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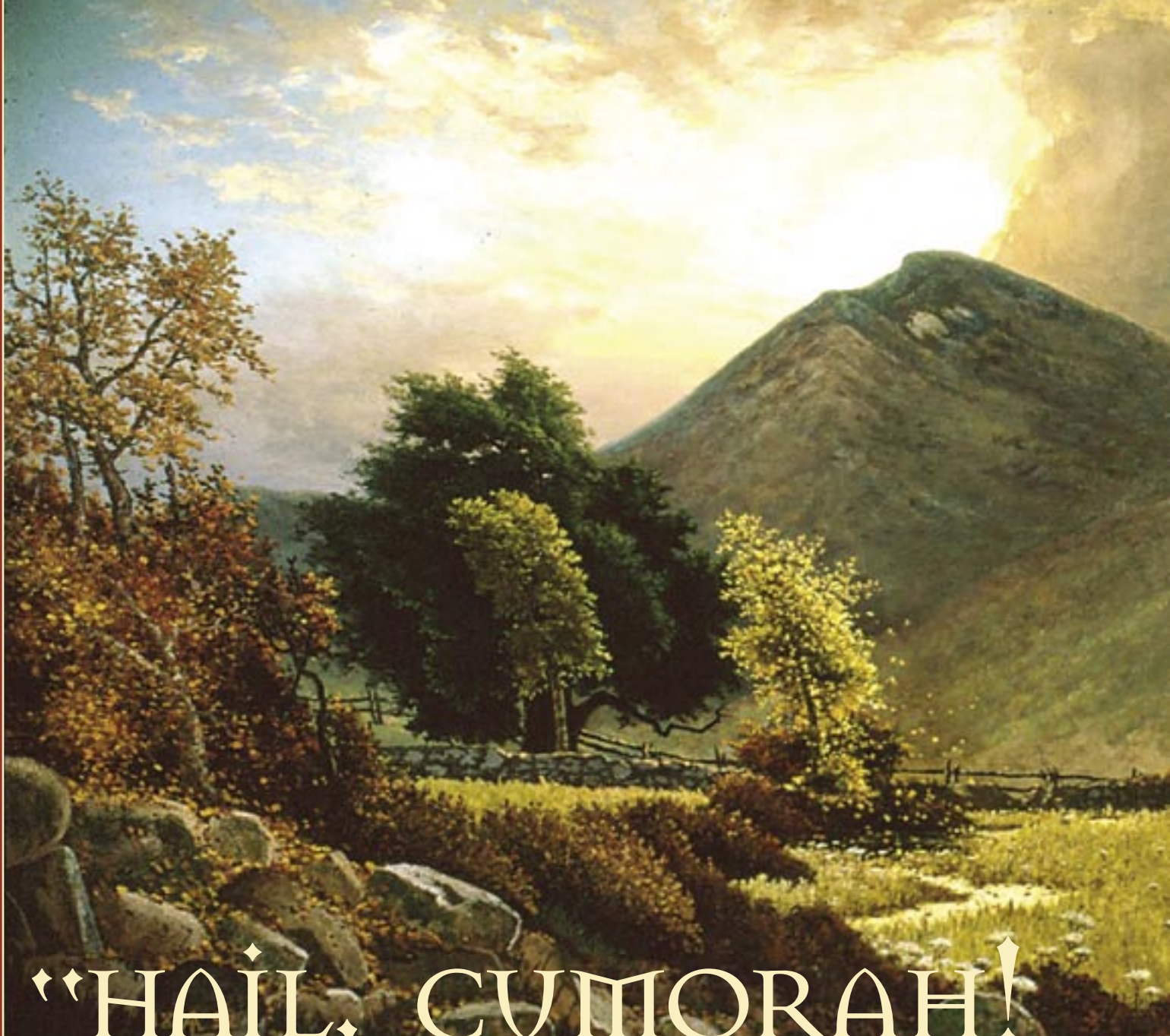
**Title** “Hail, Cumorah! Silent Wonder”: Music Inspired by the Hill Cumorah

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**Abstract** A varied body of musical works inspired by the Hill Cumorah’s prophetic history attests to the dramatic and emotional appeal of this great landmark of Mormonism. The author surveys a variety of musical works, including compositions, anthems, hymns, oratorios, plays, operas, and musicals, that show a wealth of musical potential in the Hill Cumorah’s history. Despite the variety and quality of works composed thus far, the author considers the potential largely untapped and hopes that the music of Cumorah has only just begun.



♦♦HAIL, CUMORAH!  
SILENT WONDER♦♦

MUSIC  
INSPIRED BY  
THE HILL CUMORAH

— ROGER L. MILLER —





*Hill Cumorah*, by Alfred Lambourne. Courtesy of Museum of Church History and Art, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven,  
having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that  
dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,  
and tongue, and people. —Revelation 14:6*

**W**HETHER IT BE the music of a lovely spring morning ringing through a nearby grove or the gilded statue of Moroni trumpeting the everlasting gospel to all the world, as in St. John’s revelation, music, it seems, is never far from “Cumorah’s lonely hill.”<sup>1</sup> A surprisingly varied body of musical works inspired by the hill’s prophetic history, ranging from Parley P. Pratt’s well-known “An Angel from on High”<sup>2</sup> to the music of the famous Hill Cumorah pageant “America’s Witness for Christ,”<sup>3</sup> attests to the dramatic and emotional appeal of this great landmark of Mormonism.<sup>4</sup>

Recently, several Latter-day Saint composers were invited to submit keyboard compositions for a recording project conceived around the general theme “Pictures at a Mormon Exhibition.” For his part, pianist Reid Nibley chose an 1893 painting, *Hill Cumorah*,<sup>5</sup> by Alfred Lambourne. The Lambourne painting, Nibley explains,

gives me pretty much the same feeling as my piano piece—tempestuous movement, harmonic colors shifting from dark to light and sudden changes in dynamics. There are unlimited possibilities for a story to go with the painting and music but the very name “Cumorah” opens our imagination to the incredible events that occurred there.<sup>6</sup>

The painting, which is prominently displayed in a central hallway of the Salt Lake Temple, is not only a brilliant and compelling witness to the power of art in the service of faith but also a bold piece of religious symbolism. The time appears to be early fall, perhaps late September. Faded meadow grass carpets the ground beneath trees and bushes in various stages of muted autumn color. Stark and lonely, the gray summit thrusts upward, dividing its sky into fields of blue-white radiance and troubled, sinister darkness. On one side, light appears to burst from the hillside; on the other, a violent storm threatens as jagged streaks of lightning pierce the roiling clouds. No human object interrupts the awesome landscape, except for telling glimpses of a rail fence virtually buried and unnoticed in the sublime vision.<sup>7</sup> Beneath its anxious exterior, what would seem to be a modernist nature painting is nothing less than a metaphorical drama of the restoration of the gospel, with Joseph Smith and the angel Moroni barely out of view. Extensions of the metaphor come easily to mind: the ominous shadow of two fratricidal battles fought either here or at some faraway namesake of this place, the precious plates and the heavy loneliness of the man who bore them here, and the ancient stick of Joseph speaking to our day as “a voice from the dust.”

Theodore E. Curtis’s “Hail Cumorah, Silent Wonder,”<sup>8</sup> a verbal analogue to Lambourne’s painting, seems to have captured the intense drama as well as the quiet majesty of this sacred place:

Hail Cumorah, silent wonder  
Of the hidden ages gone,  
Lo, the footprints of the thunder

Bares your treasure to the dawn,  
And Moroni clothed in glory,  
Crowns your visage as of old,  
To reveal the ancient story  
Written on your heart of gold.

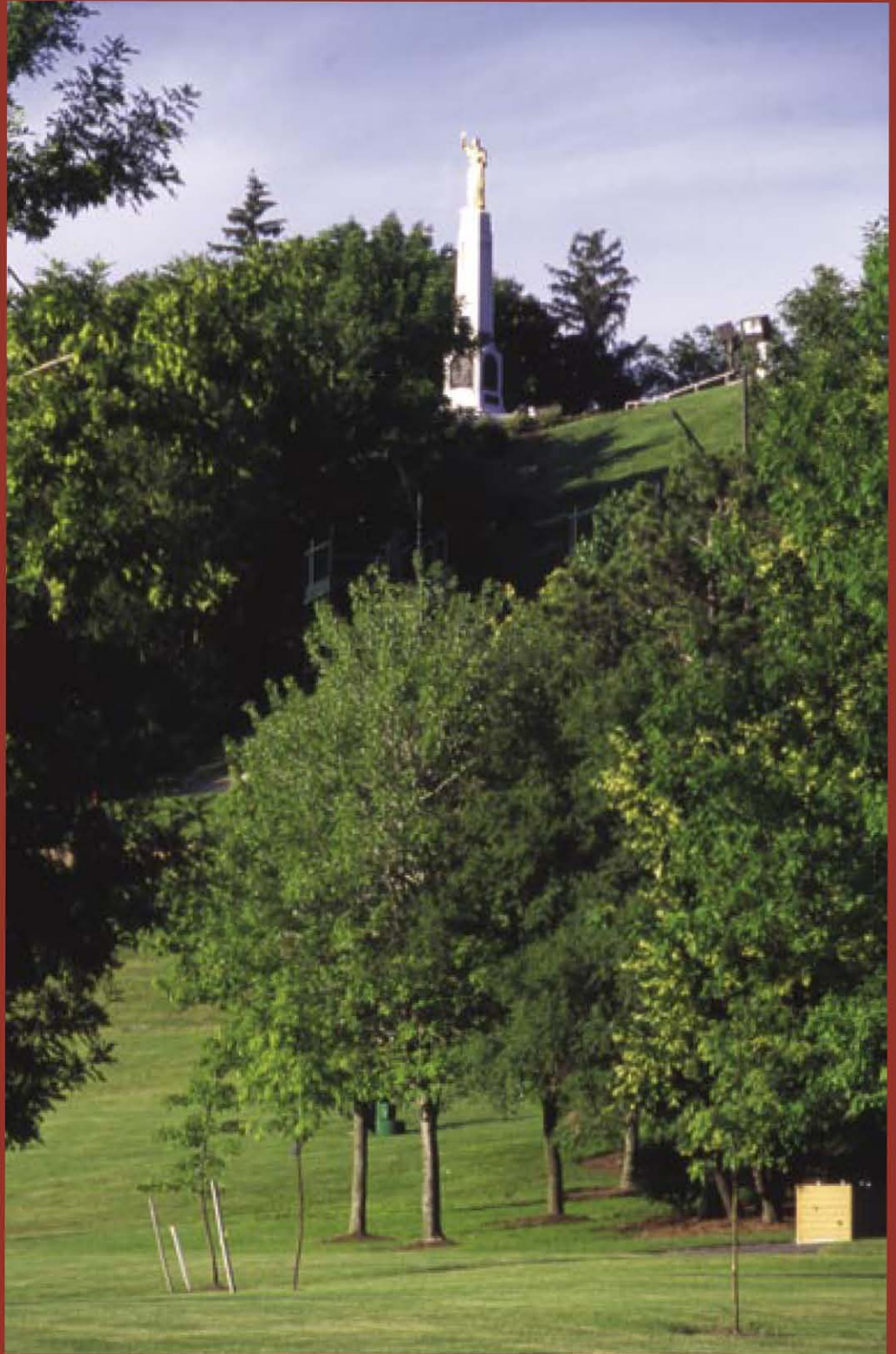
Twice a people’s last protection,  
Twice a witness of the world  
In the arms of insurrection,  
To prophetic ruin hurled.  
Ramah,<sup>9</sup> of the ancient nation,  
Dawns thy glorious day at last.  
From your bosom comes salvation  
And the story of the past.

The first stanza envisions the Hill Cumorah as we know it today, with Moroni’s handsome statue crowning its crest, while the second stanza neatly summarizes Book of Mormon history. Not surprisingly, the poem’s vivid imagery has attracted several musical settings. Hugh Dougall’s setting, for example, was included in the 1927 hymnal. This linkage between visual art, refined poetic word, and music underlies this survey of music inspired by Cumorah, a survey that is at once brief, tantalizing, and brimming with optimism about our musical future.

#### HYMNS AND THE HILL CUMORAH

Recently, Karen Lynn Davidson traced “the influence of the Book of Mormon through more than a century and a half of Mormon hymnody” (from Emma Smith’s 1835 *Collection of Sacred Hymns* to the 1985 *Hymns*).<sup>10</sup> By Davidson’s criteria only 19 hymns published in the official hymnals of the church could be uniquely tied to the Book of Mormon. Even fewer mentioned the Hill Cumorah directly: “An Angel Came Down from the Mansions of Glory,” by William W. Phelps;<sup>11</sup> “I Have No Home. Where Shall I Go?” by Lucy Smith;<sup>12</sup> “An Angel from On High,” by Parley P. Pratt, and two of his lesser known hymns, “Hark! ye mortals. Hist! be still”<sup>13</sup> and “When Earth in Bondage Long Had Lain.”<sup>14</sup> First published in the unofficial hymnal known as Little and Gardner (1844),<sup>15</sup> the last hymn’s 10 original stanzas attempt a summary of the entire restored gospel, with perhaps the earliest use of Pratt’s familiar phrase “Cumorah’s lonely hill” in the third stanza (see accompanying sidebar). Lucy Smith’s extensive narrative on the post-destruction tribulations of Moroni is likewise





The Hill Cumorah Monument.  
Photo by John Telford © 2004.

H Y M N S .

65

- 4 O gladly we'll go to the isles and proclaim;  
And nations unknown then shall hear of his fame;  
Yes, kingdoms, and countries, both Gentiles and Jews  
Shall see us, and hear us proclaim the glad news.
- 5 And millions shall turn to the Lord and rejoice,  
That they have made Jesus the Savior their choice;  
From the north and the south, from the east and the west,  
We'll bring home our thousands in Zion to rest.
- 6 As clouds see them fly to their glorious home—  
As doves to their windows in flocks see them come,  
While empires shall tremble and kingdoms shall rend,  
And thrones be cast down as wise Daniel proclaim'd.
- 7 And Israel shall flourish and spread far abroad,  
Till earth shall be full of the knowledge of God;  
And thus shall the stone of the mountain roll forth—  
Extend its dominions and fill the whole earth.

NO. 36. L. M.

- 1 When Earth in bondage long had lain,  
And darkness o'er the nations reigned,  
And all men's precepts proved in vain,  
A perfect system to obtain;
- 2 A voice commissioned from on high,  
Hark, hark, it is the angel's cry,  
Descended from the throne of light,  
His garments shining clear and white.
- 3 He comes the gospel to reveal  
In fulness, to the sons of men;  
Lo! from Cumorah's lonely hill,  
There comes a record of God's will!
- 4 Translated by the power of God,  
His voice bears record to his word:  
Again an angel did appear,  
As witnesses do record bear.

5

66

S A C R E D

- 5 Restored the priesthood long since lost,  
In truth and power, as at the first;  
Thus men commissioned from on high,  
Came forth and did repentance cry.
- 6 Baptizing those who did believe,  
That they the spirit might receive  
In fulness, as in days of old,  
And have one shepherd and one fold.
- 7 Ye Gentile nations, cease your strife,  
And listen to the words of life;  
Turn from your sins with one accord,  
Prepare to meet your coming Lord.
- 8 Let Judah's remnants, far and near  
The glorious proclamation hear,  
For Israel and the Gentiles too,  
The way to Zion shall pursue.
- 9 Their voices and their tongues employ  
In songs of everlasting joy;  
The mountains and the hills rejoice,  
Let all creation hear his voice.
- 10 From north to south from east to west,  
In thee all nations shall be blest;  
When Abram and his seed shall stand  
Unnumbered on the promised land.

NO. 37. L. M.

- 1 How fleet the precious moments roll,  
How soon the harvest will be o'er;  
The watchmen seek their final rest,  
And lift a warning voice no more.

typical of the lengthy narrative style practiced by many 19th-century versifiers. William W. Phelps found a sharper Book of Mormon focus for his Cumorah hymn (composed in 1835 but dropped from the hymnbooks after 1927):<sup>17</sup>

An angel came down from the mansions of glory,  
And told that a record was hid in Cumorah,  
Containing our Saviour's most glorious Gospel,—  
And also the cov'nant to gather His people.

