

Azvia Pieridum

for mixed vocal choir, *a cappella*

text by Lucretius
music by Ben S. Jacob

Avia Pieridum

(2000)

for mixed vocal choir (SATB)
including 2 soprano soloists and 1 alto soloist,
a cappella

text by Lucretius (ca. 95 – ca. 52 B.C.E.)
music by Ben S. Jacob (b. 1977 C.E.)

Duration: approximately 6 minutes

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about the text

Titus Lucretius Carus was a poet and philosopher who lived in the Roman Republic during its collapse into an imperial state, a time of chaos and civil war that saw the rise and fall of Julius Caesar.

The text used in this piece is an excerpt from Lucretius's primary work, *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*). *De Rerum Natura* is a philosophical epic poem 7400 lines in length and is divided into six books. The work is generally considered to be the most elegant presentation of the philosophy of Epicurus of Athens (341-271 B.C.E.) and is essentially a poetic enlivening of the ideas discussed therein. Thus, the text is marked by vivid imagery illustrating Epicurean views of all phenomena related to human existence. Lucretius is especially concerned with the deconstruction of superstitions and beliefs in the immortality of the human soul in favor of the development of a more naturalistic view of existence and a greater appreciation of the mortal life. The body of *De Rerum Natura* consists of careful, detailed descriptions of the physical universe and explanations of every parameter of human existence in these naturalistic (as opposed to metaphysical) terms. The excerpt used here is taken from the opening of Book IV and describes the primary goals of the entire work.

The dictional preference of the composer led to the use of ecclesiastical Latin spelling and pronunciation of the text. The composer has also taken freedom in the translation of the text in order to better portray the intended expressions and moods to be effected during performance.

Latin text with literal translation

Ávia untrodden path	Píeridum a daughter of the Muses	péragro to travel thoroughly	lóca places	núllius no one	ánte before		
tríta well-trodden	sólo. alone	júvat it pleases	íntegros fresh	accédere to approach	fóntis spring		
átque and	havríre, drink	júvatque it pleases	nóvos new	decérpere to pluck	flóres flowers		
insígnemque famous	méo to travel	cápiti top	pétere to reach toward	índe thereupon	corónam, crown		
únde from which	príus until now	núlli no one	velárint to hide	témpora the right time	Músae; the Muses		
prímum first	quod that	mágnis great	dóceo to teach	de of	rébus facts	et and	ártis to untangle
religiónum religion	ánimum soul	nódis knot	exsólvere to set free	pérgo, to proceed			
déinde thereupon	quod that	obsúra dark, vague	de re of the fact	tam to such a degree	lúcida bright, clear	pángo to compose	
cármina, verses, songs	músaeo poetry	cóntingens so it happens that	cúncta all	lepóre. grace			

poetic translation

Alone I travel on unexplored paths, onto the grounds
Of the Muses on which no foot has been set. I love to find undiscovered springs
And drink; I love to gather fresh new flowers
And strive toward the peak and reach for that prized crown
Which the Muses have kept hidden from all until now;
For first, I teach of powerful ideas in order to free
The human spirit from all the world's vices, to untangle that knot;
Then, as these dark matters are made clear through
These verses, the world will be endowed with grace.

notes to performers

- Although the original text is in classical Latin, standard ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation should be used in the performance of this piece.
- All accidentals only through the measure in which they are applied.
- Slurs indicate the inclusion of multiple notes within one syllable of text.
- Breath marks (,) indicate where breaths must be taken.
- No-breath marks (Ⓞ) indicate where breaths must not be taken.
- Breaths may otherwise be taken at the performers' discretion.
- All consonants at the ends of syllables are to be pronounced at the ends of the syllables' notes, never during the durations of the syllables' notes.
- Fermatas should last approximately the duration of the designated note, exceeding the original duration by no more than 50% unless otherwise indicated.
- *stagger breathing* indicates that staggered breathing is to be used during the corresponding set of slurred or tied notes.
- The range of dynamic levels is as follows:

ppp pp p mp mf f ff fff

Please be sure to use these dynamics accurately and consistently throughout the piece since they appear with great frequency.

- Soloists are to stand with the choir; they are to sing with their respective sections except where alternate staves provide the solos.
- The consistently sober tone of the text requires a correspondingly sober performance. Please avoid vibrato whenever possible; but always be sure to treat the expressive markings that appear in the score with the utmost sensitivity.
- The piano reduction is to be used for rehearsal only.

Avia Pieridum

$\bullet = 108$
solemn and sensitive; lightly pulsing

pp

Soprano
A - vi - a Pi - e - ri - dum pe - ra - gro

Alto
A - vi - a Pi - e - ri - dum pe - ra - gro

Tenor
A - vi - a Pi - e - ri - dum pe - ra - gro

Bass
A - vi - a Pi - e - ri - dum pe - ra - gro

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

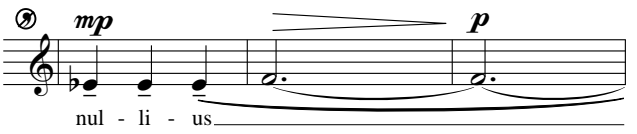
$\bullet = 108$ *solemn and sensitive; lightly pulsing*

pp

p *pp*

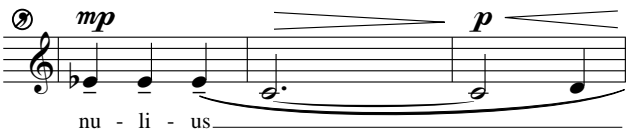
The musical score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano (for rehearsal only). It is in 3/4 time and features a tempo of 108 beats per minute. The tempo is described as 'solemn and sensitive; lightly pulsing'. The lyrics are 'A - vi - a Pi - e - ri - dum pe - ra - gro'. The score includes dynamic markings of *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). The piano part is specifically marked 'for rehearsal only'.

Soprano solo 1



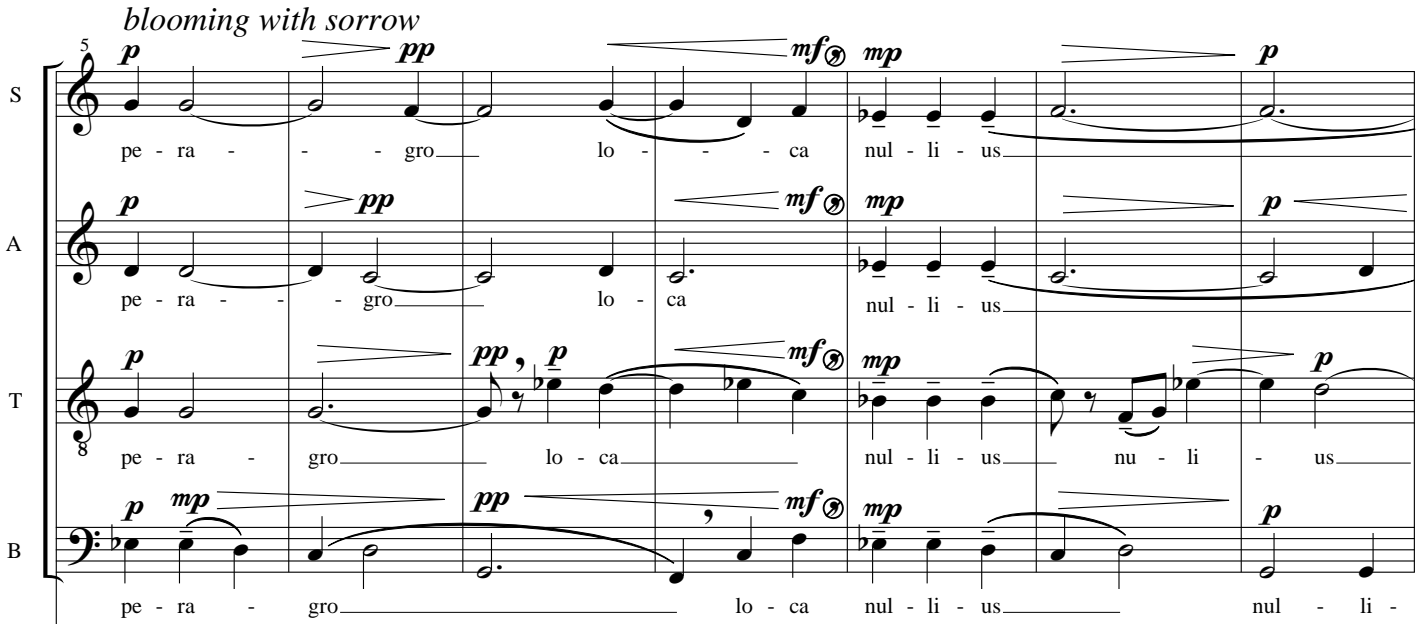
mp *p*
nul - li - us

Alto solo



mp *p*
nu - li - us

blooming with sorrow



S
A
T
B

p *pp* *mf* *mp* *p*
pe - ra - - gro - lo - ca nul - li - us

p *pp* *mf* *mp* *p*
pe - ra - - gro - lo - ca nul - li - us

p *pp* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*
pe - ra - gro - lo - ca nul - li - us nu - li - us

p *mp* *pp* *mf* *mp* *p*
pe - ra - gro - lo - ca nul - li - us nul - li -

blooming with sorrow



Pno.

p *pp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Soprano solo 1

Alto solo

S

A

T

B

Pno.

12 *lonely mp* ,
nu - li - us an - te tri - ta so - lo so - lo

12 *mp* , *lonely*
so - - - - - lo

12 *fading away* , *tutti mp*
nul - li -

mp *p fading away* , *tutti mp*
nul - li -

fading away

fading away

us

12 *lonely* , *mp*
nul - li -

♩ = 112

poco ritard. ----- *blissfully; slightly faster and more flowing*

S
us an - te tri - ta so - - - lo. ju - - - - vat in -

A
us an - te tri - ta so - lo. ju - - - - - - - - vat in -

T
8 an - te tri - ta so - - - - lo. ju - - - - - - - - vat in -

B
ju - - - - - - - - vat in -

Pno.
18 *poco ritard.* ----- *blissfully; slightly faster and more flowing*

more serious ----- *bright and clear!*

S
23 *cresc. poco a poco* te - - - - gros fon - - - - tis at - que at - que

A
cresc. poco a poco te - gros ac - ce - de - re fon - - - - tis at - que at - que

T
cresc. poco a poco te - - - - - gros ac - ce - de - re fon - tis at - que at - que

B
cresc. poco a poco te - - - - - gros ac - ce - de - re fon - tis at - - - - que

Pno.
23 *more serious* ----- *bright and clear!*
cresc. poco a poco

poco stringendo ----- *a tempo*

f *mp* *mf* *mp*

S
 hav - - - ri - - - re, ju - vat - que ju - vat - que

A
 hav - - - ri - re, ju - vat - que ju - vat - que

T
 hav - ri - re, ju - vat - que ju - vat -

B
 hav - - - ri - re, ju - vat - que ju - vat - que ju - vat -

Pno.
f *mp* *mf* *mp*

poco stringendo ----- *a tempo*

poco ritard. ----- *a tempo*
with profound freshness

mf *p* *f* *f*

S
 ju - vat no - vos no - - - vos de - cer -

A
 ju - vat no - vos no - vos de - cer - - pe -

T
 que ju - vat no - vos no - - - - - vos de -

B
 que ju - vat no - vos no - - - - - vos de -

Pno.
p *f*

poco ritard. ----- *a tempo*
with profound freshness

delicately, like a flower blooming

38

S
- pe - re flo - res flo - - res flo - - -

A
- re - flo - - - res flo - - - - -

T
8 cer - pe - re flo - res flo - res flo - - -

B
cer - pe - re flo - - - res flo -

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

fading away

Pno.

delicately, like a flower blooming

44

S
- - - res in - si - gnem - que me - o

A
- - - res in - si - gnem - que me - o

T
8 - - - res in - si - gnem - que me - o

B
- - - res flo - - - res in - si - gnem - que me - o

mp *mf* *mp* *firmly*

mp *mp* *mp* *mp*

Pno.

firmly

50 *loosening* *cresc. poco a poco*

S ca - - - pi - - - ti pe - te - re pe - - - te - re

A ca - pi - ti pe - - - te - re pe - te - re pe - - - te - re

T ca - - - pi - - - ti pe - - - te - re pe - te - re

B ca - - - pi - ti pe - - - te - re pe - te - re

Pno. *loosening* *cresc. poco a poco*

56 *soaring!* *ff* *f* *mf*

S in - de co - ro - - - na - - -

A in - - de co - ro - - - na - - -

T in - de co - ro - - - na - - - [a] - - -

B in - de co - ro - - - nam, *stagger breathing*

Pno. *soaring!* *ff* *f* *mf*

62

S [a] am, *f*

A [a] am, *f*

T am, *f*

B *f*

Pno. *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 62 through 71. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics: [a] am, am, am, am, am, am, am, am, am, am. The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

68

S *mp* *stringendo* suddenly calmer, *a tempo* *stringendo* un - de un - de

A *mp* un - de un - de un - de

T *mp* *resolutely* un - de un - de

B *mp* *resolutely* un - de un - de

Pno. *mp* *stringendo* suddenly calmer, *a tempo* *stringendo*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 68 through 77. It features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics: un - de un - de un - de. The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte). Performance directions include *stringendo*, *suddenly calmer, a tempo*, and *resolutely*. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

♩ = 120 *steadily forward* *delicately painful* *resolutely*

S *mf* *mp* *f*
 pri - - - us nul - li ve - la - rint tem - - - po

A *mf* *mp*
 pri - - - us nul - li ve - la - rint tem - po - ra -

T *mf* *mp*
 8 pri - us nul - - - li ve - la - rint tem - po - ra -

B *mf* *mp* *f* *resolutely*
 pri - - - - - us nul - li ve - la - rint tem - - - po -

Pno. *mf* *mp* *f*

S *mf* *fading away*
 78 ra Mu - - - sae

A *mf*
 [a] - - - - - [a]

T *mf*
 [a] - - - - - [a]

B *mf* *fading away*
 ra Mu - - - sae

Pno. *mf*

83 *creeping in pp* *mf* , *pp* *mp* *p* ,

S pri - mum quod ma - - - - gnis

A *p* a

T *p* [a] a

B *pp* *mf* , *pp* *mp*

pri - mum quod ma - - - - - - - -

Pno.

87 *mf* *p* *cresc. poco a poco* - - - - -

S do - ce - o de re - bus et ar - - - - tis et ar - tis

A *cresc. poco a poco* - do - - - ce - o de - - re - bus et ar - tis ar - tis

T *cresc. poco a poco* - do - ce - o de re - bus et ar - - - - tis et ar - tis et

B *p* *cresc. poco a poco* - gnis do - ce - o de re - bus et ar - tis et ar - tis

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco* -

S ar - tis re - li - gi - o - - num a - - ni - mum

A ar - tis re - li - gi - o - num a - - ni - mum

T ar - tis re - li - gi - o - num a - - ni - mum

B et ar - tis re - li - gi - o - - num a - ni - mum a - ni - mum

Pno.

poco stringendo ♩ = 126 **ff**

S no - - dis - no - - dis no - - dis ex -

A no - dis no - - dis no - - dis ex -

T no - dis no - - dis no - - dis ex -

B

Pno.

*broadening, expanding,
but not slowing down*

desolate, as if a reverberation

102 *f* *releasing*

S
sol - - - - ve - re per - go, de *fff*

A
sol - ve - re per - go, de *fff, sub. ppp*

T
sol - ve - re per - go, de *fff, sub. ppp*

B
sol - - - - - ve - re per - go, de in - de ob - - - - scu -

*broadening, expanding,
but not slowing down*

desolate, as if a reverberation

102 *f* *releasing*

Pno.
fff, sub. ppp

Soprano solo 1

108 *slightly gaining momentum*

lu - ci - da

S

108 *slightly gaining momentum*
p *mf*

lu - ci - da

A

p *mf*

scu - ra de re tam lu - ci - da

T

cresc. poco a poco

ra ob - scu - ra de re tam

B

cresc. poco a poco

ra ob - scu - ra de re tam lu - ci - da

Pno.

108 *slightly gaining momentum*
p *mf*

p *mf*

Soprano solo I

113 *mp* $\bullet = 116$
car - - - - mi - na

Alto solo *mp*
car - - - -

S *mp* $\bullet = 116$ *p* fading away
lu - ci - da

A *mp* fading away

T *mf* *p* fading away
lu - - - - ci - da

B *mf* *p* fading away
Ê - - - - ci - - - - da

Pno. 113 *mp* $\bullet = 116$ *p*

118

Soprano solo 1

car - mi - na car - mi - na car - mi - na car - mi - na

118 *mp*

Soprano solo 2

car - mi - na car - mi - na

118

Alto solo

mi - na car - mi - na car - mi - na

118

S

A

T

B

118

Pno.

123 *mf* *mp*

Soprano solo 1
car - - - mi - na car - - - mi - na

123 *mf* *mp*

Soprano solo 2
car - - - mi - na car - - - mi - na

123 *mf* *mp*

Alto solo
car - - - mi - na car - - - mi - na

f *mf* *mp* *p* *slowing down, dissolving---*

S
mu - sae mu - sae mu - - - sae - o

f *mf* *mp* *p*

A
mu - sae mu - sae mu - sae

f *mf* *mp* *p*

T
mu - sae mu - sae - - - mu - sae - - - o

f *mf* *mp* *p* *fading away*

B
mu - sae mu - sae mu - sae

123 *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *slowing down, dissolving-----*

Pno.

♩ = 108

*Epilogue: with repose, lightly pulsing; slowing down until the end**hold long
but do not
fade away**tutti*
pp

129

S
con - tin - gens — cun - cta le - po - re

A
pp
con - tin - gens — cun - cta le - po - re le - po - re

T
pp
con - tin - gens cun - cta le - po - re le - po - re

B
pp
cun - cta le - po - re

Pno.
♩ = 108
Epilogue: with repose, lightly pulsing; slowing down until the end
pp
*hold long
but do not
fade away*

