the earth.)*

*A cloud was ascending, the appearance of which I cannot give you a more  
exact description than by likening it to that of a pine tree.*

*For it shot up to a great height in the form of a very tall trunk, which  
spread itself out at the top into branches of a sort; Because, I believe, it  
was occasioned by a sudden gust of air that impelled it.*

*A black and dreadful cloud, broken with rapid, zigzag flashes, revealed  
behind it variously shaped masses of flame:  
these last were like sheet-lightning, but much larger.*

*It was sometimes clear and bright and sometimes dark and spotted,  
according to whether it had picked up earth or cinders.*

*Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea;  
The ashes now began to fall upon us, though it was still sparse.*

*Soon the real day returned, and even the sun shone out. Every object that  
presented itself to our faltering eyes seemed changed, being covered deep  
with ashes as if with snow.*

- Translated by William Melmoth, with revisions by Anne Groton

# Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius

for SSATBB a cappella choir

Pliny the Younger

Timothy C. Takach (2009)

**Ominous**  $\text{♩} = 66$   
*f*

Soprano  
Nu-bes o-ri-e-ba-tur.

Alto  
*mf*  
Nu-bes o-ri-e-ba-tur, cu-ius si-mi-li-

Tenor  
*mf*  
Nu-bes o-ri-e-ba-tur, cu-ius si-mi-li-

Bass

*A cloud was ascending, the appearance of which I cannot give you a more exact description than by likening it to that of a pine tree.*

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6 *mf*

S ar - bor quam pi-nus

A tu - di-nem et for - mam non a - li - a ma - gis ar - bor quam pi-nus

T tu - di-nem et for - mam non a - li - a ma - gis ar - bor quam pi-nus  
*mp*

B (Prae - ces - se - rat per mul - tos di - es tre - mor ter - rae.)

*(There had been noticed for many days before a trembling of the earth.)*

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Nubes Oriebatur

10

S  
ex - pres-ser - it. Nam lon-gis - si - mo ve - lut trun - co

A  
ex - pres-ser - it.

T  
ex - pres-ser - it. Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur. Nu - bes o - ri - e -

B  
Nu - bes o - ri - e - ba - tur. Nu - bes o - ri - e -

*mp*

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*For it shot up to a great height in the form of a tall trunk,*

14

S  
e - la - ta al - qui - bus - ra - dif - fun -

S2  
e - la - ta tum qui - - - mis - de -

A  
e - la - ta in - - - dam - - - fun - - -

T  
ba - tur. Nam lon-gis-si - mo ve - lut trun - co e - la - ta in al - tum qui

B  
ba - tur. Nam lon-gis-si - mo ve - lut trun - co e - la - ta in al - tum qui

*f* *poco ritard* ♩ = 56-63

*f* *poco ritard*

*f* *poco ritard*

*p* *poco ritard*

*p* *poco ritard*

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*which spread itself out at the top into branches of a sort;*

Nubes Oriebatur

19 *mf*

S ba - cre - qui - a cen - spi - tu vec - ta.

S 2 - tur, do re - e - vec - ta.

A ti ri - vec - ta.

T bus-dam ra-mis dif-fun-de-ba-tur, cre-do qui-a re-cen-ti spi-ri-tu e-vec-ta.

B bus-dam ra-mis dif-fun-de-ba-tur, cre-do qui-a re-cen-ti spi-ri-tu e-vec-ta.

*Because, I believe, it was occasioned by a sudden gust of air that impelled it.*

**Agitated** ♩ = 104

25 *pp*

S Nu - bes a - tra

A Nu - bes a - tra

T Nu - bes a - tra

B (hushed, with intense diction) *p*

B *pp* Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da, ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi - bra - tis - que dis -

*A black and dreadful cloud, broken with zigzag flashes,*

30

B ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi - bra - tis - que dis - cur - si - bus

B cur - si - bus rup - ta, in lon -

Nubes Oriebatur

32 *mp*

T *mp* fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat; ful -

B *p* rup-ta, in lon-gas flam-ma-rum Nu-bes a - tra et hor-ren-da, ig-nei spi-ri-tus tor-tis vi -

B *mp* gas flam - ma - rum fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat; ful -

*revealed behind it variously shaped masses of flame: these last were like sheet-lightning, but much larger.*

36 *p* **Suspenseful, building tension**

S *p* Can-di - da in - ter - dum,

A *p* Can-di - da in - ter - dum,

*It was sometimes clear and bright and sometimes dark and spotted,*

T gu - ri - bus il - lae et sim - i - les et ma - - - io - res e - rant.

B *mf* bra-tis-que dis-cur-si - bus rup - ta, *p* in lon-gas flam-ma - rum fig - u-ras de-his-ce bat;

B gu - ri - bus il - lae et sim-i - les et ma - - - io - res e - rant.

40 *mp* *mf*

S *mp* Can di - da in ter dum, *mf* in - ter - dum sor - di - da et

A *mp* Can di - da in - ter - dum, *mf* in - ter - dum sor - di - da et

T *mf* se - rat tre - mor ter - rae.) *mf* flam - ma - rum

B *mf* *mp* (Prae - ces - se - rat ter - rae.) Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da, ig - nei spi - ri - tus tor - tis vi - bra

B *mp* (Prae - ces - se - rat tre - mor O (open 'o')

Nubes Oriebatur

46 **Fiery!**

*f*

S ma - cu - lo - sa prout - ter - ram cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at.

A ma - cu - lo - sa prout ter - ram cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Can  
*according to whether it had picked up earth or cinders.*

T *mf* O (open 'o') O Can *f*

B *mf* tis - que dis - cur - si - bus rup - ta, in lon - gas flam - ma - rum fig - u - ras de - his - ce - bat;

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50

S Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

A di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et ma - cu - lo - sa prout - ter - ram

T di - da in - ter - dum, in - ter - dum sor - di - da et ma - cu - lo - sa prout - ter - ram

B Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

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53

*ff*

S Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

A *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

T *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

B *ff* cin - er - em - ve sus - tu - ler - at. Nu - bes a - tra et hor - ren - da,

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Nubes Oriebatur

With stunning beauty

♩ = 56-63

*mf*

57

S il - la nu - bes o - pe - ri - re ma - ri - a;

S 2

A *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
Nec mul - to post pe - ri - re ma -

T *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
Nec mul - to post il - la nu - bes des - cen - de - re in ter - ras, ma - ri - a;

B *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
Nec mul - to post des - cen - de - re in ter - ras, ma -

B *mp*  
O O

Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea;  
The ashes now began to fall upon us, though it was still sparse.

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62

S *mf* *mp*  
Iam ci - nis, il - la nu - bes

S 2  
Iam ci - nis, ad - huc ta - men ra - rus.

A *mf* *mp*  
ri - a; ci - nis, il - la nu -

T *mf* *mp* *p*  
Iam ci - nis, il - la nu - bes

B *mf* *p*  
ri - a; il - la nu -

B *mf* *p*  
ma - ri - a; il - la



# Nubes Oriebatur

## The return of light / With new eyes

67 *f* *mf* ♩ = 72-80

S  
des - cen - de - re in - ter - ras, di - es ve - rus;

S2  
nu - bes - des - cen - de - re in - ter - ras, Mox di - es ve rus;

A  
bes des cen de re in ter ras, Mox di - es ve rus;

T  
des - cen - de - re

B  
bes des - cen - de - re

B  
des - cen - - - de - re

*mp* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

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Soon the real day returned,

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74 *f* *mp*

S  
sol

S2  
sol e - ti - am ef - ful - - sit.

A  
sol e - ti am ef - ful - - sit.