A heavenly treasure, a book full of merit,  
It speaks from the dust by the power of the Spirit;  
A voice from the Saviour that Saints can rely on,  
To watch for the day when He brings again Zion.

O listen ye isles, and give ear, ev'ry nation.  
For great things await you in this generation,

The kingdom of Jesus in Zion shall flourish,  
The righteous will gather, the wicked must perish.  
O Israel! O Israel! In all your abidings,  
Prepare for your Lord, when you hear these glad tidings.

While hymns of this sort were well received in the church's first century, Davidson's study suggested a current need for more "devotional hymns of timeless and universal dignity, personal meditations upon Book of Mormon texts, hymns that pour forth the gratitude and testimony of the writer, inviting the congregation to do the same."<sup>18</sup> A similar plea was made by Elder Boyd K. Packer in 1976:

Our hymns speak the truth as far as they go.  
They could speak more of it if we had more of

them, specifically teaching the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. If I had my way there would be many new hymns with lyrics near scriptural in their power, bonded to music that would inspire people to worship. Think how much we could be helped by another inspired anthem or hymn of the Restoration.<sup>19</sup>

Retired Brigham Young University religion professor Rodney Turner's "What Do We Hear from Cumorah?" (with music by Janice Kapp Perry)<sup>20</sup> attempts exactly that. His text adapts the rhetorical format of Joseph Smith's 1842 doctrinal "epistle" (Doctrine and Covenants 128), written from Nauvoo to encourage and energize the Saints during this difficult period:

And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets—the book to be revealed.<sup>21</sup>

Formulated as a concise refrain, the hymn's title begins each of its three stanzas:

What do we hear from Cumorah?  
From its heights holy prophets of old  
Witness with power and plainness  
Of Jesus, on plates of gold.  
Their message is truth everlasting,  
The truth that shall save each soul  
Who, hearing the call of the Shepherd,  
Repents and seeks rest in His fold.

What do we hear from Cumorah?  
From its heart humble servants proclaim  
Men are alike unto heaven,  
As children of God, the same.  
Restored is the gospel of gladness,  
With joy we can now exclaim  
"The burden of sin has been lifted  
Because of our faith in Christ's name."

What do we hear from Cumorah?  
From on high speaks the voice of the Son  
Off'ring to all life eternal  
Through Him who denieth none.  
With Joseph's word joined unto Judah,  
Their witnesses stand as one,  
The gospel goes forth to the nations  
The work of salvation begun!

There is much to admire in Turner's rhetorical concept, even with its minor problems. Especially noteworthy is the three-part sequence: "From its heights" (repentance), "From its heart" (forgiveness), and "From on high" (salvation and eternal life).

Nowhere is the doctrine of salvation through Christ more succinctly stated than in Moroni's final address to the Gentiles, written shortly before the plates were buried:

Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him,  
and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and  
if ye shall . . . love God with all your might,  
mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient  
for you, that . . . ye may be perfect in Christ.  
(Moroni 10:32)

A frequent source of texts, this eloquent passage with its concise invitation to "Come unto Christ" has inspired a number of works of that title, including Reid Nibley's recent anthem "Come unto Christ," for chorus and organ (2000).<sup>22</sup> Closely related are the many works based on the recurrent "voice from the dust" metaphor, with its direct connection to Cumorah, as in Moroni 10:27:

And I exhort you to remember these things;  
for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know  
that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of  
God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did  
I not declare my words unto you, which were  
written by this man, like as one crying from the  
dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?<sup>23</sup>

Among the several interesting works on this theme, Henry Evans Giles's anthem "The Truth Has Spoken from the Dust" was composed for the 100th anniversary of Joseph Smith's receiving the plates from the angel Moroni, which was observed with programs and ceremonies throughout the church.<sup>24</sup> President Heber J. Grant marked the occasion with a visit to the Hill Cumorah on 22 September 1927. Wards and stakes held commemorative services the following Sunday, 25 September, and a special program arranged by Tabernacle organist Edward P. Kimball aired that evening on KSL radio.<sup>25</sup> Giles's anthem (composed for the Ensign Stake) contains four divisions—Chorus, Chant, Chorale, Finale—and bears the ceremonial trappings of a British coronation anthem, opening with a fugal song of praise and concluding with a brief "Amen" chorus. Only the second section (Chant) refers specifically





Trumpeters atop Cumorah officially begin the pageant.  
Photo courtesy of Palmyra Bean Packer.

to the work's title, with an explicit nod to Moroni's symbolic trumpet:

The truth has spoken from the dust  
And righteousness from heav'n come forth;  
The fullness of the everlasting Gospel  
Shall now resound through all the earth.  
Give ear unto the Angel's call.  
His trumpet sounding long and loud.  
Ye nations, kindreds, tongues, and empires all  
Prepare to meet the Lord, your God.

A more recent treatment of this theme, Merrill Bradshaw's avant-garde "A Voice from the Dust"<sup>26</sup> (composed in 1978 for a cappella choir), could hardly have been more different. At first glance, its text—a gloss on Isaiah 29, treating the future redemption of Jerusalem—seems to harbor only distant echoes of Cumorah. A closer reading, however, reveals that the real theme is the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and restoration of the gospel in the last days:

Jerusalem, thou holy city far above value  
Have no more heaviness and sorrow  
For the word of the Lord cometh to thee from a far  
land  
Whispering low out of the dust  
With a familiar spirit out of the ground.  
(Isaiah 29:1–6)

Dream no more of food! Eat!  
Eat what the Lord sendeth that thy soul be not  
empty.  
Think no more of thirst! Drink!  
Drink of the waters of life that ye be filled,  
For the Lord doeth a marvelous work and a wonder.  
(Isaiah 29:8, 13–14)

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Hear the words of the book from the dust! (Isaiah  
29:11–12)  
Israel! Israel!  
See his great work made without hands!  
(Daniel 2:34)

Jerusalem!  
The Lord speaketh, who shall not hear?  
The Lord sendeth, who shall not receive?  
The Lord worketh, who shall not be astonished?  
(Isaiah 29:18–24)

Rejoice! O Israel!  
Jerusalem, Thy salvation is nigh.

A number of avant-garde techniques support the poetic imagery. For example, the syllables JE-RU-SA-LEM, which begin the piece, are intoned by "slow, intense" tone clusters underscored by vocal sonorities of indistinct pitch and shape, creating a deliberate feeling of remoteness and estrangement. Inchoate whispers ("whispering low out of the dust") gradually form coherent words, finally emerging as full-voiced, pitched sounds at the text "out of the ground." After a bout of "frenzied" counterpoint, all the voices climax in unison, shouting, "Rejoice, O Israel! Rejoice, O Israel!" before coming full circle to the sounds of the opening on the text, "Jerusalem, Thy salvation is nigh." In a related piece, "The Vision of Ezekiel"<sup>27</sup> (composed for the BYU A Cappella Choir and the Israel Chamber Orchestra), Bradshaw reverted to more traditional musical language for his treatment of the stick of Joseph and stick of Judah theme. Again, the connection to Cumorah might seem tangential, until we realize that Ezekiel 37:16–27 is the key to the unrelenting importance that Book of Mormon writers attach to the Old Testament patriarch Joseph, who by name and covenant links the ancient patriarchal order with the remnant of the house of Israel through a modern Joseph at Cumorah.<sup>28</sup> It is hard to resist commenting on current BYU composer Christian Asplund's several hundred innovative hymns, composed primarily as a personal expres-

sion. Some require a cultivated ear, but several are surprisingly accessible despite their modern propensities. “And now I, Moroni” (Ether 12:38–41)—a mildly dissonant choral recitative for male voices—is especially effective. A solemn loneliness infuses the chantlike chords, which in their expressive neutrality (static harmony and dynamics, minimal melodic motion) emphasize the pure power of Moroni’s testimony.<sup>29</sup> Imaginative works of this sort show how modernist and even avant-garde techniques can be effectively employed in dramatic and rhetorical contexts. It is generally assumed that audiences have not kept pace with the rhetoric of modern music, but if—as here—the context is clear and the purpose convincing, the effect can be exactly right.<sup>30</sup>

