

ENSEMBLE ALTERA 2023 COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Composers are invited to submit a new work for Ensemble Altera's third annual Composition Competition. The winning work(s) will be premiered and recorded live (with the potential of being included on a commercial album) by the ensemble as part of its summer project, *Dazzling Light*. A prize fund of \$750 is available.

ABOUT THE COMPOSITION

Composers are invited to set one of several set texts on the theme of light (see texts below). The work should be an *a cappella* composition lasting between three and five minutes, scored for any combination of mixed voices up to eight parts (e.g.: SATB, SSATB, SSAATTBB, SATB.SATB). The competition is open to all composers, regardless of age or experience. The deadline for submissions is Friday June 30, 2023 at 5PM EDT.

The competition will be judged by a specially convened panel including Ensemble Altera director Christopher Lowrey, one core member of the ensemble, and one industry professional. The panel reserves the right to divide the prize money between multiple winners if there is no consensus, or, in the unlikely event that none of the submissions meets a minimum artistic standard, to choose no winner. Shortlisted composers from previous competitions are invited to re-apply, but we will not accept submissions from any composers who have won this competition in a previous year.

A shortlist of finalists will be chosen by the panel and announced by Friday July 7, 2023 at 5PM EDT. The winner(s) will be chosen and announced by Friday July 14, 2023 at 5PM EDT. The shortlisted finalists who are not named winner(s) will receive an honorable mention. All entrants will be notified of the result privately by email at each stage of the competition before results are made public.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

Fast-rising ENSEMBLE ALTERA was founded to be the beating heart of professional choral music in the United States. Led by internationally celebrated countertenor Christopher Lowrey, the group is dedicated to bringing thoughtful, engaging, and relevant programs to in-person and digital audiences at home and around the world. The group is versatile,

working on multiple scales, in a wide range of idioms, across the full range of medieval to modern to music being written today. Over the past few years, Ensemble Altera has presented concerts both in person in New England and virtually to audiences around the world. Recent programs include a boldly reimagined chamber version of Handel's *Messiah*, co-presented with Newport Classical, *The Lamb's Journey*, drawing on many periods and styles to depict the Christ narrative, *We Watch & Welcome: Feminine Voices at Christmas*, featuring works by seven female composers for treble voices arrayed around Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, and *We Remember*, a musical journey of healing and reflection in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout its short history, Altera has received universally rave reviews, creating "some of the best choral singing by an American choir". Upcoming projects include *Dazzling Light*, a meditation on illumination in the natural and metaphysical worlds. Deeply committed to championing new works and lifting up new voices, over the past few seasons Altera has premiered works by Joanna Marsh, Daniel Gledhill, Zuzanna Koziej, and Michael Garrepy. In addition to performing, Ensemble Altera undertakes an extensive education and outreach program. Such activities include interactive presentations with school students in a variety of settings, with a particular focus on opening musical horizons to those from underserved backgrounds. Additionally, Altera has a profound faith in the healing power of music both in and out of the concert hall, and is proud to offer its complete recorded music library free of charge in collaboration with select partners in music therapy.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. Entrants are required to submit a choral setting of one of the set texts included below.
2. The work should be scored for unaccompanied mixed voices up to 8 parts, for example SATB, SSATB, SATBarB, SSAATTBB, SATB.SATB.
3. The work should ideally last between three and five minutes, but shorter or longer works of exceptional quality will be considered.
4. Scores should be typeset on electronic engraving software, delivered electronically in PDF form, and accompanied by a recorded sequence of the work.
5. The competition is open to composers of any citizenship, country of residence, race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or age.

6. Shortlisted composers from previous competitions are invited to re-apply, but we will not accept submissions from any composers who have won this competition in a previous year.
7. Only one application per composer will be considered.

SUBMISSIONS

Scores should be sent in PDF form along with sequenced recordings and the attached application form to: **ensemblealtera@gmail.com**. The deadline for submissions is Friday June 30, 2023 at 5PM EDT.

PRIZE FUND

A prize fund of \$750 is available, to be allocated at the panel's discretion, either to one or multiple winning compositions, or not at all in the unlikely event that none of the submissions meets a minimum artistic standard.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The work must be original and the entry form signed with the written guarantee that it is solely the work of the composer.
2. The work must not have had a public performance, nor a recording that is publicly available (whether commercial or not), nor a broadcast of any sort.
3. The competition will be judged by a specially convened panel including Ensemble Altera director Christopher Lowrey, one core member of the ensemble, and one industry professional.
4. The winner(s) will be notified privately by email before a public announcement on Friday July 14, 2023; the first public performances of the work(s) will be given during the weekend of August 19 & 20, 2023 in Cambridge, MA and Providence, RI. The winning composer(s) is/are encouraged to attend the premiere where possible.
5. The winner(s) grant(s) exclusive rights to Ensemble Altera to perform for a period of 3 months, and to record the work(s) as part of Altera's *Dazzling Light* project, as well as the option to include the work on a commercial album of the same name. These rights must be granted to Altera with no additional fees or licenses.
6. Personal details on the entry form will be processed according to best data protection practices. The winning entrant(s) is/are expected to be identified and promoted in post-competition publicity and to agree to their name(s) being made publicly known.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

In an effort to prevent any conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest arising during the judging process, all submissions will be anonymized by a third party ahead of time and will be judged blindly by all members of the panel. A shortlist of roughly 5-10 pieces will be chosen by the panel, from which the winner(s) will be drawn. In all matters relating to the competition the decision of the panel is final and correspondence and requests for feedback will only be entertained for shortlisted pieces.

2023 COMPOSITION TEXTS

Genesis 1:1-4, 14-18 (may be excerpted at composer's discretion)

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, and it was good ... And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

Isaiah 60:1-2

Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem, quia venit lumen tuum, et gloria Domini super te orta est. Quia ecce tenebrae operient terram et caligo populos. Super te autem orietur Dominus et gloria eius in te videbitur.

John 12:35-36

"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

Lead, Kindly Light, John Henry Newman

Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom,
lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home;
lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path; but now
lead Thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
will lead me on.

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
the night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

Splendor paternae gloriae, Ambrose of Milan

SPLENDOR paternae gloriae,
de luce lucem proferens,
lux lucis et fons luminis,
diem dies illuminans.

Verusque sol, illabere
micans nitore perpeti,
iubarque Sancti Spiritus
infunde nostris sensibus.

Lucis Creator Optime, Gregory the Great (must include at least verses 1 & 2)

LUCIS creator optime,
lucem die rum proferens,
primordiis lucis novae,
mundi parans originem.

Qui mane junctum vesperi,
diem vocari praecipis,
illabitur tetrum chaos,
audi preces cum fletibus.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
cum Spiritu Paraclito
regnans per omne saeculum. Amen.

Morning Song, Sara Teasdale

A diamond of a morning
Waked me an hour too soon;
Dawn had taken in the stars
And left the faint white moon.
O white moon, you are lonely,
It is the same with me,
But we have the world to roam over,
Only the lonely are free.

**ENSEMBLE ALTERA 2023 COMPOSITION COMPETITION
APPLICATION FORM**

Fill out and attach this page as PDF by email along with composition materials.

Personal Information

Name:

Date of birth:

Address:

Telephone:

Email address:

Website (if applicable):

Closing date: Friday, June 30, 2023, 5PM EDT

Declaration

Ensemble Altera 2023 Composition Competition

I confirm that this work is original and solely my own work and does not infringe upon any third party copyrights. I have read and agreed to the Terms and Conditions of this competition.

Signed:

Date: