



**COMPLETE LIBRETTO**

# **SANCTUARY ROAD**

**AN ORATORIO BASED ON  
THE WRITINGS OF WILLIAM STILL,  
CONDUCTOR FOR THE  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

**MUSIC: PAUL MORAVEC  
LIBRETTO: MARK CAMPBELL**

**COMMISSIONED AND PREMIERED  
BY THE ORATORIO SOCIETY OF  
NEW YORK ORCHESTRA  
AND CHORUS**

**KENT TRITLE, CONDUCTOR**



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THOUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF  
JOANNE SPELLUN

KENT TRITLE, CONDUCTOR

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## 1. WRITE

William Still, Ensemble, Chorus

### SOPRANO

Sarah Grace...  
A slave all her days...  
Separated from her family...  
Ellen Craft...  
Sold three times.

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Clarissa Davis...  
Born in Martinsburg...  
A slave all of her life...  
A slave all of her days.

### TENOR

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Wesley Harris...  
Talbot Johnson...  
Fled from Richmond...  
On horseback all night.

### BARITONE

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Barnaby Grigby...  
Isaac Jackson...  
Fled from Charleston...  
Samuel Green.

### WILLIAM STILL

"The Underground Railroad.  
A record of facts,  
Authentic narrative, letters, et cetera,  
Narrating the hardships,  
Hairbreadth escapes,  
And death-struggles,  
Of the slaves in their efforts of freedom,  
As related by themselves and others,  
Or witnessed by the author;  
Together with sketches of  
Some of the largest stock-holders  
And most liberal aiders and  
Advisors of the road,  
By William Still."

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

Escaped on the roof of a train...  
Cordelia Loney...  
Emiline Chapman...  
Charlotte Giles.

### TENOR

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Wesley Harris...  
On horseback all night...  
On foot...  
On a steamer...  
Talbot Johnson...  
A slave all of his life...  
John Henry Pettifoot.

### SOPRANO

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Separated from her family...  
Henry Brown...  
Owner had five-hundred slaves...  
Edmundson Turner.

### BARITONE

*[Overlapping with above.]*  
Isaac Jackson...  
Fled from Charleston...  
Fled from Atlanta...  
Hid in a cave for one year.

### WILLIAM STILL

Write it down.  
Write it.  
Write.  
Record.  
Recount.  
Chronicle.  
Write.  
Write it down  
Every word.  
Every word they say,  
Every detail.  
Every sentence  
Every phrase  
Every syllable.  
Write it down.  
Write it.  
Write.

**WILLIAM STILL**

Set it to paper.  
 Preserve every story, every fact,  
 Every event.  
 Preserve, collect,  
 Compile every testimony.

**SOPRANO**

Clarissa Davis...  
 Harriet Eglan...  
 Ellen Craft...  
 Mary Epps...  
 Our struggles,

**MEZZO-SOPRANO**

Cordelia Loney...  
 Sarah Grace...  
 Our struggles,

**TENOR**

Isaac Jackson...  
 Sam Green...  
 Robert Carr...  
 Our stories,

**BARITONE**

Emiline Chapman...  
 Charlotte Giles...  
 Our testimony...  
 Our testimony...

**ENSEMBLE**

Our sacrifices.

**WILLIAM STILL**

From cities and plantations,  
 Rice swamps and cotton fields,  
 Kitchens and mechanic shops,  
 From cruel masters, and kind masters,  
 They arrived.  
 By steamer, by skiff,  
 By train, on foot,  
 Shipped in a crate,  
 They arrived.

**CHORUS + ENSEMBLE**

Our testimony,  
 Our stories cannot be forgotten.  
 Our testimony,  
 Our stories will be repeated,  
 Over and over.  
 Our testimony will never be forgotten.  
 Our struggles,  
 Our triumphs,  
 Our sacrifices,  
 Will be remembered,  
 Remembered.

**BARITONE SOLO + BARITONE CHORUS**

Our testimony,  
 Our stories cannot be forgotten.  
 Our testimony,  
 Our stories will be repeated,  
 Over and over.  
 Our testimony will never be forgotten.  
 Write it down.  
 Every word they say  
 Every word,  
 Every detail will be remembered.  
 Remembered.