### DRAMATIC WORKS

The Book of Mormon presents many opportunities to go beyond tradition in the portrayal of what Davidson describes as its “stirring oratory, thought-provoking figures of speech and distinctive turns of phrase.”<sup>31</sup> One could add to these its rich narrative, compelling adventures, and intense drama. Elder B. H. Roberts of the First Council of the Seventy was among the first to have a substantial vision of music and drama as a means of telling the Book of Mormon story.<sup>32</sup> As a young journalist, he wrote stories about Moroni, sketched a “Nephite Republic,” and created “a fictionalized and heightened account of the life of Alma’s son Corianton,” later adapted as a play that “found its way from the Salt Lake Theater to Broadway.”<sup>33</sup> His purpose was to show that “Book of Mormon characters have flesh-and-blood counterparts in our own day and in our own interior lives.” In 1923, as president of the Eastern States Mission, Roberts “set up an elaborate celebration” to mark the 100th anniversary of Joseph Smith’s first encounter with the angel Moroni.<sup>34</sup> A dramatic oration that he prepared for the occasion was hailed by the press as “a sweeping vision with the power of a Nordic saga” and a “graphic panorama of the past”—perhaps the earliest intimation of what a Book of Mormon pageant might be. As the 1930 centennial of the church’s founding approached, Roberts “dreamed of a major motion picture with a script built upon one or more of the epic civilizations portrayed in the book.”<sup>35</sup> The movie was not to be, but in 1937 his dream was realized in an even more significant way, with the

first performance of a gigantic outdoor drama on the slopes of the Hill Cumorah. For its first 20 years, the pageant relied on excerpts from works by Wagner and Tchaikovsky, but in 1957 an original musical score was performed and recorded by BYU choruses and the Utah Symphony Orchestra in the Salt Lake Tabernacle under the direction of the composer, Crawford Gates. Now, it is impossible for anyone who has seen “America’s Witness for Christ” not to think of Gates’s spectacular score resounding across the woods and farmlands of upstate New York.<sup>36</sup>

Significantly, Elder Roberts’s ideas served as a kind of manifesto for a new generation of Latter-day Saint artists. One who seems to have taken his ideas seriously was BYU English professor Clinton F. Larson, whose poetic drama *Coriantumr* and its companion piece *Moroni* attracted much attention in the early 1960s.<sup>37</sup> These plays, according to the foreword<sup>38</sup> by Marden J. Clark, “mark a milestone in the use . . . of strictly Mormon, especially *Book of Mormon*, material” for serious dramatic purposes. “So far as I know,” Clark writes, “Mr. Larson is the first artist of any kind to exploit the tragic potential in the parallel destructions of the peoples of Jared and Nephi recorded in the *Book of Mormon*.” The “language is truly life-like . . . in its ability to suggest, to embody, even to create life in its depths, its totality, its ramifications, its emotional richness.”<sup>39</sup> Larson is able to skirt the didacticism that has plagued so much of Mormon literature while still making use of “the religious, moral, and ethical affirmations that are the heart of the *Book of Mormon*.” He treats both the Jaredite *Coriantumr* and the Nephite *Moroni* as tragic figures whose lives, because they are intertwined



Elder B. H. Roberts instructs local Latter-day Saint missionaries gathered at Hill Cumorah. Photo courtesy of Palmyra Bean Packer.

with nations of divine destiny, have transcendent, universal appeal. In Clark's view the plays achieve universality by stressing not "undeserved suffering and evil," but rather the "regenerative effects of suffering" through the atonement of Christ. Rarely, he says, have artistic mastery and spiritual power come together with such force as when, at the end of the second play, Moroni addresses the prophet Joseph from out of the past:

Joseph, I reach to you!  
I reach to you from Sherrizah! He who was slain  
By the Jews lived among us!  
Joseph, we lived!  
Ask if we have not lived!  
.....  
My people, my people, let the Word raise you from  
the dead.<sup>40</sup>

In the end Clark pleads not only for these plays to be performed but for more of their kind to be written:

Their very existence and publication challenges Church members to rise to a cultural level at which, if not these plays, then at least similarly honest attempts at real art from Mormon materials will get the kind of hearing they deserve.<sup>41</sup>

Such a challenge could not go unanswered. Fresh from a doctorate in composition at the University of Illinois, a young Merrill Bradshaw was just

beginning his long and productive career at BYU when Larson's plays were published. The two men became warm friends and intellectual comrades, sharing common es-  
thetic and spiritual perspectives about art in the church. A piano and vocal score found among Bradshaw's papers at BYU may be his initial probe into Larson's dramatic world. Entitled "Sarah's Soliloquy," it is a setting of the opening scene of Larson's



Book of Mormon dramatist Clinton F. Larson. Photo courtesy of the Larson family.

*Coriantumr*.<sup>42</sup> In this play Larson's elevated poetic prose examines the psychology of denial and despair that must have plagued the last days of the Jaredites (see Ether 12–15). As the play opens, the Jaredites have fought themselves almost to oblivion, and once again the separate factions (one led by Shiz, the other by Coriantumr) have gone out to senseless battle. The scene begins with Coriantumr's wife, Sarah, holding an imaginary conversation with her son Mahonri. In her delusion, Sarah has convinced herself that Mahonri has not been involved in the fighting but is only just back from a day of hunting; in fact, he *has* joined the fighting and does not seem to be present as she speaks:

*(Scene: Near the hill Ramah on the North American continent, in the fourth century before the birth of Christ. The time is late autumn. There is a cave to the right. In the center is a table; against the table rests a sword, upon which the light is particularly intense. In the posture of SARAH, who is alone, there is the hint of calamity.)*

SARAH (*Clearing the table*)  
Mahonri, your father will be here soon.  
Sheath your sword; your work is done today.  
*(Abstractedly)*  
There is enough food to last for many days;  
Yet you bring more here to surfeit us,  
And we eat or it spoils in the bright sun.  
*(Now humming)*  
Your sword, Mahonri—how could you hunt  
today? . . .

*(Grasping reality)*

What am I thinking of? Or was the sun but the  
glint  
Of a jeweled scabbard somewhere near? . . .  
*(Looking, then fondling the cross of the sword)*  
Ah, the sacrifice of this time, that we are lonely,  
Just a few in this expanse of light and heat,  
Alone as the unbending trees. And we fight,  
run—  
And fight again. The days of our traveling here,  
are heavy.

*(CORIANTUMR enters with three soldiers, all breathing heavily. Their swords are streaked with blood.)<sup>43</sup>*

Sarah's pensive and distracted mood changes are reflected in the disjunct contours of Bradshaw's skillful counterpoint and in the piano's mildly dissonant harmonies. Both musically and dramatically, he seems to have found an uncompromising—yet



accessible—musical voice to match this challenging poetry. But the venture never gets beyond this first scene. Usually when a large artistic project grinds to a halt, it does so in midcourse, leaving a residue of notes, sketches, outlines, and so on, but not in this case; all that remains is this one promising score, and then—nothing. That Bradshaw went on to conclude many other lengthy and difficult projects suggests that this was a matter of choice. After all, a good poem has its own music, and Larson’s is powerful poetry. Perhaps this initial encounter was enough to convince him that he had nothing further to add. Did Bradshaw, as others, find Larson’s poetry too leaden, too grand for a musical setting? Or did he simply outgrow his early enthusiasm as his ideas matured in other directions?<sup>44</sup> The reasons are of little consequence, except that they indicate the difficulty any artist is likely to encounter in creating a serious work of this magnitude.

