

**BEN PONNIAH**

**A tender shoot**



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## **A tender shoot**

*by*

**BEN PONNIAH**

*Ben Ponniah has asserted the right to be identified  
as the composer of this composition.*

A performance by the Chapel Choir of Trinity Hall, Cambridge  
can be found on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNaG3qHgXa4>

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Commissioned by Andrew Arthur for the Chapel Choir of Trinity Hall, Cambridge

# A tender shoot

German 15th Century  
Versified by Otto Goldschmidt  
Translated by William Bartholomew

Music: BEN PONNIAH  
(b. 1984)

**Moderato espressivo** ♩ = 112

Soprano  
Alto

Piano/  
Organ

*p* dolce, legato sempre

(Ped. - organ)

6 *dolce e legato*

ten - der shoot has start - ed up from a root of grace,

*p*

as

10 *legato*

an - cient seers im - part - ed from Jes - se's ho - ly race:

*p*

it

*p*

The musical score is written for Soprano, Alto, Piano/Organ, and includes lyrics. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is Moderato espressivo at 112 beats per minute. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the Soprano and Alto parts with rests, and the Piano/Organ part with a melody and accompaniment. The second system starts at measure 6 and includes the lyrics 'ten - der shoot has start - ed up from a root of grace,'. The third system starts at measure 10 and includes the lyrics 'an - cient seers im - part - ed from Jes - se's ho - ly race:'. The score ends with a final note on the Soprano part.

14 *mf*

blooms with - out a blight, it blooms with - out a blight,

*mf*

(pedals in the higher octave)

18 *p* *mf* *p* *rit.*

blooms in the cold bleak win - ter, turn - ing our dark ness in - to light.

*p* *mf* *p*

*rit.*

(pedals in the higher octave) (Man.)

23 *a tempo* TENORS and BASSES *mp*

*a tempo* TENORS and BASSES *mp*

Solo

This

*p*

(Ped.)

## SOPRANOS and ALTOS

29

the

shoot I - sai - ah taught us, from Jes - se's root should spring;

*mp* *p*

33

Vir - gin Ma - ry brought us the branch of which we sing; our

*mp* *mf*

(Man.) (Ped.)

37

God of end - less might, our God of end - less might

*f* *mf* *f*

(add) *f*

41 *mp* *rit.* *mf* *a tempo* *p*

gave her this child to save\_ us, thus turn - ing\_ dark ness in - to light.

*mp* *mf* *p*

*mp* (reduce) *mf* *p* Solo

47 *p* *mp*

A ten - der\_ shoot turn-ing dark-ness in - to

*p* *mp*

A ten - der\_ shoot turn-ing dark-ness in - to light, turn-ing

*mp*

53

light, turn - ing dark - ness in - to light, turn - ing dark - ness to

light, turn - ing dark - ness in - to light, turn - ing dark - ness to

dark - ness to light, turn - ing dark - ness, dark - ness to

dark - ness to light, turn - ing dark - ness, dark - ness to

(pedals in the lower octave)

57

*f* *mp* **molto rit.**

light.

*f* *mp* *Solo p*

light. A ten - der child.

*f* *mp*

light.

*f* *mp* *pp*

light. A ten - der shoot.

*f* *mp*



# BEN PONNIAH

I'm a British composer with a love of minimalism, jazz harmony, and film music. In 2023 I completed my PhD in Composition at the University of Aberdeen. In the same year my setting of *Ave verum corpus* won the New Music for St Paul's (Cathedral) Composition Competition out of a field of nearly 90 applicants. I have collaborated

with the BBC Singers and Anna Lapwood: her recording of my carol *Seeing the Star* has had over 300,000 plays on Spotify. I am currently writing the music for a film and musical.

During 2006, I started to write choral music. My first two anthems were *O Lorde, the maker of al thinge* and *O sacrum convivium* and I have not stopped composing since.

## COMPOSER'S NOTE:

Commissioned by Andrew Arthur for the Chapel Choir of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. *A tender shoot* sets a well-known Advent text that reflects on Christ as the 'tender shoot' rising from the root of Jesse – a potent image of promise, renewal, and light emerging from darkness. This setting responds to that symbolism with a warm and lyrical melodic line, gently unfolding over a harmonically rich and expressive backdrop. Subtle chromatic inflections and moments of dissonance serve to highlight the emotional turning points in the text. Written with liturgical and concert use in mind.