

## Written Notes - Tallis Lamentations of Jeremiah

### Section A

Text: Here is the word

Should sound like a declamation of sacred text.

Keep it simple. Just the facts.

Starts firm mf, follow architecture of each individual line

Following rules of polyphonic singing

Listen for imitation.

### Section B1

mm.23-37

Opening stretto: sinuous, ethereal

Keep [a] vowel with point but not overly bright, or overly dark. Please eliminate any nasality.

m. 29 Tenor 1 entry- please stabilize E natural and enter straight tone – please tune the octave E shared with Baritone line m.29

Keep a lighter quality through to give bass entry a cloudy, murky feel @ m.30

Please be wary of the tuning of the Bb M chord at m. 31, lower three voices. Some are singing [a] and some [E] – please allow for the third (baritone) to have an (E) in the [a] vowel for tuning

Tenor 1 m. 31-32, smoother line D-F, sing to the end of the word “leph” at m.33

Slight swell in dynamic 31-33 at the arrival of A Major in m. 33. Wider half step, tenor 1 to C natural – know that the function is not to create a parallel minor, but to be the dominant in the soothing arrival of F major. This mediant relationship is a warm bath, a relief, and a comfort. Not a dramatic moment despite the alto's tessitura. Please treat it as such.

Our [E] gets far more pointed and tense as we sing in lower registers. Please keep this vowel pure.

Please notice the harmonic ascent mm. 33-37: F major/g minor/ A Major – arriving back to where we left off before this episode. The interruption which occurs in the baritone part now, is a draw into the parallel minor. This will be effective if the A Major arrival at 37 is stronger than the A Major arrival at 33. Let's observe a slight ritard going into this cadence. Let's draw out this A Major for a slightly longer period, and when baritone enters with this 5<sup>th</sup>, can we give him some silence: to mirror the text “how doth the city siteth solitary” – this tone sung alone is the lone voice in the dark.

aka – fermata over Quo, and then continue after about two seconds. – This will be a overdub point.

**Section B2** mm. 37-69

m. 38 pp with microphrasing, but please resist the urge to make drastic dynamic changes. Keep it stark.

[o] – keep pure, please do not accent. Mm.38-44 should feel barline-less. Please don't put weight on "quomodo"  
m. 48 – make sure this C Major arrival is really special as it is the first time C Major has appeared in the piece. Not loud.

Treat the rest at m. 44 musically – observe the question. The answer doesn't arrive fully until the arrival of F major in all five voices at m. 46. Not fortissimo, just a controlled, mannered, grieving sigh. (full mf at most)

m. 50 come back down to a reflective mp. This semitone interruption in Tenor II is now the new tonic. Please Alto and Tenor II tune octave Gs. Please think in full sentences and carefully observe syllabic stress as to avoid PRIN CEPS PRO. Also, because the points of imitation are closer together, please be aware of when this motive occurs in all five voices:

A: m.50 b4

BII: m. 51 b2

TI: m. 53 b2

BS AND TI: m. 53 b4 – please isolate and tune this 3<sup>rd</sup> - odd way into e minor

The same musical materials now occurs on different text, but the syllabic stress is the same. The reintroduction of Bb mucks up the water -gradual diminuendo from m. 58 all the way to the end of this section. Please bring out the voice pairings of TI and TII 65 to the end. This should be the main melodic focus, and everyone else is of harmonic structure.

Vowel Check!

[o]

[E] (open "e")

**Section C1:** mm. 69-75

Key center: F, but serves as a seven bar episode with dominant function

Please musically treat all rests in these seven bars; no sense of break, stagger breath (silently) as needed

Alto: Please either find a unified onset, or one start and other join on vowel midway through the seven bars. Either Alex or Eric should sing B of Beth, not both.

This section should not feel syncopated. < > in the macro *and* micro. Please sing *messa di voce* in individual two bar phrases, as well as an overarching mds over the seven bars, arriving in m. 73, poco forte

**Section C2:** mm. 76-90

Bb Major - one step higher from the previous section (Aleph - a min, Beth - Bb)

Two, five bar phrases. Think arsis/thesis.

First five bar phrase strong - strongest moment is when it arrives to the subdominant. No need to overdramaticize.

Second five bar phrase weak

In the repeat of Plorans, eighth note off, use as spring board to the second Plorans

M. 80 - this little wiggle is not supposed to be cute. It's supposed to be an uncontrollable breath in when you cry and can't quite get it together. If played slowly, the Tenor II passes through a a<sup>9</sup>. Please keep that gesture of a somber, dour nature. But also keep it in time.

