

YOU HAVE SEARCHED MY HEART

Responsorial Song from Psalm 139 for the Birth of John the Baptist
for Cantor, Assembly & Descant
with Keyboard, Flute & Guitar

TONY BARR

*I thank you, O God, who created me,
You formed me in love and beauty.*

You have searched my heart and you know me;
when I sit, when I stand, you know.
Every thoughts you see from your hidden place, afar,
you know me through and through!

And you know my coming and going,
every step that I take, you have seen.
Even when at rest, I am always in your sight,
how might I hide, run away or flee?

You have formed my inexistence
in the womb fusing me and bone
Yes, how wonderful your work your hands have shaped,
in beauty your design.

Every secret I have every long
and the depths of my heart, you know.
Every day my life is known before my birth,
each thought I have are in your gaze.

This psalm, a thanksgiving for deliverance, is in two sections. The first hymn of thanksgiving for God's universal care (vv 1-18), is followed by an individual petition seeking deliverance from accusers (vv 19-24). It is unusual for the thanksgiving to come before the petition.

What of its cultic use? It may have been a testimony in the Temple of thanksgiving by someone who had been forgiven by God. The opening hymn speaks of God's intimate knowledge of the psalmist (vv 1-6), God's omnipresence (vv 7-12), and the awe-inspiring power of the Creator. The lamentation is a petition for God to destroy the psalmist's accusers, the song of a repentant soul awaiting forgiveness. Perhaps the pilgrim had been accused of idolatry. The second section is a strong protestation of innocence, a disassociation from the godless (vv 19-24). Deuteronomy provides a procedure for ordeal in 13:13-16 and 17:2-7. The accused has come forward before the assembly to deny God's name. If the accused is not guilty, there is a song of God's undying faithfulness. The priestly oracle, the chief spokesman for God, relays judgement before the assembly.

In contemporary spirituality, there are two ways of interpreting this psalm. The initial impression is that this is a hymn to an ever-present God who will allow no harm to approach those who remain faithful to God. This understanding is inspired, for example, by the song *Y'w'h, I Know You Are Near*, a text which encourages sentiments of contentment and faith at being surrounded by God's loving care. But a more critical reading suggests the opposite. The psalmist is here, literally, to be scared stiff because God knows everything there is to know. The psalmist is not safe from the divine scrutiny. Yes, we may be reassured, in God's safe-keeping, but there is no escape from the scrutiny of an ever vigilant, and at times, in Old Testament language, vengeful, Deity.

- Tony Barr

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You Have Searched My Heart

Responsorial Song from Psalm 139 for the Birth of John the Baptist

INTRO ♩ = ca. 88

& text from Psalm 139 Tony Barr

Piano introduction in B-flat major, 4/4 time. The music features a series of chords: D \flat , A \flat , Fm, B \flat m, and E \flat . The melody is simple and contemplative.

Flute

Flute part with a melodic line consisting of eighth and quarter notes, starting on G \flat and moving up to B \flat .

Oboe

Oboe part with a melodic line consisting of eighth and quarter notes, starting on G \flat and moving up to B \flat .

Descant

Descant part with a melodic line consisting of quarter and eighth notes, starting on G \flat and moving up to B \flat .

All All

Vocal part with lyrics: "I thank you, for you have created me. You formed me." The melody is simple and follows the text.

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Vocal part with lyrics: "I thank you, for you have created me. You formed me." The melody is simple and follows the text.

Piano accompaniment for the vocal part, featuring chords A \flat , Fm, and B \flat . The bass line is simple and follows the vocal melody.

Piano accompaniment for the vocal part, featuring chords A \flat , Fm, and B \flat . The bass line is simple and follows the vocal melody.

SAMPLE

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'You Have Searched My Heart'. It consists of six staves. The top two staves are vocal parts. The third and fourth staves are piano accompaniment. The fifth staff shows the harmonic structure with chords D \flat , E \flat , and F. The sixth staff is the bass line. The lyrics are: 'me in beau - ty. formed love and beau - ty.' The score is in 3/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B \flat and E \flat). A large, diagonal watermark reading 'SAMPLE' is overlaid across the entire page.

SAMPLE

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor)

1. You have searched my heart and you know me; when I sit when I lie, this you
2. And you know my coming and going, ev'rywhere that I go, you know
3. You have formed my very existence, in the world, tis - sues
4. Ev - ry se - cret wish, ev' - ry long - ing, and the depths of my heart, you know

Chords: D \flat , E \flat , Fm, B \flat , D \flat

1. know. Ev - ry thought you see from your hidden place, a - far, you
2. seen. Ev - en when at rest I am always in your sight; how
3. bone. Yes, how wonder - ful is the work your hands have shaped, in
4. know. Ev - 'ry day I live, known be - fore my birth, each

Chords: Fm, Cm, B \flat m, A \flat , F \flat /G, Fm, D \flat

1. know I am not hidden from you, through!
2. might I have hid, where you would not find me, I
3. beau - ty you do not see, for I am not hidden from you, I
4. thought laid open to your gaze.

Chords: Fm, E \flat , Fsus4, D \flat , Cm, Fsus4

All

You Have Searched My Heart

Responsorial Song from Psalm 139 for the Birth of John the Baptist

REFRAIN ♩ = ca. 88

Descant

Music & text from Psalm 139 Tony Barr

I thank You. I thank you, for you have - a - ted me. You

me in love and beauty. formed me in love and - ty.

VERSES Psalmist (Cantor)

1. You have searched my heart; you know me; when I
 2. And you know my thoughts and going, ev - ry
 3. You have formed me; your eye saw my existence, in the
 4. Ev - 'ry secret thing that I do, ev - 'ry long - ing, and the

1. sit, when you know. Ev - ry thought you see from your
 2. step that I take, seen. Ev - en when at rest, I am
 3. womb formed me; you knitted me and bone. Yes, how wond - er - ful is the
 4. depths of my heart; you well know. Ev - 'ry day I live you had

hid - den place, far, you know me through and through!
 2. How can I hide, run a - way?
 3. How can your hands have shaped, in beauty your design!
 4. known by my birth, each thought laid bare to your gaze.