

How god comes to the soul

for SSAATTBB chorus and SA soli

PERUSAL ONLY

Jens Ibsen

Performance Notes: I have been continuously inspired by the works of female medieval mystics. While most people only know Hildegard von Bingen, Mechthild von Magdeburg was a remarkably gifted writer of ecstatic poetry and prose in her own right, and was the first medieval mystic to write in the vernacular German. This particular excerpt I have set hails from her book *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. It is full of everything from discourse on proper Christian worship, to prosaic conversations between the author and God, and lines of poetic verse. As in other mystic poetic traditions, like that of the Sufis, there is always a sense of duality to these texts. Taken out of context, they can be interpreted as ecstatic love poetry to a distant lover, but upon closer inspection one sees the texts' deeply spiritual nature. That said, some excerpts could even be read as highly erotic, which is not uncharacteristic for the genre. In honor of her legacy, I chose to set the text in its oldest surviving German translation; it is as close to the original Old High German as possible.

I wanted the piece to be full of constant movement, reflecting the excited nature of the text. Often the singers are behaving more instrumentally than vocally, particularly during the fast sextuplet figures in the middle section. The piece is a spiritual journey, starting from a chant-like invocation, exploding into glory upon god answering his beloved, and then an ascension into heaven when the beloved's spirit takes wing out of sheer awe at God's immanence. The aleatoric sections emphasize the frenetic spiritual energy of the devotee throughout, and should always be undercut with intensity. All in all, there should be a sense of divine ritual permeating this piece.

For the singers: The German is pronounced conventionally, as modern German. As in Latin, v's are often substituted for u's. So written v's like in "vf" would be pronounced [uf], for example.

XIII. Wie got kumet in die sele.

Ich kum zû miner lieben
Als ein töwe vf den blümen.

XV. Wie got die sele enfahet.

Siest wilkomen liebû tube.
Du hast so sere geflogen in dem ertriche,
das dine vedern sint gewahsen
in dem himelriche.

-Mechthild von Magdeburg

XIII. How god comes to the soul.

I come to my beloved
As the dew upon the flowers.

XV. How god receives the soul.

Welcome, my precious dove.
You have flown so keenly over the earth
that your feathers reach to heaven.

-Translation by Frank Tobin

How god comes to the soul

Mechthild von Magdeburg
(1210-1285)

Jens Ibsen (ASCAP)
(2014, Rev. 2020)

Freely, like plainchant

pp *p* *pp* staggered

Soprano 1
Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

Soprano 2
pp
Ich kum zu min - er

2

S1
Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein

S2
p *pp* staggered
lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

3

S1
p *pp*
Tö - we vf den blu - men

S2
sim.
Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

A2
pp
[a]

p

4

S 1
Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

S 2
Ich kum zu min -

A 2
p
gliss.
[lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ] [lu]

5

S 1
Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö -

S 2
er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

A 2
[lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu] [ja] - - - [ja - ja - ja - ja - ja - ja - ja - ja]

6

non rit. **Broad, ♩ = 80**

S 1
we vf den blu - - - men

S 2
blu - - - men

A 2
[a]

8

S 1 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

S 2 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

A 1 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

A 2 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

T 1 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

T 2 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

B 1 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

B 2 *f* *mf* *f*
Siest wil - kom - en, lie - bú tu - be

2 *mf* *f > p*

S. Solo
Siest wil-kom-en, lie - bú tu - be, siest wil-kom - en

S 1 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

S 2 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

A. Solo
Siest wil-kom-en, lie - bú tu - be, siest wil-kom - en

A 1 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

A 2 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

T 1 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

T 2 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

B 1 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

B 2 *p non dim.* *mf* *f > p* *mf* *p*
Siest wil - kom - en lie - bú tu - be

8 *mf* *f* *pp*

S. Solo
 Siest wil-kom-en, lie - bú tu - be, siest wil-kom - en

S 1 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

S 2 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

A. Solo
 Siest wil-kom-en, lie - bú tu - be, siest wil-kom - en

A 1 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

A 2 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

T 1 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

T 2 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

B 1 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

B 2 *non dim.* *p* *mf*
 du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen, du

p *mf*

rit.-----With anticipation, ♩ = 69

13

p ----- *ff* *subito mp*

S 1
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - [flo-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho]

