

STEVEN SNOWDEN

ASCALON

STRING QUARTET  
AND ORGAN

# ASCALON

COMMISSIONED FOR ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
ARLINGTON, VA

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 7 MIN.

## Program Notes

Born in the 3rd Century, Saint George is a prominent figure in Christian history, recognized as a martyr and a saint. He is known for his unwavering faith and his courage in the face of persecution. As legend has it, he single-handedly slayed a dragon with his lance named **Ascalon**. This enduring story has often been interpreted as a metaphor for the Christian struggle against evil, both within oneself and in the world at large. During the Crusades, Saint George became a symbol of Christian valor and bravery, and his image was often used as a standard in battle. To this day, Saint George remains an important figure in Christianity, inspiring believers to remain steadfast in their faith and to resist the temptations of the world.

I've always been fascinated with the power of storytelling. Whether fact, fiction, or somewhere in between, stories can be an extremely effective way to inspire people to focus their efforts on a common goal. The life of Saint George is one of the most enduring legends of the western world and has inspired millions. In this piece, I wanted to find a way to explore ways in which this concept can be represented musically. Melodic phrases in the beginning and end of the piece are meant to mimic natural speaking patterns. This reflects the ways in which stories are passed from person to person, evolving from simple historical facts to ancient legends over time. The middle section of the piece makes extensive use of aleatory, a technique that instructs the players to ignore the others and play independently. Over time, this cacophony gives way to unity as players gradually begin to band together, proving that the power of the ensemble is greater than the sum of its parts. This is meant to reflect the many ways in which stories can focus the zeal of many on a common goal, as the legend of Saint George has done for over 1,600 years.

# ASCALON

Steven Snowden

Bleak, Lyrical ♩ = 56

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Organ

Rumble cluster

7

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*seagull effect*

Detailed description: This block contains the first four staves of a musical score. The first staff is for Violin I (Vln. I), the second for Violin II (Vln. II), the third for Viola (Vla.), and the fourth for Violoncello (Vc.). A measure number '7' is written above the first staff. Vln. I has a fermata over a whole note in measure 7, followed by a triplet of eighth notes starting in measure 8. Vln. II and Vla. play a melodic line starting in measure 7, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Vc. has a 'seagull effect' starting in measure 7, marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The score continues with rests for Vln. I and Vln. II, and a fermata for Vln. II and Vla. in measure 9.

Org.

*8va*

Detailed description: This block contains the Organ part of the score, consisting of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and has an *8va* marking above it. It contains a melodic line starting in measure 7. The middle and bottom staves are in bass clef and contain sustained notes and tremolos. The Organ part continues with sustained notes and tremolos in measure 9.

12

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*p*

*mp*

8va

3

(8) 1

Org.

16 (8)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*8va*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains five staves. The top four staves are for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The bottom staff is for Organ. The Violin I staff begins at measure 16 with a dynamic of *mp* and features a triplet of eighth notes. The Violin II staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes at *mp*. The Viola staff also begins with a triplet of eighth notes at *mp*. The Violoncello staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes at *mp*. The Organ part has three staves; the top staff has a dynamic of *8va* and contains a melodic line with a fermata. The Organ's lower staves provide a harmonic accompaniment with sustained notes and chords. A dashed line is present at the top of the page, and a bracket groups the Organ staves.

Musical score for measures 19 and 20, featuring Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Organ (Org.).

**Measure 19:** Vln. I has a whole rest. Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. play eighth-note triplets starting on G4, F#4, and E4 respectively. The Organ part has a whole note chord of G4, F#4, and E4.

**Measure 20:** Vln. I has a whole rest. Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. play eighth-note triplets starting on E4, D4, and C4 respectively. The Organ part has a whole note chord of E4, D4, and C4.

Measure numbers 19 and 20 are indicated above the first and second staves respectively. A dashed line above measure 19 indicates a repeat sign. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano).

