## Magpies

SATB divisi a cappella

composed by Sheena Phillips for the Magpie Consort of Columbus, Ohio

duration c 2:00

perusal score – not for rehearsal or performance

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## **Magpies**

One for sorrow Two for joy Three for a girl Four for a boy

Traditional English counting rhyme

"Magpies only swoop for a few weeks in spring, but they sing all year long."

NPR report about Australian magpies, 10/24/10

"The magpie swells from knoll or silent brake his loud sweet tune."

T Heney, 1886

"Gay magpies chant the livelong day."

B Hoare 1869

The phrase 'murmurous note' comes from the following anecdote by Mark Twain:

"He is a handsome large creature, with snowy white decorations, and is a singer; he has a murmurous rich note that is lovely. He was once modest, even diffident; but he lost all that when he found out that he was Australia's sole musical bird. He has talent, and cuteness, and impudence; and in his tame state he is a most satisfactory pet--never coming when he is called, always coming when he isn't, and studying disobedience as an accomplishment. He is not confined, but loafs all over the house and grounds, like the laughing jackass. I think he learns to talk, I know he learns to sing tunes, and his friends say that he knows how to steal without learning. I was acquainted with a tame magpie in Melbourne. He had lived in a lady's house several years, and believed he owned it. The lady had tamed him, and in return he had tamed the lady. He was always on deck when not wanted, always having his own way, always tyrannizing over the dog, and always making the cat's life a slow sorrow and a martyrdom. He knew a number of tunes and could sing them in perfect time and tune; and would do it, too, at any time that silence was wanted; and then encore himself and do it again; but if he was asked to sing he would go out and take a walk."

from Following The Equator (1897)

The magpie is described as "a large, pied crow" by H. Kingsley (1859)

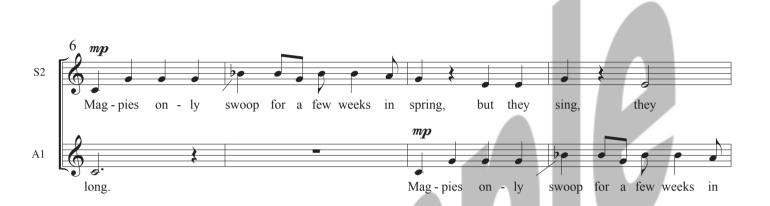
And finally, a magnificent Australian magpie in full throttle can be heard at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ pkvO5ia8

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SSAATBB

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