

*Lansing D. McLoskey*

# O MIRA NOVITAS



*(SSA SOLO VOICES)*

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*Commissioned by Tapestry*

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## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

*Accidentals apply to the octave in which they appear and hold throughout the measure, though in more chromatic passages courtesy accidentals are given.*

*Small "ticks" are used to delineate measures rather than conventional barlines. This is to facilitate a feeling of fluid motion and ensure that no extra emphasis is placed on the downbeats of measures.*

*Very few phrasing or dynamic markings are given. This does not by any means signify that the piece should be performed monotonously without shape, direction, or emotional content; quite the contrary! Just as an ensemble would approach a piece by Landini, Dufay, or Josquin and use common sense as well as personal imagination & interpretation to bring the music to life, so I expect an ensemble to breath life into these notes. The exact interpretation may vary from performance to performance, but many of the gestures and emotional climaxes in the piece obviously lend themselves to a certain treatment, and any interpretation of the details sung with conviction will be successful.*

*Though the texts are in Latin, towards the end of the piece certain words and phrases are sung in English (marked in bold italics in the score). These should be emphasized (though in a subtle manner) so that they emerge slightly from the texture.*

*As a general rule, the vocal techniques and qualities should be similar to those used when singing early music; that is, a very pure, focused style both in regards to tone as well as approach to rhythm.*

*Approximate duration: 5 ½ minutes*



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When asked by Laurie Monahan to write a Christmas piece for the vocal ensemble Tapestry, I jumped at the opportunity. I have long been involved in early music as a performer and "rabid fan," and often find it creeping into my compositions. Here was a chance to write for a fabulous ensemble that specializes in medieval and contemporary repertoire.

As a Christmas piece I wanted it to be a celebration of the birth of Christ, but I also wanted it to have multiple meanings. After giving it much thought - and no doubt being influenced by the recent birth of our twin boys - I decided to make it not simply a celebration of Christ's birth, but of *birth* in general: A celebration of womanhood and of nurturing.

However, after reading literally hundreds of Marian and matriarchal texts in various languages and from various eras and cultures, I was unable and unwilling to limit myself to one single text. The solution was to make the piece a triple-texted motet. This allowed for a counterpoint of texts and meanings, as well as of musical ideas. I selected key words and phrases from each text and set them in English, which provided yet another level of counterpoint: one of language and timbre.

# Texts and Translations:

Motetus (soprano) -- **O mira novitas**

O mira novitas  
Et novum gaudium,  
Matris integritas  
Post puerperium.

Solem quem libere,  
Dum purus oritur  
In aura cernere  
Visus non patitur,  
Cernat a latere  
Dum repercutitur,  
Alvus puerpere,  
Qua totus clauditur.

**O mira novitas**

What a marvelous thing  
and what a great new joy:  
the wholeness of the mother  
after childbirth!

Naked vision  
cannot bear  
to see the sun as it rises  
purely in the air,  
whom the womb of birth,  
in which it is enclosed,  
sees when reflected  
from her body.

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Triplum (mezzo) -- **O lilium floruit**

O lilium floruit  
arvis vernantibus  
que fons de Libano  
lymphis regantibus  
fovet et relevat  
zephyris flautibus.

Eia, eia,  
eia grex in pascuis  
alludat uberimis  
et sequantur agmina  
agnum inter lilia  
qui factus est opilio  
natus est de virgine vitreum.

**O lilium floruit**

Oh, a lily has blossomed  
in the verdant fields  
which the fountain of Lebanon,  
with its cleansing waters,  
soothes and refreshes  
with its fragrant breezes.

Hasten quickly!  
The flock plays  
in the fertile pastures,  
And the crowds follow  
the lamb among the lilies,  
who became a shepherd,  
born of a glittering virgin.

---

Tenor (alto) - **Antequam parturiret** (from Isaiah 66)

Antequam parturiret peperit  
antequam veniret partus  
eius peperit masculum.

Laetamini cum Hierusalem  
et exultate in ea omnes qui diligitis eam

Ut sugatis et repleamini  
ab ubere consolationis  
eius ut mulgeatis  
et deliciis affluatis ab  
omnimoda gloria eius

Quomodo si cui mater blandiatur  
ita ego consolabor vos  
et in Hierusalem consolabimini.

**Antequam parturiret** (from Isaiah 66)

Before she went into labor she brought forth;  
before she was to deliver  
she gave birth to a man child.

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem,  
and be glad with her, all ye that love her:

That ye may suck, and be satisfied  
with the breasts of her consolations;  
that ye may milk out,  
and be delighted  
with the abundance of her glory.

As one whom his mother comforteth,  
so will I comfort you;  
and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

---

All: **Apparuit.**

He has appeared.

# O mira novitas

Lansing D. McLoskey

♩ = 60

Motetus (Soprano I)  
So - - - mi - - - ra no -  
So - - - lem, so -

Triplum (Soprano II)  
E - ia, li - li - um flo - - - - - ru -  
e - ia, e - ia, e - - - - -

Tenor (Alto)  
Ut

*Gliss.*

(freely, quasi ad libitum)

lem vi - - - tas et no -  
quem li - - - -

it ar - - - - vis ver -  
ia grex in

An - te - quam par - tur - i - ret, an - te - - - - quam,  
su - ga - tis et re - ple - a - - - - mi - - - - ni

vum et no - vum - gau - di - um, Ma - - - - au -  
be - re, dum pu - rus or - i - tur in au -

nan - - - ti - bus que fons de Li -  
pa - scu - is al - lu - dat u - be - ri - mis et se -

ve - ni - ret par - tus e - - - - ius  
ab - ub - e - re con - - - - so - la - ti - o - - - -

tris, Ma - tris in - te -  
 ra, au - ra cer - - -  
 ba - no, lym - phis re - gan - ti - - - bus, lym -  
 quan - tur ag - mi - na a - - - gnum in -  
 pe - nis pe - rit ma - scu - - - ge -  
 e - ius ut mul - - - ge -

gri - tas post puer - pe - ri - um.  
 ne - re vi - - - sus non pa - ti - tur,  
 phis re - gan - ti - bus fo - vet et re -  
 ter li - li - a, li - li - a qui  
 lum, Lae - ta - mi - ni - cum  
 a - tis, mul - ge - a - tis et

Ma - tris Ma - tris  
 In au - ra in au - ra  
 le - vat ze - phy - ris  
 fac - tus est o - pi - li - o,  
 Hie - ru - sa - lem et ex - ul - ta - te in  
 de - li - ci - is af - flu - a - tis ab e - a

1.

puer - - - - - pe - ri - - - - - um.

1.

flau - - - - - ti - - - - - bus.

1.

om - - - nes qui di - li - gi - tis e - - am:

2.

cer - - - - - ne - re

2.

o - - - pi - - - li - - - - - o,

2.

om - - - ni - mo - da glo - ri - a e - - - ius.

$\text{♩} = 76$

*sf*

Vi - - - - - sus non pa - - - - - ti - tur,

*sf*

Na - - - - - tus est de *glù* - - -

*sf*

Quo - - - - - mo - - - do si cu - - - i

cer - nat a - ter - ing, glit - ter - ing vir - ma - ter, ma - ter

la - te - re dum gi - ne vi - tre - um glit - ter - com - for - ted ma - ter

re - flec - ted ing vir - gin blan - di - a - tur i - ta



re - flec - ted puer - - - pe - re qua  
na - - - - tus, na - - - - tus,  
e - - - go con - so - la - - - - - bor,

(slower; ♩ = 72 )

to - - - - tus *re - flec - ted from her* qua to - tus clau - di -  
na - - - - tus, *vir - gi - ne vi - tre - um glit - ter -*  
i - ta e - go con - so - la - bor *and ye shall be com - for - ted, com - for -*

tur *the womb of birth*  
ring vir - gin, *vir - - - gin*  
ted in Je - ru - sa - - - - - lem.

(slower; gently)

*poco a poco cresc.*

birth the womb of birth, the womb  
li - li - a, li - li - - - a, li - li -  
glo - ri - - - - a, glo - ri - - - a, glo - ri -

*rit.* -----

of birth, the womb of birth.  
a, li - li - - - a.  
a, glo - ri - - - - a.

(freely; with reverence & tranquility)

Ap - HAS - ru - - - it.  
Ap - - - pa - AP - PEARED.  
HE - pa - - - ru - - - it.

**DEO  
GRA-  
TIAS**