Marian Robertson Wilson recounts her memories of her father, Leroy Robertson, and of the creation of his masterpiece, the *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon*. The idea to compose an oratorio based on the Book of Mormon first came to Robertson when Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles casually suggested it to him one day in 1919. After his conversation with Elder Ballard, Robertson dedicated much of his time to studying the Book of Mormon and choosing sections of scripture to use in his compilation. The piece eventually received attention from LDS church leadership and from the renowned Maurice Abravanel. It significantly impacted missionary work, as well as the work of other LDS composers.
Leroy Robertson

and the

Oratorio

from the

Book of Mormon

Reminiscences of a Daughter

Marian Robertson Wilson
The Oratorio from the Book of Mormon by Leroy Robertson occupies a unique place in the history of music thanks to both its form and content. Twentieth-century composers in general chose not to write oratorios, and no one had ever before composed such a large work based on Mormon scriptures. Therefore, when Robertson’s Oratorio appeared, it came as an unexpected, almost anachronistic addition to our musical literature. Nonetheless, as soon as it became known to the world, critics cross-country hailed it as “one of the musical masterpieces of the twentieth century,” and described it as a “stirring work of grand design” that was “sweeping,” “surprisingly big . . . [and] powerfully dramatic.” For their part, non-musicians—whose opinion Robertson consistently prized the most—wrote of being “enthralled,” “flooded with an experience that was more than music and poetry alone,” and of being overwhelmed by “prophetic amazement . . . [and] sacred communion.”

It became a seminal work for other LDS musicians in that it triggered their imaginations and inspired them to compose pieces similar in nature. Robert Cundick has declared Robertson’s Oratorio to be “the father” of the many analogous works written by Mormon composers that were soon to follow.
Composing the Oratorio

The Idea Is Conceived

The idea for composing an oratorio based on the Book of Mormon was first planted in young Robertson’s mind by Apostle Melvin J. Ballard ca. 1919 as the two chanced to sit together on the old interurban train that once ran between Payson and Salt Lake City. Twenty-one-year-old Leroy had just spent a day giving violin lessons in Payson and was returning to Pleasant Grove, where he was then living with his maternal grandparents. His tall, thin figure and earnest demeanor must have made quite a picture as he boarded the train, awkwardly balancing his violin case and music-laden briefcase. The venerable Church dignitary engaged his traveling companion in conversation without delay and soon learned that Leroy had been enamored of music since his birth; had diligently studied Theory and Composition at Brigham Young University while still a high school student; and cherished firm hopes of becoming a first-rate violinist as well as a serious composer. Elder Ballard in turn told Leroy how he himself had long hoped that someday some musician somewhere would write an oratorio based on scriptures from the Book of Mormon—an oratorio as moving as Händel’s Messiah, so beloved and well known amongst the Latter-day Saints.

The concept instantly fired Leroy’s imagination. However, this treasured project would be destined to lie quietly in the back of his mind for many years, dormant yet never forgotten. Other more immediate and pressing demands were consuming his time. First, with Utah then essentially a musical desert, Leroy felt an urgent need for more advanced study outside his home state, and within a year he did manage to get to the New England Conservatory in Boston, then the premiere music school in America. After his graduation from the Conservatory in 1923, his foremost concern was to find employment. In short order, he became a faculty member in the Music Department at Brigham Young University, where he would remain for some twenty-three years (1925–1948), steadily enlarging the University’s music curriculum and building the first nationally known symphony orchestra to come from the Intermountain West. Also, in addition to Church callings—chiefly related to his talents as a musician—he and his beloved wife, Naomi, whom he had married in 1925, were rearing a family of four challenging children. Somehow, through it all, he was composing, ever composing, but not as yet able to devote consistent time to the Oratorio.

Every evening after supper, he would go to “his chair”—a sturdy platform rocker placed near the living room fireplace—and here, with long legs outstretched resting on a convenient footstool, he would sit poring over what he lovingly came to call “the good old ‘And it came to pass’.”
The Writing Begins

Only ca. 1938 did he begin continual work on this long-gestating composition. Its overall design rapidly took shape, and, of course, undergirding the whole structure stood the scriptures from the Book of Mormon. The copy that Robertson chose to study while constructing his libretto was the very one he had used during his stint as an Eastern States missionary in the summer of 1922—a well-worn Triple Combination, its cover in tatters.

During these late 1930s and early 1940s, the family became increasingly aware of their father’s ongoing intensive Book of Mormon studies. Every evening after supper, he would go to “his chair”—a sturdy platform rocker placed near the living room fireplace—and here, with long legs outstretched resting on a convenient footstool, he would sit poring over what he lovingly came to call “the good old ‘And it came to pass.’” As he sat outlining the basic sections of the narrative and carefully marking pertinent lines of scripture, so intently did he concentrate that, although he was aware of what was going on about him, he remained completely undisturbed by the constant family hubbub. (With him so strategically located in our path, we children could not help but trample or chase around him, often quite noisily.)

A perusal of his Triple Combination leaves no doubt that Robertson was well acquainted with the entire Book of Mormon. Notations in his copy—mostly in light black pencil—indicate that he worked through the whole text before selecting those parts which would come to serve as the backbone of his narrative. Finally, at Helaman 13:5, two parallel lines, definitively drawn, clearly mark the Oratorio’s first words, i.e., the beginning of Samuel the Lamanite’s foreboding prophecy. In the passages that follow, certain encircled verses as well as the term “chorus” scribbled in the margins evidence how this composer was already envisioning the whole work, balancing solos and choral numbers, with the orchestra constantly sounding in the back of his mind. Perhaps the most intriguing pages are those upon which he sketched rudimentary musical ideas, most of which would later appear in the Oratorio, masterfully expanded and developed in full-blown form.
From the countless events recounted in the Book of Mormon, Robertson chose what constitutes in the eyes of many the supreme episode of the entire book: the appearance of the resurrected Christ on the American continent and his ministry among the Nephites.

Theme of the eternal conflict between good and evil, the exploitation by Satan of our human frailties, and the never-ending love and overwhelming triumph of Christ.

Part I: The prophecy of Samuel.
Behold, I, Samuel, a Lamanite, do speak the words of the Lord, and He hath put it into my heart to say that the sword of justice hangeth over this people, and four hundred years pass not away that the sword of justice falleth and heavy destruction awaiteth . . . and nothing can save but repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ who surely shall come into the world and shall suffer many things and be slain by his people.

Part II: The birth of Christ.
The angels did appear and declare glad tidings . . . and miracles were wrought among the believing—
But they who believed not hardened their hearts and came to depend on their own strength and wisdom for Satan did get hold upon them . . .

Part III: The appearance of Christ to the Nephites.
Behold—I am Jesus Christ—the Son of God—I created the heav’ns and the earth and all that in them are. I have come to bring redemption to save the world from sin and whoso cometh to me as a little child the same will I receive—for of such is the Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

To conclude the Oratorio, Robertson composed a noble setting for the Lesser Doxology, a text not found in the Book of Mormon, but familiar to most Latter-day Saints:

Glory unto the Father and the Son and [unto] the Holy Ghost . . .
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever—
World without end—Forever—World without end—Amen.
As Robertson laid out his plan and drafted the final script, the music seemed to come to him almost unbidden. In fact, he would later observe, “As soon as I could get a libretto that would work, the music was there. I didn’t have to worry about the music at all.”

These were the years when students and colleagues would find him seated at the piano in his BYU studio, simultaneously playing, conducting, singing, and whistling bits from the emerging Oratorio. “But it wasn’t really whistling,” opined his listeners. Crawford Gates contributes his own vivid memories of these occasions:

While he was writing the Oratorio from the Book of Mormon . . . I had sessions at night in that old building [College Building on the old BYU Lower Campus], in which he played the orchestral fabric on the piano, and sang to the top of his lungs the passages of Samuel the Lamanite [sic] and others. He explained the development of musical themes and ideas, the interlacing of contrapuntal elements, and the weaving of orchestral fabrics, and his concern with musical architecture of profound dimensions.

Many years later, I myself remember one afternoon at home when, as I passed by him, he called to me, “Mary [sometimes he called me “Mary”], stop and listen to this.” Then in full voice he thundered forth Samuel’s first lines, “Behold, I, Samuel, a Lamanite, do speak the words of the Lord.” So forcefully did he sing that it was as if I were hearing Samuel himself. Never will I forget those moments. Indeed, at such times, what most impressed those around Father was not his playing, singing, and “whistling,” but rather the faraway look that came into his eyes, described by one colleague as “a look into the cosmos.”

