

OL' BLACK JOB

A CANTADA

by

William H. H. Rees

In Memoriam

This piece is dedicated to Eduardo Carrillo, who went to his eternal reward on July 17, 1997. Ed was a man of outstanding character and personal qualifications who saw goodness in everything. That goodness was reflected in his glorious work: he had a God-given ability to see and to paint, which enabled him to create things of great wonder and joy. Indeed, he will rank as one of the outstanding Mexican artists, not only of our time but of all time. He suffered greatly: as a human, as a foreigner, as a great artist whose work was not appreciated in his time, and in the last few months of his life from cancer. I understand that somewhere in the Bay Area, gangs would congregate at night in a parking lot for drug dealings and rumbles. On the outer wall of one of the surrounding buildings, Ed, out of the goodness of his heart, painted a magnificent mural, which had a civilizing effect. Suddenly the gangs were mollified. Then, someone, perhaps the owner of the store, painted over the mural. Ed learned about it in the middle of a lecture on the spiritual effects of art. I heard that Ed bowed his head and cried. When I told this to Chaz Garabedian, one of Ed's oldest and dearest friends, he said: "No; that's not right: Ed doesn't cry". What he stood for and what he did were enlightening and ennobling. His memory will be cherished by all who knew him, and his work will be greatly loved and admired. Yet, he endured as did Job/Joe to become an inspiration.

This piece was composed nearly two years ago and was not sent to friends. Ed did not see it. He would have liked it, not because it was good, but because he liked all such things, created or done by friends for the purpose and in the hope of doing good. I had planned to put the finishing touches on it and send it to him, but he had left for Baja, California, where he grew up and where he died.

Ed was a gift from God, and recognition of that should help those of us who grieve. May the loving Lord have mercy on his soul.

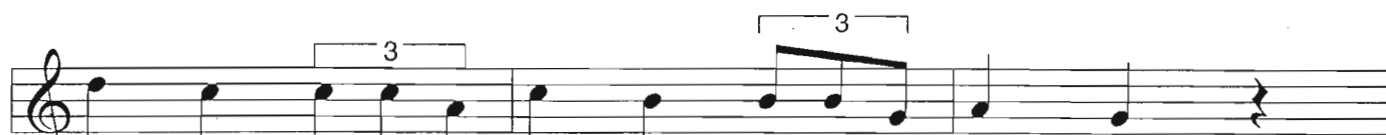
Because he never walked the ways of the world, I must believe that his place is high in heaven.

New Haven, CT
7/27/97


Chorus 1



Here's Joe! At peace with Yah - weh feel - ing con -



ten - ted like in-fants well fed with-out a wor - ry.



Joe lives just like the lin - nets trust - ing the



Lord will help him up steep hills, on earth, not of it.



Sing praise. He ne - ver doubt - ed Al - might - y



mer - cy in spite of Cir - ce, and what she tout - ed.



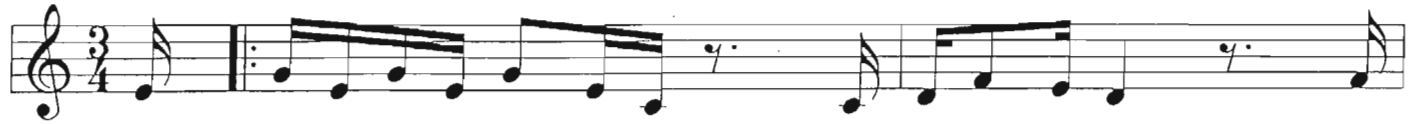
Give thanks. Ev - ery - one, A - men. Sing Al - le -



lu - ia, a gol - den rule, a re-make of A - dam.

Joe's Song 1

2



For - give me for nar-ciss - is - m for changng the real in -



to a ship of life - less nouns, with men as the keel. Please



do not deal with me as I so just - ly de - serve but



grant the mor - al crutch I need to make straight the curves.

2. Help me to sweat discrete bugs out,
as if they were flu,
and gluttony that motivates
most of what I do.
Let me enter nothingness,
where nothing remains
to keep me balled and chained to the
tyranny of change.

3. We know we won't be crushed beyond
what we can endure;
that every wound and heart brea^t comes
along with a cure;
that You will not allow those who
implore You to save
this broken, unrequited world
to be turned away.

4. Though Your perfection is beyond
our power to know,
Your gift of faith helps us to have
a foretaste of Taos.
Give glory, praise, and honor for
Cape Commodious;
for warmth, egrets, and ripples of
blue ribbon largesse.

Narrator's Song 1



Joe was born in Gro - ver with-out bal - ly-hoo to



dirt poor par - ents who did - n't have a clue and



moved to the boon - ies when his fa - ther died to a



Chorus

farm he bought with his N - S - L - I. It's



faith, hope, and love a - lone, pro -

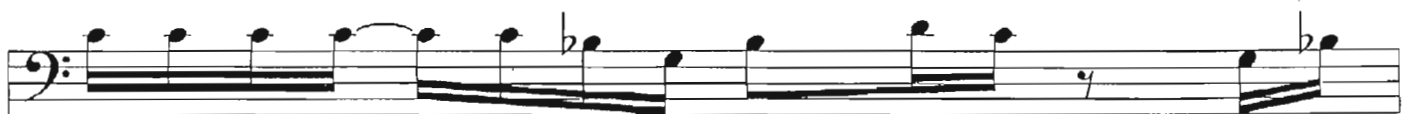


Verse 2

tect - ing him in - side the fail - safe zone. With his



wife, three chil - dren, and a mound of debt, be -



hind the eight ball but with-out one re - gret. When a



dec - ade drought split farm - ing at the seams, they ate



bread and wa - ter and a can of beans. It's



faith, hope, and love by which



goum - ba Joe can wring l' - chaim from kitsch. In



spite of no sav - ings, when a child got sick, which was like



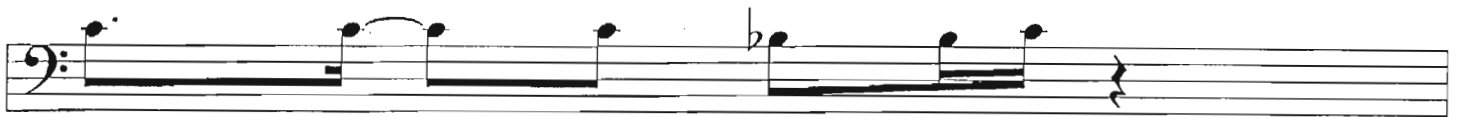
lis - ten - ing to a time bomb tick, he could



com - fort and change count - ry in - to us, from a



fall - ing call as though from Dam - as - cus. His



faith, hope, and love helps him

Verse 4



string to - geth - er trans - cen - den - tal gems. His hu -



mil - i - ty that o - thers like to hate, when



fear and jeal - ous - y would per - co - late, and be -



ne - fi - cience he choos - es for his shield be -

Chorus



comes the lance his en - e - mies use to steal. For

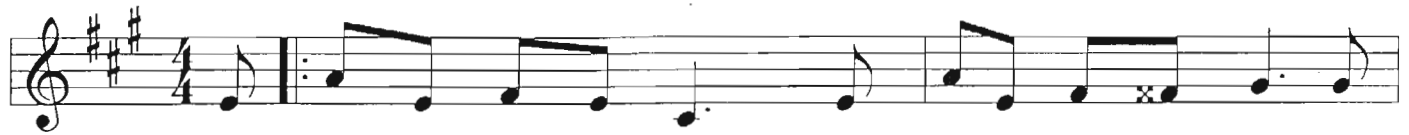


faith, hope, and love is all he



ev - er need - ed to al - lude the fall.

