

Time In Our Voices

SSAATTBB + mobile phones + sound design

Moira Smiley

Commissioned by
The Los Angeles Master Chorale
Grant Gershon, Artistic Director

To explore the human voice as an expressive tool across a lifetime.

Movement 1 [2 min]
Time Through Our Voices

Movement 2 [2 min. 15 sec]
Child Gives Voice

Movement 3 [2 min. 10 sec]
Headlong

Movement 4 [1 min. 30 sec]
Bounded Fields

Movement 5 [3 min. 10 sec]
Touched By Sound

Property of the Los Angeles Master Chorale
135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

This piece grew from two sound roots. The first was knowing that it would be sung in the June, 2017 concert honoring Morten Lauridsen's "Lux Aeterna" – with concert themes of time, light and eternity. The second was imagining 900 high school singers sing this piece while experiencing the grandeur and wonder of their voices in the vaulted Walt Disney Concert Hall during the LAMCHSCF. I decided to ask these young singers to get very personally involved in the event by making their own 30 second mobile phone recordings of friends and family talking about 'time'. I've built playback of those recordings into the performance of the piece – bringing the mobile phone temporarily out of concert-hall-taboo, and into artistic play in the sacred space of the choral concert. I also hope it's an engaging way to bring dear ones into a conversation about the changing sound of a voice across a lifetime.

TEXT:

Time In Our Voices

Time, what is the hum of this life known through our voices - the sounds
made by our breath, flesh and bone?

The lungs of babes call out 'Here I am now!'
Cooing, wailing to measure this new time and space.
And soon a child gives voice to questions we forgot the asking of.
So bright their sound of play – a ringing bell of the new day.

We deepen, falter, fly, and stretch again our flesh and bone to carry
self and sound - impatient now - to sing a song that is our own.
Head-long cross the threshold run into our time of 'I Am Grown'.

Into our bounded fields of time, whose edges we glance now and then,
we curious (furious) and joyous throw the seeds of us into the meadow.
Humming to the hum of all things. More and more, yet more we bring.

When the wheel slows, intervals widen, stillness holds...
Reflections are as real as the now they mirror to us.
Cut to bone by loss, our tenderness is found.
We're broken and put back together, touched by sound.

We come into this choral singing space. It has a grandeur, a solemnity, and a sacredness to it. It may be the perfect space to ask big questions, and express the things that unite us. But perhaps we feel torn between the power of our collective sound and our desire to speak or sing as an individual. In this movement, we slowly find our common compass.

Time In Our Voices (Intro/Mvt.1)

SATB + mobile phone recordings

Music and Words by
Moira Smiley

Stately
♩ = 100

All voices speak low & full.
As if to shrug "what are we doing?"

mp
S Oo — huh Oo - m Oo

ff
A Time - (m) huh Time - (m) Time - (m)

ff
T Time - (m) huh Time - (m) Time - (m)
open vowel until (m)

ff
B Time - (m) huh Time - (m) Time - (m)
open vowel until (m)

Piano (rehearsal only)

Quiet Rebellion: Singers exclaim & call out freely across the two measures. Exclamations like 'hey' 'aHA' 'woo' 'nuhUH', 'ohMY', 'Ehoh!' are good starts. Defy tone formality, play with color, but keep straight face and strict sense of time.

9

f Oo - m Oo - m

f Time - (m) Time - (m) Time -

f Time - (m) Time - (m) Time -

f Mm Time - (m) Time - (m) Time -

gliss.

Mvt. 2 begins as the last Child Recordings are playing. The space between Mvt. 1 and Mvt. 2 is roughly 4-6 mm. It should be enough to get new pitch center / pitches and feel like a new atmosphere connected by the spoken voices.

Time - Child Gives Voice (Mvt. 2)

SSAATTBB + mobile phone recordings

Music and Words by
Moira Smiley

Graceful
♩ = 100

S

A *mf* *p* *mf*
Oo uh new new new new new new oo

T1 *mf*
Oo oo oo

T2 *mf*
Oo oo oo

B1 *mf*
Oo oo oo

B2 *mf*
Oo oo oo

Each note of these hocket arpeggios throughout this movement should hold over the attack of the note that follows it. This creates an effect of electronic sampling - a spliced-together sound where you don't quite know who is singing when or where in the melodic shape.

Graceful
♩ = 100

Piano (rehearsal only)

Ped. Ped.

Performance Note: use a vertically open ('tall' not 'broad') mouth to shape the vowels.
Don't over-articulate the vocables. Keep consonants soft, so the quick pace is effortless,
and overall effect is smooth. The theatrical feel of the whole is of restlessness and urgency.

Time - Headlong (Mvt. 3)

SATB + mobile phone recordings

Music and Words by
Moira Smiley

Restless and Confident
♩ = 284

Sopranos start
Teen Recordings

Tenors start
Teen Recordings

Altos start
Teen Recordings

Piano
(rehearsal
only)

deee dee dee dee dee dee_ dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee fa - la la

deee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee

deee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee fa-la - la

deee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee fa - la la

Restless and Confident

deee dee dee fa- la- la dee dee dee dee fa - la dee dee dee fa-la - la dee dee dee

deee dee dee dee fa - la la We deep-en fal-ter fal-ter

deee dee dee dee fa-la - la fa-la - la fa-la - la dee dee dee dee fa-la - la dee dee dee dee

deee dee dee fa-la - la dee dee dee fa - la la dee dee dee fa-la - la dee dee dee

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In this movement, there's an almost mechanical rhythm of work and production interspersed with moments aware of life's incredible fullness. Smoothly rhythmic.

Time - Bounded Fields (Mvt. 4)

SATB + mobile phone recordings

Words and Music by
Moira Smiley

Sopranos start Adult
Recording

Rhythmic and Lively

$\text{♩} = 124$

Musical score for SATB voices, measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'Rhythmic and Lively' with a quarter note equal to 124. The dynamics are marked *mf*. The lyrics are: 'In - to our bound-ed fields of our'. The Soprano part begins with a rest, then enters in measure 3. The Alto part begins with a rest, then enters in measure 2. The Tenor part begins with a rest, then enters in measure 2. The Bass part has a rest throughout these measures.

Basses continue 'Adult'
Recording

Rhythmic and Lively

$\text{♩} = 124$

Piano
(rehearsal
only)

Piano accompaniment for measures 1-4. The piano part consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. The right hand has a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical score for SATB voices and piano, measures 5-8. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The dynamics are marked *f* for the vocal parts and *mp* for the piano. The lyrics are: 'In - to our bound-ed fields of time. In - to our bound-ed fields of time time time time time time time'. The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a dynamic change to *mp*. The Tenor and Bass parts have a more rhythmic accompaniment. The piano part continues with a complex rhythmic accompaniment.

In the final movement, we're more aware of time as cyclical. We're more sensitive to the wider cycles and intervals of change - in us, and all around us. Our memories can mix palpably with our present. We lose loved ones while we see young ones beginning their cycles. The singing here is full and emotional.

Time - Touched By Sound (Mvt. 5)

With Gravity

♩ = 64

Music and Words by
Moira Smiley

mf open vowel until (m) *mp* *p*

S1 Time - (m) oo

mf *f*

S2 Time - (m) oo When slows When slows The when

mf

A1 Time - (m) oo

mf *ff*

A2 Time - (m) oo the the wheel

mf *mp*

T1 Time - (m) oo

mf *ff*

T2 Time - (m) oo wheel wheel slows

mf *ff*

B1 Time - (m) oo slows slows hum

mf *mp*

B2 Time - (m) oo

♩ = 64
With Gravity

Piano (rehearsal only)