Even in a less ambitious project, there are difficulties. Newell Dayley’s *Moroni* (based on a script by Ralph G. Rodgers) was presented in the summer of 1977 in Salt Lake City’s Salt Palace under the supervision of Elder Mark E. Peterson of the Quorum of the Twelve.<sup>45</sup> Far removed from the epic poetry of Larson’s *Moroni*, Rodgers’s fictional narrative sets out to humanize the prophet-general Mormon and his house, as suggested in its preface:

Father Mormon is there, as is Moroni’s mother, his young friends, and even his romantic interests, and his enemies in war. . . . “Moroni” peels the gold leaf and bronze from this most fascinating character, and shows us a living, breathing human being—one who has the same concerns about family, about life and happiness as we do.<sup>46</sup>

Its musical-theater format was intended to be both didactic and entertaining: Moroni, though not quite the stereotypical “bishop’s son,” has fallen for the wrong girl—a self-centered beauty queen—while the “girl next door” languishes unnoticed until, in a typical showtune duet (“When did love arrive?”), he awakens to himself through her and accepts his role in the world for what it really is. As the tragedy of the Nephite destruction plays out, Moroni finds himself alone with the sacred record, and the show ends with an epilogue picturing Joseph Smith and the resurrected angel Moroni on the slopes of the Hill Cumorah. Quintessential Mormon musical theater, *Moroni*

was well received. But a work of this sort issues challenges unique to itself, challenges that have yet to be successfully met: Can characters of whom we know so little be endowed with flesh and blood without becoming caricatures? Can an entertainment medium such as musical theater, or even the more artistically serious medium of opera, create a believable context for the serious message of the Book of Mormon? Two projected works seek to answer yes.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE MUSIC OF  
CUMORAH? WHAT ARE THE THEMES  
ASSOCIATED WITH ITS ANCIENT HISTORY,  
ITS PLACE IN THE RESTORATION AND  
THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, ITS  
COMPELLING ROLE IN THE FULFILLMENT  
OF BOOK OF MORMON PROPHECY,  
AND ITS MODERN ROLE IN  
TELLING THE CHURCH’S STORY?

The recently announced *By the Hand of Mormon: Scenes from the Land of Promise* hopes to achieve those very goals. A collaboration between highly experienced professionals—composer Sam Cardon, librettist David Pfliler, and artist Walter Rane—it promises to take the Book of Mormon musical to the level of a Broadway production. As in previous attempts, the goal is to make Book of Mormon figures come to life as real people, in their own environment, with something approximating authentic music, costuming, sets, and so on, with the hope that seeing into “their hearts and their lives can help point us to the Savior.”<sup>47</sup> Another dramatic work with direct ties to Cumorah is Crawford Gates’s recent opera *Joseph! Joseph!*, on the life of Joseph Smith. Covering the entire length and meaning of the Prophet’s life, *Joseph! Joseph!* also attempts a realistic portrait. It remains to be seen whether it is more challenging to re-create a well-documented historical person than to construct an artificial life for epic characters about whose personal life little is known. Both approaches hold out promise, but the challenge is to find the right combination of spiritual insight and artistic genius.<sup>48</sup>

For what might seem obvious reasons, oratorio and similar types of unstaged musical drama have also held a strong appeal for Latter-day Saint composers. Leroy Robertson's *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon*<sup>49</sup> was the first major work of this kind. Its focus was the prophecies and ministry of Christ to the Nephites, as recorded in Helaman and 3 Nephi, and its success inspired other major Book of Mormon works.<sup>50</sup> One of these was Rowan Taylor's *Coriantumr*<sup>51</sup> for four-part mixed chorus, soloists, and orchestra, which premiered in the East Los Angeles Stake Center in 1960. Like Larson's play, the oratorio follows the evolution of the downfall of the Jaredites, as Coriantumr encounters the stratagems of his various nemeses in the region around ancient Ramah/Cumorah. Its text, taken directly from the book of Ether, relies on the inherent poetry of Mormon's redaction, with its authentic structure, inflection, and cadence. With this effort, Taylor—a professor of composition at Pierce College in Los Angeles—demonstrated that uncompromising works of more than limited appeal can be drawn from Book of Mormon materials and that Latter-day Saint composers who want to write seriously can create opportunities of their own accord.

Darwin Wolford's oratorio *The Land of Joseph*,<sup>52</sup> on a libretto by Marylou Cunningham Shaver (commissioned by Ricks College in 1976 for the American bicentennial), portrays a sweeping vision of America's religious history. The oratorio, which concludes with Moroni's final words of warning at Cumorah, has the unifying theme that the "land of promise" can only be possessed by a righteous people. The narrow patriotic focus connecting the "land of promise" with the United States undoubtedly limits the potential of this work. More universally appealing is Wolford's *Song from Cumorah*, a cantata for children's chorus, with narration and lyrics by Mabel Jones Gabbott.<sup>53</sup> The cantata unfolds around important Book of Mormon topics, each narration reinforced with a song, as in this example from the finale:

"The stories we have told are in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon was translated from the plates which the angel Moroni took from the Hill Cumorah. Joseph Smith translated the record, which is 'an account written by the hand of Mormon; wherefore it is an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, and of the people of

*Jared—and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentiles to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.'*

I heard the voices ringing  
In tones of mighty worth,  
From men whose words had waited  
Long hidden in the earth.  
When fools no longer hearken  
And cry that Christ is dead.  
Lo! Nephi tells his story;  
And Mormon's word is read.

I heard the voices singing,  
Of miracles, of prayer,  
Of Christ alive, but wounded,  
Of angels gathered there;  
When men again are seeking  
A hope against the night.  
His words will be their comfort,  
His love will make things right.

The delightful children's series *Musical Adventures in the Book of Mormon* (formerly *The Wonderful Book of Gold*), by Melanie Hoffman and Marvin Payne, takes an entirely different approach to children and the Book of Mormon, replacing seriousness with whimsy. The characters, including three children and their dog, present the Book of Mormon in a way that is natural, accurate, and instructive to both children and adults. Set in the children's treehouse, each of the 30 episodes is a skit beginning with dialogue, followed by a cleverly arranged song. "All the Folks on Nephi's Boat," for example, is a sea chantey, while the "Murmur Song" makes skillful use of irony and musical cliché to mock the futility and lack of faith evident in the constant bickering of Lehi's rebellious family:

Murmur in the morning. Murmur at night.  
Murmur to the left. Murmur to the right.  
They murmured up and down the desert sand:  
They murmured all the way to the—PROMised  
land.

The children ask questions and reason out solutions based on their own level of experience. Episodes are sequential, so the accounts of Mormon abridging the record and of Moroni burying the plates in the Hill Cumorah conclude the story of *The Wonderful Book of Gold*.<sup>54</sup>

Steven Kapp Perry and Brad Wilcox's *From Cumorah's Hill*,<sup>55</sup> written in a popular medium geared for young adults, works best as a cantata or concert piece. It was conceived around letters received by the composers addressing issues such as ridicule, intimidation and outright persecution, intellectual challenges, rebellious feelings and actions, and loneliness. Excerpts from the letters are paired with parallel situations in the Book of Mormon, thus providing practical and inspirational answers to the problems of ordinary people who want to live righteously but face overwhelming personal challenges.

"Voices from the Dust," a (1990) stake production written by former KSL-TV news anchor Margaret Smoot, centered around the character Everyman (pretaped and projected onto jumbo television screens) and his search for truth.<sup>56</sup> Interaction between the television character and an onstage family who have shared with him a copy of the Book of Mormon leads to portrayals—some humorous, some serious—of Book of Mormon episodes and doctrinal concepts, along with modern-day testimonials of its truth. Except for an original title song, the music is borrowed, ending with Jeff Goodrich's "You Can Believe in Christ."<sup>57</sup> This unique application of television technology was but one way of enhancing an otherwise amateur production that proved both entertaining and inspiring. With today's even more advanced technologies, the potential for this kind of creativity is virtually boundless.

#### A MUSIC ONLY JUST BEGUN

What began as a comprehensive survey of music inspired by the Hill Cumorah became, in process, a more introspective project, inevitably raising new questions: What constitutes the music of Cumorah? What are the themes associated with its ancient history, its place in the restoration and the early history of the church, its compelling role in the fulfillment of Book of Mormon prophecy, and its modern role in telling the church's story? How have these various aspects inspired composers and influenced the arts in the church? What has been the response to the Hill

Cumorah by the rank and file of the church, in its worship and in the deepening of individual and collective faith? Only gradually, it seems, have we come to realize how vast the possibilities are.

The church moved away from its geographical origins early in its history. Only a small percentage of early church members knew the prophet Joseph's New York surroundings at first hand. Yet Cumorah was, and is, the symbolic heart of the restoration. It is a tangible connection with the Book of Mormon's past—its prophets, its heroes, and its message to the world. As this very limited survey has shown, there is a wealth of musical potential in Cumorah's history, but despite the variety and quality of works composed thus far, it is a potential largely untapped.

