

## PROGRAM NOTES

This composition alternates homophonic chorale-like writing with melody and accompaniment writing in ABAB form. The juxtaposition of these gestures alludes to the world at the time of composition: a world filled with uncertainty, chaos, strife, hope, compassion, and love. At times the music is at odds with the dissonance or angularity of the musical phrase, at other times the music is lush, warm, and settled. The piece reminds us to, even in the midst of turbulence and the unknown, hold dear the value of love, wisdom, courage, tenderness, and truth.

—Matthew Emery

## TEXT

I saw how tears had left their weary traces  
Within those eyes that once the sun outshone,  
I heard those lips, in low and plaintive moan,  
Breathe words to stir the mountains from their places.  
Love, wisdom, courage, tenderness, and truth  
Made in their mourning strains more high and dear  
Than ever wove soft sounds for mortal ear;  
And heaven seemed listening in such saddest ruth  
The very leaves upon the bough to soothe,  
Such sweetness filled the blissful atmosphere.

—Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374)

*Fifteen Sonnets of Petrarch,*

Translated by Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823–1911)

Sonnet VI, excerpted and adapted by Matthew Emery

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Commissioned by Chronos Vocal Ensemble, Jordan Van Biert, conductor  
 Dedicated to the memory of Anna Maria Almond, and all victims of COVID-19

# Breathe

for SATB Chorus unaccompanied

Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374)

Trans. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823–1911)

Matthew Emery

(SOCAN)

Gently ♩ = 70      rit.      a tempo (♩ = 70)

*mp*      *mf*

Soprano  
 Love, \_\_\_\_\_ wis - - -

Alto  
 Love, \_\_\_\_\_ wis - - -

Tenor  
 Love, \_\_\_\_\_ wis - - -

Bass  
 Love, \_\_\_\_\_ wis - - -

Piano  
 (for rehearsal only)





21

*mf* *rit.* *f* *mf*

plain-tive moan, \_ Breathe, \_ breathe, \_ breathe, \_

*mf* *f* *mf*

Breathe, \_ breathe, \_ breathe, \_

*mf* *f* *mf*

Breathe, \_ breathe, \_ breathe, \_

*unis.* *mf* *f* *mf*

Breathe, \_ breathe, \_ breathe, \_

*rit.*

24

*a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 70$ ) *mf* *rit.*  $\text{♩} = 50$  *legato*

Breathe words to stir the moun-tains from their plac-es, breathe, \_

*mp*

plac-es, breathe, \_

Hmm

*mp*

plac-es, breathe, \_

Hmm

*mp*

plac-es, breathe, \_

Hmm

*mp*

plac-es, breathe, \_

*a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 70$ ) *rit.*  $\text{♩} = 50$  *legato*

27  $\text{♩} = 70$  *mp sub.* *rit.* *mf* *a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 70$ )

breathe, — Love, — wis -

breathe, — Love, — wis -

breathe, — Love, — wis -

breathe, — Love, — wis -

$\text{♩} = 70$  *rit.* *a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 70$ )

32 *f* *mp sub.* *rit.* *mf*

- dom, cour - age, ten - der - ness,

- dom, cour - age, ten - der - ness,

- dom, cour - age, ten - der - ness,

- dom, cour - age, ten - der - ness,

*rit.*

♩ = 60 *accel.*

♩ = 70

*rit.*

37 *pp* *mp* *mf warm*

and truth

*pp* *mp* *mf warm*

and truth

*pp* *mp* *mf warm*

and truth

*pp* *mp* *mf warm*

and truth

♩ = 60 *accel.*

♩ = 70

*rit.*

Piano accompaniment for the first system.

**Blossoming** ♩ = 60

42 *p* *mp* *mf*

Made in their mourn-ing strains more high and dear Than ev - er wove soft

*pp sub.* *mp*

Hmm

*pp sub.* *mp*

Hmm

*pp sub.* *mp*

Hmm

**Blossoming** ♩ = 60

Piano accompaniment for the second system.

44

sounds \_\_\_\_\_ for mor - tal ear; \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* mor - tal ear; \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* mor - tal ear; \_\_\_\_\_ Hmm \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* mor - tal ear; \_\_\_\_\_ Hmm \_\_\_\_\_

47

And heav-en seemed \_\_\_\_\_ lis - t'ning in such sad - dest ruth \_\_\_\_\_

*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* \_\_\_\_\_

*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *mf* \_\_\_\_\_

Hmm \_\_\_\_\_

Hmm \_\_\_\_\_



50 *mf* legato, unhurried *rit.*

The ver - y leaves up - on the bough — to soothe, —

*mp* Hmm

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*rit.*

53 (*rit.*) Gently ♩ = 52, *rubato*

— Such sweet-ness filled the bliss-ful at - mos - phere. —

*mf* at - mos - phere. —

*mf* at - mos - phere. —

*mf* *unis.* at - mos - phere. —

(*rit.*) Gently ♩ = 52, *rubato*