21

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The musical score consists of five systems. The first system contains four staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The second system contains the Organ part, which is written on three staves (treble and two bass clefs). The Vln. I and Vln. II parts feature a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings of *mp* and *mf*. The Vla. and Vc. parts also feature triplets and dynamic markings of *mp* and *mf*. The Organ part features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. The score is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings of *mp* and *mf*.

25 Fervent ♩ = 120\*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

24

*f*

3

3

Play phrase approx.  
8 times in total

*f*

3

3

Play phrase approx.  
9 times in total

\*Tempo should be approximately 120,  
but independent of all other players.  
(applies to all box notation)

Start Zimbelstern 25 Fervent ♩ = 120\*

Org.

Start Zimbelstern 25

Fervent ♩ = 120\*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

Play phrase approx. 22 times in total

Play phrase approx. 8 times in total

*f*

*f*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains five staves. The top two staves are for Violin I and Violin II, both in treble clef. The third staff is for Viola, in alto clef (C4 on the second line), with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The fourth staff is for Violoncello, in bass clef, with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The bottom three staves are for Organ, with the top staff in treble clef and the two lower staves in bass clef. The Viola part features a boxed-in phrase starting at measure 31, consisting of a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, then a quarter rest, and another triplet of eighth notes. The Cello part features a boxed-in phrase starting at measure 34, consisting of a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, then a quarter rest, and another triplet of eighth notes. Both boxed phrases are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Performance instructions above the boxes indicate that the Viola phrase should be played approximately 22 times in total and the Cello phrase approximately 8 times in total. The Organ part consists of six measures of whole rests.

Play phrase approx. 2 more times

Play phrase approx. 7 times total

37

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The image shows a page of a musical score for five instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Organ. The score is written in treble clef for the strings and organ. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first measure is marked with the number 37. There are four rehearsal marks, each consisting of a box around a phrase of music and a text instruction above it. The first rehearsal mark is for the Vln. I part, starting at measure 37 and ending at measure 40. The instruction is "Play phrase approx. 2 more times". The second rehearsal mark is for the Vln. II part, starting at measure 37 and ending at measure 40. The instruction is "Play phrase approx. 8 more times". The third rehearsal mark is for the Vla. part, starting at measure 37 and ending at measure 40. The instruction is "Play phrase approx. 6 more times". The fourth rehearsal mark is for the Vc. part, starting at measure 37 and ending at measure 40. The instruction is "Play phrase approx. 6 more times". The Organ part has a brace on the left side and contains several measures of rests. The Vln. I part has a second rehearsal mark starting at measure 47 and ending at measure 50. The instruction is "Play phrase approx. 7 times total".

43

Vln. I

Play phrase approx.  
7 times total

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

51

Play phrase approx. 2 more times

Play phrase approx. 8 times in total

Play phrase approx. 11 times in total

Play phrase approx. 14 more times

Play phrase approx. 4 more times

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

**61** Beefy, Dramatic

56

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*mf* *ff*

Stop  
Zimblstern

**61** Beefy, Dramatic

Org.

*ff*

Play phrase approx.  
4 more times

63

Vln. I

Vln. II

Play phrase approx.  
6 more times

Vla.

Play phrase approx.  
5 more times

Vc.

Org.

The musical score is arranged in five systems. The first system (measures 63-66) features Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla. with a boxed-in phrase and the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 4 more times'. The second system (measures 67-70) features Vln. II and Vla. with a boxed-in phrase and the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 6 more times'. The third system (measures 71-74) features Vla. with a boxed-in phrase and the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 5 more times'. The fourth system (measures 75-78) features Vc. with a long note, a dynamic marking of *p*, and a *ff* marking. The fifth system (measures 79-82) features the Organ (Org.) with sustained notes. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, accents, and dynamic markings.

Play phrase approx. 5 times in total

69

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The score consists of five staves. The Vln. I staff has a highlighted phrase in a box, starting at measure 69. The phrase includes a triplet of eighth notes, a quarter note with an accent (>), and another triplet of eighth notes. The Vc. staff features a series of chords with slurs and dynamic markings *p* and *ff*. The Org. section is divided into three staves, with the top two staves containing chords and the bottom staff containing a single melodic line.