Oil Equipment Salesman's Song



The Bi - ble is un - sound, for if a Saint's held down, if



he's kept poor and in - se - cure, he will not wor-ship clowns.

2. His choices are quite few.
They all boil down to two:
Alleluias
or funerals,
some myth or I-C-U.

5. Self interest rules the earth,
as it's done since its birth:
"What's best for me"
translates to be
the basis of all worth.

3. But give the bloke some dough
and see how fast he goes
from saying prayers
and voodoo cares
to Alcapulco Gold.

6. A person must have pride
in order to abide
the Pentateuch
and Doomsday Book,
the knowledge God had lied.

4. Allow him to be free,
to rise from poverty,
from hair shirt reins
and mental chains,
by having property.

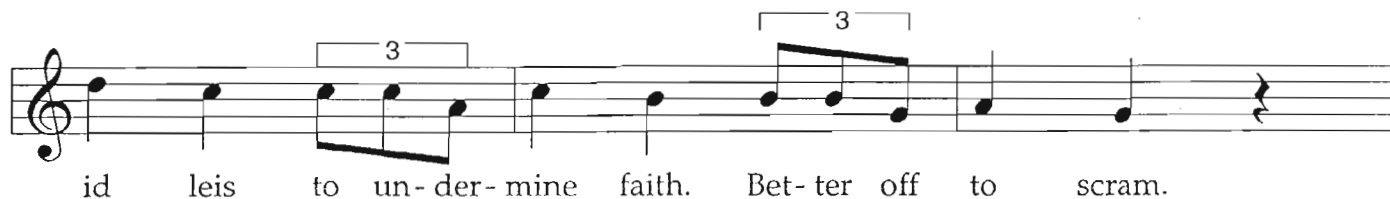
7. Make good ol' Joe a Tut,
and he will trust his gut:
in what he eats
and how he cheats
those lonely, moonstruck sluts.

8. Just let him strike some oil;
enough to make him royal
to be the sheik
of Grover's Peak,
and he will worship soil.

Chorus 2



It's a gi-gan-tic flim flam e-go and



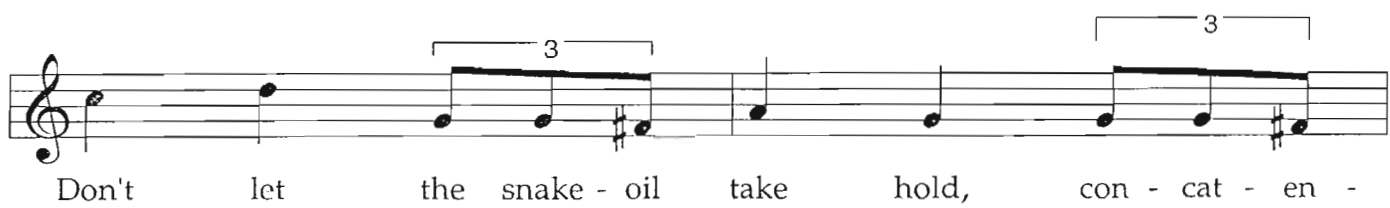
id leis to un-der-mine faith. Bet-ter off to scam.



Watch out! Pay no at-ten-tion, no need for



badg-es or get ad-van-tage. It's mal-e-dic-tion.



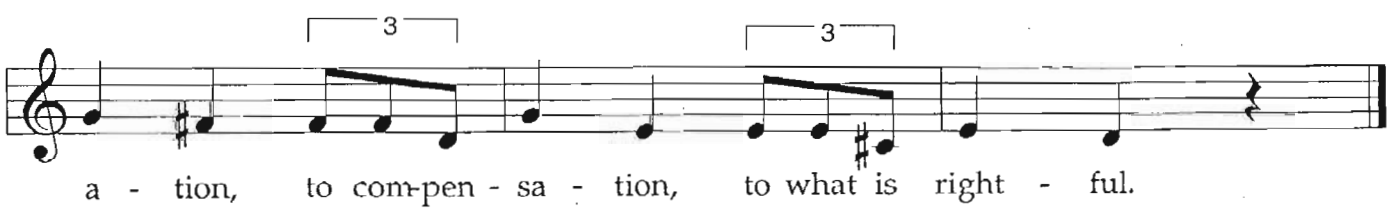
Don't let the snake-oil take hold, con-cat-en-



ate you; it will de-flate you in-to a cold mold.

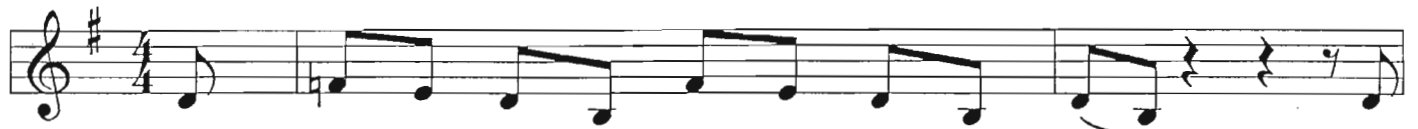


Don't think you are en-ti-tled to a found-



a-tion, to com-pen-sa-tion, to what is right-ful.

Joe's Song 2



I can't be - lieve that I have been so bles-sed to



have more oil strikes tha - an all the el - se. This



swamp worth no more than a pile of rocks, is

Verse 2



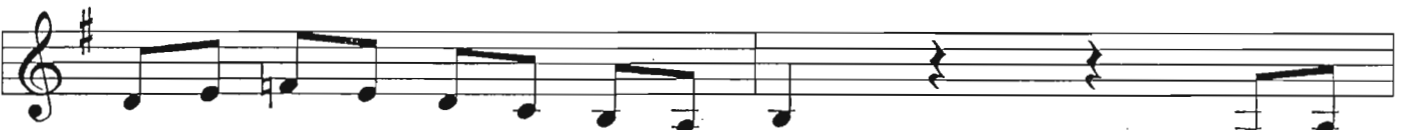
now worth more than the gold of Fort Kno-x. Each