T  
Oc - cur - sa - bant tre - pi - dan - ti - bus ad -

B  
Oc - cur - sa - bant tre - pi - dan - ti - bus ad -

*f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

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and even the sun shone out. Every object that presented itself to our faltering eyes seemed changed,

Nubes Oriebatur

80

*f* *mp*

S mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que tam - quam

A mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que tam - quam

T huc o - cu - lis mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que ci - ne - re *mf*

B huc o - cu - lis mu - ta - ta om - ni - a al - to - que ci - ne - re *mf*

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86

*p*

S ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

A ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

T ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. *mp*

B ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ob - duc - ta. *p*

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*being covered with ashes as if with snow.*

92

*pp ritard*

S ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve

A ni - - - ve ni - - - ve ni - - - ve *pp ritard*

T ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ni - - - ve *pp ritard*

B ni - ve ob - duc - ta. ni - ve ni - - - ve *ritard pp*

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## Timothy C. Takach



Timothy C. Takach has received a number of commissions from various organizations including the St. Olaf Choir, Cantus, the Bowling Green State University Men's Chorus, The Singers: Minnesota Choral Artists, the Appleton North High School Varsity Men's Chorus, and the Western Michigan University Chorale. His compositions have been heard on NPR and have been recorded by various groups in North America. Takach graduated with honors from St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN in 2000 with a BA in Music Theory/Composition and a BA in Studio Art. While there he studied composition under Dr. Peter Hamlin and Dr. Timothy Mahr. He now lives in Minneapolis and sings with the professional male vocal ensemble, Cantus. As a singer with Cantus, Takach gives over 80 concerts a year and has had his works performed in concert halls across the United States, Canada, and Europe.

### Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius (2009)		SSATBB a cappella
Something There is Immortal (2008)		SSATBB a cappella
To Live Forever (2008)		SSATB a cappella
Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers (2008)		SSATBB a cappella
As the Sunflower Turns on Her God (2007)		SSAATBB div, Sop. solo, SSATB soli, a cappella
Titania's Lullaby (2006)		SATB a cappella
'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (2005) Huron Carol	(Graphite Publishing)	SATB a cappella
The Darkling Thrush (2004)	(earthsongs)	SATB, SAT soli, a cappella
A Sign of Day to Come (2003)	(Graphite Publishing)	SATB a cappella
She Moved Through the Fair (2002) Irish Ballad	(Neil A. Kjos Music Co.)	SATB a cappella
She Moved Through the Fair (2009) Irish Ballad		SSAA a cappella
Home on the Range (2007) American Folk Song	(Graphite Publishing)	2-part treble voices, piano
The Streets of Laredo (2007) American Folk Song	(Graphite Publishing)	Unison, TTB, piano
Queen of the Range (2006)	(Graphite Publishing)	SA choir, piano
Infervesco (2003)		SSAA a cappella
Serenade (2002)	(Graphite Publishing)	SSAA a cappella
Flight (2003)		Boomwhackers, optional SSAA, TTBB, or SATB choir
We Wish You a Merry Christmas (2008) Traditional Carol		TBB choir, djembe, bongos, triangle
All Natures, Even Mine (2008)		TTTBB a cappella
I Will Howl (2007)		TBB choir, piano or cello
And Her Smoke Rose Up Forever (2007)		TTTBB a cappella
Auld Lang Syne (2007) Scottish Folk Song		TTTBB a cappella
O Tannenbaum (2007) German Christmas Carol		TBB a cappella
Susani (2007) German Christmas Carol		TBB a cappella
The World Before Me (2006)		TTBB, tenor soli, a cappella
I Can Transform (2006)		TTTTTBBB, tenor solo, 8 percussionists
'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (2006) Huron Carol		TTBB a cappella
Salvation is Created (2006) Pavel Chesnokov		TTBB, TTBB soli, a cappella
O Captain! My Captain! (2006)		TTTBB a cappella
The Highwayman (2004)		TTBB a cappella
What I Have Done (2003) Amazing Grace/House of the Rising Sun		TTTTBBB a cappella
We Three Kings (2002) John H. Hopkins		TTBB a cappella
Things I Didn't Know I Loved (2001)	(Graphite Publishing)	TTBB a cappella
What Child is This (2000) Traditional	(Neil A. Kjos Music Co.)	TTBB a cappella
She Moved Through the Fair (1998) Irish Ballad	(Neil A. Kjos Music Co.)	TBB a cappella
Veni Creator Spiritus (1998)	(Graphite Publishing)	TTBB a cappella