Play phrase approx.  
3 more times

75

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The musical score is arranged in a system with five staves. The top four staves are for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The bottom three staves are for the Organ, with a brace on the left. The Violin I staff has a rehearsal mark at measure 75. A box highlights a phrase in measures 75-76, with the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 3 more times'. The Violin II staff has a box highlighting a phrase in measures 75-76, with the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 7 times in total'. The Viola staff has a box highlighting a phrase in measures 75-76, with the instruction 'Play phrase approx. 3.5 more times'. The Violoncello staff features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Organ part consists of three staves with sustained chords and moving bass lines.

**83** Resolute

Play phrase approx. 4 times in total

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Violin I part begins at measure 81 with a phrase consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes, including two triplet markings. The Violin II part has a similar phrase starting in measure 83, also with triplet markings. The Viola part enters in measure 83 with a dynamic marking of *ff* and plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Violoncello part provides a harmonic foundation with sustained notes and some movement in measure 83.

**83** Resolute

Musical score for Organ. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three staves: the upper staff in treble clef, the middle staff in bass clef, and the lower staff in bass clef. The organ part features sustained chords and moving lines in all three staves, providing a harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment for the string ensemble.

86

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

*ff*

Play phrase approx. 4 times in total

3

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 17, starting at measure 86. It features five staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Organ (Org.). The Vln. I staff has a treble clef and contains a few notes in the final measure, marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The Vln. II staff has a treble clef and contains a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure, which is highlighted in a box with the instruction "Play phrase approx. 4 times in total". The Vla. staff has a bass clef and contains a complex melodic line with many notes and slurs throughout the page. The Vc. staff has a bass clef and contains a few notes in the final measure. The Org. staff consists of three staves (treble and two bass clefs) and contains a few notes in the final measure. The page number "17" is in the top right corner, and "86" is in the top left corner.

90

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

This musical score page contains measures 90 through 93. It features five staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Organ (Org.).

- Vln. I:** Measures 90-93. Measure 90 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of quarter notes with accents and slurs. Measure 91 has a double bar line. Measure 92 has a double bar line. Measure 93 ends with a double bar line.
- Vln. II:** Measures 90-93. Measure 90 contains a triplet of eighth notes, which is boxed. The rest of the staff is a solid black line.
- Vla.:** Measures 90-93. The staff uses a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents and slurs.
- Vc.:** Measures 90-93. The staff uses a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains sustained chords with long horizontal lines indicating their duration.
- Org.:** Measures 90-93. The organ part is written in three staves (treble, bass, and a lower bass). It features sustained chords with long horizontal lines.

94

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

98

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mp

Org.

103 Brittle

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *mf* Sul Pont

Vc. *mf* Pizz.

103 Brittle

Org.

107

Vln. I *pp* *pp* *8va*

Vln. II *pp* *pp* *8va*

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 107-110. Vln. I starts with a *pp* note in measure 107, then rests in 108, and plays a tremolo in 109-110. Vln. II has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 107, then rests in 108, and plays a tremolo in 109-110. Vla. plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents in measures 107-110. Vc. plays a simple rhythmic pattern in measures 107-110. The Organ part is silent throughout. Dynamics include *pp* and *8va* markings.

111 (8)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first four staves are for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The fifth staff is for Organ, which is divided into three systems (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The score is divided into three measures. Violin I and II play a continuous eighth-note pattern. Viola plays a melodic line with accents. Violoncello plays a simple harmonic line. Organ parts are marked with rests.

8) 8va

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla.

Vc.

*mp*

Org.

118 (8)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*mp* *pp*

*mp* *pp*

Org.

*pp*

121

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

8va<sup>-</sup>

*pp*

8va<sup>-</sup>

*pp*

Org.