stock I bought by throw-ing ti - ny da - rts but



now the pri - ces have gone off the cha - rts. My



name is on ev - ery - one els - e's lips; in the

Verse 3



me - di - a; and or Forbe's rich - est li - ist. Yet



I must not de-ceive my-self that I - I can

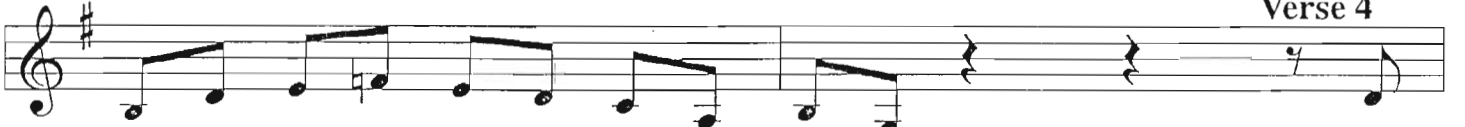


take the cred-it and to live a li-ie. The



God of A-bra-ham chan-ges our names, as

Verse 4



signs that we are no long-er the sa-me. I



pray I may sing prais-es to the Lo-rd; re-



main stead-fast when all the hea-thens ro-ar; ho-



san-nas to ki-mo-sa-bi and friend, Who



gives more than we ev-er ap-pre-he-nd.

Narrator's Song 2

Verse 1

To drain rain off he be-gan to drill a hole, which

punc - tured un - dis - cov - ered veins of black gold and was sur -

prised to be - come a bil - lion - aire with the

re - sour - ces of what was bur - ied there.

Chorus

Faith, hope, and love pushed Joe up

to the top of Mount Al - tis - si - mo. Try - ing

to es - cape ex - is - tence on the fringe and to

fill her bore - dom with a buy - ing binge, his wife

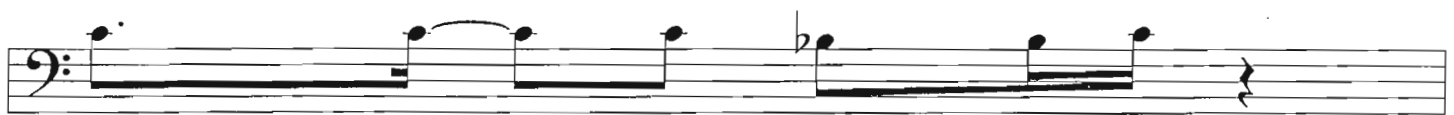


en - tert-ained the Who's Who at the shore with a



bouf - fant get - up and a mat - a - dore. By

Chorus



faith, hope, and love he could



do what was need - ed to a - chieve the should. His first

Verse 3



daugh - ter al - most o - ver-dosed on crack; his



young-er be - came a nymph - o - ma - ni - ac; his



son was wound - ed on a mo vic set af - ter



try - ing to re - nege on gam - bling debts. His

Chorus



faith, hope, and love's the DOS a -

Verse 4



gainst ev - ery - one els - e's "Save my ass." All thought



wealth en - ti - tle - ment to lib - er - ty, giv - ing



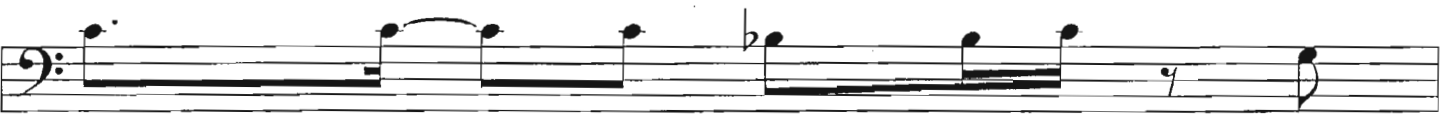
them the pow - er of the de - i - ty. On - ly



Joe re - lies up - on his faith a - lone, ho - ning



him on - to an ev - er - last - ing throne.



Faith, hope, and love's the rule that



puts the bound - less in the smal - lest tool.

Joe's Song 3



All this wealth has deep sixed me to the depths of mis - er - y,



Keep me faith - ful to Your Word, Peac - a - ble cloud - burst.

2. What I thought would bring us joy
is but a demonic ploy.
Keep me trusting and preferred,
Merciful earthquake.

5. I have followed all the does,
yet in everything I lose.
Keep me free of Lucifer,
Graceous tornado.

3. My composure had collapsed;
every expectation axed.
May Your Voice be always heard,
Glorious darkness.

6. It's as though some cancer changed
all my happiness to pain.
You are my great comforter,
Felicitious blizzard.

4. Oh! My soul, what have I done?
Why has my depression won?
Life without You is absurd;
Bountiful landslide.

7. All my hopes and dreams destroyed,
like the glory that was Troy.
Life without You is a dirge,
Kindly volcano.

8. I put my belief in One
Who observes me come undone.
To avoid satanic lure,
Generous ice storm.

Narrator's Song 3



Jump - ing out of Gen - e - sis two opp - o - sites, with a



sys - tol - ic myth-os of a par - a - chute and a



tri - age sach - el of ex - per - i - ence to help our



home - boy re - gain his con - fi - dence. This



push, this pull, this pass at him, the



choice of mer - ry - go or may-hem.

Hagar's Song

1

Come a - way with me and you'll be hap - py.

3

No more slings and ar - rows, you'll be care - free.

5

You de - serve to be with some - one pret - ty,

7

Beau - ti - ful and love - a - ble, just like me.

9

I will give you "It" to set your mind free,

11

keep you from the riff raff and the ban - shees.

13

You need some - one by you who is chic - chic,

15

glam - or - ous and am - or - ous and sex - y.

17



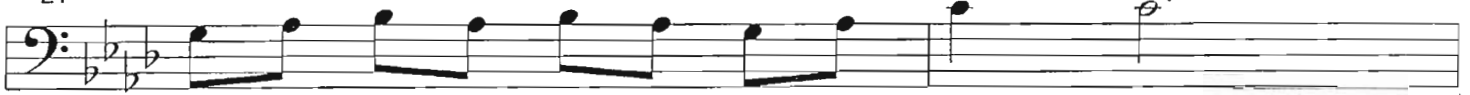
I have what you need to keep a ho - jo.

19



It's the ex - tra ummph for get - ting hi - lo.

21



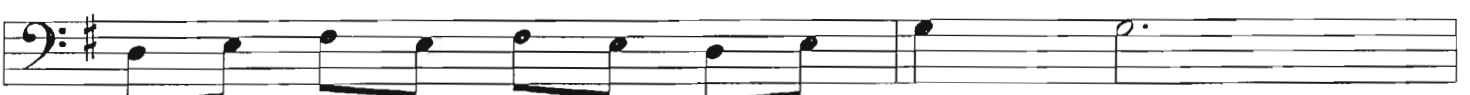
You can - not re - ly up - on your so - ho,

23



to pro - tect your - self from feel - ing so - so.

25



Just a lit - tle here to make the flo - slow;

27



ev - ery now and then to set the no - mo.

29



Ev - ery oth - er day to lay the bo - tow;

31



up and down the al - ley for a row - po.