The arrival of C Major in m. 85 is a deceptive arrival as in the middle of the bar we are launched into the subdominant. Please keep this cadence soft so that...

M. 85 b.3 - TII/BT - " 'Et lacrimae 'eius 'in maxillis eius" – dolore e molto espressivo – subito forte, startling from the diminuendo in the surrounding three parts. and crescendo to true f at entrance of all parts. Alto line should be expressive but decorative...should sound visceral and from beneath. Please sing in full sentences, but sung fully. No ritardando at b. 89. Please put a light glottal in front of each initial vowel for rhythmic clarity –without- breaking the line. Living in the subdominant Eb Major is an exaggeration of the harmonic crescendo found in the brief subdominant interjections in the shorter, five bar phrases in prior bars.

b. 89 – lean into this Eb/E cross relation in A/BT ...rapido diminuendo upon resolution. Make it nasty (blowing of the nose after a long sob)

m. 91 ATT – molto legato e dolcissimo

m. 89 – we make take some time for the upper partials to clear before moving on.

### **Section C3: mm. 90-124**

F Major/d minor

"Among all her lovers, there should be no one to comfort her."

Walter Kaiser – Sensuality and symbols of the Old Testament

In the rehearsal recording this all seems beat-y to me. Please sing the architecture. This should be somewhat sensual. This whole passage should be like dribbling fluids.

Upper three voices sing a two bar three voice madrigal, or a 15th century Italian *frottola*. It sounds like it will be a entire loving section until it takes a depressing, lonely turn in d minor, affirmed by the lower two voices in m. 93. Can we sing with this deceptive quality? Perhaps making the vowels a little sour in the back half of m. 92?

...but not out of tune. A: [E] vowel is flat in pitch and loses focus in m. 92 - keep it in line.

m.93 TII - careful not to cheat the dotted- quarter and rush the 16ths following: D-C-Bb-A. The Bb re-emphasizes this sadness after the audience hears this line sing B-natural as part of the melodic minor scale leading to it...maybe this is the part sung by the most deceitful of lovers. Evil.

Uniformly – low C#s please, but return to the D you started from.

**NOTE CHECK:** TI m. 94 b. 2 – the descending fifth C-F, and then which affects the two bars proceeding. Please work that out.

Dynamic scheme in the four repetitions of text mm. 90-105: pp, mp, mf, mp

mm. 101-108: Tenor I solo. All other parts please back light, microphrasing, but all very much below the foreground, as a slightly monodic, highly Italian solo song is sung by TI. **Which means all note lengths and pitches need to be accurate.** For TI – think *Jeptha*, or some other early baroque opera. Maybe even Monteverdi Vespers – this line clearly foreshadows what is about to come in the next century and should be sung as such. Long drawn suspensions, with straight, focused tone and tremendous phrasing. All other parts, sing as if you are a plucked instrument played harmonically.

m. 107 – don't be shy about the augmented second dissonance between alto and tenor 1

Back into old, communal style in m. 108, shying away from the D-Major cadence. Healthy mf Loving, beautiful, dulcet until m. 116. I'd like to experiment again with a more marcato feel to "et facti sunt" but not too short. Come out of this and make gnarly sounds in anything suspended or dotted. Darker in vowel color. From friends to enemies, this intervallic section from mm. 116-124 should sound gruff, abrupt, and aggressive. But, still underwraps. Like, people are talking about you behind your back and you don't want them to hear.

m. 123 – this cross-relation is uuuuuugly. Make it so.

#### **Section C4 m. 124-143**

F Major...longer than before.

The alto is sending out a prayer to an empty temple. What returns is an echo. The upper voice should be the prominent voice, the lower four should be less, always. Please do not sing heavy.

JE – RU – SA – LEM

Intervocalic s are VOICED.

That all can be tenuto, equal weight on each syllable of the word of the city. Can there be a pulse on each syllable?

m. 125 open fifth F-C needs to be clearly in tune right away. And equally balanced. Understand the function of the upper voice is a pedal tone, common to to the harmonic sentence underneath – F-dmin-A-dmin, before it breaks away, ascending to its apex crying for God's help.

The repetition in m. 132 is similar, but should sound more like concession and fear that God's help will not come, no matter how loud you cry. Still be beneath the alto voice if singing lower four parts. starting subito f pick up to m. 139, diminuendo to a solid mp. We will explore different ways record the last five bar phrase section far away from the mics to create a distant effect.

