

How To Sing Like a Planet

TBB and piano



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

How To Sing Like a Planet

“Scientists now say the planet itself is generating a constant, deep thrum of noise. No mere cacophony, but actually a kind of music, huge, swirling loops of sound, a song so strange you can't really fathom it, so low it can't be heard by human ears...”

- Mark Morford, from “How To Sing Like a Planet,” San Francisco Chronicle, April 23, 2008

Let everything unfold in its own time.
Accept what's beyond your control.
Revel in simple harmonic motion.

Turn.
Rotate.

Get charged up.
Be weak. Be strong.
Don't fight friction.
Vibrate sympathetically.
Don't be afraid to get into a groove.

Let gravity have its way with you.
Revolve around something luminous.

*Wheel, whirl, slide, collide,
Circle, cycle, amble, gambol –
Resonate, radiate, innovate, renovate,
Oscillate, fluctuate, circumnavigate –*

Bloom periodically.
Hunker down when you must.
Wobble from time to time without apology.

Know that annihilation's possible any time,
But expect a bright tomorrow's coming anyway.

Elizabeth Alexander

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Composer's Note: *How To Sing Like a Planet* was inspired by a news article by the same title, written by gregarious San Francisco Chronicle columnist Mark Morford. Using a recent science report as a springboard, Morford spun out a delicious riff about the irrepressible music that the earth makes just by being itself. His glorious, over-the-top phrases described "...all sorts of curious tonal phrases that bounce around the mountains and spin over the oceans and penetrate the tectonic plates and gurgle in the magma and careen off the clouds and smack into trees and bounce off your ribcage and spin over the surface of the planet in strange circular loops." Wow, I thought. Could *we* sing that kind of music?

While I didn't actually set Morford's words to music, his unfettered imagination and provocative title got me off and running. In addition to that, I had some other sources of inspiration. My son Oliver (who had studied earth science more recently than I had) helped me remember principles like harmonic motion and oscillation, as well as the four basic planetary forces: gravity, electricity, weak force and strong force. I also gleaned wisdom from my yoga teacher Paul Busch, whose radical notions include the convictions that 1) gravity is our friend and 2) wobbling is nothing to be embarrassed about.



Cover image:

"May 30th, 2016 (Day 762)"

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www.derekthedeliman.tumblr.com

How to Sing Like a Planet

TBB and piano

(♩ = 44-50) Alive!

Elizabeth Alexander

Tenor

Baritone

Bass

Piano

p

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

7

8

Ten

Bar

Bass

Piano

pp

Let ev'-ry-thing un - fold in its own time.____

pp

Let ev'-ry-thing un - fold in its own time.____

pp

Let ev'-ry-thing un - fold in its own time.____

Ped.

Ped.

(Cue-notes are for rehearsal or reinforcement)

Boychoir arrangement © 2012 by Elizabeth Alexander
Men's Chorus arrangement © 2021 by Elizabeth Alexander

14

Ten *p*
Ac - cept what's be - yond your con - trol.

Bar *p*
Ac - cept what's be - yond your con - trol.

Bass *p*
Ac - cept what's be - yond your con - trol.

p
Ped. m.s. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

19 *mp*
Ten *mp*
Rev - el in sim - ple har - mon - ic mo - tion,

Bar *mp*
Rev - el in sim - ple har - mon - ic mo - tion,

Bass *mp*
Rev - el in sim - ple har - mon - ic mo - tion,

mp
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

24

Ten *pp*
and turn, turn, turn, turn,

Bar *pp*
and turn, turn, turn, turn,

Bass *pp*
and turn, turn, turn, turn,

29

Ten *p*
turn, turn, turn, turn, rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate!

Bar *p*
turn, turn, turn, turn, rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate!

Bass *p*
turn, turn, turn, turn, rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate!

33 *mp*

Ten
rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate! rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo -

Bar
mp
rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate! rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo -

Bass
mp
rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - - tate! rō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo - ō - oo -

mp

Ped. *

36

Ten
ō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō - wō

Bar
ō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō - wō

Bass
ō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō!_ wō - wō - wō - wō

A (♩ = 100-104) (Double-time)

Musical score for measures 40-45. The vocal parts (Tenor, Baritone, Bass) are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and sing the syllable "wō!". The piano accompaniment starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a sforzando (*sfz*) accent in measure 42.