**WILLIAM STILL**

Their testimony will never be forgotten.  
 Write it,  
 Write,  
 Write,  
 Write it down.  
 Every word they say,  
 Every word, every detail.  
 Dip the quill in the well.  
 Draw, draw from it deeply,  
 Deeply, and write.  
 Write it down.  
 Write it,  
 Write.  
 Record.  
 Recount.  
 Chronicle.  
 Write,  
 Write it,  
 Write,  
 Write.

## 2. QUIETLY

Ensemble

### BARITONE

Spoken in a whisper,  
Spoken in a whisper,  
Quietly, quietly,  
Just a rumor,  
Too good to be true,  
Free.

### TENOR

Spoken, spoken in a whisper  
Spoken in a whisper,  
Never too loud,  
Just a rumor,  
Too good to be true,  
Too good to be true,  
Free.

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

Spoken, spoken,  
Spoken in a whisper,  
Too good to be true,  
Free.

### BARITONE + TENOR

Hard to believe,  
Not a hope in Heaven,  
But there it is,  
Even just a chance,  
They must never know.

### MEZZO-SOPRANO + SOPRANO

Quietly, quietly.  
They must never hear.

### ENSEMBLE

One little word,  
One sweet little word,  
Free.

### MEZZO-SOPRANO + SOPRANO

Free,  
To be your own person,  
To have your own life,

### TENOR + BARITONE

To raise your own family,  
Free to have your own life,

### ENSEMBLE

Your own soul.  
May not be tomorrow,  
May take us a while.  
Imagine it,  
Pray for it,  
Find a way,  
Find a way,  
Make it come to be,  
Quietly,  
Quietly,  
Free.

## 3. REWARD!

Chorus, Ensemble

### CHORUS

Reward will be paid!  
Runaway slave!  
Age...  
Appearance...  
Countenance...  
Demeanor...  
Last seen...  
Reward will be paid!  
Reward will be paid!  
Reward will be paid!  
Runaway, runaway slave!

### BARITONE + TENOR CHORUS

Reward.

### CHORUS

One hundred dollars.  
Two thousand dollars.  
Four hundred dollars.  
One thousand, six hundred dollars.

### SOPRANO + ALTO CHORUS

Will be paid.

**BASS + TENOR CHORUS**

For the apprehension.

**BARITONE CHORUS**

For the safe return.

**CHORUS**

For the arrest and confinement  
Of a runaway slave.

**BARITONE****B2:**

Talbot Johnson...  
Edward Morgan...  
Mary Epps...

**B1:**

Josiah Jackson...  
Robert Carr...  
Wesley Harris...  
Sam Green...

**TENOR****T2:**

Emiline Chapman...  
Sarah Grace...  
Clarissa Davis...

**T1:**

John Henry Proudfoot...  
Saj Tracey...

**ALTO****A2:**

Sarah Grace...  
Clarissa Davis.

**A1:**

Cordelia Loney...  
Barnaby Grigby...

**CHORUS**

*[Unison.]*

Age.

**CHORUS**

Twenty-nine...  
Forty years of age...  
Thirty-four years old...  
Thirty-six...  
Fifty-nine years old...  
Between nineteen and twenty-two...  
Older than he looks...  
Sixty-four...  
They both are twenty-five...  
Forty-seven years old...  
Younger than her years...  
On the verge of womanhood...  
Lies about his age.

**CHORUS**

*[Unison.]*

Appearance...

**CHORUS**

Five feet seven inches...  
A little over five feet...  
High cheekbones...  
A little bowlegged...  
Broad across the shoulders...  
Round featured...  
Stoops while walking...  
Face rough...A scar above his eye...  
Small mustache and beard...  
Thickset and stout made.

**CHORUS**

*[Unison.]*

Demeanor...

**BARITONE + TENOR CHORUS**

Arrogant eyes...

**SOPRANO + ALTO CHORUS**

A happy countenance...

**CHORUS**

Can read and write well...  
 Plays on the violin...  
 A confident manner...  
 Quick spoken...  
 Laughs a good deal...  
 Of awkward manners...  
 Stammers, stammers, some.

**CHORUS**

*[Unison.]*

Reward will be paid!  
 Last seen...  
 On their way up north...

**ENSEMBLE**

New York...  
 Boston...  
 A free state...  
 Philadelphia...

**CHORUS**

*[Unison.]*

Philadelphia.