Altos – please work to gain a matching timbre mm. 139-143

#### **Section D: mm. 144-171**

The Lamentations of Jeremiah: Part II

“From the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet”

This is a “just the facts” statement as the beginning was. This time, the material is even more imitative and is in a whole tone darker of a key, g minor. This section is as if the composer was fixed on this five bar theme: an ascending minor scale, a descending fifth, a return to the prior fifth, ascend to the minor third, then a descending step decorated by a leading tone neighbor. I liken this section to being stuck in quicksand- the heavy footed nature of this implies that destruction is sometimes impossible to crawl out of and death is inevitable. That is the word.

This theme is repeated in three different keys, gm, dm, am, a collection of ten times. Please mark where this occurs:

- m. 144 Tenor II (g)
- m. 146 Baritone (d)
- m. 149 Bass (g)
- m. 151 Tenor I (a)
- m. 154 Alto (d)
- m. 156 Tenor II (g)
- m. 159 Baritone (d)
- m.161 Bass (g)
- m. 164 Alto (a)
- m. 166 Tenor I (d)

This cycle is broken by the pieces most jarring cross relation, beat 2 of m. 168 between alto and Tenor II. This should be NASTY.

I would like to clearly here the main motive clearly, ten times, particularly, the opening. I think this could be a stoic mp and without any sense of crescendo even as the them ascends, higher voices join, or the texture gets thicker. Only until this NASTY cross-relation should we perform any crescendo as the cycle is broken, we’re able to free ourselves from the quicksand, and resolve in a relieving D-Major cadence. Light third on top, altos. Slight rit. Into the cadence.

Diction:

More hard palate Ds and no pre-phonatory (word?) n before d.

X Te X

X Nde X

Intonation:

In the ascent of the five note scale, please make sure you allow enough space and stretch to get up and over the fifth. Please sing through it as well to complete the rest of the phrase.

Bass II - careful not to get stuck in the phrase. Keep the pulse going. Tenor II - be careful not to rush.

**Section E: mm. 172-187**



Ghimel:

The “Ghimel” motivic material kinda sounds like the Hebrew letter looks.

Pronunciation: [ glmEl ] – open I, open E.

Arriving in g minor from the dominant D Major in the prior section.

Even though the music is contrary to the syllabic stress, can we be nuanced about this and aim to not gimEL?

This section should move a little more than we’ve originally allowed it to.

Note check: Alto, Eb m. 175 b. 3

Back to an unassuming mp. The opening 12 bars of this section are awkward and a little clunky. The theme from the section before is now inverted, but because harmonic voice leading, (plus an added flat in the key signature), there's no real effective way to include any leading tones for any secondary key areas and/or cycles. This opening imitative figure from the TI and A set a dark tone in imitation, but the entry of the BT distorts it by altering the exact pattern in its imitation – not only is the stepwise motion slightly different, but it also results in an inverted Eb Major chord, and as a result the thematic material would start on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and not the 5<sup>th</sup>. This 'imposter' imitation gives the next few bars an uncertainty of tonal center, so don't be rattled by it.

The alto line in this section wants a duet partner regardless. Be mindful of the voice pairing of A and TI at 176 (please take a lift before this b. 4 triad), but the alto's rhythmic pattern then closely duets with BT to try and make sense of its direction.

The darker modal theme is more closely imitated by the Bass line at m.180. Considering how low it is the range, I think this should sound like a 32' stop on an organ and draw quite a bit of attention to itself. Basses, sing out! Gradual crescendo up to mf+ before the syncopated Ghimel in m. 183, and then all parts audible breath to the rise of Eb Major, which in this piece seems to be a key of brightness and hope.

Bass- stay firm as you resolve, and allow a strong support for the mellifluous duetting between Alto and Tenor I to the end of this section. This G Major cadence should be stronger than the D Major cadence that closed the section before.

Upper four voices, lighter and more leggiero, please.

m. 183 b. 4 – make sure to sing through the entirety of the bar and not move pitches until after you've cleared the bar line (don't sing m. 184 b. 1+ early)

Unaccented syllable in the final cadence

m. 185 – TII please be right on time so the paired voices have something to place their mini duet moments against.

