

*Commissioned by the Toledo Choral Society
Richard Napierala, Artistic Director
for premiere June 26, 2022
Toledo, Ohio*

PROGRAM NOTES

The Great Lakes is a musical journey across the magnificent five lakes bordering the Eastern US and Canada. Texts by American and Canadian poets have been selected as lyrics for this cantata. The journey moves from East (Lake Ontario) to West (Lake Superior), stopping to explore the unique character of each lake en route.

Because *The Great Lakes* was commissioned by the Toledo Choral Society, special attention has been given to the Lake Erie song, *Erie Waters*. On request from members of the Chorus, storm references have been included in the music. Yet the voyagers survive!

*O! wind so sweet and swift. O! danger-freighted gift
Bestowed on Erie with her waves that foam and fall and lift,
We laugh in your wild face, and break into a race
With flying clouds and tossing gulls that weave and interlace.*

Although the preliminary form of the cantata was scored for chorus with piano accompaniment, the final version is now orchestrated. Therefore, the composer has enjoyed exploring orchestral colors inspired by the personalities of the lakes.

TEXT

A dash of yellow sand,
Wind-scattered and sun-tanned;
Some waves that curl and cream along the margin of the strand;
And, creeping close to these
Long shores that lounge at ease,
Old Erie rocks and ripples to a fresh sou'-western breeze.

A sky of blue and grey;
Some stormy clouds that play
At scurrying up with ragged edge, then laughing blow away,
Just leaving in their trail
Some snatches of a gale;
To whistling summer winds we lift a single daring sail.

O! wind so sweet and swift,
O! danger-freighted gift
Bestowed on Erie with her waves that foam and fall and lift,
We laugh in your wild face,
And break into a race
With flying clouds and tossing gulls that weave and interlace.

*—Emily Pauline Johnson (1861–1913),
from Flint and Feather (1917)*

Erie Waters

[the calm and the storm]
from *The Great Lakes*

Alto and Baritone Soli, SATB Chorus (divisi), and Piano or Orchestra

“Erie Waters” by
Emily Pauline Johnson (1861–1913)
Canadian Poet

Gwyneth Walker

Introduction

At a peaceful tempo ♩ = 108

(calm waters)

Piano

p 5 5 5 5

with much *Leg.*

(clouds floating overhead)

3 *L.H.*

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

(Leg.)

6

poco cresc. 5 5 5 5

Leg. *Leg.*

8

mf 5 5 5 5 5 5

accel. *L.H. >*
(violent storm) *f*

Leg. *8vb* *Leg.*

10 *(accel.)* L.H. >

(8^{va})
(Ped.)

12 **Quickly**
(waves)

(Ped.)

15 *rit.* [long hold] *(as the storm passes)*

(Ped.)

19 **A** **Original tempo** ♩ = 108
peacefully (calm waters) L.H.

(Ped.)

22 **Alto Solo: calmly descriptive**
mf

A dash of yel - low

(Ped.)

24

Alto Solo
sand, Bar. Solo (*calmly descriptive*) Some

mf

Bar. Solo
Wind - scat - tered and sun - tanned;

L.H.

(Ped.)

27

Alto Solo
waves that curl and cream a - long the

Bar. Solo

(Ped.)

29

Alto Solo
mar - gin of the strand;

T
B

All Men
unis. *mf* with warmth and affection

E - rie

(Ped.)

39 C

T
8 creep - ing close to these Long shores that lounge at

B
8 creep - ing close to these Long shores that lounge at

C

And.

42 *mf*

S
mf ease, Old E - rie rocks and rip - ples to a

A
mf ease,

T
mf ease,

B
mf ease,

mf

And.

45

S
fresh sou' - west - ern breeze, E - rie wa - ters, (*mf*)

A
Lake E - rie

T
Lake E - rie

B
Lake E - rie

mf

And.

D More agitated rhythm

49

T
B

wa - ters, my home.

D More agitated rhythm

ped.

(with aggression as a storm breaking)

53

with pedal

E Faster ♩ = 120

57

Alto *mf* anxiously

accel.

A sky of blue and grey;

E Faster ♩ = 120

Soprano *mf* anxiously

61

Some storm - y clouds that play

65 *(mf)*

S
A

T
B

rag - ged edge, then

At scur-ry-ing up with rag - ged edge,

mf

with pedal

69

S
A

laugh - ing blow a - way,

72

Soprano

Tenor

Some

Just leav - ing in their trail

F

75 *p* **G**

S snatch - es of a gale; To whist - ling sum - mer winds we lift a

A To whist - ling sum - mer winds we lift a

T To whist - ling sum - mer winds we lift a

B To whist - ling sum - mer winds we lift a

p **G**

79 *cresc.* *f*

S sin - gle dar - ing sail.

A *cresc.* sin - gle dar - ing sail. *f*

T *cresc.* sin - gle dar - ing sail. *f*

B *cresc.* sin - gle dar - ing sail. *f*

cresc. *f*

83

S *mf* Ah,

A *mf* Ah,

T *p* Ah *f*

B *p* Ah *f*

p cresc. *f* *mf*

86

S *f* O!

A *f unis.* O!

rit. *cresc.* *f*

rit.

H Original tempo ♩ = 108

89

S wind so sweet and swift,

A wind so sweet and swift,

T 8 O! dan - ger freight - ed

B O! dan - ger freight - ed

f

unis. (f)

H Original tempo ♩ = 108

f

Red.

92

S Be - stowed on E - rie with her waves that

A Be - stowed on E - rie with her waves that

T 8 gift that

B gift that

unis.

Red.

Red.

Red.

95

S foam and fall and lift, We laugh in your wild

A foam and fall and lift, We laugh in your wild

T foam and fall and lift,

B foam and fall and lift,

I

98

S face,

A face,

T And break in - to a race With *unis. p*

B And break in - to a race With *p*

[“laughing” motive]

p

accel. (with building excitement)

101

S A *p* *cresc.*
that weave and in - ter -

T *cresc.*
fly - ing clouds and toss - ing gulls that weave and in - ter -

B *cresc.*
fly - ing clouds and toss - ing gulls that weave and in - ter -

rapidly (as clouds and gulls) *accel. (with building excitement)*

cresc.

Leo.

(accel.)

J Faster, celebratory ♩ = 120

104 *(cresc.)* *f*
lace. O! wind so swift,

T *(cresc.)* *f*
lace.

B *(cresc.)* *f*
lace.

(accel.)

J Faster, celebratory ♩ = 120

(cresc.) *f*

Leo.

107 *rit.*

S
A
T
B

O! waves that lift.
O! waves that lift.
O! dan - ger "gift," O! waves that lift.
O! dan - ger "gift," O! waves that lift.

rit.

111 *a tempo* (♩ = 120)

S
A
T
B

mf
Ah
un. mf
Ah
un. mf
Ah

a tempo (♩ = 120)

114 *unis. mf*

S Ah

A

T

B

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

117 **K** *f*

S Ah

A Ah

T *f* Ah

B *f* Ah

K *f* 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

119 *rit.*

Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

Piano

rit.

Ped.

121 **Slower** *unis. mf grandly* *f*

S *lake!*

A *lake!*

T *lake!*

B *lake!*

Slower
(hint of a storm)

p sub. cresc. *f*

8vb *8vb-1*

Ped.