



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Doctoral Lecture | Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 9:00 am | Conference Room

Will McLean, choral conducting

A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO PREPARING AND PERFORMING STEPHEN PAULUS AND MICHAEL DENNIS BROWNE'S ORATORIO *TO BE CERTAIN OF THE DAWN*

The purpose of this document is to aid conductors and organizations in preparing *To Be Certain of the Dawn* for performance by students and community organizations. In this study, I will provide a thorough guide for the conductor's teaching and preparation of this concert-length oratorio by American composer Stephen Paulus (1949–2014) and English American poet Michael Dennis Browne (b. 1940). In this study, I will (a) provide brief biographical profiles of composer Stephen Paulus and librettist Michael Dennis Browne and elucidate their long-standing artistic partnership; (b) explore the historical factors that led to the commissioning and musical impetus for the work; (c) analyze the large formal design, unifying elements, and polystylistic elements found within the oratorio; (d) demonstrate how Paulus's synthesis of styles provides a unique approach that results in a deliberate expression of the libretto; and (e) provide pedagogical teaching and rehearsal strategies and suggestions for the successful performance of the work.