S 2
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - [flo-ho-ho-ho] [flo-ho-ho-ho] [flo-ho-ho-ho] [flo-ho-ho-ho]

A. Solo

A 1
p ----- *ff* *sub. p*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - []

A 2
p ----- *ff* *sub. p*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - []

T 1
p ----- *ff* *sub. p*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - []

T 2
p ----- *ff* *sub. p*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen — ge - []

B 1
p ----- *ff* percussive [p], like a beatboxer
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen [pm] gliss. lowest note possible

B 2
p ----- *ff* percussive [p], like a beatboxer
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen [pm] gliss. lowest note possible

p ----- *ff* *sub. p*

16

S 1

[ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho]... - [ho]...

S 2

[ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho-ho-ho-ho] [ho]... - [ho]...

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

mf *mp*

mf *mp*

mp *p*

mp *p*

mp *p*

mp *p*

mf *mp*

19

S 1
S 2
A 1
A 2
T 1
T 2
B 1
B 2

[ho]...
[ho]...
[a]
[a]
[dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]
[dΛ] - [dΛ][dΛ] [dΛ]

f
f
f
ff
ff

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

22 *ff* *f*

S 1
[ho]... [ho...]

S 2
[ho]... [ho...]

A 1

A 2

T 1
ff *p* *f*
[a] [a]

T 2
ff *p* *f*
[a] [a]

B 1
f
[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]

B 2
f
[dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ]

ff *f*

25

S 1
6 6 6 [ho]... 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

S 2
[ho]...

A 1

A 2

T 1
[a]

T 2
[a] du

B 1
[dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] -

B 2
[dΛ]-[dΛ]

Piano
6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

Dynamic markings: *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *p*

31

S 1 (a)

S 2 [ho]...

A 1 *f* *mf* *f*
flo - gen ge - flo - gen

A 2 *f* *mf* *f*
flo - gen ge - flo - gen

T 1 *f* *mf* *f*
so se - re

T 2 *f* *mf* *f* *mf*
du hast so du

B 1 [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ]-[dΛ]-[dΛ]-[dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]—[dΛ] - [dΛ]-[dΛ]-[dΛ]-[dΛ]

B 2 *mf*
[dΛ] - [dΛ]

f *mf* *f*

34

S 1 *mp* (a) (a)

S 2 *mp* [ho]... [ho]...

A 1 *mf* *f* *mf*
ge - flo - gen ge -

A 2 *mf* *f* *mf*
ge - flo - gen ge -

T 1 *mf* *f* *mf*
so se - re so se - re

T 2 *f* *mf*
hast so du hast so se - re ge

B 1 *f* *mf*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] -

B 2 *f* *mf*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ]

mf *f* *mf*

37

S 1 (a)

S 2 [ho]...

A 1 flo - gen du

A 2 flo - gen du

T 1 du

T 2 flo - gen du hast so se re - ge - flo gen du

B 1 [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ]

B 2 [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ]

Piano accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *mp*, and *f*.

40 *f*

S 1 *f* (a)

S 2 *f* [ho]...

