

Ross C. Bernhardt

THE COLOUR OF HIS HAIR



*Second Prize Winner of the 2015
Ithaca College Choral Composition Competition*

SATBB mixed choir, unaccompanied

2011

 **SWIRLY MUSIC**
www.SwirlyMusic.org

Composer's Note

In 1895 Oscar Wilde was imprisoned for two years for being a practicing homosexual, a crime in England at that time. Housman's poem, while seemingly tongue-in-cheek, was written in protest of Wilde's incarceration and a British court system so arbitrary in its justice that a man could conceivably be imprisoned because of "the colour of his hair."

The poem references hard labor punishments for prisoners which may be unfamiliar to singers today. "Oakum" is tarred fiber used in caulking ships, made by picking apart old rope by hand. Prisoners had to pick 3 to 6 pounds per day, which caused lacerations and calluses on the hands. While the "treadmill" is known today as an exercise device, it originated as a means of producing power for grinding grain. Prisoners often were forced to walk the treadmill 8 to 10 hours per day, 15 minutes on and 5 minutes off.

DR. ROSS C. BERNHARDT is Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, where he conducts Camerata Isla, University Singers, and teaches applied voice and choral methods. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting from Michigan State University, and Masters and Bachelors degrees from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University of Missouri, respectively.

Dr. Bernhardt previously served as Chair of the Music Department and Director of Choral Activities at Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee. He also served on the faculties of Columbia College (Missouri) and Lansing Community College (Michigan) and was a high school choral director in southwest Virginia.

An internationally recognized composer, Dr. Bernhardt has won first prize in the Ithaca College Choral Composition Competition (US), Silliman Anthem Award Competition (US), Longfellow Choral Composition Competition (US), and Concurso Internacional Amadeus de Composición Coral (Spain), and special commendation in the Phoenix Choral Composition Competition (UK). His compositions have been published by Hinshaw, Mark Foster, and Colla Voce.

*Self-published compositions are available via
www.bernhardtmusic.com*

The Colour of His Hair

1

A.E. Housman

Ross C. Bernhardt
(ASCAP)

Swing 8ths - ♩=90 *mp*

Soprano

Bass

mp Oh

Dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo

5

S

who is that young sin - ner with the hand - cuffs on his wrists? — And

B2

dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo

7

S

what has he been af-ter that they groan and shake their fists? And where-fore is he wear-ing — such a

B2

dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

10

S

con-science-strick - en air? Oh they're tak - ing him to pri - son — for the col - our of his hair. —

B2

dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo doo doo

2

13

S *'Tis a shame to hu - man na - ture, — such a*

A *mp*
Bop bop

T *mp*
Bop bop

B1 *mp*
Bop bop

B2 dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

16

S head of hair as his; In the good old time 'twas hang - ing — for the

A boo dah — Bop bop

T boo dah — Bop bop

B1 boo dah — Bop bop

B2 dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

18

S col-our — that it is; Though hang-ing is-n't bad e-nough and flay-ing would be fair For the

A boo dah — bop bop boo dah —

T boo dah — bop bop boo dah —

B1 boo dah — bop bop boo dah —

B2 dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm dm dm dm dm

21 *mp* 3

S name - less and a - bom - i - na - ble col - our of his hair. Oh a

A daht doo doo doo Oh a

T daht doo doo doo Oh a

B1 daht doo doo doo Oh a

B2 dm doo doo doo doo doo doo Oh a

24

S deal of pains he's ta - ken and a pret - ty price he's paid To hide his poll or dye it of a

A deal of pains he's ta - ken and a pret - ty price he's paid To hide his poll or dye it of a

T deal of pains he's ta - ken and a pret - ty price he's paid To hide his poll or dye it of a

B1 deal of pains he's ta - ken and a pret - ty price he's paid To hide his poll or dye it of a

B2 deal of pains he's ta - ken and a pret - ty price he's paid To hide his poll or dye it of a

27

S men - tion - a - ble shade; But they've pulled the beg - gar's hat off for the

A men - tion - a - ble shade; But they've pulled the beg - gar's hat off for the

T men - tion - a - ble shade; But they've pulled the beg - gar's hat off for the

B1 men - tion - a - ble shade; But they've pulled the beg - gar's hat off for the

B2 men - tion - a - ble shade; But they've pulled the beg - gar's hat off for the

4
29

S world to see and stare, And they're hal-ing him to jus-tice for the col-our of his hair. —

A world to see and stare, doo doo doo col-our of his hair. —

T world to see and stare, doo doo doo col-our of his hair. —

B1 world to see and stare, doo doo doo col-our of his hair. —

B2 world to see and stare, doo doo doo col-our of his hair. —

32

S

A

T

B1 *mp* bah dah doot n doot n doo daht

B2 *mp* doo doo doo doo dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

36

S

A

T *poco a poco cresc.* Dow dow dow dow dow

B1 bah dah doot n doot n doo daht bah dah doot n doot n

B2 dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo

39

S

A *poco a poco cresc.*
bah doot n doot n

T
dow dow dow dow dow dow

B1
doo daht bah dah doot n doot n doo daht

B2
dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

42

S

A
doo bah bah doot n doot n

T
dow dow dow dow dow

B1
bah dah doot n doot n doo daht

B2
dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

44

S
Bah doo bah doo bah

A
doo bah bah doot n doot n

T
dow dow dow dow dow

B1
bah dah doot n doot n doo daht

B2
dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

6

S Bah doo bah doo bah ___

A doo bah ___ bah doot n doot n

T dow dow dow dow ___ dow

B1 bah dah doot n doot n doo daht

B2 dm dm dm doo doo doo dm dm dm dm

48

S dah dah dah dah dah daht daht daht *f*

A doo bah dah dah dah dah dah daht *f* daht daht

T dow dow dah dah dah dah dah daht *f* daht daht

B1 bah dah doo dah dah dah dah dah daht daht daht

B2 dm dm dm dah dah dah dah dah *f* dm dm dm dm

50

S dah ee ah ee ah ee ah ___ Daht daht doo bah doo bah ___ Now 'tis *mf* *mp*

A dah dah ___ Daht daht dah dah ___ *mf*

T dah dah ___ Daht daht dah dah ___ *mf*

B1 dah dah ___ daht daht dah dah ___ *mf*

B2 dm dm dm dah dah dah dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo *mp*

53

S
oa - kum for his fin - gers and the tread - mill for his feet And the

A

T

B1

B2
dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo

55

S
quar - ry - gang in Port - land in the cold and in the heat And be -

A

T

B1

B2
dm dm dm dm dm dm dm doo doo doo

57

S
tween his spells of la - bour in the time he has to spare He can

A
doo doo time he has to spare He can

T
doo doo time he has to spare He can

B1
doo doo time he has to spare He can

B2
dm dm dm dm time he has to spare He can

60

S curse the God that made him for the col - our of his hair, —

A curse the God that made him for the col - our of his hair, —

T curse the God that made him for the col - our of his hair, —

B1 curse the God that made him for the col - our of his hair, —

B2 curse the God that made him for the col - our of his hair, —

62

S his hair.

A his hair.

T his hair.

B1 his hair.

B2 — dm dm dm dm his hair.

FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY