

Matthew Coleridge

The Breath of Life



A cantata for SATB choir and chamber orchestra

Duration: 30 mins

1. Rejoice in God, O Ye Tongues
2. Benedicite
3. Arise, the Breath, the Life
4. Awake, My Glory
5. Praise God, From Whom all Blessings Flow
6. For Thunder is the Voice of God
7. These Great Trees are Prayers
8. The Breath of Life is in the Sunlight

© 2025 Matthew Coleridge. All rights reserved

www.matthewcoleridge.com

Matthew Coleridge THE BREATH OF LIFE

a cantata for SATB choir and chamber orchestra

The Breath of Life is a joyful and uplifting new cantata by composer Matthew Coleridge.

Scored for choir and chamber orchestra, this radiant work draws on sacred texts, hymns and poetry to explore themes of Christianity, spirituality and humanism.

From the shimmering stillness of its opening to its elemental evocation of thunder, vivid echoes of the natural world and warmth of hymn-like praise, the music brims with rhythmic energy, lyrical beauty and emotional depth.

Rooted in the English choral tradition yet refreshingly modern in voice, *The Breath of Life* is a piece that encourages both reflection and celebration.

Accessible, deeply moving, and irresistibly singable, it is a work that choirs will want to perform, and audiences will return to again and again.

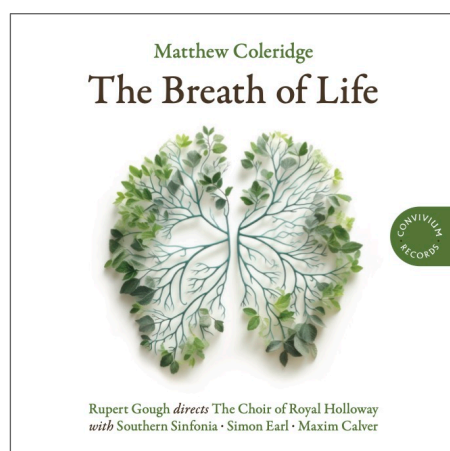
Oliver Condry

Matthew Coleridge has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the Composer of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the copyright holder, or as expressly permitted by law.

Permission to perform this work in public (except in the course of divine worship) should normally be obtained from the Performing Right Society Ltd or its affiliated Societies in each country throughout the world, unless the owner of the premises being used holds a licence from the Society,

Permission to make a recording must be obtained in advance from the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Ltd (MCPS), or its affiliated Societies in each country throughout the world.



Recorded by The Choir of Royal Holloway,
directed by Rupert Gough.
with Southern Sinfonia and Simon Earl (organ)

Album released by Convivium Records, March 6th 2026
(catalogue number CR116)

www.matthewcoleridge.com

The Breath of Life

1

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues;
Give glory to the Lord and the Lamb.
Nations, and languages, and every Creature
In which is the Breath of Life.
Let man and beast appear before him,
And magnify his name together.

Christopher Smart

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Psalms 150

2

Let the rivers and the mountains bless the Lord,
And let the fire and the water bless the Lord;
Let the breeze upon the meadow bless the Lord,
And let the sunlight and the shadow bless the Lord.

Let the silence of the mountains bless the Lord,
And let the murmur of the forest bless the Lord;
Let the whisper of the desert bless the Lord,
And let the echo in the valley bless the Lord.

Let the moonlight and the darkness bless the Lord,
And let the storm upon the ocean bless the Lord;
Let the tempest and the lightning bless the Lord,
And let the rolling waves of thunder bless the Lord.

Let the quiet clouded morning bless the Lord,
And let the gentle light of evening bless the Lord;
Let the fading glow of sunset bless the Lord,
And let the shining stars of heaven bless the Lord.

adapted from Benedicite

Hallelujah from the heart of God,
And from the hand of the artist inimitable.

Christopher Smart

3

Arise! The Breath, the Life again has reached us.
The darkness is gone. The light is come. Arise!

Rig Veda, hymn 113

4

Awake, my glory! Awake, awake both psaltery and harp,
I will awaken the dawn.

Psalms 57

5

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Bishop Thomas Ken

Let all things their creator bless;
And worship God in humbleness.
Praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the spirit, three in one.

William H. Draper

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let songs of faith and hope arise.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Isaac Watts

O friends, in gladness let us sing
Supernal anthems echoing;
Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
Ye patriarchs and prophets blest.

Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong;
All saints triumphant, raise the song:
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Athelstan Riley

To God the Father, heavenly light;
To Christ revealed in earthly night.
To God the Spirit, let us raise
one heart and voice in ceaseless praise.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Charles Coffin

6

For Thunder is the voice of God direct in verse and musick.
For Lightning is a glance at the Glory of God.
For Matter is the dust of the earth,
Every atom of which is the life.

Christopher Smart

7

Be still, my heart,
these great trees are prayers.

Rabindranath Tagore

I said to the trees: "show me God",
And they blossomed.

Nikos Kazantzakis

8

The breath of life is in the sunlight,
and the hand of life is in the wind.

Kahlil Gibran

And our bodies are the instruments
through which our souls play their music.

Albert Einstein

Echoing with the stars,
singing and shining together as one.

John Muir

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Bishop Thomas Ken

Beauty beyond thought everywhere;
beneath, above; made, and being made forever.

John Muir

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear.

William H. Draper

And shining with the stars above
We swim through seas of ceaseless love.
Amen.

The Breath of Life

i. Rejoice in God, O Ye Tongues

Calmly and psalm-like (♩ = 46)

MATTHEW COLERIDGE

Soprano

Re-joice in God, O ye tongues; Give glo - ry to the Lord, and the Lamb.

Alto

Re-joice in God, O ye tongues; Give glo - ry to the Lord, and the Lamb.

Tenor

Re-joice in God, O ye tongues; Give glo - ry to the Lord, and the Lamb.

Bass

Re-joice in God, O ye tongues; Give glo - ry to the Lord, and the Lamb.

Calmly and psalm-like (♩ = 46)

Piano

pp

10

Soprano

Nations, and lan-gua-ges, and e-ve-ry Crea-ture in which is the Breath of Life.

Alto

Nations, and lan-gua-ges, and e-ve-ry Crea-ture in which is the Breath of Life.

Tenor

Nations, and lan-gua-ges, and e-ve-ry Crea-ture in which is the Breath of Life.

Bass

Nations, and lan-gua-ges, and e-ve-ry Crea-ture in which is the Breath of Life.

Piano

p cresc. *animato* *rit.* *molto rit.*

A tempo, poco meno mosso

I *p sotto voce* *pp* *p*

S Let man and beast ap-pear be-fore him, and mag-ni - fy his name to-geth-er. Hal-le-

p sotto voce *pp* *p*

A Let man and beast ap-pear be-fore him, and mag-ni - fy his name to-geth-er. Hal-le-

p sotto voce *pp* *p*

T Let man and beast ap-pear be-fore him, and mag-ni - fy his name to-geth-er. Hal-le-

p sotto voce *pp* *p*

B Let man and beast ap-pear be-fore him, and mag-ni - fy his name to-geth-er. Hal-le-

I **A tempo, poco meno mosso**

p *pp*

= perusal score

2 *cresc. poco a poco (slowly coming in to focus)* *(mp)* *(mf)*

S lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le-

cresc. poco a poco (slowly coming in to focus) *(mp)* *(mf)*

A lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le-

cresc. poco a poco (slowly coming in to focus) *(mp)* *(mf)*

T lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le-

cresc. poco a poco (slowly coming in to focus) *(mp)* *(mf)*

B lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le-

2 *p cresc. poco a poco* *(mp)* *(mf)*

33

S *lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Let*

A *lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Let*

T *lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Let*

B *lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Hal-le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu-jah, ha - le - lu - jah! Let*

(f) p f

= perusal score

41

S *ev'-ry - thing that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

A *ev'-ry - thing that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

T *ev'-ry - thing that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

B *ev'-ry - thing that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

molto allargando (♩ = 45) rit. a tempo rall. ff

mf f ff