A 1 *ff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du hast so se re ge -

A 2 *ff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du hast so se re ge -

T 1 *ff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du hast so se re ge -

T 2 *ff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du hast so se re ge -

B 1 *f*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]

B 2 *f*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ]

43

ff

S 1

du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du

S 2

[ho]...

mf *ff*

A 1

flo - gen du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du

mf *ff*

A 2

flo - gen du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du

mf *ff*

T 1

flo - gen du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du

mf *ff*

T 2

flo - gen du hast so se - re ge - flo - gen du

ff

B 1

[dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ][dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] -

ff

B 2

[dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ]

46

S. Solo *ff* in dem er -

S 1 *fff* *mf* *fff*
hast so se - re ge flo - gen - -

S 2 *fff* *mf* *fff*

A 1 *fff* *mf* *fff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen - -

A 2 *fff* *mf* *fff*
hast so se re ge - flo gen

T 1 *fff* *mf* *fff*
hast so se - re ge - flo - gen

T 2 *fff* *mf* *fff*
hast so se re ge - flo gen

B 1 *fff*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] [dΛ] [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]

B 2 *fff*
[dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ] - [dΛ]

fff

48 *subito mp* *f* *mp* *f*

S. Solo
tri - che, das din - e ve - dern sint ge-wah - sen in dem hi - mel-ri - ch - e

S 1
S 2
A 1
A 2
T 1
T 2
B 1
B 2

52

S. Solo

S 1

mp *mf* *mp*

Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

S 2

mp

Ich

A 1

A 2

T 1

p gradually morph vowel to [ə], singing on the l

[a] [ə]

T 2

p gradually morph vowel to [ə], singing on the l

[a] [ə]

B 1

p gradually morph vowel to [ə], singing on the l

[a] [ə]

B 2

p gradually morph vowel to [ə], singing on the l

[a] [ə]

The image shows a musical score for a vocal solo and choir. The soloist part (S. Solo) is on a treble clef staff with a whole note on G4. The choir parts (S 1, S 2, A 1, A 2, T 1, T 2, B 1, B 2) are on treble and bass clef staves. The lyrics are in German: 'Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men'. The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). The T and B parts have instructions: '*p* gradually morph vowel to [ə], singing on the l'. The piano accompaniment is at the bottom, showing a treble and bass clef staff with chords and a melodic line.

53

S. Solo

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T 1

T 2

B 1

B 2

gliss. *mf* fall, not too quickly *mp*

[a] Ich kum zu min - er lieb-en als ein

f *mp* gliss.

kum zu min - er lieb-en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

pp

[lɛ] [lu] [ja]

pp

[lɛ] [lu] [ja]

pp

[lɛ] [lu] [ja]

54 *f* *mp* *mf* ,

S 1
tö - we vf den blu - men [a]

S 2
mf fall, not too quickly *mp* *f*
[a] Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu -

A 1
mp *mf* gliss.
[a] [lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ]

A 2
mp *mf* gliss.
[a] [lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ - lɛ]

T 1
[a] [ə] [lɛ]

T 2
[a] [ə] [lɛ]

B 1
[a] [ə] [lɛ]

B 2
[a] [ə] [lɛ]

The image shows a musical score for a choral and instrumental piece. It features eight vocal parts (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass 1, Bass 2) and a piano accompaniment. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are in German. The piano part has a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The vocal parts have various dynamics and articulations. The Alto parts have a glissando effect. The Tenor and Bass parts have simple harmonic lines. The piano part has a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand.

All trebles continue, ad lib. Soprano 1's fade out first, then 2's, then Alto 1 until Alto 2's are the only ones left singing. The conductor should cut each off in that order. Men continue on [m] until after the Sopranos have been cut off, and are silent until the end.

55

mp *f* *p*

S 1 Ich kum zu min - er lieb - en als ein tö - we vf den blu - men

mp *mf* *p*

S 2 men [a] Ich

mp *mf* *mp*

A 1 [lu] [lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu] [ja]

mp *mf* *mp*

A 2 [lu] [lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu - lu] [ja]

T 1 [lu] [ja] [m]

T 2 [lu] [ja] [m]

B 1 [lu] [ja] [m]

B 2 [lu] [ja] [m]

The score includes a piano accompaniment at the bottom with treble and bass clefs. A large watermark 'PERUSAL ONLY' is visible across the page.