

Four Witticisms

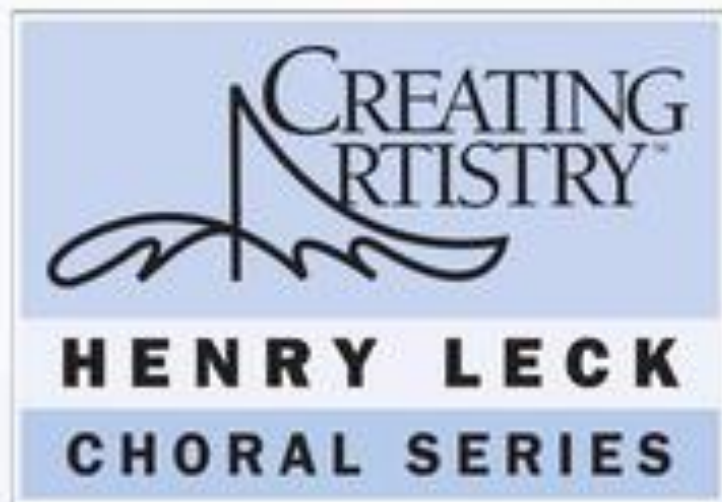
I Bought Me a Bakery

Fish in a Basket

My Friend's Dog

The Fence Builders

Words and Music by
Christopher Alexander



FOUR WITTICISMS

For SATB* and Piano
Duration: ca. 2:30

Words by CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER
Inspired by various word puzzle solutions

Music by
CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER

I. I Bought Me a Bakery

Jauntily (♩ = ca. 100)

Soprano Alto *unis. mf*

Tenor Bass *unis. mf*

Piano *mf*

3

bought me a lit - tle bak - 'ry, im - proved it with i - deas quite wise. So

bought me a lit - tle bak - 'ry, im - proved it with i - deas quite wise. So

* halleonard.com/choral
Visit sheetmusicdirect.com to purchase and download digital choral scores and audio (MP3s).



now, it's mak - ing lots of dough. Bus-'ness is clear - ly *unis.*

now, it's mak - ing lots of dough. Bus-'ness is clear - ly *unis.*

f

5

mf

on the rise!

mf

on the rise!

mf

sf

9

II. Fish in a Basket

Swimming along ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 70$)

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Piano

Swimming along ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 70$)

mp legato

mp legato 5 *unis.*

"Do you have a lot of fish in your bas - ket?"

mp legato

A

4

The musical score is for a piece titled "Fish in a Basket". It is arranged for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The tempo is marked "Swimming along" with a quarter note equal to approximately 70 beats per minute. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 6/8. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are shown with rests in the first system. The piano accompaniment begins in the second system with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked *mp legato*. The vocal line enters in the third system with the lyrics "Do you have a lot of fish in your basket?". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. A finger number "5" is indicated above the fifth note of the vocal line. The word "unis." is written above the final note of the vocal line. The piano accompaniment ends with a fermata over the final chord, marked with a letter "A". A page number "4" is written at the bottom left of the piano part.

boy asked the fish - er - man com - ing back from the shore.

unis.

rit. **Slower, eerily ($\text{♩} = 60$)**

"Yes, a good eel," was the

rit.

"Yes, a good eel,"

Slower, eerily ($\text{♩} = 60$)

rit.

Tempo I ($\text{♩} = 70$)

rath - er slip - p'ry re - sponse.

rath - er slip - p'ry re - sponse.

Tempo I ($\text{♩} = 70$)

L.H. ----- A

R.H.

III. My Friend's Dog

With urgency (♩ = ca. 120)

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Piano

When

When my friend's dog ran a -

my friend's dog ran a - way, in - stead of call - ing An - i - mal Con -

way, in - stead of call - ing An - i - mal Con - trol,

3

mf

mf

mf

4

tro, he called his den-tist, he called his den-tist, and

and fran-tic-'lly re-port-ed, _____ fran-tic-'lly re-port-ed, _____

fran-tic-'lly re-port-ed, _____ fran-tic-'lly re-port-ed, _____

_____ fran-tic-'lly re-port - ed, fran-tic-'lly re-port - ed, fran-tic-'lly re-port-ed, _____

fran-tic-'lly re-port - ed, fran-tic-'lly re-port - ed, fran-tic-'lly re-port - ed, _____

11 13

div.

FOUR WITTICISMS – SATB

unis.
that one of his ca - nines was

unis.
that one of his ca - nines was

15

loose, was loose, was loose, was loose, was

loose, was loose, was loose, was loose, was

17

div. loose, was loose, was loose, was loose! *fade to a distance*

loose, was loose, was loose, was loose! *fade to a distance*

20 *fade to a distance*

IV. The Fence Builders

Martial (♩ = ca. 120)

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Piano

f

The

f

The

Martial (♩ = ca. 120)

5

fence build - ers were — up - set be - cause their boss would not give them a

fence build - ers were — up - set be - cause their boss would not give them a

5

raise. Un - a - ble to ne - go - ti - ate a

raise. Un - a - ble to ne - go - ti - ate a

8

com-pro-mise, the crew had no

com-pro-mise, the crew had no

11

mp 13

mp

choice, the crew had no choice, the

choice, the crew had no choice, the

14

mp

mf fence build-ers had no choice but to pick-et! *f*

mf fence build-ers had no choice but to pick-et! *f*

17

Pick - et! The fence build - ers had no choice

Pick - et! The fence build - ers had no choice

20

sfz but to pick - et!

sfz but to pick - et!

sfz

23

FOUR WITTICISMS – SATB



PERFORMANCE NOTES

I am a puzzle enthusiast. I often find myself doing various word puzzles whenever I have time to spare, even purchasing subscriptions to publications such as PennyDell Puzzles.

One of my favorite types of puzzles is called “Word Games,” where a diagram (a grouping of blank boxes about four to five rows and twenty-six columns) will spell out a quote or witticism using letters from the answers in the clues.

There are four “families” for each puzzle where you must fill in the word game answers one letter per dash. The letter and number under a dash tell you where the letter you wrote on that dash is to be written in the diagram.

The solution to a Word Games puzzle is a message reading from left to right, line by line, in the diagram. Word endings are not indicated in the diagram, and a word may continue from one line to the next.

After I solved one of these Word Games puzzles, I read it over and over again while humming a tune. I had no idea from where the tune came. It just popped into my head. As I continued to solve more puzzles, I had different melodies coming to me. I knew then that these puzzle solutions needed to be set to music. After writing the melodies and working out the accompaniments, I had solved this musical puzzle.

Choirs are encouraged to present all four movements together in one performance with a slight pause between each setting. This gives time to change mindsets and settle into the character for the next song. Each movement has its own character that should be fully welcomed and complemented by the singers.

Many people often groan at puns and witticisms. In this case, the more that singers seek to charm the audience with their performance of “Four Witticisms,” the more the audience will enjoy and laugh at the humorous lines.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Christopher Alexander is the accompanist for Platte County High School in Platte City, Missouri. He received his Music Education degree from Missouri Western State University in 2009. He is a composer and arranger having written over 200 works for both instrumental and vocal music. He is active in musical theatre and serves as the pianist and primary arranger for the Christian youth group, New Generation Singers. In 2016, Christopher was awarded the St. Joseph Allied Arts Council Mayor’s Award for Artist of the Year.