#### 4. THE SAME TRAIN— ELLEN CRAFT

Mezzo-Soprano Solo

**MEZZO-SOPRANO**

He doesn't know.  
 He doesn't know.  
 He shuffles into the train,  
 Huffs a "hello,"  
 And sits across from me,  
 Right across from me.  
 My master's brother.  
 I'm done for.  
 I'm finished.  
 He sees through my disguise!  
 Knows I'm a slave.  
 Throws me in jail,

Has me whipped,  
 Shot,  
 Worse.  
 But...but he doesn't know.  
 He does not know.  
 Last night I served him leg of mutton,  
 Sweet potatoes,  
 Blueberry pie.  
 Poured his wine,  
 Cleared his plates,  
 Twice folded his napkin,  
 Everything but chew his food for him.  
 Last night I was a slave,  
 Young, female, black.  
 Today I'm a gentleman.  
 Old, feeble, and white,  
 At death's door,  
*[Coughs theatrically.]*  
 On my way to see my "doctor" in  
 Philadelphia,  
 Dressed up in a fine suit.  
 Tinted glasses,  
 A little powder to lighten my skin,  
 My head bandaged up,  
 I pretend not to hear  
 If someone speaks to me.  
 But no one does.  
 No one knows.  
 Not a soul.  
 They see me as a sick, white gentleman,  
 A sick white gentleman,  
 Who has his own valet,  
 A black man who sits with the other slaves,  
 In the other car.  
 But he's not my valet.  
 That man is not my valet.  
 He's the man I will marry,  
 The man I will marry in Philadelphia.  
 He's in a different car.  
 But we're on the same train,  
 Humming along like a hymn,  
 All the way to Philadelphia,  
 To Philadelphia.



## 5. INTERVIEW I

William Still, Baritone Solo

### WILLIAM STILL

How old are you?

### BARITONE

Thirty-two years old, first day of June.

### WILLIAM STILL

Were you born a slave?

### BARITONE

Yes.

### WILLIAM STILL

How have you been treated?

### BARITONE

Badly all the time.

## 6. RUN (PART I)— WESLEY HARRIS

Tenor Solo

### TENOR

Run, run,  
Run through the woods,  
Along the creek,  
Past the marsh,  
Up the ridge,  
Down the hill.  
Avoid the trail,  
Avoid the road,  
Avoid the port,  
Anywhere they wait,  
Anywhere they wait,  
To stop you.  
Run, run, run...

## 7. THIS SIDE UP— HENRY "BOX" BROWN

Baritone Solo

### BARITONE

They can't seem to read.  
They don't seem to know.  
The crate I'm in.  
It says: "THIS SIDE UP WITH CARE"  
This side up with care.  
In big, big letters.  
To clarify: This side up is above me,  
Not below.  
Been on a cart,  
On a train,  
On a steamer,  
And on a train again.  
It'll be twenty-six hours since I had myself  
Nailed in a shipping crate.  
It'll be twenty-six hours of being thrown  
This way and that,  
Of not seeing the light of day,  
Of not moving a muscle,  
Of not saying a word,  
Twenty-six hours of breathing through a  
Hole in this box  
No bigger than a button.  
My brain may burst from being  
Upside down.  
And my eyeballs may explode.  
But it's worth every second,  
Every second of those twenty-six hours,  
Even if I'm caught,  
Even if I'm beaten,  
Even if they hang me from a tree,  
For just a chance,  
For the slightest chance,  
The dimmest hope,  
For just a chance,  
The slightest chance,  
The dimmest hope that this crate,  
This crate I mailed myself in arrives  
Safe and sound in Philadelphia.  
Philadelphia.  
Now if only these fools could READ.

## 8. I WAITED

Chorus

### ENSEMBLE

I waited,  
I waited patiently for the Lord,  
And He inclined unto me,  
And heard my calling.

## 9. RUN (PART II)—WESLEY HARRIS

Tenor Solo

### TENOR

Run,  
Go,  
Run,  
Quicker than the wind,  
Quicker than their horses,  
Quicker than their whips,  
Quicker than their bullets.  
Run,  
Go,  
Run,  
Hide under a house,  
Hide in a cave,  
In a hollow,  
Up a tree,  
In a barn,  
Hide,  
Then run,  
Run again...

## 10. INTERVIEW II

William Still, Soprano

### WILLIAM STILL

What do you mean by  
Being treated badly?

### SOPRANO

Have been whipped and sold three times.

### WILLIAM STILL

What was the name of your master?

### SOPRANO

Fleming Bibbs.

### WILLIAM STILL

Where did he live?

### SOPRANO

Caroline County.