There is, however, reason for optimism. First, in terms of its cultural history, the church is still very young; we should remember that it took centuries for Christianity in general to build its impressive artistic legacy. Second, it is always good to recognize that what exists need not limit or prescribe future possibilities. Efforts to create self-consciously Mormon art, however, are probably (and rightly) doomed to failure. The gospel is universal, and one of the great challenges of our generation is to find that universal voice without minimizing or compromising the uniqueness of our mission. Because the gospel embraces all truth—even (and perhaps especially) artistic truth—we need to foster greater confidence in our own creativity as a people. We should consciously and consistently use the arts, as other communities have done, for introspection and exploration to discover and project the very best in ourselves. A real Latter-day Saint art, avoiding the twin plagues of didacticism and narcissism, would provide the impetus for living the gospel richly and vigorously, so that the wellsprings of our experience are full when the Lord would bless us with the gifts of his Spirit. Cumorah's music ranges from high art to the songs of children, from the deeply serious to the comic. At each level there have been fresh and interesting ideas, although not without challenges and failures. Let us hope that the music of Cumorah, in both a real and a symbolic sense, has only just begun. ■



- Discourses*, 14:330–31; 15:182–83; 16:57; 17:30–31; 17:281; 19:218. Another source for Pratt's accounts is supposedly the *Quorum of the Twelve Minutes*, 6 May 1849, but I have not been able to confirm this. Brigham Young's record of that date, however, is interesting to note: "I met with President Willard Richards and the Twelve on the 6th. We spent the time in interesting conversation upon old times, Joseph, the plates, Mount Cumorah, treasures and records known to be hid in the earth, the gift of seeing, and how Joseph obtained his first seer stone" (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 6 May 1849, Church Archives). See also *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 May 1849.
- Most of the cave accounts mention Oliver Cowdery as a participant. Although Cowdery is not formally on record as having shared this experience in speaking or writing, there is one obscure line from Cowdery that might refer to the cave experience. In describing his feelings about the Hill Cumorah, Cowdery wrote, "In my estimation, certain places are dearer to me for what they *now* contain than for what they *have* contained" (*Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, October 1835, 2:196; emphasis in original).
  - It is interesting that his account differs from the others regarding the exact location of the cave, and yet it should be remembered that Whitmer's statement "not far away from that place" may have been referring to the exact place where the plates were found, and therefore the cave, which was nearby, could have still been in the hill proper. Another possibility is that, for some reason, Whitmer was thinking of Miner's Hill, which is just north of the Hill Cumorah and was said to feature a cave dug by Mormons; see Cameron Packer, "A Study of the Hill Cumorah: A Significant Latter-day Saint Landmark in Western New York" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002), 59–62.
  - For a review of these missing records, see Monte S. Nyman, "Other Ancient American Records Yet to Come Forth," *JBMS* 10/1 (2001): 52–61.
  - Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:57.
  - Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:218.
  - Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:39.
  - Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:37.
  - Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:38.
  - Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:38.
  - Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:39.
  - Journal of Jesse Nathaniel Smith*, 217.
  - Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:105.
  - Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:105.
  - Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:105.
  - See also Jeffrey R. Holland, "Therefore, What?" (address given at the 2000 CES Conference, Brigham Young University, 8 August 2000), 2; and Leslie A. Taylor, "The Word of God," *JBMS* 12/1 (2003): 52–63.
  - Account 10, by Orson Pratt, also mentions an angelic guardian.
  - Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 11 December 1869, 6:508–9.
  - Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball: An Apostle, the Father and Founder of the British Mission*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, 1945), 15–17. See also Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:5; George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:104; 16:193; and *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:622.
  - It is also interesting to note that when Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith on 21 September 1823 and revealed the existence of the Nephite record, "he informed [Joseph] of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence" (Joseph Smith—History 1:45). Perhaps the sword in the cave symbolized that these judgments were at hand.
- The Hill Cumorah Pageant: A Historical Perspective**  
Gerald S. Argetsinger
- The Passion Play of Oberammergau* is the world's most enduring and famous play depicting the Passion of Jesus Christ. It has been presented regularly since AD 1634 in Bavaria.
  - Charles W. Whitman, "A History of the Hill Cumorah Pageant (1937–1964) and an Explanation of the Dramatic Development of the Text of *America's Witness for Christ*" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1967); Randy V. Hansen, "Development of the Cumorah Pageant" (honors thesis, Brigham Young University, 1978); Walter E. Boyden, "The Road to Hill Cumorah" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982); Gerald S. Argetsinger, "Cumorah Pageant," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:347.
- Designing Costumes for the Hill Cumorah Pageant**  
Rory R. Scanlon
- See Margot Blum Schevill, *Costume as Communication: Ethnographic Costumes and Textiles from Middle America and the Central Andes of South America in the Collections of the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology*, Brown University, Bristol, Rhode Island (Bristol, RI: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, 1986), 9.
  - See Ralph Whitlock, *Everyday Life of the Maya* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 44–46.
  - "There is a tendency by some Christians to assume too much from archaeology. Sometimes the words *confirm*, *prove*, *authenticate*, and *substantiate* can be employed. It can be proved that historical conditions were such that Solomon could have been as powerful a king as the Bible says he was; but it does not prove that God gave Solomon wisdom. It can be fairly well substantiated that there was a census when Jesus was born; but this confirmation hardly proves his divinity. No archaeological evidence will ever prove the atonement. It must be recognized that there is a clear separation between historical and theological proof." Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 20.
  - John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992).
  - Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Orem, UT: S. A. Publishers, 1989).
  - See John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon Mapped," in his *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985).
  - See Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Indian Clothing before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 9–14.
  - See Ralph Whitlock, *Everyday Life of the Maya* (New York: Dorset Press, 1976), 43.
  - See Henry F. Lutz, *Textiles and Costumes among the Peoples of the Ancient Near East* (New York: G. E. Stechert and Co., 1923), 70. For more contemporary information, see Florence Eloise Petzel, *Textiles of Ancient Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt* (Corvallis, OR: Cascade Printing, 1984), 21–28.
  - See Anawalt, *Indian Clothing before Cortés*, 209–14. Also see Margot Blum Schevill, *Costume as Communication* (Bristol, RI: Mark-Burton, Inc., 1986), 13.
  - See Federico Kauffmann-Doig, *Ancestors of the Incas: The Lost Civilization of Peru*, trans. Eulogio Guzman (Memphis, TN: Wonders, 1998), 108–17. See also Raoul D'Harcourt, *Textiles of Ancient Peru and Their Techniques*, trans. Sadie Brown (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1974), 3.
  - See Patricia Rieff Anawalt, "Textile Research from the Mesoamerican Perspective," *Beyond Cloth and Cordage: Archaeological Textile Research in the Americas*, ed. P. B. Drooker and L. D. Webster (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 2000), 214.
  - See Michael D. Coe and Justin Kerr, *The Art of the Maya Scribe* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 97.
  - See Mormon 1:8–9; Jacob 1:14.
- A New Beginning for the Pageant: 1948 to 1951**  
Harold I. Hansen
- J. Karl Wood was called to direct the Hill Cumorah Pageant in 1939.
  - Thorpe B. Isaacson, in Conference Report, October 1949, 156.
  - Thorpe B. Isaacson, in Conference Report, October 1949, 156–57.
- "Hail, Cumorah! Silent Wonder": Music Inspired by the Hill Cumorah**  
Roger L. Miller
- "An Angel from on High," *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 13; hereafter *Hymns*.
  - Latter-day Saint children might also think of one of their favorite songs: "The Golden Plates Lay Hidden," *Children's Songbook of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 86.
  - On summer evenings in July and August, thousands gather on the slopes of the Hill Cumorah to

