

# At the Ninth Hour

A Lent & Easter Musical Journey

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# Foreword

The last week of Christ's life on earth is the central drama of the Christian faith. Mark devotes over a third of his gospel to the events that begin with Jesus riding triumphantly into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and end with his suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection. It is a story that plummets from exuberant celebration to the darkest depths of pain and betrayal, and then soars once again to the transcendent joy of Easter morning. It was the first account to be memorized and communicated by the followers of Jesus, and it remains the foundation of our faith today.

This work is our attempt to capture that drama as specifically revealed in Mark's gospel. We intentionally wrote the script and score with some flexibility. It can be used as an Easter cantata that makes the full journey from Palm Sunday to Easter morning, or it can be presented purely as a Lenten piece, telling the Passion of Jesus from the Last Supper to the Crucifixion. The story is told entirely by one or two narrators, a choir, and several soloists. Some churches may wish to support the presentation with actors posing in tableaux, or with projected images—we suggest using great works of Christian art. The work can also be divided into three parts—with the opening section, *Hosanna*, presented on Palm Sunday; the central section from *Before the Passover* (page 8) through *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (page 45) presented on Good Friday; and the final anthem, *On the Third Day*, sung on Easter. The suggestions below give additional details for dividing the work. The heights of joy we feel on Easter are rooted in the depths of Christ's suffering that precede it. We pray this work might give you a chance to experience both ends of that journey.

—Tom Long and Allen Pote

## Suggestions for Using the Work:

**As a Lenten Cantata:** Begin the work at measure 94, omitting the opening anthem, *Hosanna*, and omitting Narrator 1's line "It wasn't long before the cheering stopped." at measure 102. End the work with *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* which concludes at measure 617.

If necessary, the lines labeled Narrator 1 and Narrator 2 can be read by one narrator.

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