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Commissioned for the Centennial Celebration for the Palo Alto High School Campus

HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

SSATBB a cappella

Text by
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Music by
Christopher Tin

The musical score is for a cappella SSATBB. It features six vocal parts: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The tempo is marked as quarter note = ca. 50. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "Hope", followed by a long line and then "Hope", followed by another long line. The Soprano 1 and 2 parts are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano), while the Alto and Tenor parts are marked *p* (piano). The Baritone and Bass parts are marked *mp*. The piano part is marked *mp* and is intended for rehearsal only. The score includes a large watermark that reads "Not for use in performance" and "ABCD 2023".

Musical score for measures 4-6. The score includes vocal lines for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics include "Oh," and "Hope".

Musical score for measures 7-10. The score includes vocal lines for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics include "Oh," and "Hope" is the".

10

“Hope”,

thing with feath-ers that perch - es in the soul And sings the

*thing with feath-ers that perch - es in the soul And sings the

thing with feath - ers that perch - es in in the soul sings the

thing with feath - ers that perch-es in the soul sings the

thing with feath-ers that perch-es in the soul sings the

13

And sings the tune

tune with-out the words

And sings the tune with-out the words

tune with-out the, with - out the And nev - er stops at

tune with-out the, with - out the words Oo,

tune with-out the words Oo,

* Sing F# if Sop. I singing high A

16

p And sweet - est in the Gale is heard *mp*

p And sweet - est in the Gale is heard *mp*

p And sweet - est in the Gale is heard *mp* And

p all in the Gale is heard *mp*

And sweet - est in the Gale is heard *mp*

And sweet - est in the Gale is heard

19

p And sore__ must be the storm *mf* That could a - bash the lit - tle *mp*

p And sore__ must be the storm *mf* That could a - bash the lit - tle *mp*

p sore must be the storm *mf* That could a - bash the lit - tle *mp*

p And sore must be the storm *mf* That could a - bash the lit - tle *mp*

p And sore__ must be the storm *mf* That could a - bash the lit - tle *mp*

p And sore__ must__ be the__ storm *mf* the lit - tle *mp*

22 *f* *mf*

Bird That kept so man - y warm

Bird That kept so man - y warm

Bird That kept so man - y warm

8 *f* *mp* *mf*

That could a - bash the Bird That kept so warm

f *mp* *mf*

That could a - bash the Bird That kept so warm

f *mp*

Bird the Bird man - y warm

25 *mp* *mf*

I've heard

I've heard

mp

I've heard it in the chill - est land

mp *mf*

I've heard it in the chill - est I've heard it in the

mp

I've heard it in the chill - est land

I've heard

And on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty It

And on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty It

And on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty It

land on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty

And on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty

And on the strang - est Sea Yet nev - er in ex - trem - i - ty nev - er in ex -

asked a crumb "Hope" is the

asked a crumb "Hope" is the

asked a crumb of me.

It asked a crumb of me.

It asked a crumb of me.

tre - mi - ty a crumb of me.

33

“Hope”, “Hope”

dim. *mp* *mp* *mp*

thing “Hope” is the thing thing with
 thing “Hope” is the thing thing with
 “Hope” is the thing with
mf “Hope” is the thing is the thing with
mf “Hope”, “Hope” with
mf “Hope”, “Hope” with

36

mf *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *mf*

feath - ers with feath - ers with
 feath - ers with feath - ers with
 feath - ers with feath - ers with
 feath - ers with feath - ers with feath - ers with
 feath - ers with feath - ers
 fea... with feath - ers

Musical score for measures 39-41. The score is for a choir with four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The lyrics are: "feath - ers", "“Hope,”", and "“Hope,”". The dynamic marking *mp* is present in each vocal part. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

Musical score for measures 42-44. The score is for a choir with four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The lyrics are: "“Hope,”", "“Hope,”", and "“Hope,”". The dynamic markings are *p* for the vocal parts and *pp* for the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have long notes with commas indicating breath marks. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady bass line and chords.

PROGRAM NOTES

Hope Is the Thing With Feathers was commissioned by my alma mater, Palo Alto High School, in celebration of their centennial. It's a setting of Emily Dickinson's poem by the same name and borrows a melody from a string orchestra piece of mine called "Flocks a Mile Wide," originally composed as the score for director Deborah Dickson's documentary *The Lost Bird Project*.

Like the film that the source piece was composed for, *Hope Is the Thing With Feathers* is a meditation on the fragility of nature, as well as our own hand in its destruction. Its elegiac tone lends itself to occasions of honoring and remembrance; but deep within its downy melodic layers beats a warm heart of hope, like the song of a small bird in a storm.

TEXT

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -*

*I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.*

DURATION

Ca. 4 minutes 5 seconds

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Christopher Tin is a two-time Grammy-winning composer of concert works, film, and video game scores. *Time* magazine describes his work as "rousing, anthemic," while *The Guardian* calls it "joyful" and "an intelligent meeting of melody and theme." With his music exceeding 100 million views on YouTube, he is one of the most listened-to and performed hybrid artists straddling the contemporary classical and media worlds. He is also an in-demand collaborator, working with artists from a wide range of genres, including Lang Lang, Alan Menken, Danny Elfman and the Soweto Gospel Choir.

His choral works include his celebrated Swahili setting of The Lord's Prayer, *Baba Yetu*. Originally composed as the theme for the video game *Civilization IV*, it became the first piece of video game music ever to win a Grammy, and has been performed everywhere from Carnegie Hall, to primetime TV shows like *America's Got Talent*, to the historic signing of Mozambique's peace accords. Likewise, his definitive recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Soweto Gospel Choir has been licensed for use by organizations as varied as Premier League Football and The Vatican.

His albums have garnered considerable acclaim; his debut release *Calling All Dawns* won the 2011 Grammy for Best Classical Crossover Album, and his sophomore release *The Drop that Contained the Sea* debuted at #1 on the Billboard Classical Charts. His third album, *To Shiver the Sky*, was funded by the highest grossing classical music Kickstarter campaign of all time.