Preface

In response to a growing demand for pieces by women composers, I was invited by Oxford University Press to assemble a collection of outstanding new works from living contributors. This set me on an exciting journey of discovery as I sought out new composers from across the world and had the opportunity to connect with others I've long admired.

Breath of Song brings together ten compelling works from different creators, some of whom are well-known, and others are just beginning to make their mark on the international choral scene. Each piece contributed to shaping this collection and played a part in refining the parameters of the original brief. In Breath of Song we have a group of unaccompanied works appropriate for concert performance and at a difficulty level accessible to the majority of choirs. Sacred and secular texts are both represented, and pieces can be programmed individually or together in one thrilling concert. Each work has a unique story to tell and brings something fresh and exciting to the contemporary choral catalogue. From the modal sound coloured by the Hindustani classical tradition in Esmail's 'TāReKiṬa', to the expressive melodic lines seasoned with Scottish snaps in McDowall's 'God be with us', there is something in this eclectic collection for each choir, each concert, and each season.

Thank you to Robyn Elton, Commissioning Editor at Oxford University Press, for her tireless work on this project and for amplifying voices that deserve to be heard. Thank you to Amy Chang and Jane Griffiths for keen eyes and thoughtful editing. Finally, thank you to my fellow composers for sharing your music and for trusting us with your exquisite work.

Sarah Quartel November 2020

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Wake, Love, Wake!



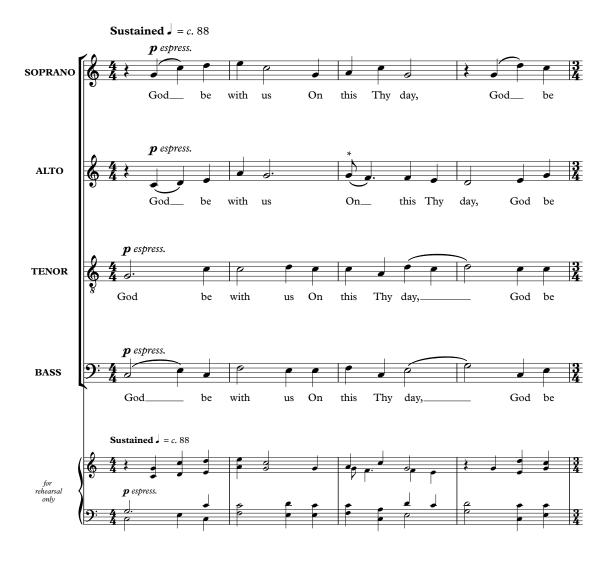
My beloved spake



Duration: 3.5 mins

God be with us

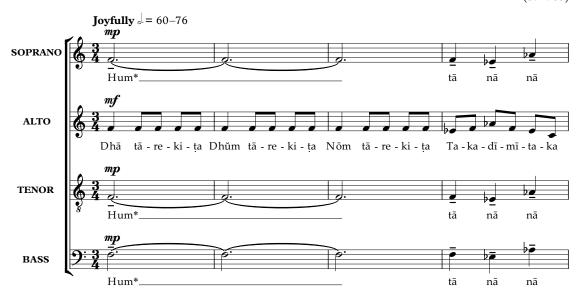
Invocation, *Carmina Gadelica*, Vol. 1 Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912) CECILIA McDOWALL (b. 1951)

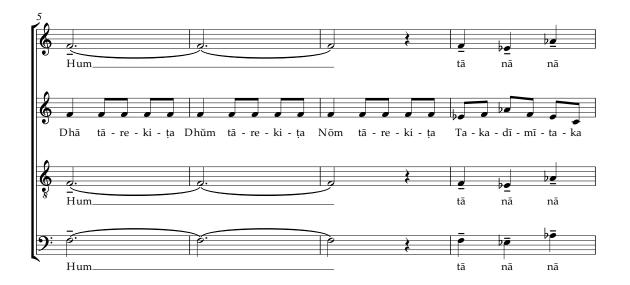


^{*} Sing as Scotch snaps, always clearly accented.

TāReKiṬa (तारेकिट)

Words and music by REENA ESMAIL (b. 1983)





^{*} close to m immediately

The Arrow and the Song

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82)

LAURA HAWLEY (b. 1982)

Before the notes begin, start with c.15–20 seconds of some voices imitating the sounds of wind, gentle breezes, the subtle whistle of an arrow, and occasional bird calls. Continue the wind and birds (or wind only) until the text begins in b. 13. Choirs should feel free to experiment with placement of singers, textural variety, and character and 'pitch' of the wind and bird sounds according to their own artistic expressive nuance.



^{*} straight to the 'n' of 'doon'

Also available separately in a version for SSSAAA unaccompanied (ISBN 978-0-19-355088-9).

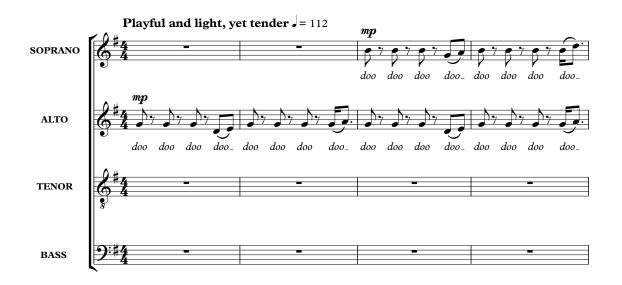
Duration: 4 mins

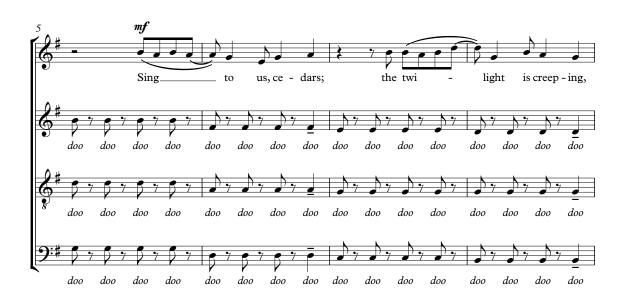
[†] The piano reduction includes the rhythmic accompanying parts throughout; for reason of playability, melodic lines are sometimes omitted.

The Birds' Lullaby

E. Pauline Johnson (1861–1913)

SARAH QUARTEL (b. 1982)





Snow is Silent

John Pickles (b. 1953)

JENNY MAHLER (b. 1989)



O ye who taste that Love is sweet

Christina Rossetti (1830–94)

ELEANOR DALEY (b. 1955)







^{*} Keyboard reduction for rehearsal only.

Round me falls the night

William Romanis (1824–99)

ANNABEL McLAUCHLAN ROONEY (b. 1973)



Duration: 3 mins

Round me falls the night has been recorded by The Choir of Christ's College, Cambridge, conducted by David Rowland, on the album As a seed bursts forth (Regent).