

McNeil Robinson, II (1943-2015) internationally renowned organist and composer was born in Birmingham, Alabama and educated at Birmingham Southern College, Mannes College of Music and the Julliard School. Robinson served iconic and celebrated churches and a synagogue in the City of New York including: the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the Church of the Holy Family (United Nations), Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Avenue Synagogue, and Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church. As an academic, Robinson was chair of the organ department and a professor of music at Manhattan School of Music. Over the course of these appointments, Robinson composed music for organ solo, organ and orchestra, choral, and solo voice with organ and orchestra accompaniment. Other compositions include music for a film, a play, and an opera in progress. Robinson composed sixty choral compositions along with a wealth of service music for both the Christian and Jewish traditions. These compositions include anthems, Missa Brevis, hymns, and psalm responsorials. Much of the choral music was written for use in his own parish and synagogue, other works were commissions received from other houses of worship across the United States and abroad, including a commission by the Archbishop of Canterbury in England, and for the concert stage. Robinson's compositional teachers and influences include: Vincent Persichetti, Charles Wuorinen, Yehudi Wyner, and Virgil Thomson with influences of Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen and Maurice Durufle. Robinson's choral compositions can be categorized as post-Neoclassic, serial, and conservative with elements of contemplative and Romantic style-characteristics. This dissertation will provide a biographical sketch of Robinson's life and career. Chapter two contains conversations with family, academics, former students, clergy, singers, and other professionals. Chapter three introduces Robinson as a choral musician. Chapter four outlines Robinson's compositional style. Chapter five is a survey of Robinson's choral music for the Christian tradition. Chapter six discusses Robinson and Park Avenue Synagogue. Chapter seven is a survey of Robinson's choral music for the Jewish Tradition. Chapter eight serves as a conclusion. The appendixes will include a catalogue of works, DVD interview with Robinson on Jewish music, a DVD interview with Robinson and the NYC Chapter of the American Guild of Organist, Robinson's obituary, memorial service bulletin, DVD of his Memorial Service, degree recital programs, DVD of Lecture-Recital, and biographical sketch of myself.