

CJ Madsen

*Tree of Life, Rod of Iron*

A Sacred Choral Work for  
SATB Soli, SATB Choir,  
Piano, and Audience

CJ MADSEN MUSIC

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### **CJ Madsen (b. 1993)**

Christopher Jed “CJ” Madsen is a second-year doctoral student at the University of Arizona, emphasis in choral conducting. CJ recently received a Masters of Music degree from Brigham Young University (BYU), in Provo, Utah, with an emphasis in choral conducting. He also received a bachelor’s degree in piano performance from BYU.

As a composer and arranger, CJ has had his works performed by University of Arizona Symphonic Choir and all five of BYU’s choral ensembles. CJ’s most recent large work, an opera entitled *He Shall Prepare a Way*, was staged in April 2022 and released as an album and concert video. In addition, CJ is the composer of *One Fold, One Shepherd*, a sacred work for choir and orchestra released in 2019.

CJ grew up in West Jordan, Utah, and was a volunteer missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 2012 to 2014 in North Carolina. Much of CJ’s inspiration as a conductor, composer, and pianist come from his belief in Christ, his passion for people, his thirst for powerful music, and his love for his wife (Samm) and four children (Hollis, Charlotte, Jonathan, and Taran). For more information, see [CJMadsenMusic.com](http://CJMadsenMusic.com).

### **Note from the Composer**

This is a 45-minute, nine-movement work for SATB Choir, soloists, and piano about the Tree of Life vision seen by Lehi and Nephi (c. 598 B.C.) in *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. The purposes of this work are to help build faith in Jesus Christ and to share a cool story from an amazing book with those who may/may not be familiar with the book or with Latter-day Saints in general.

The work can be performed by any of the following configurations, using this score:

1. Vocal solo singing melody and piano
2. Vocal quartet
3. Vocal quartet and choir

The piece is designed for adaptability, depending on the forces and skill level of the ensemble. Practice tracks, libretto, supertitles, and other helps are available on my website. There are also versions of each movement with simpler piano parts.

The piece is built around a beloved Latter-day Saint hymn “The Iron Rod.” Each of the first eight movements incorporates into the melodic motifs one of the eight phrases from the hymn, with the last movement actually including the hymn text and tune itself. In fact, one of the most crucial parts of the work is that of the audience part, which occurs three times in the final movement. If possible, it is encouraged that the director should take 5 minutes at the beginning of the performance to teach this part to the audience. This can be easily done by projecting the part on a slide projector or printing it in the score. The director may also be able to teach the audience by rote – it ain’t that long. 😊

The soprano soloist sings the words of Nephi. I gave Nephi’s words to a soprano to show the applicability of his words to all people, but as the needs of individual circumstance dictates, a tenor can sing the solo part instead. The same goes for other roles that can be sung up/down the octave.

I hope a performances of this work conveys the hope and joy that the Iron Rod, the Tree of Life – even Jesus Christ – is within our reach – as well as all the hope and joy that accompanies Him.