

Full Score

GWYNETH WALKER

THE GREAT TREES

Musical Settings of the Poetry of Wendell Berry

for Soprano Solo, SATB Chorus, Clarinet and Piano

THE GREAT TREES

Duration: 13'15"

THE GREAT TREES are musical settings of the poetry of Wendell Berry (1934 –). The poetry and music focus on the beauty and spirituality of nature – trees, birds, still water – “one household, high and low.”

Five poems have been selected for this set. #1, #3 and #5 are generally descriptive in character: quiet beauty *The Peace of Wild Things*; a clearing in the woods *The Dark Around Us* and great trees rising to heaven *The Timbered Choir*. These songs are scored for SATB chorus. Poems #2 and #4 are more introspective *Silence*, listening to the *Steps of the City*, and are composed for solo voice.

A clarinet is added to the piano accompaniment, and indeed, is a featured element in this work. The clarinet was chosen for this role due to its gentle, “wood” wind sonority and appearance. In the first song, the clarinet portrays a lone bird in flight. In the second song, the clarinet provides commentary to the solo voice. Clarinet becomes the essence of the dance in the fourth song, and rises in range with the great trees in the finale.

THE GREAT TREES is an expression of ecstatic reverence for the spiritual presence in nature. This expression ranges from the peaceful reverence of the “grace of the world” to the celebratory reverence of “O light come down to earth, be praised!”

* * * * *

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council as well as the 2008 “Athenaeum Award for Achievement in the Arts and Humanities” from the St. Johnsbury (VT) Athenaeum.

Walker's catalog includes over 190 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus and solo voice. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer of Boston (choral and vocal music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral and instrumental music).

Further information concerning Gwyneth Walker and her works is available at

www.gwynethwalker.com.

THE POEMS

(1) THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

(2) THE SILENCE

Though the air is full of singing
my head is loud
with the labor of words.

Though the season is rich
with fruit, my tongue
hungers for the sweet of speech.

Though the beech is golden
I cannot stand beside it
mute, but must say

"It is golden," while the leaves
stir and fall with a sound
that is not a name.

It is in the silence
that my hope is, and my aim.
A song whose lines

I cannot make or sing
sounds men's silence
like a root. Let me say

and not mourn: the world
lives in the death of speech
and sings there.

(3) THE DARK AROUND US

The dark around us, come,
Let us meet here together,
Members one of another,
Here in our holy room,

Here on our little floor,
Here in the daylit sky,
Rejoicing mind and eye,
Rejoining known and knower,

Light, leaf, foot, hand, and wing,
Such order as we know,
One household, high and low,
And all the earth shall sing.

(4) SONG

I stood and heard the steps of the city
and dreamed a lighter stepping than I heard,
the tread of my people dancing in a ring.
I knew that circle broken, the steps awry,
stone and iron humming in the air.

But I thought even there, among the straying
steps, of the dance that circles life around,
its shadows moving on the ground, in rhyme
of flesh with flesh, time with time, our bliss,
the earthly song that heavenly is.

(5) GREAT TREES

Slowly, slowly they return
To the small woodland let alone:
Great trees, outspreading and bright,
Apostles of the living light.

Patient as stars, they build in air
Tier after tier a timbered choir,
Stout beams upholding weightless grace
Of song, a blessing on this place.

They stand in waiting all around,
Uprisings of their native ground.
Downcomings of the distant light;
They are the advent they await.

Receiving sun and giving shade,
Their life's a benefaction made,
And is a benediction said
Over the living and the dead.

In fall their brightened leaves, released,
Fly down the wind, and we are pleased
To walk on radiance, amazed.
O light come down to earth, be praised!

Commissioned by the Wolf River Singers, Ben J. Legett, Director,
through the Choral Commissioning Project and a gift from Bob and Deb Cameron in memory of Edwin K. Dimes
Premiered on March 6, 2010 – Germantown, Tennessee

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for SATB Chorus, Clarinet and Piano

Wendell Berry (1934 -)

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1. The Peace of Wild Things

Rubato ♩ = ca. 100

B♭ Clarinet

p peacefully
as a lone bird in flight

Rubato ♩ = ca. 100

Piano

roll fingers gently on piano lid*

Cl. 6

pp echo

p

roll fingers gently on piano lid

p

Cl. 11

mf

mf

sneak a breath if necessary

mf

(Ped.)

