For you have struggled with God and with men

three pieces from the life of Jacob
for SATB choir and piano

Joshua Groffman
For you have struggled with God and with men (2009)
three pieces from the life of Jacob
for SATB choir and piano
Joshua Groffman (b. 1984)

I. Jacob's dream pg. 5
II. Jacob sees the past and the future pg. 30
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel pg. 41

Duration: ca. 16 minutes

For you have struggled with God and with men presents three scenes from the life of the Biblical patriarch Jacob, drawing its texts from the book of Genesis. The narrative of Jacob's life shows a high degree of subtlety and nuance in presenting the psychology and actions of Jacob, and these pieces aim to reflect this, tracing Jacob's development as a person over the course of his long life.

In Jacob's dream, we see him as a young man, talented, destined for greatness, and a little cocky. Jacob sees the past and the future finds him older and close to despair, unsure of the worth of his own achievements and fearful for the future of his children and their descendants. Closure is found in Jacob wrestles with the angel, after a long night of turmoil, Jacob, renamed Israel, departs with a new and deeper sense of his relationship with God and his fellow human beings.

Although the three pieces form a narrative arc, any one movement may be performed independently, showing Jacob at a particular moment in his journey towards wisdom. The settings are dramatic and are intended to tell Jacob's story as vividly as possible. Translations of the Hebrew texts are included with this score that the performers may more fully engage with the words they are singing. Translations by Joshua Groffman, with the exception of the passage in which Jacob foretells the futures of his children, which is reprinted from The Torah: A Modern Commentary, edited by W. Gunther Plaut. (Copyright © 2005, 2006 by URJ Press. Reprinted with permission of URJ Press.) Transliterations from Orach Chayim Torah Study & Resources.

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Bloomington, Indiana
October 2009
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I. Jacob's Dream

And Jacob dreamed; and behold, a ladder was set in the earth and the top reached to the heavens; and behold, messengers of God were going up and going down there and behold, God stood by him, and said, “I am Adonai, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. This land that you lie upon - to you will I give it, and to your descendants. And behold: I am with you, and I will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. For I will not forsake you until that thing of which I have spoken is done.”

II. Jacob sees the past and the future

Few and miserable have been the days of the years of my life And they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my fathers during their sojourns.

For your help do I look, O Eternal One.
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

Vayivater Yaakov levado
Vaye'avek ishimo ad alothashchar.

Vayomer shalcheni ki alah hashachar

Vayomer lo ashalechachaki
im-berachtani.
Vayomer elamah-shmecha

Vayomer Yaakov.
Vayomer lo Yaakov ye'amerochashimcha

ki im-Yisrael
ki-sarita im-Elokim ve'im anashim
vatuchal.
Vayish'al Yaakov
Vayomer hagida-na shmecha

Vayomer lamah zeh tish'al lishmi

Vayevarech oto sham.
Vayikra Yaakov shem hamakom Peni'el

Ki-ra'iti Elokim panim el-panim
Vatinatzel nafshi.

And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the dawn. And the man said, “Release me, for the dawn is breaking.” And he said, “I will not release you unless you bless me.” And he said to him, “How are you named?” And he said, “Jacob.” And he said, “Not Jacob shall you be named, but Israel. For you have struggled with God and with men and prevailed.”

And Jacob asked him and said, “Tell me how you are named.” And he said, “For what do you ask my name?” And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peni'el: “I have seen God face to face and my soul is preserved.”
I. Jacob's dream

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

\[ \text{\textbf{Ped.}} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{va - ya}} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{va - ya}} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{va - ya}} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{va - ya}} \]

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\[ \text{\textbf{va - ya}} \]
I. Jacob's dream
I. Jacob's dream
may mah, ha sha may mah,

may mah, ha sha

may mah, ha sha may mah,

may mah, ha sha may mah, ha sha

ha sha may mah,

sha may mah,

sha may mah,
I. Jacob's dream

28

ha - sha - may - mah, ve -

may - - - - mah

mah, ha - sha - may - - - - - mah ve -

ha - sha - may - - - - - mah ve -

30

hi - - - neh

più f

hi - - - neh

ma - la - chei

hi - - - neh

hi - - - neh

3
I. Jacob's dream

\[ \text{ma-la-chei} \quad \text{E-lo-him,} \]

\[ \text{E-lo-him,} \quad \text{ma-la-chei} \]

\[ \text{ma-la-chei} \quad \text{E-lo-him,} \quad \text{ma-la-chei} \]

\[ \text{E-lo-him,} \quad \text{ma-la-chei} \quad \text{E-lo-him,} \]

\[ \text{E-lo-him o-lim} \quad \text{ve-yo-re-dim}, \]

\[ \text{E-lo-him} \]
I. Jacob's dream

sempre cres.

El oh i m, ol i m v e yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim.

(o pedal change)

y o re dim, o lim ve yo re dim ve

y o re dim, o lim ve yo re dim bo ve

y o re dim bo ve

y o re dim bo ve

(y o re dim, o lim ve yo re dim, ve

sempre cres.

(E - lo him ) o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.

o lim ve yo re dim, o lim ve yo re dim,

sempre cres.
I. Jacob’s dream
I. Jacob's dream

sempre cresc.

mf sempre cresc.
Falsetto if necessary. Do not sing 8vb.
I. Jacob's dream
I. Jacob's dream

93 ff

let ring until silent

94 decresc.

ti cha
I. Jacob's dream

Tempo I $\frac{\dot{}}{\dot{}} = 78$

ped.
I. Jacob's dream

ma'kom ha-zeh eyn zeh ki im

ma'kom ha-zeh eyn zeh ki im

ma'kom ha-zeh eyn zeh ki im

ma'kom ha-zeh eyn zeh ki im

beit Elohim ve-zeh sha'ar

beit Elohim ve-zeh sha'ar

beit Elohim ve-zeh

beit Elohim ve-zeh

beit Elohim ve-zeh

beit Elohim ve-zeh

beit Elohim ve-zeh

beit Elohim ve-zeh
I. Jacob's dream

150

sha'ar sha'ar sha'ar

sha'ar sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim

150

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

sha'ar ha-sha-ma-yim, ha-sha-ma-yim

153
II. Jacob sees the past and the future

Freely \( \frac{\text{\textdagger}}{\text{\textdagger}} = 66 \)

\* All grace notes should be placed on the beat, rather than before it.
II. Jacob sees the past and the future

for rehearsal only
(mm. 9 - 29)
II. Jacob sees the past and the future

8
nei____ cha-yei a-vo-tai, a-vo-tai,
hei, sh-nei____ cha-yei a-vo-tai, a-vo-tai,
nei____ cha-yei a-vo-tai, a-vo-tai,

21
rit.-------------------------- a tempo

f
a-vo-tai,____ bi-mei me-gu-rei-hem me-gu-

f
a-vo-tai, bi-mei me-gu-rei-hem me-gu-

f
a-vo-tai bi-mei me-gu-rei-hem me-gu-

f
a-vo-tai____ bi-mei me-gu-rei-hem me-gu-

21
rit.-------------------------- a tempo

f

pp

pp

pp

pp
From measures 32 to 44 all notes without stems should be sung freely at approximately the speed indicated, similar to a recitative. No attempt should be made to co-ordinate rhythms either within a section or with any other part of the ensemble. Each melody enclosed within double lines should be repeated for as long as indicated, at which point each singer should finish the melody, before going on to the next melody.
Choral parts observe accelerando (singing speed remains approximately \( \frac{3}{4} \) as tempo increases).
II. Jacob sees the past and the future

37 (accel.)

\[ \begin{align*}
4 \quad \frac{4}{4} &= 72 \\
\end{align*} \]

Gad ge-dud ye-gu de-nu ve-hu ya-gud a-kev

Naf-ta-li a-ya-lah shlu-chah ha-ro-ten im-rei sha-fer

37 (accel.)

Me’ A-sher shme-cha lach-mo

(ped.)

39

singers enters individually over two beats

Ben-ya-min

Ben-ya-min

(ped.)
II. Jacob sees the past and the future

Ben-ya-min ze' ev-yit-raf

singers drop out individually over four beats

singers drop out individually over four beats

(ped.)

ti-hi ei-nah le-rosh Yo-sef

Yo-sef Yo-sef

chot ho ray ad ta'r a-vat giv' ot o-lam

(ped.)
Tempo I $\frac{\n}{\m} = 66$

for rehearsal only (mm. 47 - 64)
II. Jacob sees the past and the future
II. Jacob sees the past and the future
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

\( \text{D} = 72 \)

\( \text{D} = 72 \)

\( \text{D} = 72 \)

\( \text{D} = 72 \)

\[ \text{Va- yi-vat-ter Ya- akov le- va- do} \]

\[ \text{Va- ye- a-vek, va- ye- a-vek ish i- mo} \]
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

va-ye' a-vek ish i-mo, va-ye' a-vek, va-ye' a-vek, ish i-mo, ish i-mo, ish i-mo,
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

 senza ped.

\[ \text{be-rach-ta-ni, ki im be-rach-ta-ni} \]

\[ \text{lo ash-a-le-chacha, lo ash-a-le-chacha,} \]

\[ \text{ki im be-rach-ta-ni} \]

\[ \text{le-chacha, lo ash-a-le-chacha} \]
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

lo Ya-a-kov

a-kov, lo Ya-a-kov,

kov, lo Ya-a-kov,

a-kov, lo Ya-a-kov

ye' a-mer

lo Ya-a-kov ye' a-mer, ye' a-mer

lo Ya-a-kov ye' a-mer ye' a-

ye' a-mer
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

\[ \text{poco rit.} \quad \text{a tempo} \quad \text{pp} \]

\( \text{Yisrael,} \quad \text{ki im} \quad \text{Yisrael} \)

\( \text{(ped.)} \)
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel

P dolce, legato

va-yishr al Yaakov va-yomer, va-yishr al Ya-

(ped.)

P dolce, legato

va-yomer lamah zeh tish

na sh-me-cha, na-gi-da na sh-

a-kov va-yo-mer, va-yishr al Ya-a-kov va-yo-

(ped.)
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel
III. Jacob wrestles with the angel