

HEADWATERS

i.

Headwaters

ii.

Four Winds

iii.

Arms Wide

Text and Music
by Moira Smiley

Commissioned by The Myrna Loy, for the choirs of
Helena High School

This short song cycle is based on three maps.

These maps illuminate the area of Montana around its capital, Helena, and as the place where the longest river in the United States (The Missouri River) originates. Movement 1 zooms our map in on the headwaters - the meeting of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin Rivers - of the Missouri. Movement 2 zooms out to show the regions around Helena. Movement 3 zooms out to greater Montana, and follows the Missouri River system as it ventures across the U.S.

I found this theme of 'headwaters' to be resonant while composing text and music for young adult singers in Montana. The text is inspired by these singers' answers to questions I asked them about their area. I wanted these young singers - young Montanans - to feel inspired by the essential elements of their home, and energized - like a young river at its headwaters - to explore the unknown.

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Movement 1 establishes the quiet, spacious grandeur of a young river at its headwaters, with everything in front of it.

Headwaters

SSAATTBB

Moira Smiley

Spacious, Vibrant Calm

$\text{♩} = 92$

S1+2
I a m I a m I a m a m I am

A1+2
I a m I a m I a m I am

T1+2
I a m I a m I a m a m I am

B1+2
I a m I a m I a m I m I am

Spacious, Vibrant Calm

$\text{♩} = 92$

Piano
I a m I a m I a m a m I am

11

S1
head - wa - ters head - wa - ters I am head - wa - ters I am new a - bove

A1
head - wa - ters head - wa - ters I am head - wa - ters I am new a - bove

T1
head - wa - ters head - wa - ters head - wa - ters ah new a - bove

B1
head - wa - ters head - wa - ters head - wa - ters ah new a - bove
a2 a2

Pno.
head - wa - ters head - wa - ters head - wa - ters I am head - wa - ters I am new a - bove
head - wa - ters ah new a - bove

Movement 2 takes the quiet, still grandeur and formality of Movement 1 and moves it into purposefulness and spatial awareness. You are making your audience aware of beautiful place names on the map around Helena, Montana

Helena - Four Winds

SSAATTBB

By Moira Smiley

A $\text{♩} = 112$

High Drone

Low Drone

7 **B**

H.D.

L.D.

S-NE
HI

A1-NW

A2+T
SE
Hi + LO

B1-SW

B2-NE
LOW

NORTHWEST

Birds - eye Wil born Black Moun - tain__

SOUTHWEST

Co - met A - ma-zon Clan - cy__

CONCEPT + PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS:

You are representing Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast regions around Helena.

You also need a core group to represent 'Helena'. Think of the stage as a map around Helena.

The song slowly spreads you, as you sing, to these 4 directions - as if walking those ways from Helena.

The parts must be memorized, to enable moving with ease and spatial awareness.

NW and SW (A1 + B1) arrive upstage and downstage RIGHT respectively. (Conductor's LEFT)

NE and SE (S+B2 and A2+T) arrive upstage and downstage LEFT respectively. (Conductor's RIGHT)

Section C's spoken names should be spoken at each singer's subtly different timing & emphasis.

Section C should feel like many individual storytellers simultaneously telling stories in a room (using 8-9 measures).

ARRANGEMENT:

1. All singers start w/'Helena' Drone - in a clump, or processing to a location that can be the center point.

2. Once at center, NW and SW begin singing your place names (that's A1 + B1) - Sections A + B

As you sing, you walk away from 'Helena' center point up to upstage right (NW) and downstage right (SW)

3. At end of 1st time through, all but 'Helena' singers and 'Hm' singers speak their place names at Section C.

4. 2nd time through, 'Helena' singers continue, and only NE and SE begin singing place names (that's S+B2 and A2+T)

As you sing, you walk away from 'Helena' center point up to upstage left (NE) and downstage left (SE)

Then...all parts but 'Helena' singers and 'Hm' singers speak at Section C

5. 3rd time through, all parts, all sections. End with D drone to connect with next piece, 'Arms Wide...'

6. As the D drone is sung, walk into places for 'Arms Wide'

By this third movement, singers should be loose and expressive in their movements, stepping the foot pattern as you would naturally dance, and unified in the gestures.

Arms Wide, Big Sky

SATB + 2 soloists + feet

Words & Music by Moira Smiley
Inspired by words from Helena High School Singers

A $\text{♩} = 112$

Step Touch Step Touch
R L L R

Continue STEPPING until m.39

FEET

mf pp mf pp mf pp mf pp mf > pp mf pp mf pp mf pp mf pp

SOP

Start Gesture 1 *mf* Start Gesture 2 Start Gesture 3

Arms wide... big sky Snow

ALTO

Arms wide... big sky Snow

TENOR

Arms wide... big sky Snow

BASS

Arms wide... big sky Snow

Piano

$\text{♩} = 112$ **A**

Arms a2 Start Gesture 1 Start Gesture 2 Start Gesture 3

Arms wide... big sky Snow

GESTURES:

- Gesture 1 = LAND: Lift open palms forward and at hip height (your arms will cross others' a little).
- Gesture 2 = SKY: Lift LEFT arm straight up to indicate sky directly above. Turn head up gently toward LH.
- Gesture 3 = SNOW: Draw left arm down very slowly as if tracing snow falling.
- Gesture 4 = FIRE: Push both hands w-spread fingers towards bonfire in front of you, as if warming cold fingers at fire.
- Gesture 5 = SPARKS: Throw random snaps in front of the middle of your body, as if catching flying sparks.
- Gesture 6 = MOUNTAINS: Hold arms/hands as if in prayer but w/hands apart (represent a mountain), raise UP, lower DOWN.
- Gesture 7 = ROOT: Left palm opens up to sky, and Right fingers press into left palm. Raise slowly up
- Gesture 8 = RIVER: Left palm still open to sky, Right hand makes simple 'fish swimming slowly forward' gesture.

9

Continue Gesture 3 End Gesture 3

S.

falls mid Ju - ly This is the land I know This is the land I know This is the land I know

A.

falls mid Ju - ly

T.

falls mid Ju - ly Land I know Land I know Land I know

B.

falls mid Ju - ly

Pno.

falls mid Ju - ly This is the land I know This is the land I know This is the land I know

falls mid Ju - ly Land I know Land I know Land I know

1. 2. 1.