Although the Oratorio’s basic outline would always be at the root of Robertson’s thinking, it is interesting to note that the various parts and myriad details of the composing would not be written in the same order that they would finally take in the completed work. Some of the earliest pieces to be composed came not at the beginning, but rather, in the middle or towards the end. One such number is the orchestral interlude, “Pastorale,” heard at the conclusion of the scenes portraying Christ’s birth and the signs thereof witnessed by the Nephites, placed at the end of Part II. This tender, peaceful meditation upon that momentous event in Bethlehem was actually first composed as the slow movement of Robertson’s Desert Symphony, which dates from 1925. In its Oratorio version, the piece remains virtually unchanged except for an extended arpeggio figure in the last section, which is given to the clarinet and is to be played softly as background motion (a real challenge for clarinetists). The composer would later explain that this figure—in addition to material introduced in the section preceding—was “like a soft wind over the desert.” (Leroy Robertson was no stranger to the desert, for as a youth he had herded sheep for his own father in Utah’s West Desert and had experienced firsthand the wind—both fierce and soft—in the vast solitude of that land.)

Another number heard in the latter part of the Oratorio, but which was composed during its early developing years, is Robertson’s renowned setting to the Lord’s Prayer, and here is its story: In 1939, for a final take-home exam in an Advanced Music Theory class, this professor had given his students a chorale melody to harmonize. When, at the designated hour, they returned to submit the assignment, their teacher stepped to the chalkboard to show his charges various treatments they might have tried, which was his custom. As he picked up the chalk, the words to the Lord’s Prayer suddenly entered his mind along with a complete setting of the chorale melody. So rapidly did the music hit him that he could scarcely write
The piano, and, as requested, enthusiastically played and sang from his large Oratorio score, indicating what had already been composed and what yet remained to be put on paper. When the spirited composer concluded his presentation, the three august dignitaries unhesitatingly requested that he finish the work posthaste so as to have it ready for the upcoming 1947 Centennial of the Mormon Pioneers’ arrival in Utah. They proposed to feature the Oratorio as the centerpiece of the grand celebrations already being planned.

Robertson was elated beyond expression. At last he had the outside impetus to put his masterpiece in final form, for, until that evening, he had indeed wondered how he alone could amass the forces needed to perform such a large work. Forthwith he set to writing with extraordinary vigor while still carrying out all the regular duties required of a full-time BYU professor. In addition, one more unexpected complication came his way. He was granted a long overdue sabbatical leave for the coming school year of 1946–47 in order to work on the Ph.D. degree towards which he had been striving for so many years. Not knowing when or if he would get another sabbatical and strongly feeling the academic pressure to get his doctorate, he decided to attend the University of Southern California, where he had briefly studied during the summer of 1936. Along with his classwork, Robertson was also teaching Advanced Music Theory, and only in his spare time could he work on the Oratorio. After a few weeks he realized that if he were to have this epic composition ready on schedule, he would have to leave USC, return to Utah, and devote all his time and energies to completing it. Therefore, in January 1947, after a very successful first semester at USC, he came back to Utah. However, when he inquired about using his customary studio at BYU, he learned that it was occupied by another. With no room on campus, he matter-of-factly set up a card table at home in an upstairs bedroom and proceeded to write almost round the clock. Evenings, when the bedroom was given over to a sleeping child, he once again went to his usual spot in the living room midst the ever-present family turmoil, and there he sat finalizing the last details, oblivious to all else.

The weeks passed. The Oratorio was in essence completed, save a few pages yet to be orchestrated, when one day in March Father chanced to read in the newspaper that Promised Valley—a musical by his student, Crawford Gates—had been selected to be performed as the centerpiece of the 1947 Centennial. The Oratorio had obviously been replaced, even perhaps forgotten, and no one had

---

Leroy Robertson (left) and Maurice Abravanel (center) present a copy of the first Oratorio recording to LDS Church President David O. McKay in 1953. Photograph courtesy Deseret News.
told Leroy Robertson. Father never said a word to anyone, not even to Mother. He simply put his treasured Oratorio aside and left it lying untouched for nearly six years while he went on to other compositions.

Maurice Abravanel Offers Encouragement

During that interim, Robertson moved with his family to Salt Lake City. For reasons quite unrelated to the Oratorio incident, he had accepted an offer to head the University of Utah’s Department of Music. One overriding factor in this 1948 decision was that the recently revamped Utah Symphony was in precarious circumstances, and Robertson—who had long championed Utah’s need for a professional symphony—knew that from a strong position at the University of Utah, he would be able to give the struggling organization much critical help. Equally important was the fact that he and Maurice Abravanel—appointed in 1947 as the Symphony’s Conductor and Musical Director—had become friends, had the same ideals, and could work well together.

Maestro Abravanel had first seen the Oratorio score in June 1947, during a visit with Robertson at BYU, and had admired the composition at once. Since that day he had kept urging the composer to pick it up again and finish it. As further incentive, he promised to perform it with the Utah Symphony, special soloists, and choruses from the University of Utah. However, not until 1953, when the Maestro announced that he had in fact scheduled a performance of the Oratorio for 18 February 1953, did the busy composer-teacher-administrator begin to put the last touches on paper. Now convinced that his beloved score could at last be heard, Leroy Robertson wrote those final notes with unsurpassed speed, getting everything ready just under the wire.

Performances and Recordings

The Premiere Creates Local Enthusiasm

Beginning with his first season with the Utah Symphony, Abravanel had programmed at least one great choral-orchestral work each year, so his decision to perform the Oratorio was in keeping with an established tradition. Nonetheless, presenting the Oratorio did involve some risk not only musically, but also financially and politically; for although the community had previously welcomed performances of great Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish choral-orchestral works, when the performance of the Oratorio from the Book of Mormon was announced, many non-Mormon friends of the Symphony accused the Maestro of “selling out to the Church.” The general public, however, looked forward to the event.

The evening of the much anticipated premiere finally arrived, and how dramatic it was. Despite a blinding snowstorm raging throughout northern Utah, an audience of 6,000, which included high dignitaries from both Church and State, filled the venerable Salt Lake Tabernacle. An electrical excitement seemed to charge the air, for in the face of this unknown, never-before-heard work, no one knew what to expect. The performers took their places on stage; Abravanel stepped to the podium, and after a deep breath, gave the downbeat. From the first tumultuous measures—played by the orchestra and portraying the iniquitous turmoil of the Nephites—to the final “Glory” and “Amen”—proclaiming the eternal triumph of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—all those present remained spellbound. As the last chord sounded, the audience leapt to its feet, shouting “Bravo! Bravo!” and gave a standing ovation of some twenty-five minutes.
involved. The oratorio based on scriptures from the Book of Mormon, envisioned so long ago by Apostle Melvin J. Ballard, had at last been born.

Subsequent Performances and Recordings Bring National and International Recognition

So popular was the Oratorio that within less than seven weeks it was performed six times, each concert a sellout; and on 6 April, at another performance in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, the first commercial recording was made. In the years immediately following those exciting weeks of 1953, Abravanel regularly brought the work to enthusiastic Utah audiences. But it was only in 1961, when a second recording was released nationwide by New York’s Vanguard Company, that the work suddenly became known far beyond Utah. Praise from critics coast to coast gave it considerable momentum among both Mormons and non-Mormons alike. One New York producer wanted to promote it everywhere, “no stops pulled,” but he foresaw one obstacle. The rather cumbersome title, Oratorio from the Book of Mormon, was not marketable, and furthermore, its straightforward identity with the Book of Mormon could possibly generate negative reaction. He therefore insisted that Robertson retitle his composition, even suggesting Samuel as one possibility. There is evidence that the composer may have given the idea some consideration, for in his old copy of the Triple Combination, on the flyleaf facing the title page, he did inscribe three alternative titles: The Other Sheep; A New Witness (this in 1961!); and The Messiah of America. However, he ultimately decided that the original title best described what he had written and opted against any name change. The producer promptly lost interest.
The last time Leroy Robertson would hear the Oratorio in live concert was in 1968 when Abravanel, with the Utah Symphony and choruses from BYU, presented it in Provo. There is, however, one poignant tale yet to tell. In July 1971, as Father lay critically ill in a Salt Lake City hospital, Abravanel—then in Santa Barbara as Director of the Music Academy of the West—insistently got a phone call through to the composer’s ICU bedside, no small feat in those days before portable telephones. The Maestro wanted to cheer his longtime friend with the news that he had again programmed the Oratorio for performances in the spring of 1972 as part of the regular Symphony season. Leroy Robertson would die a few days later, reassured, however, that this masterpiece would live on.

And live on it has, but rather sporadically, with performances here and there, from time to time. In 1978 came the historic concert and recording by the Tabernacle Choir and Utah Symphony, Abravanel conducting. This heartwarming occasion marked a milestone in two ways, for it turned out to be the last time for the Oratorio to be heard live in Utah, and also became the last recording made by Maurice Abravanel.17

The Oratorio Becomes an Effective Missionary Tool

Because of the widespread international attention that this recording had focused upon both the music and the Book of Mormon, the Oratorio suddenly became a remarkable tool for missionary work. Very soon after its release, requests for “the Book,” i.e., the Book of Mormon, began to arrive at the Robertson home. Other performances in Minneapolis and Chicago in December 1975—under the direction of Clyn Barrus and mostly non-Mormon performers—elicited some 200 requests for the Book of Mormon from choir members. (With another performance scheduled concurrently at Ricks College, we Robertson children faced a real challenge in preparing enough scores and parts for all concerned.)