- see “America’s Witness for Christ.” The pageant and its history are discussed elsewhere in this issue of *JBMS*.
4. Surprisingly little folk music has surfaced that deals specifically with the Hill Cumorah, but folk music from Joseph Smith’s time and place may be useful in providing a cultural context for the events surrounding the restoration of the gospel; Latter-day Saint composer Lisa Despain has begun work in this area. Popular music has produced only a few samples of music dealing with Cumorah; see, for example, Liz Smith, “Road from Cumorah,” from *A Prayer from the Heart*, CD (Covenant Communications, 1996).
  5. A copy of the painting is found in the Museum of Church History and Art at Temple Square in Salt Lake City. The recording project, including scores and photographic plates, is published as *Mormoniana* (New York: Mormon Artists Group Press, 2004). Nibley’s “Hill Cumorah” is no. 4.
  6. Correspondence from the composer, 4 September 2003.
  7. The rail fence refers, of course, to Joseph Smith’s account of the morning after the angel Moroni’s visits when he failed in his attempt to cross a fence on his way home (see Joseph Smith—History 1:48).
  8. There are at least three published versions of this poem. The text here comes from George H. Durham’s anthem “Hail Cumorah! Silent Wonder” (Salt Lake City: Deseret Publishing, 1960), with only slight alterations in wording, punctuation, and capitalization from the version printed in *Latter-day Saint Hymns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1927), no. 319. An earlier and substantially different version, entitled “Cumorah,” appeared in the *Improvement Era* 12 (March 1909), 373.
  9. *Ramah* is the Jaredite name for the ancient hill Cumorah. Another of Curtis’s poems, “Historic Ramah’s Verdant Slope” (*Improvement Era* 31 [1928], 245), incorporates this name, expanding upon the topics of Jaredite and Nephite destruction and the revelation of the Book of Mormon plates to Joseph Smith.
  10. Karen Lynn Davidson, “The Book of Mormon in Latter-day Saint Hymnody,” *JBMS* 9/1 (2000): 14–27.
  11. *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, 66.
  12. *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, 270; see also Davidson, “The Book of Mormon in Latter-day Saint Hymnody,” 22. It is not clear whether the author of this hymn is Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph Smith’s mother, or Lucy Smith, his sister.
  13. *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, 137. “Hark! ye mortals. Hist! be still. Voices from Cumorah’s hill Break the silence of the tomb,” etc., but note the third stanza: “Thrones shall totter, Babel fall, Satan reign no more at all; Saints shall gain the victory, Truth prevail o’er land and sea, Gentile tyrants sink to hell! Now’s the day of Israel!” Set to a tune from Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus*, it was understandably dropped after the 1927 hymnal. Other early hymns dwelt on the plight of the “Red Man,” as for example, “O Stop and Tell Me, Red Man,” by W. W. Phelps. See Davidson, “Latter-day Saint Hymnody,” 20–21.
  14. A text such as Pratt’s “The Morning Breaks” (*Hymns*, 1) owes its pride of place to (apparently) self-evident restoration and Book of Mormon allusions. However, what might be seen by Latter-day Saints as clear-cut Hill Cumorah symbolism, “Angels from heav’n and truth from earth / Have met, and both have record borne,” could as easily have come from Psalm 85:11: “Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.” While this biblical source does not prevent the Latter-day Saint interpretation, it also opens a wider field of possibilities. Thus, Davidson’s study did not count it as a specifically Book of Mormon hymn.
  15. The first six stanzas were retained in *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 24th ed. (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1905). Sometimes attributed to “Dr. Rippon,” an English Baptist clergyman whose well-known “A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors . . .” (1787) went through 27 printings (including an American edition printed in Philadelphia in 1820), Pratt’s version was undoubtedly a paraphrase. Its original tune, “Advent,” like many hymns and sacred songs of the time, borrows from secular tradition, here reminiscent of an 18th-century English country dance. The tune was rewritten for the 1927 hymnal (*Latter-day Saint Hymns*, no. 224) by Tabernacle organist Edward P. Kimball but was dropped in the 1948 hymnal. Kimball’s resetting combined the first six stanzas into three.
  16. This Parley P. Pratt hymn was found in J. C. Little and G. B. Gardner’s *A collection of sacred hymns, for the use of the Latter-day Saints* (Nauvoo, IL: n.p., 1844), 65–66.
  17. *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, 66. See also G. Careless et al., *The Latter-day Saint Psalmody: a Collection of Original Tunes*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902), 307.
  18. Davidson, “Latter-day Saint Hymnody,” 17.
  19. “The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord,” BYU devotional address, 1 February 1976.
  20. Rodney Turner, “What Do We Hear from Cumorah,” in Janice Kapp Perry, *Inspirational New Hymns for Choir & Home*, vol. 2 (Prime Recordings Inc., 2000), 13. Acknowledging Elder Packer’s challenge, Perry undertook a project in 1997 to write 100 hymns on texts by various Latter-day Saint poets (see her introduction to this collection). In this case the distinct resemblance of her music to the waltz tune “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling” tends to distract from the hymn’s overall effectiveness.
  21. Doctrine and Covenants 128:20.
  22. Reid Nibley, “Come unto Christ,” for chorus and organ (2000); see also settings by Donald Ripplinger, Newell Dayley, Lorenzo Mitchell, etc. Not all works of this title are focused on Moroni’s words; for example, a similar text can be found in Omni 1:26, and Merrill Jensen’s oratorio *Come unto Christ*, commissioned by Ricks College (unpublished, 1999), centers on the conversion of Alma the Younger.
  23. See also 2 Nephi 3:18–21; Isaiah 29:4: “And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.”
  24. Henry E. Giles, “The Truth Has Spoken from the Dust: Chorus, Chant, Chorale, Finale,” L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. From the title page: “For the one hundredth anniversary celebration of the delivery of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated to the prophet Joseph Smith. September 22nd, 1827–1927.”
  25. The afternoon session of the Salt Lake Stake conference in the Tabernacle (1927) also featured the anniversary.
  26. Merrill Bradshaw, *A Voice from the Dust*, ASCAP, 1978. A manuscript copy resides in the Music Division of BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library.
  27. Merrill Bradshaw, *The Vision of Ezekiel*, 1982. A manuscript copy resides in the Music Division of BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library.
  28. Compare 2 Nephi 3. Ezekiel 37 becomes an extension of the “voice from the dust” metaphor. The “Joseph” theme is carried further in sections 10 and 16 of Bradshaw’s oratorio *The Restoration*, premiered in 1974 by the BYU Oratorio Choir.
  29. Christian Asplund, “And now I, Moroni . . .,” *Brick Church Hymnal* 2:4 (Lebanon, NH: Frog Peak Music, 1998).
  30. Some contemporary composers find that there is no place for such music in Latter-day Saint culture, leaving them isolated and unable to contribute.
  31. Davidson, “Latter-day Saint Hymnody,” 21.
  32. Truman G. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon,” in *BYU Studies* 19/3 (Spring 1979): 436. It was through Roberts’s efforts, during his five years (1922–1927) as president of the Eastern States Mission, that the church purchased the Hill Cumorah, the Smith Family Farm, the Sacred Grove, and the Whitmer Farm. See David F. Boone’s study in this issue. It should also be noted that, as early as 1919, Apostle Melvin J. Ballard communicated his hope that someone would compose an oratorio on the Book of Mormon to the young Latter-day Saint composer Leroy Robertson, whose *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon* has been widely performed since. See Marian Robertson Wilson, “Leroy Robertson and the *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon: Reminiscences of a Daughter*,” *JBMS* 8/2 (1999): 4–13.
  33. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts,” 436. See Orestes U. Bean, *Corianton, an Aztec romance: a romantic spectacular drama, in four acts*, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; also *Corianton*, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, MSS 2927, for memorabilia connected with the motion picture but not the film itself.
  34. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts,” 436.
  35. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts,” 436. The 1930 Centennial was also the occasion for a large church-sponsored pageant, “The Message of the Ages,” with music for soloists, chorus, and orchestra composed and arranged by Leroy Robertson. The pageant premiered on 6 April 1930 in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. It depicted the dispensations of the gospel, culminating in the revelations given to Joseph Smith, including, of course, his encounters with Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.
  36. The original score has been revised several times to conform to changes in the pageant; Gates has also adapted it as Symphony No. 2, “Scenes from the Book of Mormon.”
  37. Clinton F. Larson, *Coriantumr and Moroni* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1961).
  38. Larson, *Coriantumr and Moroni*, 5–7, passim.