## 11. AUNT ABIGAIL— HARRIET EGLAN, CHARLOTTE GILES

Mezzo-Soprano Solo+ Soprano Solo

### SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO

Oh, oh, oh,  
Poor, poor Aunt Abigail.  
Summoned to Heaven  
Too, too, too early

### SOPRANO/MEZZO-SOPRANO

By gout /By scarlet fever.

### SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO

So sudden,  
So, so, so sudden,  
Too soon, too soon,

### SOPRANO

Plucked from our arms.

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

By the clutches of death.

**SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO**

Oh, oh, oh,  
 Poor Aunt Abigail.  
 Will our suffering ever,  
 Ever cease?  
 So far, so good,  
 On this train.

**SOPRANO**

No one wants to question,

**SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO**

No one wants to trouble,  
 The black women in black,  
 Their faces covered in veils.  
 But we're not in mourning,  
 We're not in mourning,  
 And poor Aunt Abigail,  
 She doesn't exist.

**MEZZO-SOPRANO**

And if someone looks askance,

**SOPRANO**

If someone suspects,

**SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO**

(Like that man,  
 Walking right toward us...)  
 Then it's...  
 Oh, oh,  
 Poor, poor Aunt Abigail.  
 Will our suffering ever cease?  
 Oh, oh, oh...

**SOPRANO**

How many tears?

**MEZZO-SOPRANO**

How many sobs,

**SOPRANO**

How many whimpers,

**SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO**

How many whimpers,  
 How many "ohs,"  
 And how many nose-blows,  
 To Philadelphia,  
 To Philadelphia?

**12. RUN (PART III)—  
WESLEY HARRIS**

Tenor Solo, Chorus

**TENOR**

Run, run,  
 Run through the woods,  
 Along the creek,  
 Past the marsh,  
 Up the ridge,  
 Down the hill.  
 Avoid the trail,  
 Avoid the road,  
 Avoid the port,  
 Anywhere they wait,  
 Anywhere they wait,  
 To stop you.  
 Run,  
 Go,  
 Run,  
 Quicker than the wind,  
 Quicker than their horses,  
 Quicker than their whips,  
 Quicker than their bullets.  
 Run all day, all night.

**CHORUS**

All day, all night.

**TENOR**

Was that a voice...

**CHORUS**

You don't hear it.

**TENOR**

Was that a face?

**CHORUS**

You don't see it.

**TENOR**

Was that a shadow?

**TENOR + BARITONE CHORUS**

Don't look back.  
Don't look around.

**CHORUS**

Not there.

**TENOR**

Was that a shot?

**CHORUS**

You don't hear it?

**TENOR**

Was that another shot?

**CHORUS**

You don't hear it.  
You don't feel it.

**TENOR**

There was no shot.  
And it's so close,  
So close,  
So close,  
You can wrap your arms around it.

**CHORUS**

You can taste it.  
You're nearly there.

**TENOR**

So close, nearly there.

**13. INTERVIEW III**

William Still, Ensemble

**WILLIAM STILL**

We're giving you some new clothing.  
A good meal.  
Money, and a ticket away from here.  
To New York and then Boston  
And then further north.  
Talk to no-one.  
Don't look around.  
Do not look back.  
Keep on moving.  
Keep on going until you're  
Over the border.

**ENSEMBLE**

New clothing.  
A good meal.  
And a ticket away from here.  
Talk to no-one.  
Don't look around.  
Do not look back.  
Keep on moving.  
Keep on going.

**14. RAIN—  
CLARISSA DAVIS**

Soprano Solo, Ensemble

**SOPRANO**

Come down, rain.  
Come down hard.  
Come down fast.  
Come down Noah's Ark heavy.  
Empty the streets,  
Empty the squares of those  
Who might want to catch me.  
Empty the streets of those  
Who might want to stop me,  
Who might want to hurt me,  
Who might want to kill me.

**SOPRANO**

Double the darkness of this night.  
 That I might slip away,  
 Like a shadow,  
 And get to the boat  
 That will take me up North  
 To liberty,  
 To my own life.  
 Come down, rain.  
 Come down hard.  
 Come down fast.  
 Come down Noah's Ark heavy.  
 And when I'm free,  
 When I'm free  
 I'll dance in that rain that hid me,  
 That saved me,  
 That delivered me to freedom.

