

This Thirsty Land

note

This Thirsty Land was commissioned by Marta McCarthy for the University of Guelph. The original concept was for a composition to be premiered as part of a conference on issues related to water, and though the plan to coordinate the premiere with the conference fell through, the theme of water has remained central to the work.

From early recorded texts to the very present, water has remained a profound focus of our attention, and the realities of climate change make it an ever more crucial object of our concern; water as life source, as life sustaining, but also life threatening through both regionally dependent over-abundance or lack of access.

The opening movement is a hymn of thanks to the sky--the womb of vapour in which our earth lives; the words are those of Aeschylus, from the fifth century BC. The second movement is a dance-like celebration, extolling the virtues of Sister Water; the thirteenth century words are those of Saint Francis. In the third and fifth movements we hear excerpts from T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* -- the text of the third paints a world that is dry, a land in which one longs hopelessly for water and the song of the hermit-thrush. As foil, the words of the late Canadian poet George Whipple form the text for the acappella fourth movement--a call to reflect on the stunning beauty of the smallest drop of this gift of life. The final movement returns to Eliot again; this is a plea that we not lose (nor lose sight of) our necessary bond with the spirit of the sea. Eliot's final line, *and let my cry come unto Thee*, essentially determined the references to Purcell's *Hear my Prayer, O Lord*, which forms the musical scaffolding of the movement.

Much of the work on this composition was completed during two independent residencies in the Leighton Colony at the Banff Centre for the Arts in the springs of 2016 and 2017. I am thankful to Conrad Grebel University College, at the University of Waterloo, and to the Canada Council for the Arts for support of those residencies.

Leonard Enns
Davidson Studio, Leighton Colony
Banff Centre for the Arts
28 May 2017

Premiered 7 April 2018 by the University of Guelph Choirs directed by Marta McCarthy, Guelph ON Canada

Recipient of the 2020 Choral Canada OUTSTANDING CHORAL COMPOSITION award

First Movement

I: THE GREAT SKY

The great and amorous sky curved over the earth,
and lay upon her as a pure lover.

The rain, descending from heaven
for all the earth,
for both weak and strong,
germinating the wheat,
swells furrows with life
and brings forth buds in the orchards.

-Aeschylus (alt. LE) PD

Second Movement

II: SORELLA ACQUA

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sor'Acqua,
la quale è multo utile
et humile
et pretiosa
et casta.

*(Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water,
she is very useful,
and humble,
and precious,
and pure.)*

-St Francis of Assisi PD

Third Movement

III: THE SOUND OF WATER

If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But the sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop
But there is no water

-from T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*:
What the Thunder said PD

Fourth Movement

IV: THE SMALL BLUE LAKE

Have you seen
how, after rain, the small
blue lake at the bottom
of the tulip cup
looks back at you?
How flowers effloresce
on the first warm night in May,
burst from green buds and raise
sprung faces to the stars and do
a moon-dance with the breeze...?

-George Whipple, *Swim Class and Other Poems: Flowers*
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Fifth Movement

V: THE SPIRIT OF THE SEA

Blessed sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden,
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks,
Our peace in His will
And even among these rocks
Sister, mother
And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee.

-T.S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday* (final lines) PD

Commissioned by the University of Guelph

performance duration: 30 minutes

all performance materials are available from

Monarda Music

63 Dorset Street
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada N2L 3M1

email <info@monardamusic.ca>

I: The Great Sky

Aeschylus, *The Danaides*

choir, oboe, strings

Leonard Enns

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 86$

Violin 1 *n.* *mf*

Violin 2 *mf* *mf*

Viola *mf*

Cello *mf*

Double Bass *mf*

10 S *mf* **A**

A *mf*

Ob *p* *mf*

Vln 1 *mf*

Vln 2 *mf*

Vla

Vc

DB

The great and am - o - rous sky curved,
The great and am - o - rous sky curved, —

NOTE: The String Bass part may be omitted, particularly for performances by smaller ensembles.

The size of the string ensemble may vary from string quartet to large string orchestras, depending on the size of the choir.

I: The Great Sky

20

S
A
T
B

Ob

Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Vc
DB

curved o-ver the earth, the sky the great and am - o-rous sky curved _

curved o-ver the earth, the sky, the great and am - o-rous sky curved _

the great and am - o-rous sky curved _

the great and o-rous sky curved _

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

I: The Great Sky

29

S
ov - er the earth, and lay up - on her as a lov - er, as a pure

A
ov - er the earth, and lay up - on her as a lov - er,

T
ov - er the earth and lay up - on her, lay up - on her as a

B
ov - er the earth and lay up - on her, lay up - on her as a

Ob
mp

Vln 1

Vln 2
mp

Vla
mp

Vc
mp

DB
mp

II: Sorella Acqua

Leonard Enns

Saint Francis of Assisi

choir, strings

dance-like (♩ = c. 80)

Soprano
*Lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to _____ si, lau - da - to si,

Alto
*Lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to _____ si, lau - da - to si,

Tenor
*Lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to _____ si, lau - da - to si,

Bass
*Lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to _____ si, lau - da - to si,

Violin 1
mp pizz. *f*

Violin 2
f pizz. arco pizz.

Viola
f pizz. arco pizz.

Cello
f pizz. arco pizz.

Double Bass
f pizz.

ca. 4' 30"

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II: Sorella Acqua

6

S
lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau - da - to si, lau-da-to si, lau-da to si mi Si- *p*

A
lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau - da - to si, lau-da-to si, lau-da-to si mi Si- *p*

T
lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau - da - to si, lau-da-to si, lau-da-to si mi Si- *p*

B
lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau-da-to, lau - da - to si, lau-da-to si, lau-da to si mi Si- *p*

Vln 1
mp *f* *p*

Vln 2
p arco

Vla
p arco

Vc
p

DB
p

12

S
gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to si mi Si - gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to, lau-da, lau-da-to, *mf* *mp* *mf*

A
gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to si mi Si - gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to, lau-da, lau-da-to, *mf* *mp* *mf*

T
gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to si mi Si - gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to, lau-da, lau-da-to, *mf* *mp* *mf*

B
gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da-to si mi Si - gno-re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau-da to, lau-da, lau-da-to, *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vln 1
mf *mp* *mf*

Vln 2
mf *mp* *mf*

Vla
mf *mp* *mf*

Vc
mf *mp* *mf*

DB
mf *mp* *mf* arco

mf *mf*

II: Sorella Acqua

20

S *f* *mp* *mf* (no rit.)
 lau - da, lau - da - to, laud - da, lau - da - to si mi Si - gno - re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau -

A *f* *mp* *mf*
 lau - da, lau - da - to, laud - da, lau - da - to si mi Si gno - re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau -

T *f* *mp* *mf*
 lau - da, lau - da - to, laud - da, lau - da - to si mi Si - gno - re, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau -

B *f* *mp* *mf*
 lau - da, lau - da - to, laud - da, per Sor' Ac - qua, lau -

Vln 1 *f* *mp* *mf*

Vln 2 *f* *mp* *mf*

Vla *f* *mp* *mf*

Vc *f* *mp* *mf*

DB *f* *mp* *mf* pizz.

28

S *f* *mp*
 da - to, lau - da - to, lau da - to, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to si,

A *f* *mp*
 da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to si,

T *f* *mp*
 da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau -

B *f* *mp*
 da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to si, lau - da - to, lau - da - to,

Vln 1 *f* pizz. *mf*

Vln 2 *f* pizz.

Vla *f* pizz. arco *mp* arco

Vc *f* pizz. *mp* arco *mp*

DB *f* *mp*

III: The Sound of Water

choir, oboe, strings

Leonard Enns

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

$\text{♩} = \text{c.}80$

Violin 1 (arco) 1. *p* 1. & 2. tutti

Violin 2 (arco) 1. *p* 1. & 2. * tutti

Viola (arco) *p*

Cello (arco) *p*

Double Bass

6 (c. ♩ = ♩) ♩ = c.58

Ob. *mp*

Vln 1 * 1. pizz 2. & 3. arco 1. & 2. pizz 3. arco tutti pizz. 3. tacet 2. & 3. tacet tutti arco *n.*

Vln 2 1. pizz 2. & 3. arco 1. & 2. pizz 3. arco tutti pizz. 3. tacet 2. & 3. tacet tutti arco *n.*

Vla pizz. * arco *n.*

Vc pizz. *

DB (arco) *p*

* Individual players repeat the pitch cells in order or re-ordered, in their own tempo. The effect should be gentle, random and rain-like.