39. Some may regard this aspect of Clark's assessment as overly enthusiastic. Larson's language is epic in cast, not "lifelike" in the sense of common, everyday speech. But it is life-affirming and powerful in its ability to project the terrible conflicts that come to each of us as a result of our being "free to choose liberty and eternal life, . . . or to choose captivity and death" (2 Nephi 2:27).
40. Larson, *Coriantumr*, 71.
41. *Ibid.*, 7.
42. Merrill Bradshaw, *Coriantumr* (incomplete opera on a play by Clinton Larson, first scene only: "Sarah's Soliloquy"), an unpublished voice/piano manuscript copy resides in the Music Division of BYU's Harold B. Lee Library.
43. Larson, *Coriantumr*, 11. Bradshaw's text differs in the last two lines from the published play, which gives the following: "The broad plains and the rivers, alone as the unbreathing Trees in the heavy days of our travelling here."
44. There is yet another possibility, one that is always a potential problem when attempting to deal with a fictional mise-en-scène. Perhaps the anachronisms and misconceptions in Larson's script, laid bare through later research in the second half of the 20th century, ultimately made him uncomfortable with the material.
45. *Moroni* was the first of three theatrical works sponsored by the Promised Valley Playhouse (at that time a cultural appendage of the church) to educate and inspire through music and drama. The second was on the life of Christ and the third on Joseph Smith.
46. Prefatory note from the script published by the Promised Valley Playhouse, Salt Lake City, 1977.
47. Carma Wadley, "Hand of Mormon' a monumental task," *Deseret Morning News*, Sunday, 31 August 2003, sec. E1.
48. Another recent addition to the genre is Meredith R. Taylor's *Abinadi* (2003), an opera on the well-known Book of Mormon prophet.
49. See Robertson Wilson, "Leroy Robertson and the *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon*," 4–13.
50. Former Tabernacle organist Robert Cundick's doctoral thesis, for example, was an extended work for chorus and orchestra, "The Song of Nephi" (1955), completed under Robertson's tutelage at the University of Utah. Cundick had copied the parts for the *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon* and thus had a first-hand acquaintance with the score.
51. Taylor, *Coriantumr*, manuscript copy, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Taylor's prolific output also includes several symphonies with Book of Mormon themes, including symphonies 4 and 7, which contain excerpts from *Coriantumr*.
52. Darwin Wolford, *The Land of Joseph*, BYU–Idaho, Dept. of Music (Rexburg, ID: unpublished, 1976). Wolford was one of a number of Robertson's composition students. Robertson taught at BYU and the University of Utah in the 1930s through the 1960s.
53. Darwin Wolford and Mabel Jones Gabbott, *Song from Cumorah* (Orem, UT: Jackman Music, 1980).
54. Melanie Hoffman and Marvin Payne, *Scripture Scouts, Musical Adventures in the Book of Mormon, The Wonderful Book of Gold* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986, 1987, 1992). The entire series contains 30 episodes, each with its own song.
55. Steven Kapp Perry and Brad Wilcox, *From Cumorah's Hill: The Book of Mormon Speaks to Our Day* (Provo, UT: Prime Recordings, 1990).
56. Margaret Smoot, *Voices from the Dust* (unpublished, 1990).
57. Jeff Goodrich, *I Heard Him Come and Other Songs about the Savior* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book). Direct inspiration for this piece is attributed by the composer to John 1:11–13 and Doctrine and Covenants 93:1–2, but the doctrine of Christ as taught in *Moroni* 10:32 seems even more apt and is certainly reflected in the text.
- Look Once Again at Cumorah's Hill: The Poets' View**  
Louise Helps
1. These poems are similar to each other. One was clearly a reworking of the other.
- The Hill Cumorah Monument: An Inspired Creation of Torleif S. Knaphus**  
Allen P. Gerritsen
1. Torleif S. Knaphus, "Description of the Hill Cumorah Monument," ca. 1935, in possession of the author. In a few instances, the punctuation and spelling in quotations from Knaphus's writings have been normalized.
  2. Torleif Knaphus, *Personal Journal of Torleif S. Knaphus*, trans. Brit Woodbury, unpublished document in the author's possession, 2.
  3. *Personal History of Torleif Knaphus*, as dictated to Linda Knaphus, 1957, in the author's possession, 4.
  4. Rowan Taylor, *Coriantumr*, 3.
  5. For more on Knaphus and his youth, see William G. Hartley, "Torleif Knaphus, Sculptor Saint," *Ensign*, July 1980, 10–15.
  6. *Improvement Era*, April 1935, 200.
  7. "The Life of Torleif Severin Knaphus," unpublished autobiography, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
  8. Torleif S. Knaphus, "Work Done for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," date unknown, list in the author's possession.
  9. LaVar Wallgren (craftsman who made the casts), personal interview, May 2001.
  10. Concerning the identity of this angel, Rebecca Bean remarked, "I say 'angel,' [but] I don't know. I asked Brother Knaphus, when he told me the story, if it was the Angel Moroni that came to him. He said, 'Sister Bean, that's my secret.' But I really feel that it was the Angel Moroni who came [to him]" (Rebecca Bean, fireside address given in Salt Lake City in 1964. This address appears under the title "The Mormons Return to Palmyra" at <http://joda.cis.temple.edu/~nichols/drhaws/hpalmyra.html> [accessed July 2004]).
  11. Rebecca Bean, fireside address.
  12. According to Rebecca Bean's account, the angel, in response to Torleif's prayer about which of the seven drawings to take to the Brethren, told him which drawing was the right one. This raises the question of why Torleif presented all seven drawings to the Brethren and not just the designated one. This matter is resolved in the following account: "When the sculptor inquired [of the angel] how he should confront the Brethren with this choice [the sketch that the angel's finger pointed to] (inasmuch as they were the ones making the decision), he was instructed that they would choose the one the Lord had chosen." Rand H. Packer, "History of Four Mormon Landmarks in Western New York: The Joseph Smith Farm, Hill Cumorah, the Martin Harris Farm, and the Peter Whitmer, Sr., Farm" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 31–32.
  13. Antone Clark, "Finding the Face of an Angel," [http://www.ezratclark.org/familyfile\\_findingthefaceofanangel.asp](http://www.ezratclark.org/familyfile_findingthefaceofanangel.asp) (accessed July 2004).
  14. Knaphus, "Work Done for the Church."
  15. Marie Knaphus James (Torleif's daughter), personal interview, September 2003.
  16. The text on the plaque is nearly identical to Torleif's description that appears in his "Description of the Hill Cumorah Monument," 23 June 1935, in the author's possession.
  17. Knaphus, "Description of the Hill Cumorah Monument."
  18. John D. Giles, "The Symbolism of the Angel Moroni Monument—Hill Cumorah," *Instructor*, April 1951, 99.
  19. Marie Knaphus James, personal interview, September 2003.
  20. Kit Poole, "Missionary sees family image in statue of the Angel Moroni," *Church News*, 15 January 1994, 12.
  21. This and other details are taken from Clark, "Finding the Face of an Angel," posted on the Ezra T. Clark family Web site. See n. 13 above.
  22. Clark, "Finding the Face of an Angel."
  23. Torleif S. Knaphus, "The Call—Brief Description and Impressions of My Trip," unpublished document in the author's possession, June 1934.
  24. Knaphus, "The Call."
  25. Byron Warner, "Statue Makes a Left Turn," *Church News*, 17 April 1976, 3.
  26. Journal History of the Church, 21 July 1935, "Monument Dedicated," United Press, clipping taken from the *Los Angeles Times*, 22 July 1935.
  27. Journal History of the Church, July 21, 1935, "Mormons Dedicate Moroni Statue," clipping taken from *Rochester Evening Journal* and the *Post Express*, July 22, 1935.
  28. Knaphus, "Description of the Hill Cumorah Monument."
- The Geologic History of Hill Cumorah**  
Michael J. Dorais
1. The 1815 Tambora eruption altered weather patterns around the world, causing the "year without a summer" in 1816 and extensive crop failures in New England.
  2. J. W. Miller Jr., "Variations in New York Drumlins," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 62/3 (1972): 418–23.
  3. W. Kenneth Hamblin and Eric H. Christiansen, *Earth's Dynamic Systems*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001).
  4. M. Milankovitch, *Kanon der Erdbestrahlung und seine Anwendung auf das Eiszeitenproblem* (Belgrade: Königlich Serbische Akademie, 1941), 133.
  5. Jürgen Ehlers, *Quaternary and Glacial Geology* (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, 1996); I. Peter Martini, Michael E. Brookfield, and Steven Sadura, *Principles of Glacial Geomorphology and Geology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 110–30.
  6. M. E. Ragmo, and W. F. Ruddimann, "Tectonic Forcing of Late Cenozoic Climate," *Nature* 359 (1992): 117–22.