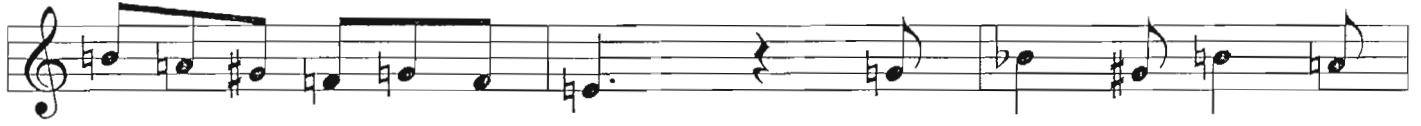
Sarah's Song



You are sub-stance with - out a dent, your ev - ery point e - qui - dis -



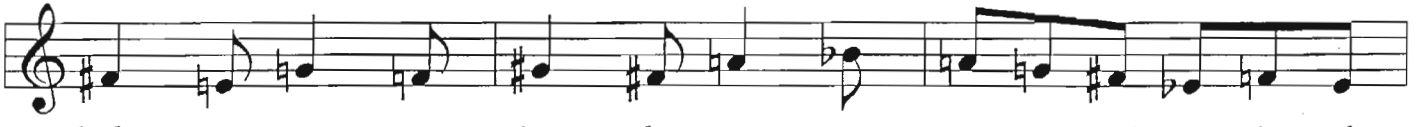
tant; rich - er than all of the treas - ure



that the Get - ty has acqu - ired. You're great - er than each



fi - nite sum and deep - er than can be fath - omed. As



light en - com - pass - ing the stars con - vert - ing each to an al -



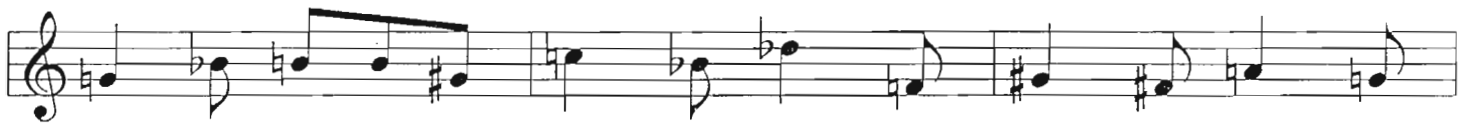
tar. Your per - fec - tion is on - ly sought, is



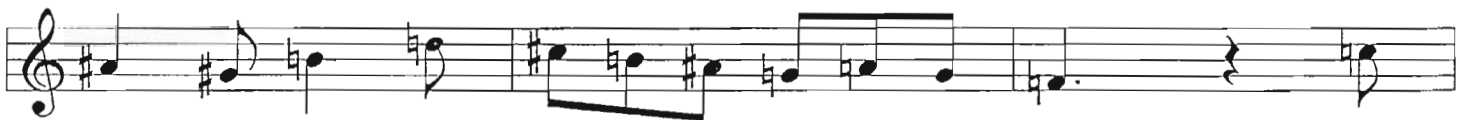
such that can't ev - er be taught. Your ar - e - a can be set



down on - ly by us - ing an un - known.



I'll give my want for your ran - som, my sav - ings for res -



ti - tu - tion, and stand in for you on the line, or



take your place for do - ing time.

Joe's Song 4



I'm a one man dias - por - a in a land that val - ues more.



Help me praise in word and deed, Thun - der - ous si - lence.

2. Terror rages in our streets;
rape and incest in our sheets.
You are all I'll ever need,
Nuclear vastness.

5. We emasculate the weak,
throw the fetus out to reek.
May You be ever satisfied,
Common omniscience.

3. I see justice self-destruct,
I see innocence get fucked.
You will not abandon me,
Logical nightmare.

6. We tie grandpa in a chair
as a testament we care.
And forever glorified,
Split second aeon.

4. I know many capricorns
who wish they had not been born.
Your grace is what sets us free,
Heavy perfection.

7. Wives and husbands dig their claws
into one another's jaws.
Help me to be fortified,
Tangible cypher.

8. The Galapagos has become
a colossal heap of dung.
So I won't be mortified,
Linear Endless.

Narrator's Song 4



Three lead - ing gu - rus came to give their ad-vice. The



first was a - live by just a roll of dice. In a



con - cen - tra - tion camp a - bout to die when a



Ger - man Cap - tain he knew hap - pened by. He



spoke so well the Cap - tain nev - er knew this



drink - ing bud - dy was a Po - lish Jew. So the



sen - tence was va - ca - ted on the spot; and they



cel - e - bra - ted on his O - der yacht.

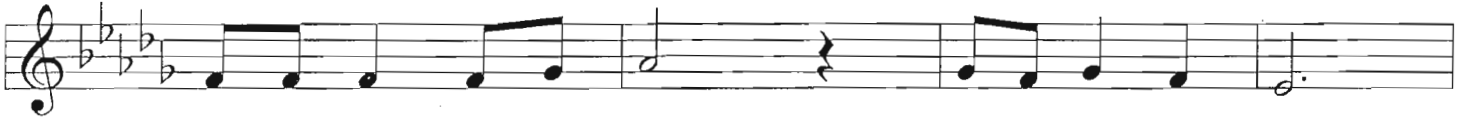
Politician's Song



Ei - ther by ones-self or through the na-tion state,



our si - ne qua non is to dom - i - nate;



All war and strat - e - gies bring on such path - os;



ev - 'ry set-tle-ment end-ing in cha-os.



Needed is Number Two Pax Brit-tan - i - a,



a world com-mon wealth to stem ma - ni - a.

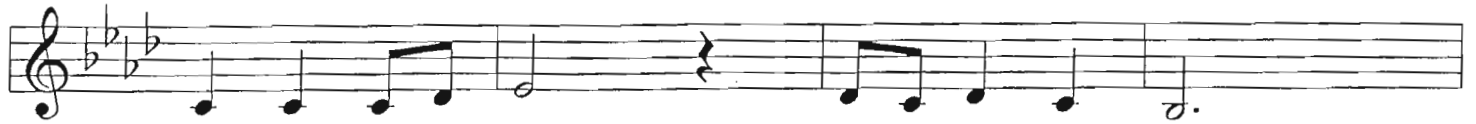


Some su - pra struc-ture to fix a sound ma - trix



to reign in our e - mo-tion - al sol-stice.

A



Sec - re - tar - i - at of the wis - est ones,



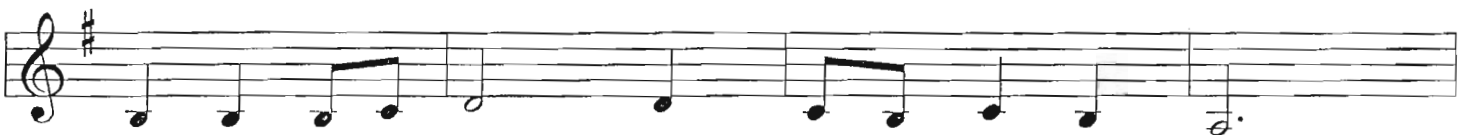
in con - cert a - gainst hacks, har - lots, and huns; pro -



tec - ted and en - forced by a glo - bal fleet,



di - rec - ted by a pla - ton - ic e - lite.