Tuning of a g minor five note scale needs work in all voices

Bass: mm.181-183 – please use more forward motion through this line – don't pull back

## **Section E2: mm.187-222**

This section is one of the longer sections of the Lamentations and uses one key rhythmic motive in diminution as text changes. I sense this is Tallis musically depicting the anxiety, the shame, and the anger of being cast away from your own land, to a land far away from everything you've known. Religious writer James E. Smith published an entire section in the *Bible Study Textbook Series* in 1972:

"Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction"

"c. Explanation (1:3): Judah has gone captive out of affliction and great servitude; she dwells among the nations but finds no resting place; all her pursuers have overtaken her in the straits. The children of Zion have been carried away captive by the Chaldeans and now dwell on foreign soil. Even though this deportation was in a sense a relief from "affliction" —the miseries of war, famine and pestilence—and "servitude"—the bitter bondage to cruel

oppressors like Neco (2 Kgs 23:33) and Nebuchadnezzar—still the children of Zion found no real rest. Living among Gentiles they find themselves plagued by worry and doubt, depressed by homesickness, surrounded by idolatry, tormented by the realization that their God has inflicted this great punishment upon them because of their spiritual rebellion. From this captivity there is no escape. This is the point of the figurative expression “all her pursuers have overtaken her in the straits.” Narrow mountain passes make it almost impossible for a fugitive to escape from those who would pursue him. So also is escape only a remote possibility for those living in foreign exile.

The opening bars of this section is in Bb Major but spends most of the three voice texture in second inversions and root position major chords with short durations as parts wander away from the tonality after one beat. It's very clear that Tallis is musically depicting the feeling of being lost, wandering in unfamiliar lands. This section should not feel titular and concrete like “GhimeL.” It should feel lost. Vulnerable. Scared. Ashamed. Piano in dynamic. The tempo should have a gentle rock to it.

Afflic' tionem – please uniformly stop the sound on the c in m. 190 b.3

A firm cadence in Bb Major is felt at the entrance of the bass at m. 195, but is even uncomfortably approached by an imperfect cadence, with the bass arriving to tonic by means of an ascent from the submediant. Awkward! Please relish in this awkwardness.

Observe the rhythmic quartet in mm.196-197 between A, TII, and two bass voices even if on different text. Also for the two bass parts in the same bar. I think this is an opportunity for the rhythm, the rom-pom-pom of the bars to be the defining feature of this part of the text. Please articulate this well so the texture is not muddy – especially with all sorts of consonants and vowels happening at different times.

Molto Crescendo starting at m. 198 to poco f at the downbeat of 202 and then subito in the syncopated entry of the upper voices at m.203. For the remainder of this section, I think it's permissible to let the topography dictate the dynamic contrast to the end of the section. Let's observe a dim. And rall starting m. 219

Keep [E] open – please fix these pure vowels in the middle to low registers.

Some voices prevalent in this section are not featured in the recording, but please notice how keeping monodynamic here simply will not work. Please make note of this new interpretation...and personalize. We will be spending some time in the AirBnB talking theology as we record this album.

Alto - strident in m. 218, careful.

T2 m. 203 - perfectly in tune, but please stabilize tone

D naturals in m. 222, stabilize

Careful of the rhythm, fell off the wagon at 214-218 - keep articulated

### **Section F1: mm. 223-230**

Balls to the walls. Anachronistically ugly, brassy, and bright. Unnuanced and out of control. Loud AF.

### **Section F2: mm. 231-240**



All her persecutors overtook her within the straits. Almost sung in shock. A delicate dance in

Beautiful. Arresting. Upper two voices don't come together until "within the straits." As if a bit confined.

### **Section F3: mm. 240-271**

Warm Mf to at m.241 when all five voices respond to the prior duet - reiterates the text

The turn to g minor at m. 250 should have an urgency, but the cadence to d minor in m. 254 should almost be angry. Please sharpen the tone here and crescendo into that cadence. Please pay attention to syllabic stress when all five voices.

Mm. 247-249 descending movement in the lower three voices is a sure indication that there is Hell on Earth. Please make an intense mdv there, and that will allow for the upper voices to continuo that gesture in a higher register.

New text: "They mourn, because none comes to the assembly"

Subtext: Nobody is here to help us

This section is significantly more chromatic than the others.

Mm. 255-259 lower for voices. Lots of diction, lots of syllabic stress, but sotto voce. M. 259 - alto should be a whisper if at all possible. This is brooding anger...the kind of anger where you try not to lose your temper and so you externalize it by expressing with tremendous amounts of sharp consonants and volume control.

Turn on the heat at the TII line in m. 269 - this opens the flood gates and should be espressivo, cutting through this mood. All shit is about to break loose in the next section. Don't let this be a call to sing mm.270-272 poco mf after the cry out. Everyone else turn up the heat slightly, and with a strong glottal on 'o of omnes in this bar, is where we have arrived to the Lamentation's climax.

### **Section F4: mm. 271-293**

The climax of the work. Ultra strength.

"All her gates are desolate, her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she herself is in bitterness."

Jerusalem is pissed.

This whole section should be militaristic and hot-blooded. Poco con moto – let it move. Highlight mm. 275-276 call in T2 and then its resolution-like response in T1 at mm.279-280.

Bring the boil to a simmer from mm.281-284 beat one. In m. 284 b. 2 is a mega cross relation between tenor 2 (Eb) and alto (E-nat). This should be like gasoline on a burning fire. Do give the semitone dissonance a little more width to create more vibratory cycles, think less of a modern interpretation of a half-step clash and more or a fight for

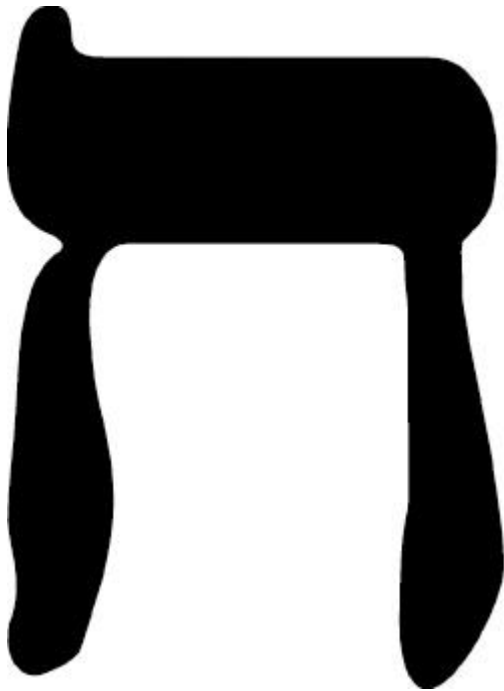
direction. Let the fire ROAR mm. 285-290. And then a slight cooling off but still hot and with little ritardando going into the final cadence.

Just because it's loud, it doesn't give us the permission to sing out of tune. Please manage breath, tone, and volume accordingly in your own voice as to not affect overall intonation. (speaking mostly for myself here...)

Note check – Tenor II – m. 287 b. 1-2, Eb, not E-natural

### Section H1: mm. 294-300

Heth : Eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet – loving kindness of the Lord.



A sequence of seven ascending c minor five note scales then returns a sequence of descending c minor five note scales in this seven bar Ferris wheel episode.

Piu misterioso. This comes after musical battle. Let it sound like the flickering embers of the burnt city.

This means start pianissimo and mdv, apex at m.297 to forte, and then back to pp by the end. Once the alto announces the letter, throw all diction out the window. Let it sound basically just like one long E vowel.

### Section H2: mm. 301-339

“Her adversities are become of the head, her enemies prosper, for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions”

Mocking. Snide.

The recording seemed to go really well in this section upon second listen. Only at spots did it seem unsure...please look at your own parts to figure out where those are.

Starting in m. 318, "Quia Dominus locutus est," please put marcato markings over each 8<sup>th</sup> note of a barred four eight note (i.e. T1 m. 320)

Accel. Starting in m. 324 to m. 339

### **Section H3: mm. 339-349**

Her children are gone into captivity before the adversary

Remarkably slow and all extremely hushed, all sotto voce. This will all parts to simplify the tone. (Eric)

In the Harry Christophers recording of Lamentations, he explores with a A-natural in the alto line in m. 340 and in its consequent phrase in m. 344. It might be worth playing around with one of these bars as an A-natural, though I'd have to explore more about why this choice was made...ficta don't appear in this edition we are working from, and such, I'd have to reference original material.

C minor world...scary. And even more odd that we arrive in the parallel major at the three bar codetta, mm. 347-349. We could give a bit of a swell here.

All moving parts in sotto voce could add slightly more color like T2 in m.347, but most of the syncopations in this section will give enough profile without getting louder. That said, all initial entries should not sound syncopated. Please aim toward the middle of the phrases.

[a] vowel – please don't tighten that closed when moving to lower registers.

### **Section H4: mm. 349-368**

It's a fervent, desperate prayer, but should not be felt in the compound. Please keep a sense of heavy 1 -2 - 3 with a duple feel.

MP dynamic

We'll sort out mm. 358-360

Louder dynamic in m. 364

### **Section I: mm. 369-575**

Concrete. Or iron. F without any dynamic shading. No opinions in the running eighth notes. This final section should be stoic and petrified.

Tu-um

Keep f all through the section

Will be in 4, and somewhat slow. Let's not rush the tempo.