*roll fingers on closed piano lid to simulate fluttering bird's wing.

15

Cl. *dim.* *p*

A *Solo Alto mf espr.*

When des -

pp barely audible

Ped.

17 **A**

A pair for the world grows in me

A

(Ped.)

19 *

Cl. (*p*)

S *Solo Sop. mf espr.*

A and I wake in the night at the

(Ped.)

* Grace notes precede the beat.

21

Cl.

S

T

least sound

Solo Ten. *mf espr.*

in

(Ped.)

23

T

fear of what my life and my chil - dren's lives may

(Ped.)

25

Cl.

T

be,

mf

(Ped.)

6 B

27

Cl. *p*

S *Tutti p*
I go, I

A *Tutti p*
I go, I

T *Tutti p*
I go, I

B *p*
I go, I

B

p gently

Red.

31

Cl. *p*

S go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the wa- ter, _____

A go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the wa- ter, _____ *mf*

T go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the wa- ter, _____ and the

B go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the wa- ter, _____

Red.

36 *rit.* C *a tempo* (♩ = ca. 100) (p)

S I

A (p)

T I
 great her-on feeds. (p)

B I
 the great her-on feeds. p

rit. C *a tempo* (♩ = ca. 100)

mf p gently

Ped.

40

S come in - to the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with fore-thought of

A come in - to the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with fore-thought of

T come in - to the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with fore-thought of

B come in - to the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with fore-thought of

Ped.

43 D

Cl. *(p)*

S
grief. I come in - to the pres - ence of still wa - ter. And I feel a -

A
grief. I come in - to the pres - ence of still wa - ter. And I feel a -

T
grief. I come in - to the pres - ence of still wa - ter. And I feel a -

B
grief. I come in - to the pres - ence of still wa - ter. And I feel a -

D

47 *rit.*

Cl. *mf*

S
bove me the day - blind stars wait - ing with their light. For a

A
bove me the day - blind stars wait - ing with their light. For a

T
bove me the day - blind stars light. For a

B
bove me the day - blind stars light. For a

mf

rit.

Ped.

50 **E** Slower

S time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

A time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

T time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

B time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

E Slower

for rehearsal only

mf

a tempo (♩ = 100)

54 *mf* *p* *p* *p* *rit.*

S

A

T

B

a tempo (♩ = 100)

Play

p *rit.*

Ped.

58 **F** Slower

Cl. *p*

S
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the

A
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the

T
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the

B
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beau-ty on the

F Slower

61

Cl. *mf* *p*

S
wa - ter, _____ and am

A
wa - ter, _____ and am

T
wa - ter, on the wa - ter... I rest in the grace of the world, and am

B
wa - ter, on the wa - ter... I rest in the grace of the world, and am

8va

G a tempo, (♩ = 100) as the beginning

65

Cl. *mf*

S free.

A free.

T free.

B free.

G a tempo, (♩ = 100) as the beginning

70

Cl. *pp*

S *pp*

A *pp*

T *pp*

B *pp*

rit. *p*

rit. roll fingers on piano lid

*The *ossia* (Clarinet) and bracketed (Piano) passages are an alternate ending if the performance is not to continue into the next song. If proceeding, the Clarinet plays the full-size notes as written and the piano is tacet for measure 73.

Score in C

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2. The Silence

Slowly **Freely, as a recitative** (♩ = 120)

B♭ Clarinet *p*

Soprano *mf freely*

Though the air is full of sing - ing my head is loud with the

Slowly **Freely, as a recitative** (♩ = 120)

Piano *p* *8va*

Ped.

5

p

la - bor of words. _____

Though the sea - son is rich with

p

Ped.

9

fruit, my tongue hun - gers for the sweet of speech.

8^{va}

(Ped.)

12

A

p *mf* *p*

Though the beech is gold - en I

A

mf *p*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

15

can - not stand be - side it mute, but must say "It is gold - en,

mf

Ped. Ped. Ped.

18

mf *p* *tr*

gold - en," while the

Ped. 3 Ped. 3 Ped. 3

21

mf *p*

leaves stir and fall with a sound that is not a name.

p gently *mf*

Ped. Ped.

24

p *dim.* *p*

It is in the si - lence that my hope is, and my

Ped. (b) (b) (b)

28

aim. A song whose lines I can-not make or

mp

p

Ped. Ped.

31

sing sounds - men's si - lence like a root. Let me

p *f*

Ped. Ped.

34 **C**

say and not mourn:

f

Ped. Ped. Ped.

37 Slowly

the world lives in the death of

Ped. Ped.

Slowly

40 *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

speech, in the death of speech, and

a tempo (♩ = 120)

pp barely audible

(Ped.) Ped.

43

sings there, and

p echo *mp*

L.H.

(pp)

(Ped.)

45

sings there, _____ and

p

Ped.

47 *rit. to end*

sings _____ there. _____

pp

pp

rit. to end

8va

(pp)

Ped.

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3. The Dark Around Us

Slowly and peacefully ♩ = 100

p *unis.* *unis.*

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

The dark a - round us, come, Let us meet here to - geth - er,

The dark a - round us, come, Let us meet here to - geth - er,

Piano

Slowly and peacefully ♩ = 100

p

with pedal

6

S
A

mem - bers of one an - oth - er, Here in our ho - ly room, Here on our lit - tle

T
B

mem - bers of one an - oth - er, Here in our ho - ly room, Here on our lit - tle

Piano

accel. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

unis. *unis.* *unis.*

accel. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

Ped. _____ pedal simile

*The piano accompaniment is provided to support the chorus, only if needed. Play minimally through measure 26, then play as written.

2

11 *(accel.)*
(cresc.)

S
A
T
B

floor, Here in the day - lit sky, Re - joic - ing mind and

floor, Here in the day - lit sky, Re - joic - ing mind and

(accel.)
(cresc.)

15 *(accel.)* **Faster** ♩ = 120 *mf* *rit.* **B** ♩ = 100 *p* lightly, as birds hopping

S
A
T
B

eye, Re - join - ing known and know - er, Ah Light, leaf,

eye, Re - join - ing known and know - er, Light, leaf,

(accel.) **Faster** ♩ = 120 *mf* *rit.* **B** ♩ = 100 *p* lightly

19 *unis.* *unis.*

S
A
T
B

foot, hand, and wing, Such or - der as we know And all the

Such or - der as we know

foot, hand, and wing, One house - hold, high and low,

25 *accel. poco a poco*
cresc. poco a poco

S A earth, the earth shall sing, sing,

T B *unis.*
and all the earth shall sing, sing,

accel. poco a poco
Play
p cresc. poco a poco

Ped.

29 *(accel.)*
(cresc.)

S A Ah Here on our lit - tle floor,

T B *(cresc.)*
Ah Here... lit - tle floor,

(accel.) **C** *Faster* ♩ = 120
f

(cresc.) **C** *Faster* ♩ = 120
f

Ped.

33

S A Here in the day - lit sky, Re - joic - ing mind and eye, Re - join - ing known and

T B Here... day - lit sky, Re - joic - ing... mind and eye, Re - join - ing...

38 *rit.* **D** ♩ = 100 *p* lightly, as birds hopping

S know - er, Ah — Light, leaf, foot, hand, and wing, and all the earth, and

A know - er, Ah — Light, leaf, foot, hand, and wing, And all the earth, — and

T know - er, Light, leaf, foot, hand, and wing, and all the earth, and

B know - er, Light, leaf, foot, hand, and wing, and

rit. **D** ♩ = 100 *p* lightly

44 *accel.* **E** In celebration ♩ = 120 *f*

S all the earth, the earth shall sing, — the earth shall

A all the earth, the earth shall sing, — the earth shall

T all the earth, the earth — shall... the earth shall sing, —

B all the earth, the earth — shall... — the earth shall sing, —

accel. **E** In celebration ♩ = 120 *f* Play

Ped.

*Optional accompaniment (as at the beginning) through m. 44, then play as written.

48 *rit.*

S
sing, the earth shall sing. *ff*

A
sing, the earth shall sing. *ff*

T
the earth shall sing. *ff*
sing.

B
the earth shall sing. *ff*

rit. *ff*

5 *5* *5* *5*

ff

v *φ* | *v* *φ* | *φ*

Ped.

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4. The Steps of the City

$\text{♩} = 88$

B♭ Clarinet

$\text{♩} = 88$
tap lid lightly, as a joyous dance

Piano

5 **Lively** ($\text{♩} = 88$)

mf lightly

Lively ($\text{♩} = 88$)

10 *rit.* *a tempo*

p

rit. *a tempo*

p

with pedal

* Grace notes precede the beat.

15 A

Cl. *mf* lightly

S Solo *mf* lightly

I stood and heard the steps of the cit - y

mf lightly A

19

(mf lightly)

and dreamed a light - er step - ping than I

23

heard, the tread of my peo - ple danc - ing in a

27

musical score for measures 27-31. It features a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and lyrics. The piano part includes dynamic markings *p* and *cresc. poco a poco*. The lyrics are: ring dan - cing, dan - cing, dan - -

32

musical score for measures 32-36. It features a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and lyrics. The piano part includes dynamic markings *f* and *mf*. The lyrics are: - cing in a ring. I

37 **B**

musical score for measures 37-41. It features a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and lyrics. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mf*. The lyrics are: knew that cir - cle brok-en, the steps a - wry, stone and iron

4

42

p *f* *p sub.* *rit.*
f *p sub.*
 hum-ming in the air, in the air.
rit.
f *p sub.*
 Ped.

47

C *a tempo* (♩. = 88)

D

f *mf*
f *mf*
 But I thought e-ven

C *a tempo* (♩. = 88)

D

f *mf*

52

there, a-mong the stray-ing steps, of the dance that cir-cles life a-

57

E

Musical score for measures 57-60. The system includes a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a bass line. The vocal line starts with a rest, then enters with the lyrics "round, its shadows moving on the ground,". Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. A piano accompaniment is present in the right hand, and a bass line is in the left hand. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the piano accompaniment. A box labeled "E" is positioned above the vocal line.

61

Musical score for measures 61-64. The system includes a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a bass line. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "rhyme of flesh with flesh,". Dynamics include *p*. A piano accompaniment is present in the right hand, and a bass line is in the left hand.

65

rit.

Musical score for measures 65-68. The system includes a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a bass line. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "time with time, our". Dynamics include *mf* and *rit.*. A piano accompaniment is present in the right hand, and a bass line is in the left hand.

69 **F Grandly** *Slowly, freely*

bliss, _____ the earth - ly song that heav'n - ly

F Grandly *Slowly, freely*

Ped. _____

73 *a tempo* (♩ = 88)

p

is. _____

a tempo (♩ = 88)

8^{va} _____ tap lid joyously

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5. The Timbered Choir

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Stately ♩ = 72 (hum) *pp* barely audible

Tenor

Bass

Piano

Great Trees, Great Trees, Great Trees,

6 **A** (hum) *pp* barely audible

A

T

B

slow - ly, slow-ly they re - turn to the small wood-land let a -

Great Trees, Great Trees, Great Trees, Great Trees,

A

(Ped.)

2

10 **B** *poco accel.*

S

A *p*
Great _____ trees, — out-spread-ing and bright, A - pos-tles of the liv-ing light.

T *pp*
lone: slow - ly... —

B Great Trees, Great _____ Trees, Great Trees, Great _____ Trees, *poco accel.*

B

(Ped.)

14 *(accel.)* **C** Slightly faster ♩ = 80

S *p* Light... Pa - tient as stars, they build in air Tier af-ter tier, a

A *mp*
Pa - tient as stars, they build in air Tier af-ter tier, a

T *mp*
slow - ly... Pa - tient as stars, they build in air Tier af-ter tier, a

B *mp*
Great Trees, Great _____ Trees, Great Trees, Great _____ Trees,

(accel.) **C** Slightly faster ♩ = 80

(Ped.)

18

S tim - bered choir, stout beams up - hold - ing weight - less grace of

A tim - bered choir, stout beams up - hold - ing weight - less grace of

T tim - bered choir, stout beams up - hold, up - hold - ing weight - less grace of

B Great Trees, stout beams up - hold, up - hold - ing weight - less grace of

21

poco accel.

D Faster ♩ = 88

S song, a bless - ing on this place. They stand in wait - ing

A song, a bless - ing on this place. They stand in wait - ing

T song, of song, a bless - ing on this place. They stand...

B song, of song, a bless - ing on this place. They stand in wait - ing

poco accel.

D Faster ♩ = 88

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

Red.

24 *rit.*

S all a - round, Up - ris - ings of their na - tive ground.

A all a - round, Up - ris - ings of their na - tive ground.

T 8 — Up - ris - ings...

B all a - round, up - ris - ings of their na - tive ground.

rit.

Ped. Ped. Ped.

27 **E** *Slower* *f* *mf* *accel.*

S Down - com - ings of the dis - tant light; They are the ad - vent they a - wait.

A Down - com - ings of the dis - tant light; They are the ad - vent they a - wait.

T 8 Down... of the light; They are the ad - vent they a - wait.

B Down... the light; They are the ad - vent they a - wait.

E *Slower* *f* *mf* *accel.*

Ped. Ped. Ped.

F Faster ♩ = 88

30 (accel.)

Cl. *mf* *f*

S *p*

A *p*

T *p*

B *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal and woodwind parts for measures 30, 31, and 32. The Clarinet (Cl.) part starts at measure 30 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with grace notes marked with an asterisk (*). The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) all play piano (*p*) and have long, sustained notes across the measures.

(accel.) **F** Faster ♩ = 88

p *mf* *f*

(Ped.) *Ped.* 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Detailed description: This block shows the piano accompaniment for measures 30, 31, and 32. The right hand has a melodic line with triplets and a crescendo from piano (*p*) to forte (*f*). The left hand features a steady eighth-note accompaniment with triplets. Pedal markings (Ped.) are present at the beginning and end of the section.

33

Cl. *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Detailed description: This block contains the woodwind and piano parts for measures 33, 34, and 35. The Clarinet (Cl.) part starts at measure 33 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features melodic lines with triplets. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a triplet accompaniment in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte (*mf*) to forte (*f*).

* Grace notes precede the beat.

Slower, freely

36 *rit.* *p* *Slower, freely*

39 **G** Stately ♩ = 72

CL. *p* *tenderly* *unis.*

S
A
T
B

Re - ceiv - ing sun and giv - ing shade, _____ Their

Re - ceiv - ing sun and giv - ing shade, _____ Their

G Stately ♩ = 72

(*p*)

41

CL. *mf*

S
A
T
B

life's a ben - e - fac - tion made, _____ And is a

life's a ben - e - fac - tion made, _____

mf

43

Cl. *mf*

S ben - e - dict - ion said

A ben - e - dict - ion said o - ver the liv - ing...

T o - ver the liv - ing and the

B o - ver the liv - ing and the

Ped. Ped. Ped.