III: The Sound of Water

31 *f*

S if there were the sound of wa - ter, the sound of wa - ter of wa - ter on - ly, _____

A if there were the sound of wa - ter, the sound of wa - ter of wa - ter on - ly, _____

T if there were the sound of wa - ter, the sound of wa - ter of wa - ter on - ly, _____

B if there were the sound of wa - ter, the sound of wa - ter of wa - ter on - ly, _____

Vln 1 *f* *n.* *n.*

Vln 2 *f* *n.* *n.* *p*

Vla *f* *n.* *n.* *p*

Vc *f* *n.*

DB *f* *n.*

B *mp* *f* *n.* *molto*

S if there were the sound of wa - ter, if there were the sound of wa - ter, *molto*

A if there were the sound of wa - ter, if there were the sound of wa - ter, *molto*

T if there were the sound of wa - ter, if there were the sound of wa - ter, *molto*

B if there were the sound of wa - ter, if there were the sound of wa - ter, *molto*

Vln 1 *p* *n.* *p* *p*

Vln 2 *p* *n.* *p* *p*

Vla *p* *n.* *p* *p*

Vc *n.* *p* *p*

DB *p* *mp*

George Whipple

IV: The Small Blue Lake

acappella

Leonard Enns

♩ = c. 66, flexibly, tenderly, with awe

Soprano *mf*
 Have you seen how, af - ter rain, the small blue lake at the bot - tom of the tu - lip cup —

Alto *mf*
 Have you seen how, af - ter rain, the small blue lake at the bot - tom of the

Tenor *mf*
 Have you seen how, af - ter rain, the small blue lake at the bot - tom of the

Bass *mf*
 Have you seen how, af - ter rain, the small blue lake — at the bot - tom of the

5 *mp* (shimmering)
 — looks back, looks back, looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks

A *mp*
 tu... looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks back looks

T *mp*
 tu - lip cup looks back looks back looks

B *mp*
 tu - lip cup looks back looks back looks

8 *mp* *piu mosso*
 back looks back looks back looks back looks back at you? Have you seen

A *mp*
 back looks back looks back looks back looks back at you? Have you seen

T *mp* *mf*
 back looks back looks back at you? Have you seen how flowers* ef - flor -

B *mf*
 back looks back looks back at you? How flowers* ef - flor - esce

*only one syllable (flow'rs)

IV: The Small Blue Lake

14 *mf* *rit.* *ten.* *a tempo* *delicately* *mp*

S Have you seen, have you seen how flowers* ef-flor-

A Have you seen, have you seen how flowers* ef-flor-

T esce on the first warm night in May, Have you seen how flowers* ef-flor-

B on the first warm night in May, Have you seen how flowers* ef-flor-

20 *poco piu mosso* *f* *mf* *f*

S esce on the first warm night in May, burst from green buds and

A esce on the first warm night in May, burst from buds and

T esce on first warm night in May,

B esce on first warm night in May,

25 *mp* *f* *mp* *mp*

S raise sprung fac-es to the stars and do a moon-dance with the

A raise sprung fac-es to the stars and do a moon-dance with the

T burst from green buds and raise sprung fac-es to the stars and do a moon-dance with the

B burst from buds and raise sprung fac-es to the stars and do a moon-dance with the

V: The Spirit of the Sea

T. S. Eliot, *Ash Wednesday*
Purcell, *Hear my prayer*

choir, oboe, strings

Leonard Enns

♩ = c. 76

S
Spi - rit of — the

A
Spi rit of — the foun - tain, spi - rit of the

T
Ho - ly mo - ther, spi - rit of the foun - tain, spi - rit of — the

B
Bles - sed sis - ter, — ho - ly mo - ther, spi - rit of the foun - tain, spi - rit of the

ca. 9'30"

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V: The Spirit of the Sea

16

S
gar - den, suf - fer us not, suf - fer us not to mock our - selves with false - hood

A
gar - den, suf - fer, suf - fer us not, not to mock our - selves with false - hood

T
gar - den, suf - fer, suf - fer us not, not to mock our - selves with false - hood

B
gar - den, suf - fer, suf - fer us not, not to mock our - selves with false - hood

Ob.

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

DB

24

A

S
spi - rit of the foun - tain, sp -

A
ho - ly mo - ther spi - rit of the foun - tain, sp -

T
Bles - sed sis - ter, ho - ly mo - ther sp -

B
Bles - sed sis - ter, Choir spi -

Ob.
spi - rit of the *mf*

Vln 1
mf

Vln 2
mf

Vla
mf

Vc
mf

DB
mf

V: The Spirit of the Sea

31

S
- rit of the gar - den, teach us to care to care and

A
- rit of the gar - den, teach us to care, teach us to care and

T
- rit of the gar - den, teach us to care, teach us to care and

B
- rit of the gar - den, teach us to care, teach us to care and teach us

Ob.

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

DB

37

S
not to care Teach us to sit still e - ven a - mong these rocks, —

A
not to care Teach us to sit still e - ven a - mong these rocks, —

T
not to care Teach us to sit still e - ven a - mong these rocks, —

B
not to care Teach us to sit still e - ven a - mong these rocks, —

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc