

Program Notes

The solstice, occurring twice a year, marks Earth's axial tilt toward or away from the Sun. Culturally significant, solstices inspire folklore, festivals, and rituals, symbolizing life's cyclical nature.

The song starts in 4/4, transitioning from autumn to winter with a "business as usual" essence. Reaching rehearsal letter A, the narrative shifts to Solstice, honoring traditions. The move to 6/8 conveys story-telling urgency, rushing before darkness sets in.

The piece, with a madrigal-meets-carol feel, allows contemporary singing to peek through when inspired. Articulation is key, with over-exaggerated consonants giving narrators sass, a wink to the darkness. The return to 4/4 signifies grounded history supporting traditions, contrasting with swift storytelling, especially introducing the mischievous "trickster raven." The climax at bar 93 underscores love's illuminating power amid darkness.

Duration: ca. 4:25

Text

It's Natalis Sol Invictus
In case you didn't know,
The birth of the unconquered Sun,
Into the light we go.

But first we honor Mother Earth
And souls healing in the dark,
Solstice means "sun standing still,"
No rushing this part!

There's poison in the mistletoe
And magic in the oak.
The candle wicks are lit again,
The elements we invoke.

The crone is lurking 'round the bend,
Holda has a light.
Skadi and Frigg embrace the dark
Halcyon rests at night.

Yuletide myth and legends told
rituals of yore.
Let us sit inside the night
To see the light of our core.

The trickster raven brings the fire
The holly brings the luck
the cloves bring rebirth, wealth, and love.
The snowfall brings the hush.

—Cheryl B. Engelhardt

CHERYL B. ENGELHARDT is a GRAMMY nominated composer who writes both music and lyrics. Her choral pieces have recently been written about in *PEOPLE*, *Forbes*, and *LGBTQ Nation*. She is the Chair of Repertoire & Resources for the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) East for Contemporary/Commercial Music, as well as a representative of The Recording Academy in their Advocacy program, an organization in which she is also and active voting member.

Her commissioned pieces often end up being the "glue that makes an entire program flow." Writing her own lyrics, meeting choirs in person, weeks of research, and the ability to write powerful social justice text or laugh-out-loud lyrics is Cheryl's process that allows for a uniqueness and freedom found in her compositions. www.ecspublishing.com

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Commissioned for the E.O. Smith High School Chamber Singers

Solstice Song

for SSATB Chorus unaccompanied

Words and Music by
Cheryl B. Engelhardt

Linger with curiosity ♩ = ca. 100

Soprano 1 *p* S1 +S2

Soprano 2 *p*

In - to the light. In - to the light. In - to the

Alto *p*

In - to the light. In - to the

Tenor *p*

In - to the

Bass

Linger with curiosity ♩ = ca. 100

Piano (for rehearsal only)

6

With movement and purpose

unis. light. It's Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't know: _ the

unis. light. It's Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't know: the

light. Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't know: _ the

p Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't know: _ the

With movement and purpose

11

birth of the un - con - quered Sun, in - to the light we go. But *mf*

birth of the un - con - quered Sun, in - to the light we go. But *mf*

birth of the un - con - quered Sun, in - to the light we go.

birth of the un - con - quered Sun, in - to the light we go.

15

first we hon - or Moth - er Earth and souls heal - ing in the dark, ___

first we hon - or Moth - er Earth and souls heal - ing in the dark,

mf
Hon - or Moth - er Earth heal - ing in the dark,

mf
Hon - or Moth - er souls dark,

19

“Sol - stice” means “sun stand - ing still,” ___ no ___

Sol - stice, stand - ing still, ___ no ___

Sol - stice, stand - ing still, ___ no ___

Sol - stice, stand - ing still, ___ no ___

unis.

Poco più mosso ♩. = ca. 110

23

rush - ing this part. _____ There's poi - son in the mis - tle - toe and
 rush - ing this part. _____ There's poi - son in the mis - tle - toe and

** * **

Poco più mosso ♩. = ca. 110

27

mag - ic in the oak. _____ The can - dle wicks are lit a - gain, the
 mag - ic in the oak. _____ The can - dle wicks are lit a - gain, the

** * **

*Tenors and Bases: Aleatoric drone on changing vowels, singer's choice. Staggered breathing.

31

el - e - ments we in - voke. ____ It's Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in

el - e - ments we in - voke. ____ It's Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in

Oh, Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus,

Oh, Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus,

35

case you did - n't know: ____ the birth ____

case you did - n't know: ____ the birth ____

Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus

Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus

39 *unis.* *pp*

of the un-con-quered Sun. _____ The Sun, the

pp

nn nn

p

In - to the light we go.

p

There's poi-son in the mis-tle-toe and

43

Sun, _____ the Sun, the *Sun. *S2* *mf*

nn nn nn nn *Sun. The

In - to the light we go. In - to the light we

mag-ic in the oak. There's poi-son in the mis-tle-toe and mag-ic in the oak.

* close to "n"

46

S1
Oo

S2
A
crone is lurk - ing 'round the bend, Hold - a has a light.

T
go. Hold - a has a light.

B
Hold - a has a light.

50

rit.

Ska-di and Frigg em-brace the dark and rest at night.

Ska-di and Frigg em-brace the dark, Hal-cyon rests at night. S2 ↗

Ska-di and Frigg em - brace the night.

Ska-di and Frigg em-brace the dark and rest at night.

rit.

54 *a tempo*

S1 *mf* go, oh we

S2 *mf* In - to the light we go, oh we

A *mf* In - to the light we go,

T *mf* go,

B *mf* go,

a tempo

60 *pp* *unis. whisper*

we go. There's poi - son in the mis - tle - toe and

we go. poi - son in the mis - tle - toe and

we go.

we go.

65

mag-ic in the oak. There's poi-son in the mis-tle-toe and mag-ic in the oak!

mag-ic in the oak. There's poi-son in the mis-tle-toe and mag-ic in the oak!

whisper

Hold-a has a light. Hold-a has a light! Here we

68

^{+S2}
mp
Yule - tide myth and rit - u - al.

mp
Yule - tide myth and leg - ends told, rit - u - als of yore.

percussive guttural "Oo," breathy "Ha!"
go! Ha! Oo Ha! Oo Ha! Oo Ha!

mf
unis.
Yule - tide myth and leg - ends told, rit - u - als of yore.

72

mf *f*

Let us sit in - side the night _____ to see the light of our

Let us sit in - side the night to see the light of our

Let us sit in - side the night to see the light _____ of our

Let us sit in - side the night to see the light of our

77

dim. *mp*

S1 core! _____ Oo _____

S2 core! Of our core, of our core. _____ Oo _____

A core! _____

T _____ Of our core. _____

B _____ Oh _____ Oo _____

82

mp *mf*

Oo The The

mp *mf*

Oo One more! One more!

mp *whisper*

Oo One more!

87

S1 S2

trick - ster ra - ven brings the fire, the hol - ly brings the luck. The

A

mf

Fire, fire, brings luck.

T

mf

Fire, fire, brings luck.

B

mf

Trick - ster ra - ven brings the luck. The

rit., with weight

91

f *pp sub.*

cloves bring re - birth, wealth, and love. The snow - fall brings the

f *pp sub.*

Birth, wealth, and love. The snow - fall brings the

f

Birth, wealth, and love.

cloves bring wealth, and love.

rit., with weight

96

unis. mp *a tempo, espressivo* *unis.*

hush. It's Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't

mp

hush. Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't

pp mp

Hush. Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't

pp mp

Hush. Nat - a - lis Sol In - vic - tus, in case you did - n't

a tempo, espressivo

100

know:— the birth of the un - con-quered Sun, in-to the light we go,

know: the birth of the un - con-quered Sun, in-to the light we go,

know:— the birth of the un - con-quered Sun, in-to the light we go,

know:— the birth of the un - con-quered Sun, in-to the light we go,

105

pp in - to the light we go, *mf* in - to the light we go. Hoo!

pp in - to the light we go, *mf* in - to the light we go. Hoo!

pp in - to the light we go, *mf* in - to the light we go. Hoo!

pp in - to the light we go, *mf* in - to the light we go. Hoo!

* The final three phrases from meas. 103 to the end can vary in tempo from each other. Experiment and have fun.

** All parts in one breath: "go" turns into a forced out-breath, like blowing out a candle.

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