

KRONOS QUARTET
CHORAL REQUIREMENTS
FOR PERFORMANCES OF *AWAKENING*

Awakening is a 90-minute program, performed without intermission, consisting of 13 works. The second-to-last piece on the program is “Winter Was Hard” by Aulis Sallinen, for string quartet and children’s choir.

ABOUT THE WORK:

“Winter Was Hard” (Vintern var hård) is a two-minute work for two-part children’s chorus, with a simple, folksong-like melody. It is in a slow, rocking 3/4 without any tempo changes. It is firmly in E minor throughout and is harmonically very simple. Most of the piece is homophonic. The string quartet plays dotted half note chords underneath the vocal lines for the entire piece. A score with piano reduction is available upon request.

The text is a poem by Bo Carpelan, in Swedish. Sallinen is a Finnish composer, born in 1935.

Kronos recorded this work in 1987 with the San Francisco Girls Chorus for an album titled *Winter Was Hard*. An mp3 can be emailed upon request.

ABOUT THE CHOIR NEEDED:

The choir should consist of children around 10–12 years old, though this range can be different if mutually agreed. The singers should have some concert performance experience and some background in Western classical music. The group will need to sing in Swedish and from memory, so it is best if they have experience memorizing music in other languages. We prefer a slightly raw, young sound over a more polished sound from, say, an advanced teenage choir.

The range of the top treble part is from E above middle C to the C on the staff. The range of the bottom part is from D-sharp above middle C to G on the staff.

The size of the choir is variable, but should be around 40 children. The visual effect should be of a sizeable group of singers surrounding the quartet.

The choir’s regular conductor will lead the singers in performance. S/he will be seated on stage.

REHEARSALS:

The choir will need to rehearse and memorize the piece in advance of Kronos’ arrival. The amount of rehearsal time needed should be determined by the choral conductor.

To help prepare the piece, choirs will receive:

- a Swedish pronunciation guide
- a two-page vocal score with piano reduction, to be photocopied locally.
- a copy of Kronos’ 1987 recording

Kronos will need to rehearse with the choir the day before the performance, in the performance space if possible. One hour should be reserved, which will allow the choir 30 minutes to warm up and get positioned, and 30 minutes to work with Kronos.

PERFORMANCE:

Schedule

The choir will need to participate in a 30-minute rehearsal/soundcheck on the afternoon of the performance. Typically for an 8:00 p.m. concert the choral soundcheck would be from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The choir is then free until they have to go on stage for the performance. They appear in the second-to-last piece in the 90-minute program, i.e., after 9:00 p.m.

The choir will need a large room to gather in. They will need to either bring their own dinner or make plans with parents to get dinner. The choir should provide chaperones to manage the children; there will not be Kronos staff available to assist with this.

During the third-to-last piece on the program, the choir will quietly file on stage while Kronos is playing. They will sing “Winter Was Hard” standing. After “Winter Was Hard” is finished, Kronos will begin the final piece, without pause. The choir will remain standing quietly on stage for the duration of this piece, which is about 6 minutes. After the final piece, the choir will take a bow and file off the stage.

Note that the choir will probably need a designated pick-up and drop-off point to avoid confusion.

Placement on Stage

The choir will be in a large arc surrounding Kronos. The singers should be staggered and not in clearly defined rows. The singers closest to the audience will be quite far downstage, so the choir should know in advance that they may be more spread apart than they usually sing.

The conductor will be seated slightly *upstage* of Kronos, so the singers will not all have a direct view of the conductor. This is also probably different from how they normally perform.

It may be useful for the conductor to look at the stage set-up before the singers to arrive, as this will likely influence the choir’s standing arrangement.

Dress

The choir will be dressed in modest street clothes. They should not be in uniform or dressed formally. Some guidelines are:

- no large logos
- no text
- no large images
- no large, reflective jewelry
- no flip-flops
- no hats
- no miniskirts or shorts
- no cropped shirts
- no clothes with holes
- solids and patterns are OK
- t-shirts and jeans are OK
- there are no color restrictions; white and black are also OK

The conductor should be dressed in all black.