**Study guide for Dance for Martin’s Dream from Maestro Culbertson:**

Attached is a study recording of the Abels piece for the website [(click here).](file:///C:\Users\Peggy\Documents\My%20Websites\SOMA%20Website\Abels%20Dance%20for%20Martins%20Dream.mp3)

Below is the program note, which explains what the piece is "about":

Dance for Martin’s Dream is a celebration of the progress that has been achieved by Dr. King and those who

marched with him, and the difference their courage has made in the lives of my generation. The piece begins in somber remembrance, but then bursts into danceable, cross-cultural melodies.

Instead of drawing on gospel or spirituals, I chose melodies with a definite bluegrass influence, and then had fun developing them. The form is rhapsodic, which allows for episodes of joy and difficulty, success and setbacks. Eventually it arrives at an uplifting, ambiguous ending that brings back the original somber trumpet melody surrounded by a swirling, pulsating background.

Instead of quotes from Dr. King’s speeches, the score calls for loud chanting of nonsense syllables by members of the orchestra. These syllables were inspired by the hip-hop technique of beat-boxing. But in this context, the voices are used to evoke the sound of a crowd chanting slogans as they might during a rally, as they did during the civil rights movement. The ability to inspire thousands to call for action is a mark of a great leader, and I wanted to recreate that galvanizing sound within the music itself.

– Michael Abels

The chant is pronounced in American English. It is to be over-enunciated and spoken in

each person’s lowest comfortable vocal range. There should be an exaggerated rise in pitch at

the end of each phrase, as if asking a humorous, dramatic question in a nonsense language.