On - ly if we can get a - bove and be - yond



will we ha - ve or - der of a com - mon bond.



Chan - nel your re - sour - ces to our na - scent putsch;

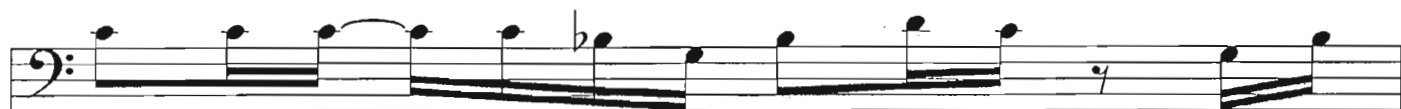


be im - mor - tal - ized as our burn - ing bush.

Narrator's Song 5



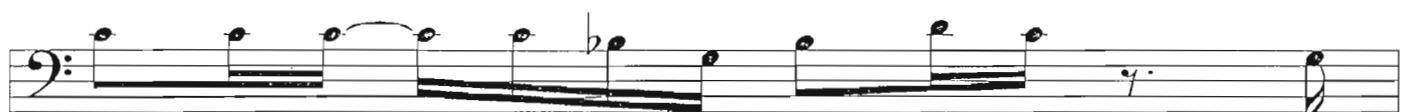
The next en - tered busi - ness dur - ing World War II, buy - ing



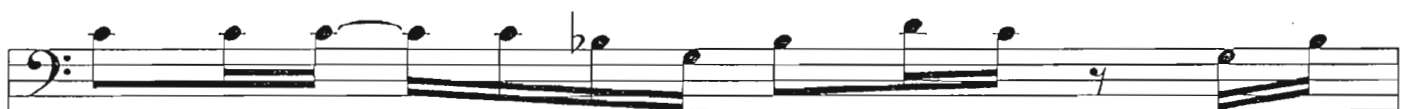
va - cant build - ings with rents o - ver - due. When the



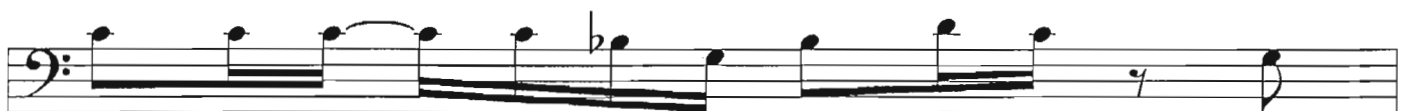
Coun - cil lif - ted wage and price con - trols, he be -



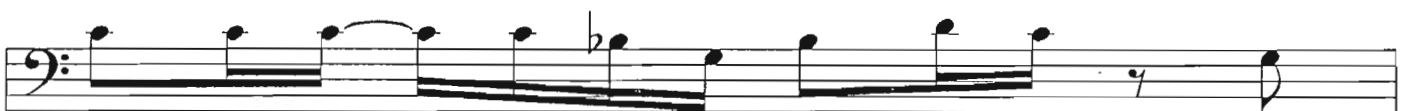
came so rich he bought a sil - ver Rolls and,



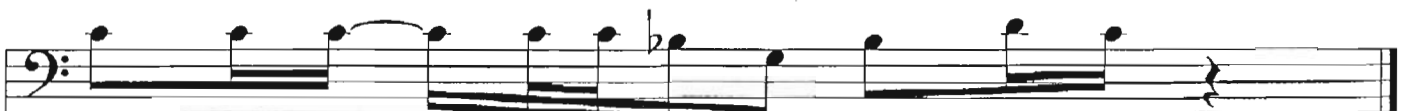
in So - mal - ia ev - ery tree so cheap, cut for



lum - ber to fi - nance a flock of jeeps; which



sold so well when des - ert sands rolled up the



tribe named him Ec - o - nom - ic Laur - e - ate.

Economist's Song



It's the e-con - o - my on which must be spent



what sur-plus there is, not on gov-ern-ment.



Cre-a-tion o - f wealth and the re-sult - ing jobs



for pro - duction are what tax - a - tion robs.



When me - di-um mon - ey in-come is kept low,



the cap is put on fam - i - ly cash flow.



Just think what could be done to the G - D - P



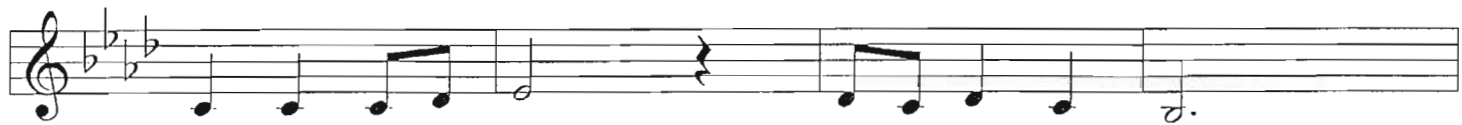
if the hoi pol - loi went on shop-ping sprees. To



pro - duce up - per - most out of ev - ery cup,



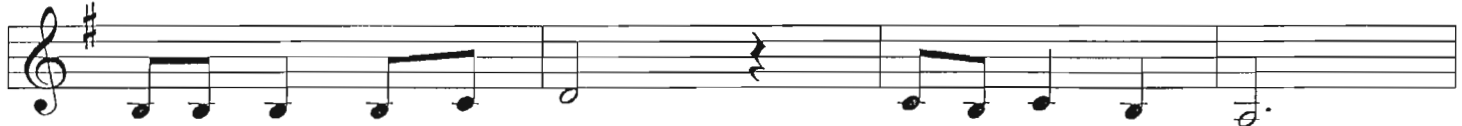
we should build the base from the bot - tom up. Aim



at the Cen - tral Bank and the S - E - C



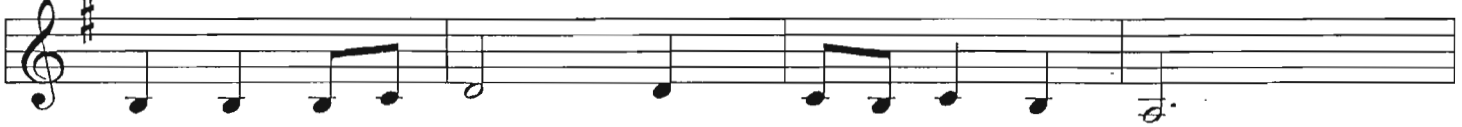
to take them a - part and set bus - iness free.



Mar - ket right he - li - um tends to lev - i - tate,



pull - ing the un - em - ployed to work in its wake.



We need your ass - is - tance so that we can sack

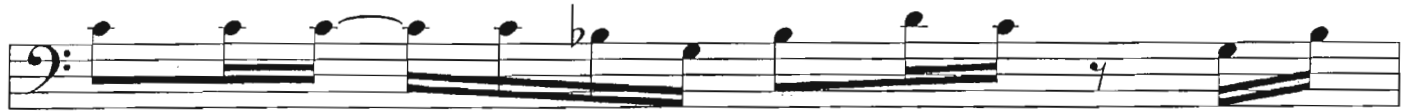


all the bot - tle - necks with our high - tech PAC.

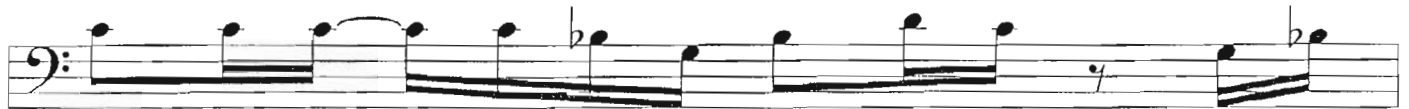
Narrator's Song 6



Our third's a doc - tor who in - vent - ed tar used in



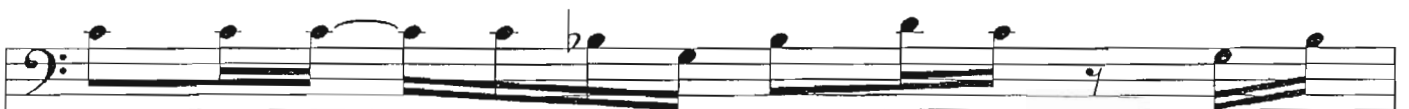
plas - tic sur - ger - y to cov - er scars. Link - ing



a com - pu - ter to a mi - cro - scope to de -



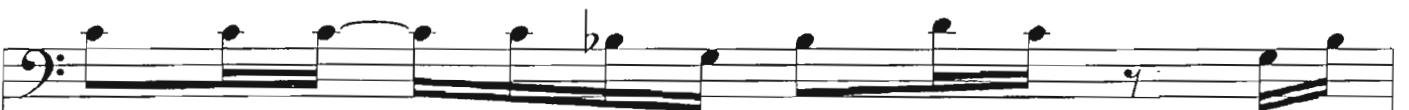
tect the chan - ges of an i - so - tope; con - cen -



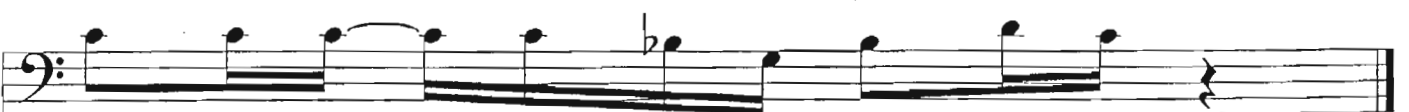
tra - ting on New - ton - i - an pro - teins and, then,



slic - ing mu - tants with a la - ser beam; hemoved

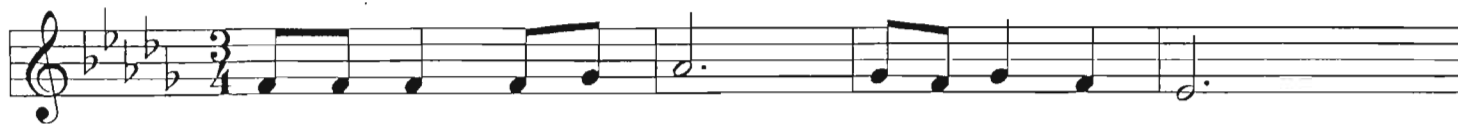


med - i - cine be - yond mere nov - a - caine to the



thres - hold of e - lim - i - nat - ing Paine.

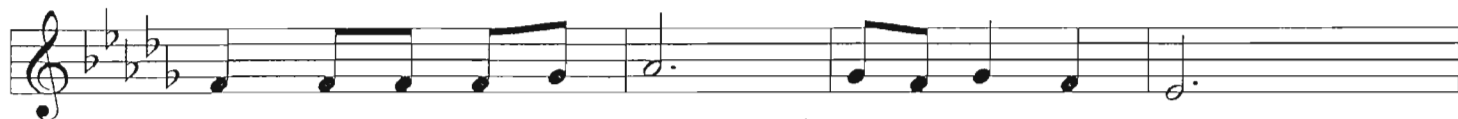
Doctor's Song



Be - fore you en - ter in - to al - li - an - ces,



see what you can get from the sci - en - ces.



Man - kind's de - pen - dent on its gen - et - ic code,



on the chem - is - try of this key pay - load.



Ev - ery de - for - mit - y leaves a well marked trail



back to mol - e - cules which have been de - railed



or to im - bal - an - ces caus - ing suf - fer - ing,



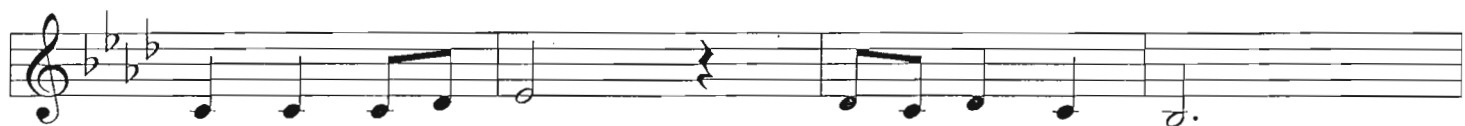
which stand be - tween us and the Ni - be - lung.



Med - i - cine has the means of di - la - ting grace,



of cut - ting ties to pur - i - fy the race; of



chil - ling stim - u - li of a - myg - dal - as,



where the gen - i - i can hide to spread in - fa - ta.



Our aim is to cre - ate the root - ol - o - gy,



which will change a stump to a mus - tard tree.



Help us find can - di - dates for ex - per - i - ments



to join us in this new age sac - ra - ment.

Joe's Song 5



Here at the ap - o - gee of free - dom and cen - ter



stage, as spent as at a fi - nal state of



AIDS. In ful - fill - ing all of the i - deals of Jef - fer -



son, but as emp - ty as from some ad - dic -



tion. Cap - i - tal that's need - ed to un - der - write sur - i -



ty be - com - ing o - cca - sions of blas - phem -



y. Which is not to say mon - ey in it - self is to



blame for the Sun King syn - drome that it con -



tains; i - so - la - ting us from what's wor - thy of child-like



trust, the way pass - ion turns a - ga - pe to



lust; as young turks at a moun - tain in contempt are pre -



pared to scale the sum - mit just be - cause it's



there; or as a floe of pow - er drifts sub-merged through its



links look - ing for a new Ti - tan - ic to



sink. The sub - lim - i - nal need to have and hold, call one's

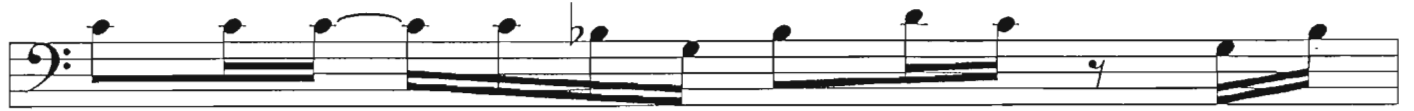


own, fun - nel-ing ac - tion to La - o - co - on.

