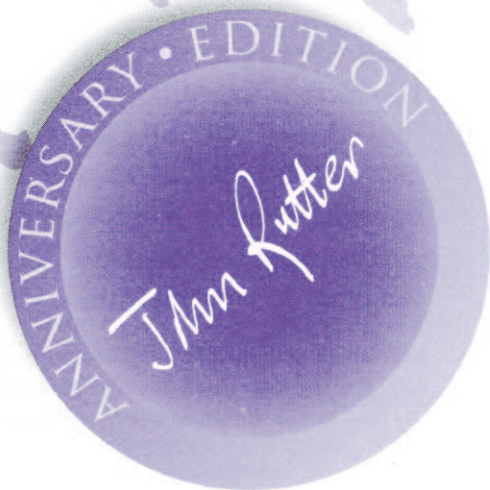


SACRED

SATB and piano or organ

OXFORD

JOHN RUTTER
FOR THE BEAUTY OF
THE EARTH



Composer's note

The author of this well-known but now much-altered hymn text, F. S. Pierpoint (1835–1917), was a schoolmaster who taught Classics in his native city of Bath, reputedly inspired to write the words while contemplating the elegant city and its natural surroundings from a nearby hill. He was a devout Tractarian – that is, a follower of the Oxford Movement which, from its origins in the 1830s, sought to beautify Anglican worship and restore pre-Reformation rites and theology within the Church of England. *For the beauty of the earth* was published in 1864 in *Lyra Eucharistica*, a collection of sacred verses by different authors, intended to adorn and celebrate the rite of Holy Communion. In its original version (with the refrain 'Christ our God, to thee we raise, This our sacrifice of praise'), the Eucharistic theme of Pierpoint's text is clear. The two concluding stanzas – containing references to martyrs, prophets, confessors, and the Virgin Mary – perhaps made the text less palatable to non-Tractarians and were generally omitted in most hymnals, while the remaining six verses were variously altered to obscure the Eucharistic theme, leaving a simple-hearted thanksgiving for nature, hearth and home, unlikely to offend any denomination. Some editors, fearing misinterpretation of the line 'To our race so freely given', have substituted 'To the world' or 'To us all'.

My musical setting (originally for sopranos, altos, and piano) was written in 1980 as one of a set of three pieces commissioned by the Texas Choral Directors Association for performance at their annual convention; the other two were *Open thou mine eyes* (for SATB unaccompanied) and *Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace* (for TTBB with organ or piano). The present adaptation of *For the beauty of the earth* for SATB dates from 1981, my orchestration from about 1982.

Performance hints

The singing style appropriate for this piece is hard to get exactly right. There is an obvious pop influence in the music, calling for lightness, lift, and bounce in performance, yet it is not a pop song and should be sung with simple classical purity and a sense of a sustained vocal line despite the rests between phrases. The most important thing is to project the text with a sense of joy.

In bar 15 and all parallel places, the semiquavers need to be crisply articulated, not slithered over.

In bar 96 the soprano rhythm is often mistaken in performance: the G sharp should come *on* the second crotchet of the bar, not before it.

Conductors and choirs sometimes struggle with the rhythm in bars 105–110. The secret is to remember that during the 3/8 bars, quavers remain at exactly the same speed they always were but they are grouped in threes instead of in fours. After that, beat the 2/4 bar as two quick crotchets (quavers still being constant), then stay in crotchets from bar 110 to the end to control the *rallentando* – don't go back into two in bar 114 for the piano postlude.

Publisher's note

This piece is scored for small orchestra (2fl, ob, 2cl, bsn, 2hn, perc, hp, str). Conductor's scores and instrumental parts are available on sale – score (ISBN 978-0-19-340727-5); set of parts (ISBN 978-0-19-340729-9) – and on hire – score and parts (ISBN 978-0-19-341518-8) – from Oxford University Press or its appointed agent.

The original version, for SA and piano (ISBN 978-0-19-341513-3), is also published. The orchestral accompaniment is compatible with both versions.

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for Rosemary Heffley and the Texas Choral Directors Association

For the beauty of the earth

F. S. Pierpoint (1835–1917)

JOHN RUTTER

Happily $\text{♩} = 66$ PIANO
or
ORGAN*mp delicato*

5

SOPRANOS
mp legato

1. For the beau - ty of the earth, _____

13

For the beau - ty of the skies, _____

16

— For the love _____ which from our birth _____

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major (one flat) with lyrics. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, featuring a continuous eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in G major, featuring a continuous eighth-note melody. The lyrics are: "— For the love _____ which from our birth _____".

20

poco staccato

— O - ver and a - round us lies, — o - ver and a -

23

legato *mf*

$$mf$$

legato

-round us lies: Lord of all, to thee we

mf

27

mp poco marcato

raise _____ This our joy - ful hymn _____ of

mp

31

praise. _____

35 **A** SOPRANO *mf*

ALTO

2. For the beau - ty of each hour _____

TENOR

BASS *mf*

A *mf*

39

Hill and

Of the day and of the night, _____

Hill and

43

S. *leggiero*
vale _____ and tree and flower, _____ Sun and moon and

A. *leggiero*
Hill and vale _____ and tree and flower, Sun and moon and

T. *leggiero*
Hill and vale _____ and tree and flower,

B. *leggiero*
vale _____ and tree and flower, _____



The piano accompaniment for measures 43-46 features a flowing melody in the right hand with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a supporting bass line in the left hand with quarter and half notes. The music is in a minor key, indicated by the key signature of two flats.

47

S. *legato*
stars of light: _____ Lord of

A. *legato*
stars of light: _____ Lord of

T. *leggiero* *legato*
Sun and moon and stars of light: _____ Lord of

B. *leggiero* *legato*
Sun and moon and stars of light: _____ Lord of



The piano accompaniment for measures 47-50 continues the melodic flow in the right hand, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 50. The left hand provides a steady harmonic foundation with quarter and half notes. A crescendo marking is present in the final measure of the piano part.

51 *f*

all, to thee we raise_____

f

all, to thee we_____ raise_____

f

all, to thee we raise_____

f

all, to thee we_____ raise_____

f

all, to thee we_____ raise_____

55 *mf*

This our joy - ful hymn_____ of praise._____

mf

This_____ our hymn of praise._____

mf

This our joy - ful hymn_____ of praise._____

mf

This_____ our hymn of praise.

mf

mp
espress.

Ped. *

59

B(S. and A.)
unis. *p*

3. For the

(T. and B.)
unis. *mp espress.*

3. For the joy of hu - man love, _____

B*p dolce*

Ped.

*

64

joy _____ of love,

Bro-ther, sis - ter, pa - rent,

— Bro-ther, sis - ter, pa - rent, child, _____ Friends on

69

child, Friends on earth, _____ and friends a - bove, _____

earth, _____ and friends a - bove, _____ For all gen-tle

73 *(p)*

For all gen - tle thoughts and mild:_____

thoughts and mild,_____ For all gen-tle thoughts and mild:_____ Lord of

77 *mf*

_____ Lord of all,_____ to thee we raise_____

mf all, to thee we raise_____

81 *unis. p*

Our joy-ful hymn of praise._____

mp This our joy - ful hymn_____ of praise._____

mp *cresc.*

17/05-04-10

85

C ALL VOICES

unis.

f

4. For each per - fect gift of thine_____

89

SOPRANOS

To our race so free - ly giv - en,_____

ALTOS, TENORS,
BASSES

mf

To our race so free - ly giv - en,_____ Gra - ces

mf

93

mf

Gra - ces_____ hu-man and di-vine,_____

hu - - - man and di - vine,_____ Flow'rs of earth and

97

cresc. *s. f*
Ah *Ah* *A.*
 Lord of

cresc. *T. f*
B. f
 buds of heav'n, _____ flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n: _____

cresc. *f*

101

S.
 all, to thee we raise _____

A.
 all, to thee we _____ raise _____

T.
 all, to thee we raise _____

B.
 all, to thee we _____ raise _____

17/05-04-12

D (♩ = ♩)

105

mf

This our joy - ful hymn of praise,

mf

This our joy - ful hymn of praise,

mf

This our joy - ful hymn of praise,

mf

This our joy - ful hymn of praise,

D (♩ = ♩)

mf

111

rall.

(*rallentando al fine*)

p legato

This our joy - ful hymn of praise.

p

our hymn of praise.

p

our hymn of praise.

p

our hymn of praise.

rall.

(*rallentando al fine*)

dim.

p

(*p*)

115

molto rall.

JRA6 For the beauty of the earth RUTTER

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