H

45

Cl. *f*

S *f* dead. In fall their bright - ened leaves, re - leased,


A *f* dead. In fall their bright - ened leaves, re - leased,

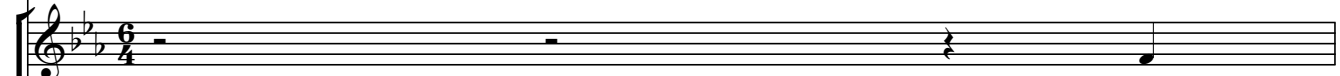
T *f* dead. In fall... Fly

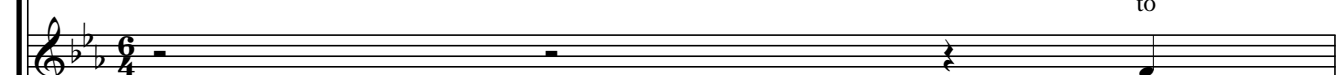
B *f* dead. In fall... Fly

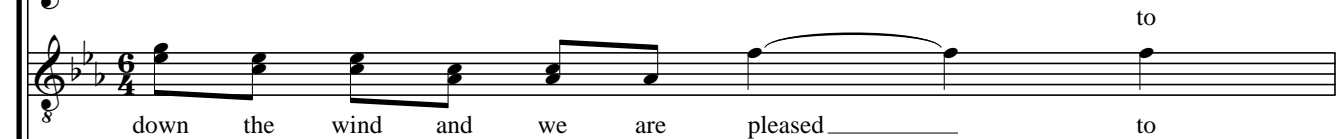
Ped. Ped.


47 *tr*

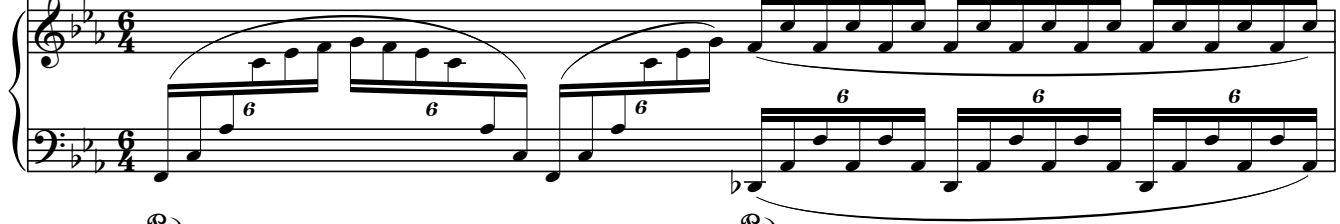
Cl. 

S 

A 

T 

B 

Red. 

48 *rit.* *tr* *accel. poco a poco*

Cl. 

S 

A 

T 

B 

rit. *accel. poco a poco* *p* 

50 (accel.)

Cl. *mf*

S A *cresc.*
light come down to earth, O light come down to earth, be

T *cresc.*
light... to earth, O light... to earth, be...

B *cresc.*
light... to earth, O light... to earth, be...

(accel.)

cresc.

I **Faster** ♩ = 88 *in celebration*

52

Cl. *f*

S A *f*
praised! O light, be praised, O light, be

T *f*
O light, be praised, O light, be praised,

B *f*
O light, be praised, O light, be praised,

I **Faster** ♩ = 88 *in celebration*

54

Cl.



S

praised, be praised, O light come down to earth be

A

praised, be praised, O light come down to earth be

T

O light, be praised, be praised, O light come down to earth be

B

O light, be praised, be praised, O light come down to earth_ be



Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a vocal quartet and piano. It begins at measure 54. The Clarinet part features a melodic line with sixteenth-note runs, marked with '6' (fingerings) and a slur. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) have lyrics: 'praised, be praised, O light come down to earth be'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns. The score is in a key with two flats and a 6/4 time signature, which changes to 4/4 in the final measure.

57 *rit.* *f* *tr* *tr* *ff*

S
praised, _____ be _____ praised!

A
praised, _____ be _____ praised!

T
praised, _____ be _____ praised!

B
praised, _____ be _____ praised!

rit. *ff*

ped. *ped.*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 11, features a Clarinet (Cl.) part at the top and vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The Clarinet part begins at measure 57 with a *rit.* (ritardando) and *f* (forte) dynamic, followed by a trill (*tr*) and a *ff* (fortissimo) section. The vocal parts have lyrics: "praised, _____ be _____ praised!". The piano accompaniment is shown below the vocal staves, also featuring a *rit.* and *ff* section. Pedal markings (*ped.*) are present at the bottom of the piano part.

3' 15"
Total: 13' 15"
October 18, 2009
Braintree, Vermont