

JS 042
3 minutes, 30 seconds

Hiroshima: a Monday

SATB, a cappella

Music by
Joshua Shank

Text by
Robert W. Ressler

Note from the composer

When Dr. Kevin Coker approached me about collaborating on a choral song cycle, we talked through many different themes that we felt might tie a set of pieces together. In a previous work, *Color Madrigals*, I had used the color wheel and texts by John Keats as a jumping-off point so, for this new cycle, we entertained various ways to do the same. The idea we hit upon that we thought might yield something interesting was a song cycle based around something entirely quotidian (literally): the days of the week. We sometimes see the week as a thing to make it through, but momentous events like the first atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima and man's first steps on the surface of the moon happened, boringly enough, on a Monday. But more personal stories—falling in love, having a child, losing a parent—can also happen to us no matter what day of the week it is. Thus, *Songs for Seven Days* was born.

To that end, I searched for texts that mentioned each day of the week and came up with some beautifully diverse offerings. For the second movement, American poet Robert W. Ressler offered up a contemplation about the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 (including the haunting phenomenon of the “Hiroshima shadows.”

Songs for Seven Days was commissioned by the Blue Valley Northwest High School Chamber Singers (Dr. Kevin Coker, conductor) for their performance at the 2014 Kansas Music Educators Convention.

The Text

The Earth was dropped on a Monday

by Robert W. Ressler (b. 1988)

The Earth was dropped
on a Monday
and a wound opened

Power betrayed slippery fingers
to let loose their stranglehold
to let fall a wailing ball.

Science possessed humanity
to split history, hearts, and homes
while we forget what it felt like
to be a child.

A peace, a paradise
that may never have existed
was lost; tossed
out the window of a plane
and what remains
are the delicate shadows
of flowers etched in white walls, and the
question.

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for their 2014 performance at the Kansas Music Educators Convention

Hiroshima: a Monday

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Shaking (♩ = 80)

Soprano
The Earth, Earth, Earth,

Alto
The Earth, Earth, Earth,

Tenor
The Earth, Earth,

Bass
The Earth, Earth, Earth, Earth,

Earth was dropped, dropped, dropped,

Earth was dropped, dropped, dropped,

Earth was dropped, dropped, dropped,

Earth was dropped, dropped, dropped,

“The Earth was dropped on a Monday”.
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7

dropped on a Mon-day and a wound o - pened, and a wound

on a Mon-day and a wound o - pened, a wound

8

dropped on a Mon-day and a wound o - pened,

dropped on a Mon-day and a wound o - pened, a

10

o - pened, a wound o - pened.

o - pened, a wound o - pened, a wound o - pened.

8

a wound o - pened, a wound o - pened.

wound o - pened, a wound o - pened.

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

14 A bit slower (♩ = 72)

mf

po - wer be - trayed slip - 'ry, slip -

mf

po - wer, po - wer be - trayed slip - 'ry, slip - 'ry,

mf

8

po - wer be - trayed slip - 'ry, slip -

mf

po - wer be - trayed slip - 'ry,

17

This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3...

'ry, slip - 'ry fin - gers, slip - 'ry fin - gers to let

slip - 'ry fin - gers, slip - 'ry fin - gers to let

'ry, slip - 'ry fin - gers, slip - 'ry fin - gers to let

slip - 'ry fin - gers to let

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22 **Tempo 1**

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loose their stan - gle - hold, hold,

loose their stan - gle - hold,

loose their stan - gle - hold, hold,

loose their stan - gle - hold, hold,

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23

hold, hold, to let *fall, fall

hold, hold, to let *fall, fall,

hold, hold, to let

hold, hold, to let *fall, fall,

* Hold the notated pitch for a split second and then *gliss.* immediately to the bottom of your range.

26

fff extreme upper range, molto vibrato G.P.

**a wail - ing ball.

fff extreme upper range, molto vibrato G.P.

fall **a wail - ing ball.

fff extreme upper range, molto vibrato G.P.

*fall, fall **a wail - ing ball.

fff extreme upper range, molto vibrato G.P.

fall, **a wail - ing ball.

** Non-pitched. First note (on the word "a") should be at the extreme bottom of your range and the final one (on the word "ball") should be at the extreme top.

30 Mysteriously (♩ = 63)

* Slowly scoop up to the note from the bottom of your range. Hold the pitch for a bit and then slowly *gliss.* down into the bottom of your range. Never *gliss.* at the same time as your neighbor and make sure to hold the 'F-sharp' long enough so there is a perceived pitch droning beneath the sopranos and altos.

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35

45 Slowly, calm (♩ = 66)

47

poco *poco rit.* **mf**

a pa - ra - dise, that may ne-ver have ex - ist - ed was lost;

a pa - ra - dise, that may ne-ver have ex - ist - ed was lost;

a pa - ra - dise, that may ne-ver have ex - ist - ed was lost;

a pa - ra - dise, that may ne-ver have ex - ist - ed was lost;

53 A little slower

54

poco rit. **mp**

tossed out the win - dow of a plane. And what re - mains are the

tossed out the win - dow of a plane. And what re - mains are the

tossed out the win - dow of a plane. (m)

tossed out the win - dow of a plane. (m)

56 Softly (♩ = 66)

poco rit. **mp** gradually open to "oh"

58 *mf* *poco rit.*
 de - li - cate sha - dows of flo wers etched - in white walls.
mf *poco rit.*
 de - li - cate sha - dows of flo - wers etched in white walls.
mf *poco rit.*
 oh sha - dows of flo - wers etched in white walls.
mf *poco rit.*
 oh sha - dows of flo - wers etched in white walls.

62 Senza rit. to the end (♩ = 68)

mp no vibrato abrupt cutoff
 and the ques - tion...
mp no vibrato abrupt cutoff
 and the, and the ques - tion... and the ques - tion...
mp no vibrato abrupt cutoff
 and the ques - tion, and the ques - tion, and the...
mp no vibrato abrupt cutoff
 and the ques - tion...
mp no vibrato abrupt cutoff
 and the ques - tion...

"This illegal copy will self destruct in 5...4...3..."