125 (8)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first two staves, Vln. I and Vln. II, are in treble clef and play a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The Vln. I staff starts at measure 125 with a dynamic of *mp* and ends at measure 128 with a dynamic of *pp*. The Vln. II staff also starts at measure 125 with a dynamic of *mp* and ends at measure 128 with a dynamic of *pp*. The third staff, Vla., is in bass clef and plays eighth-note patterns with accents. The fourth staff, Vc., is in bass clef and plays a simple bass line. The fifth staff, Org., is in treble clef and has a few notes in the first measure, followed by rests.

**130** Tenacious

129

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

ff

Ord.

ff

**130** Tenacious

Org.

133

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. arco  
*ff*

Org.

*ff*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 29, starting at measure 133. It features five staves. The top four staves are for string instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The bottom staff is for Organ (Org.). The Vc. staff is marked 'arco' and 'ff'. The Org. staff has a 'ff' marking in the second measure. The music consists of rhythmic patterns with slurs and accents. The Vln. I and Vla. parts have similar rhythmic motifs, while the Vln. II part has a more melodic line. The Vc. part provides a bass line with some rhythmic accompaniment. The Organ part has a simple melodic line in the right hand and rests in the left hand.

136

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

139

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

**142** Swirling, Jubilant

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

**142** Swirling, Jubilant

Org.

145

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

This musical score page contains measures 145, 146, and 147. The instruments are Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Organ. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello parts are written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Organ part is written in two staves, with the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The Organ part features a melodic line in the upper staff and a sustained harmonic accompaniment in the lower staff, indicated by long horizontal lines and curved ties. The string parts consist of rhythmic eighth-note patterns with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and slurs. The page number '33' is located in the top right corner, and the measure number '145' is at the beginning of the first staff.

This musical score page features five staves. The top four staves are for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The bottom two staves are for the Organ (Org.), with the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The music is written in a common time signature and includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and accidentals (flats). The Organ part includes a large, sweeping slur across the bottom two staves, indicating a sustained or glissando effect. The page is numbered 34 at the top left and 148 at the top left of the first staff.

151 Wistful ♩=56

150

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4

*mp*<sup>3</sup> 6

*mp*<sup>3</sup> 6

151 Wistful ♩=56

Org.

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4

*pp*

3 6

154

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first two staves are for Violin I and Violin II, both in treble clef. The third and fourth staves are for Viola and Violoncello, both in bass clef. The fifth staff is for Organ, with three sub-staves. Measure 154 is marked with a *p* dynamic. The Violin I part has a half note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note G4. The Violin II part has a half note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note G4. The Viola and Violoncello parts have a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note C4. The Organ part has a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note C4. The Organ part also features a 5th fingering and a 3rd fingering.

158

This musical score page contains five staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Org. The music is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three measures. The first measure (158) shows Vln. I and Vln. II with long notes, while Vla. and Vc. play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second measure (159) features triplets in the Vla. and Vc. parts, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third measure (160) continues the triplet patterns in the Vla. and Vc. parts, with a dynamic marking of *p* and a breath mark. The Organ part consists of a treble clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment and a bass clef staff with long notes.

This musical score page contains five staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Org. The Vln. I and Vln. II staves are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The Vla. and Vc. staves are in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The Org. part is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one flat. The score is divided into two measures, 161 and 162. In measure 161, the Vln. I and Vln. II staves have whole notes. The Vla. and Vc. staves have eighth-note patterns with accents and a triplet of eighth notes. The Org. part has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef and rests in the bass clef. In measure 162, the Vln. I and Vln. II staves have whole notes. The Vla. and Vc. staves have eighth-note patterns with accents and a triplet of eighth notes. The Org. part has a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef and rests in the bass clef. Dynamics include *mp* for the Vla. and Vc. parts.

163

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Org.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*mp*

seagull effect

Power off Organ

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 163 to 166. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Organ. Measures 163-165 show a melodic line in the strings, starting with a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamics are marked *pp*. Measure 166 features a 'seagull effect' in the cello, marked *mp*. The organ part is marked 'Power off Organ' in a box. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.