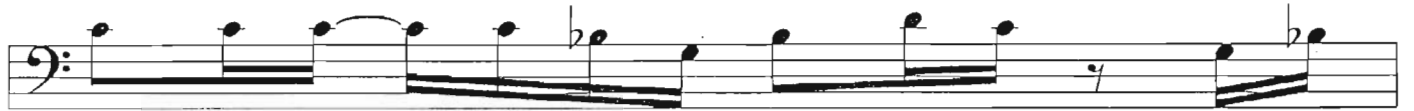
Narrator's Song 7



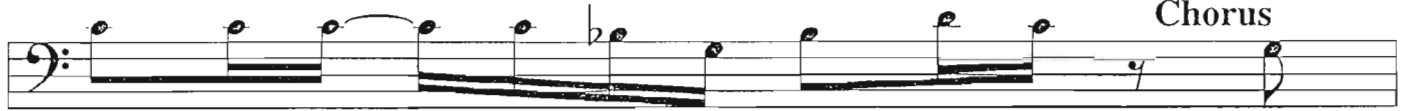
Lis-ten - ing to each he chose to in - tu - it based on



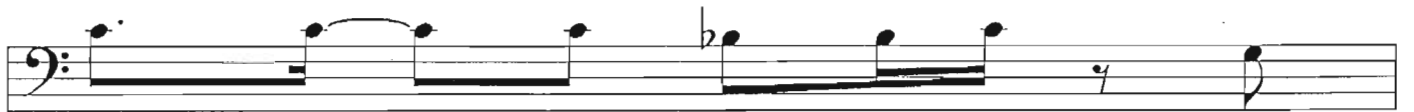
what he gath - ered from the Ho - ly Writ. Try - ing



to re - pair this bro - ken cock - eyed eight, bleech - ing



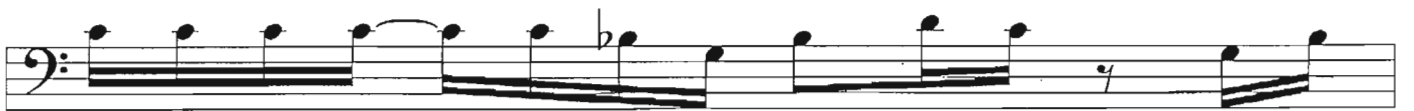
it in - to an in - fin - ite es - tate. It's



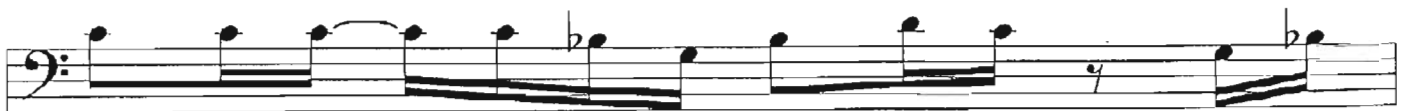
love, love, it's love a - lone through



which a hint of his re - ward is shown. His



pow - er to see be - yond that has been said and of

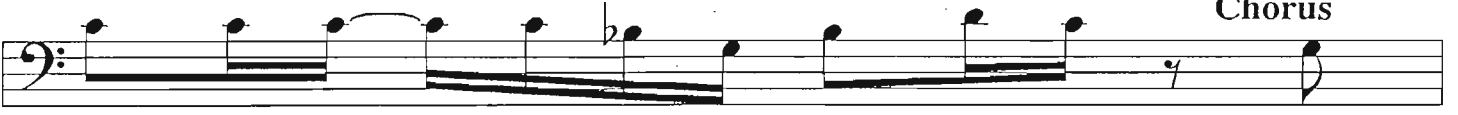


un - der - stand - ing where the self has led. More than



that, he act - ed out his faith - ful - ness and be -

Chorus



cause of it was giv - en rec - om - pense. Since



love, love, since love re - deems, it

Verse 3



is the e - lix - ir for suf - fer - ing. He had



cour - age to dis - tri - bute his es - tate to the

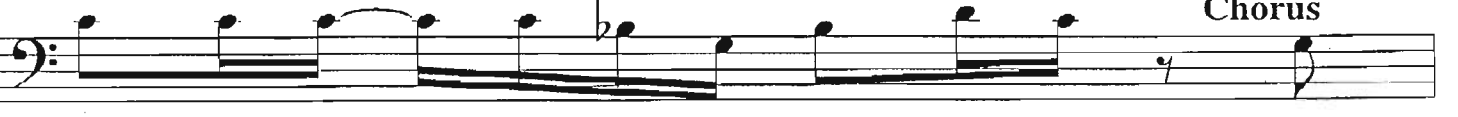


wretch - ed ref - use at The East - ern Gate and was



giv - en back his fam - i - ly in - tact with the

Chorus



so - lace which un - til then they had lacked. It's

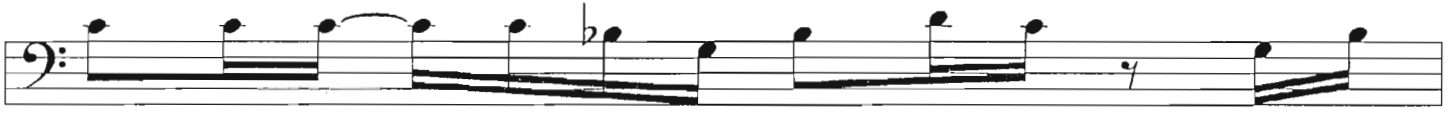


love, love, it's love's se - quence, but

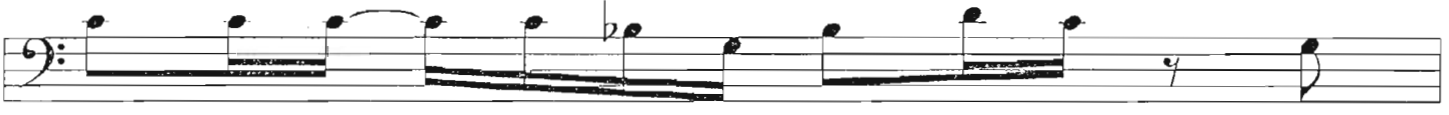
Verse 4



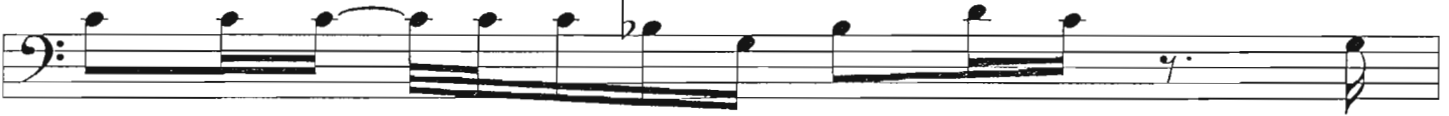
not in its A - mer - i - can sense. He helped