**ENSEMBLE**

Come down, rain.  
 Come down hard.  
 Come down fast.  
 Come down Noah's Ark heavy.  
 And when I'm free,  
 When I'm free  
 I'll dance in that rain.  
 I'll dance in that rain,  
 I'll dance.

**SOPRANO**

I'll dance.

**15. INTERLUDE: 1861-1865****16. FINALE**

All

**WILLIAM STILL**

Five years since I hid these records.  
 Five years,  
 Five terrible years since the start of the war.  
 And fearing the outcome,  
 Concealed them in a shelf in  
 Lebanon Cemetery.  
 The war is done.  
 The records must be recovered.  
 Gently, gently,  
 So that they don't fall apart.  
 Gently and pray that no moisture or mice  
 Got in to trouble the page,  
 To trouble the fate of their testimony.

Survived.

Survived.

Survived.

Every page,  
 Every record,  
 Every handbill,  
 Every account,  
 Every letter,  
 And here,  
 The best letters,  
 The ones from Canada,  
 Sent when they got there.  
 Sent when they first knew freedom.  
 Sent when they first saw their new flag  
 And shook hands with the lion's paw.

**ENSEMBLE**

*[Overlapping.]*

**MEZZO-SOPRANO**

Dear Mister Still...  
 I take this method of informing you...  
 In health and mind...

**TENOR**

My dear friend Mister Still...  
Excuse me for not writing sooner...  
As I don't write myself...

**BARITONE**

Dear brother in Christ...  
As I don't write myself...

**SOPRANO**

Dear Sir...  
That I am well...

**ENSEMBLE**

*[Overlapping.]*

**SOPRANO + MEZZO-SOPRANO**

I arrived safe into Canada...  
I arrived on Friday last...  
And I am happy to tell you I am well...

**WILLIAM STILL**

Write it.  
Recount every word.  
Record every syllable.

**TENOR**

Shaking hands with the lion's paw.  
Hear that big cat roar.  
I'm unbound,  
Unchained,  
Unshackled.  
A slave no more.

**WILLIAM STILL**

Every word they say.  
Every detail.  
Every phrase.  
Every syllable.  
Write every story,  
Every detail...

**ENSEMBLE**

*[Overlapping.]*

Much pleased with Toronto...  
Made a good start...  
Endeavored to make every day  
Tell for itself...  
I will open a shop for myself...  
I go to work this morning...  
Went right to work at the Willard House...

**MEZZO-SOPRANO + SOPRANO**

Sixteen dollars a month...

**ENSEMBLE**

Five dollars a week...  
I shall, with the help of the Lord,  
Go to school...  
I have no master in Canada,  
But I am my own man...  
Learning to read and write...

**MEZZO-SOPRANO + SOPRANO**

The wedding takes place on Saturday...

**ENSEMBLE + WILLIAM STILL**

Shaking hands with the lion's paw.  
In the nick of time.  
Fin'ly found a place  
Where freedom is not a crime.

**ENSEMBLE**

*[Overlapping.]*

I wish all in bondage were as  
Well off as I am...  
I must request from you to write  
A few lines to my wife...  
If my brother is well send him on  
For I have a place for him...  
Send me word if any of our friends  
Have been passing through...  
I am grateful for my liberty...  
Obliged to you for all you have done and  
For your kindness...  
When I was in distress and  
Out of doors you took me in...  
I was hungry and you fed me.

**SOPRANO + TENOR**

For these things God will reward you.

**MEZZO-SOPRANO + BARITONE**

I hope to meet you all again.

**SOPRANO + TENOR**

If not on Earth may we so live

**ENSEMBLE, WILLIAM STILL  
+ CHORUS**

Shout from every rooftop,  
Loud as can be:  
Free.

[THE END.]

**ENSEMBLE**

that we shall meet in that happy land  
where tears and parting are never known.

**CHORUS**

Shaking hands,  
Shaking hands with the lion's paw.

**ENSEMBLE + CHORUS**

Here I know I'll stay.  
The sky,  
The land,  
The whole world is mine today.

**ENSEMBLE + WILLIAM STILL**

Shout from every roof top,

**ALL SOLO + CHORUS**

Loud as can be,  
Joyfully,  
Finally come true...

**ENSEMBLE + WILLIAM STILL**

Free.  
Free.  
One sweet little word.  
Everyone must hear,  
Everyone must know.

**CHORUS**

Thou shalt not deliver  
Unto his master the servant  
Who has escaped his master  
Unto thee.