In April 1983, a performance in the huge RLDS Auditorium in Independence, Missouri—with non-Mormon performers from the University of Missouri/Kansas City, augmented by choir members from both the LDS and RLDS communities—proved to be a genial ecumenical occasion. High LDS and RLDS dignitaries sat side by side at the concert in friendship and respect, while audience members came from America’s heartland, some having driven from St. Louis, Chicago, and even from as far away as New York. The most recent event featuring the Oratorio—by means of a CD recording, not a live performance—took place in Berlin, Germany, in March 1996, at a special program honoring the centennial year of Robertson’s birth. Not only LDS members, but many visitors and investigators came to listen and learn of the Gospel.18

On a concluding note, let it be said that this daughter remembers Leroy Robertson as a devout Latter-day Saint who strove always “to keep his heart open to the Lord” (from a prayer he offered as he christened a grandson). He composed the Oratorio through dedicated study and never failing inspiration, and thereby left us a work that bears vivid witness to the divine origin of the book upon which it is based, namely, the Book of Mormon.

Discography for the Oratorio from the Book of Mormon by Leroy Robertson

Because it is highly unusual for a work of this magnitude to have so many recordings made and reissued so soon after its composition, and because I constantly receive inquiries about recordings of the Oratorio, I have prepared this discography. Unfortunately, however, all of these recordings are at present sold out and hence are unavailable at this writing.

- Salt Lake City, 1953: Studio Records, produced by Allen Duff Associates (i.e., Allen Jensen of KSL Radio and Marion Duff Hanks), 5303–RC long play, featuring the Utah Symphony, University of Utah Choruses, and soloists: Désiré Ligeti, Harold Bennett, Kenly W. Whitelock, and Naomi Farr; Maurice Abravanel, conducting.
- New York City, 1961: Vanguard, VRS 1077, featuring the Utah Symphony, University of Utah Choruses, and soloists: Roy Samuelsen, Kenly W. Whitelock, Jean Preston, and Warren Wood; Maurice Abravanel, conducting.
- New York City, 1978: Columbia Masterworks, M 35148, featuring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Jerold Ottley, Director; the Utah Symphony, and soloists: Hervey Hicks, John Prather, Clayne Robison, and JoAnn Ottley; Maurice Abravanel, conducting.
- Salt Lake City, 1986: Music Box Press, produced by Herold L. Gregory, MBPC 403 Stereo. This is the 1978 Columbia recording reissued on cassette tape.
- New York City, 1996: Vanguard Classics, a Division of Omega Record Group, 08 5041 71. This is the 1961 Vanguard recording reissued as a CD, and was distributed only in Europe.
- The BYU School of Music plans to perform and record the Oratorio within the next few years. Tantara Records will be the producer. □
LeRoy Robertson and the Oratorio from the Book of Mormon: Reminiscences of a Daughter

Marian Robertson Wilson

1. As a musical form, oratorio resembles opera in that it is a dramatic story set to music, with soloists portraying characters of the plot while the orchestra provides instrumental color and commentary; the subject is usually taken from scripture. Oratorio differs from opera in that it is presented in concert form, i.e., without staging, costumes, or acting.

Large choruses, the Oratorio from the Book of Mormon is scored for two large choruses, a children’s chorus, soloists, and full orchestra. Robertson compiled reviews from critics and kept letters sent to him about the Oratorio. For the citations in the first paragraph, see respectively: the Provo Herald, 20 February 1953; the Denver Post, 14 January 1982; Billboard Music Week (New York City, 30 October 1961); Washington [D.C.] Star, 10 December 1961; Apostle Mark E. Petersen, letter to Leroy Robertson (Salt Lake City, 19 February 1953); Dr. David Reiser, letter to Leroy Robertson (Salt Lake City, 18 February 1953); Dr. L.M. Barrus, interview with Marian Robertson Wilson (Rexburg, Idaho: 28 September 1981). For all these materials, see the Leroy J. Robertson Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries, Salt Lake City (hereinafter LJRC Collection) and the Addendum thereto (hereinafter Addendum).

2. Robert Cundick, conversation with Marian Robertson Wilson (Salt Lake City, early February 1999). At the risk of omitting important Mormon works that followed Robertson’s Oratorio, one may cite, for example: Robert Cundick’s The Song of Nephi, and The Redeemer; Darwin Wolford’s Behold, He Cometh!; K. Newell Dayley’s The Song of Helaman 13:5–6/orchestra score, pp. 7–9; Helaman 13: 22–23, 36–37/orchestra score, pp. 12–26; Part II: Helaman 16:14; 4/orchestra score, pp. 55–57; Helaman 16:15, 23/orchestra score, p. 58; Part III: 3 Nephi 9:15, 21–22/orchestra, pp. 121–22; the Lesiner Doxology/orchestra score, pp. 151–70.

3. For the citation and further explanation about his developing the text, see Leroy Robertson, “Creativity in Music . . . Other Thoughts on Creativity” (Salt Lake City: unpublishd reprint of a manuscript from the Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity, n.d.). 83. Robertson’s remarks were later edited and published in the first chairman of the Church’s General Music Committee— would keep an abiding interest in Leroy Robertson. For more details about their relationship, see Marian Robertson Wilson, Leroy Robertson: Music Giant from the Rockies (Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Publications, 1996), 35, 85, and 267–92. For details of Robertson’s boyhood and youth, see ibid., 7–40.

4. The children born to Leroy and Naomi (née Maggie Naomi Nelson) are Alice Marian, Reteree, Karen Naomi, and James Leroy (Jim). For more details about Leroy’s years in Boston and the years following (1920–1948), see Robertson Wilson, Leroy Robertson, 41–156. For a list of his compositions from this period, see Marian Robertson Wilson, Register of the Annotated Bibliography of the Compositions of Leroy Robertson (Salt Lake City: Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries, 1945–60).

5. Not all the encircled and otherwise marked passages found their way into the final libretto. For example, next to the report of the death of Moroni—following the death of Joseph’s wife—and the destruction of the plates penciled in the margins of Robertson’s Triple Combination, p. 417, a striking musical motif and this lamento: O, O this great and terrible day

6. Tempest, the thunder, the lightning Our brethren are burned O our children are buried

However, only the first line (from 3 Nephi 9:24) appears in the final version of the libretto; neither is the musical motif to be heard in the Oratorio.

For more information about the Oratorio’s structure, plus a comparison of Robertson’s libretto with the scriptures upon which it is based, and a cursory analysis of music’s role in relation to the scriptures, see ibid., 121–22; the Lesiner Doxology/orchestra score, pp. 151–70.

7. For the citation and further explanation about how developing the text, see Robertson Wilson, “Creativity in Music . . . Other Thoughts on Creativity” (Salt Lake City: unpublishd reprint of a manuscript from the Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity, n.d.). 83. Robertson’s remarks were later edited and published in the first chairman of the Church’s General Music Committee— would keep an abiding interest in Leroy Robertson. For more details about their relationship, see Marian Robertson Wilson, Register of the Annotated Bibliography of the Compositions of Leroy Robertson (Salt Lake City: Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries, 1945–60).

8. Knight was apparently using the word “seer” to refer to someone who had the ability to see or find objects hidden from natural sight (ibid.).

9. Ibid., 112, see p. 137.

10. Lucy herself felt that Satan was involved with such efforts, “str[i]ung up the hearts of those who in any way gotten a hint of the matter, to search into it and make every possible move towards preventing the work.” Proctor and Proctor, eds., History of Joseph Smith, 140. While I agree that Joseph did not travel any appreciable distance before hiding the plates in the log.

11. According to Oliver Cowdery, Joseph’s prayer this evening may have been several hours in length, which would admit of many harmonizations. The chorele melody assigned by Robertson was his own and appears prominently in various parts of the Oratorio—a fact quite unknown to his students.

ENDNOTES

Compositions of Leroy Robertson Annotated Bibliography of the Wilson, Leroy’s years in Boston and the years following (1920–1948), see Robertson Wilson, Leroy Robertson, 41–156. For a list of his compositions from this period, see Marian Robertson Wilson, Register of the Annotated Bibliography of the Compositions of Leroy Robertson (Salt Lake City: Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries, 1945–60).

All My Endeavors To Preserve Them*: Protecting the Plates in Palmyra, 22 September–December 1827 Andrew H. Hedges

1. According to Oliver Cowdery, Joseph’s prayer this evening may have been several hours in length, which would admit of many harmonizations. The chorele melody assigned by Robertson was his own and appears prominently in various parts of the Oratorio—a fact quite unknown to his students. 