them re - nounce the wedge of own - er - ship, to see



things in terms of their com - mu - nal fit. Thus,

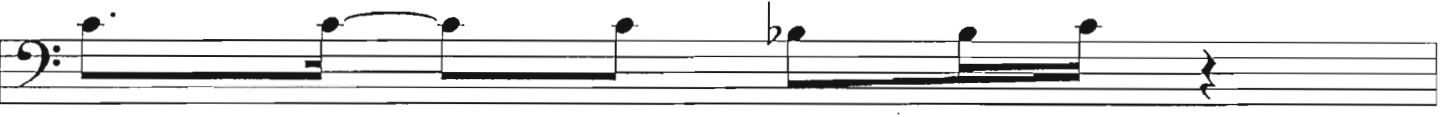


a temp - ta - tion was o - ver - come a - gain, by

Chorus



three vir - tues and some an - gel - ic pol - len. For



love, love, for love's the lease,

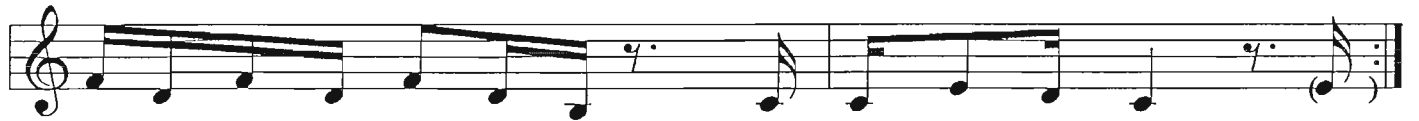


of - fer - ing the ten - ant in - ner peace.

Joe's Song 6



You did not for- get Your planes, by help- ing them land,



safe- ly through the thun- der- storm in Your guid- ing hand.

2. You were there to shepherd us
in our time of need;
and gave us all the sustenance
to overcome greed.

3. The profit motive is the ruse
that tears us apart,
and turns us to automatons,
keeps us in the dark.

4. This basic verve of property
converts us to knaves,
to highfalutin champagne
tooting popenjays.


5. Thank You for returning to me
my love and her chicks.
Of my spiritual edifice,
these doves are the bricks.

6. The spark of the divine exists
in each of their souls,
shining through their weaknesses
and making them whole.

7. I am grateful to You, Lord,
for giving the light;
the vagueness that I call myself
can never be trite.

8. This is all I ask the Lord:
keep us in Your grace,
help me help all others to
See You face to face.


Chorus 3



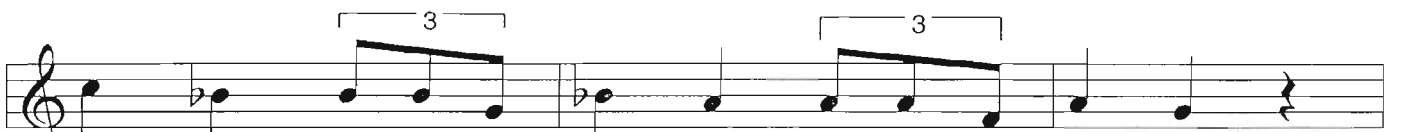
God's good! Turn - ing on spring rain; put - ting in




Ap - ril; mak - ing the waves still, where there had been pain.




Joe's free! He has earned his wings. His wife has




come home. His child - ren brought loam for a new plant - ing.



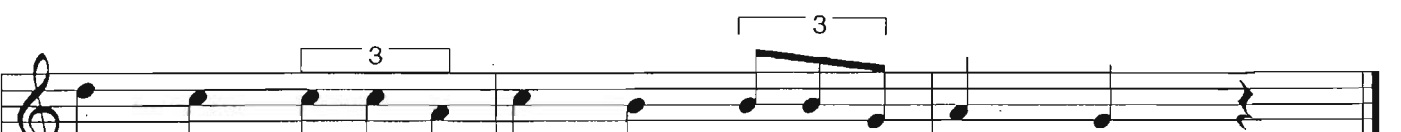
Thank You, for bring - ing Sha - lom, for giv - ing



us means to free us from liens, for Gil - e - ad's balm.



Praise God. Glo - ry and hon - or our lov - ing



Ab - ba, for - giv - ing Pa - pa, for time ev - er - more.

This piece was conceived to be performed by a chorus of about eight voices, who will sing or chant in unison without instrumental accompaniment in much the same manner as we understand the classical Greek drama was performed; as Gregorian chants are sung; and as "Oedipus at Colonnus" was sung by a gospel choir in New York City a few years ago. It probably would be best performed by a gospel choir in a non-commercial setting. The piece wanted to be in rhyming verse as an answer to the secular humanism of "J.B.". Since nothing in that form is now taken seriously, except in song, it was put to music.

I am not a musician and might even be tone deaf: in the eighth grade, while singing in the choir, a very large and fearsome nun, told me in no uncertain words that I was "a listener", and I have sung rarely since. I did take piano lessons for five years as an adolescent but have not played since. The music for each song was not invented--if music is ever "invented"-- but it is based on tunes heard and kept in memory. No score was ever seen and, thus, each song used herein might be very different from the original. Perhaps they might be characterized as variations on various themes.

- CHORUS: A peasant chant at the harvest of coffee beans in Columbia, heard as background music advertisement for Maxwell House Coffee on the radio about 1992.
- JOE #1: A Napolitan street song, from the 1920's, sung at a reception at the opening of an exhibition of Art of Naples at the Yale Art Gallery in 1988.
- NARRATOR: A Calypso song, sung by Blind Blake, about King Edward leaving the throne, played often on WYBC in 1952.
- SALESMAN: Maybe a nursery rhyme or maybe a theme song of a movie cartoon.
- JOE #2: A nod to Chuck Berry.
- JOE #3,#4:A Gregorian chant.
- HAGAR: Another common tune, probably a nursery rhyme.
- SARAH: A reference to Anton Webren. ("Fahr hin, O Seel", Opus 15)
- GURUS: A hymn, played often on the organ at St. Joseph's Church in Meriden, CT, in the late 1940's, probably at funerals.

JOE #5: Another organ hymn, heard at St. Joseph's, most likely at Solemn High Masses.

JOE #6: A reference to Tantum Ergo, sung on Holy Thursday.

The piece was scored with the help of Drew Krause, a composer and graduate of The Julliard. He put the notes on paper that seemed to be in my head. I did not start with the melody and fit words to it as, apparently, were many hymns, but the reverse: after having written a section, I tried to make music out of it. Sometimes, as with the Webren song, the written section did get re-bent, but more often than not, it was the melody that changed.

Joe is not meant to be a black man, but any man (or woman). The title was selected for its ironic value.