For extra brightness in measure 40, some baritones and basses may sing the alternate higher pitch.

Musical score for measures 46-48. The vocal parts (Tenor, Baritone, Bass) sing the lyrics "Get charged up. Be weak. Be strong," with clapping indicated by 'Clap:'. The piano accompaniment includes fingerings (1, 2, 1, 2, 5, 1) and dynamics such as mezzo-piano (*mp*) and sforzando (*sfz*).

Pianist may play mm. 46-48 with different hand positions and fingering; one possibility is given here.

Solo or small group: **f**

52

Ten
8 Don't (t) fight (t) fric - tion. Whee!

Bar
Don't (t) fight (t) fric - tion.

Bass
Don't (t) fight (t) fric - tion. Vi - brate sym - pa - the - tic - ally. _____

ped. * *gliss.*

58

Ten
8 Tutti: *mp*

Bar
Don't be a-fraid to get in - to a groove, _____

Bass
mp
Don't be a-fraid to get in - to a

mp *

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet • Paul Adams, technological hero • Stephen Alexander, lyric consultant • Ginny Allen, Agile coach and friend • The great people at American Composers Forum • Yehuda Amichai, poet • A. R. Ammons, poet • Jennifer Anderson, conductor and composer advocate • Scott Bates, poet • Abbie Betinis, initiator of collaborative endeavors • Beth Norton, conductor and composer advocate • Dennis Blubaugh, more than just a music dealer • Michael deVernon Boblett, poet • Edna Busby, my first piano teacher • Ray Bradbury, writer • Augustin Cadena, translator • Norbert Capek, minister and advocate for religious freedom • Jessica Corbett, editor • David Cummings, poet • Philip Dacey, poet • Catherine Dalton, composer and serum partner • Emily Dickinson, poet • Evelyn Dudley, poet and caregiver • Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister and composer advocate • Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher and poet • Louise Erdrich, writer • David Allan Evans, poet • Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer • Richard M. Fewkes, minister and writer • Pasha Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Michael Hagan, founders of Graphite Marketplace • Steve Harper, just about everything • Steve Harkins, web designer • Edie Hill, composer and friend • Langston Hughes, poet • Margaret and George Heald, piano technician • Karel Husa, composer and teacher • David Ignatow, poet • Kabir, mystic • Linda Kachelmeier, composer and serum partner • Ruth Palmer, conductor and composer advocate • Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet • Paul Rardin, conductor and composer advocate • Kalidasa, poet • Steve Kaul, recording engineer • Søren Kierkegaard, philosopher and poet • Dorothy Knost, piano teacher • Ben Krywosz, artistic director of Nautilus Music-Theater • Denise Levertov, poet • George Ella Lyon, poet • Jonathan Machen, vocalist • Dawna Markova, writer • Anne Matlack, conductor and composer advocate • Nancy Menk, composer advocate • Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet • Jane Ramseyer Miller, conductor, composer, social activist • Joe Mish, conductor and composer advocate • J. David Moore, composer • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • friend • King Sigismund III, religious reformer • Ann Silsbee, composer, poet and friend • Simon Alexander-Adams, sounding board, fellow creative, and awesome son • Steven Stucky, composer and teacher • Rabindranath Tagore, poet • Sister Peronne Marie Thibert, teacher and writer • Oliver Alexander-Adams, unconventional thinker and light of my life • Howard Thurman, civil rights leader and writer • Everyone whose work supports the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries • Charles Varney, high school choral director • Anna Vonhuben, illustrator and graphic designer • Nancy White, poet • John Greenleaf Whittier, poet • Theodore Chickering Williams, poet • Daniel Winter, pianist and teacher • Nancy Wood, poet • Yehudi Wyner, composer and teacher

**A lot of hard work
and creativity went
into bringing this
music to you...**



**...and some of it
was even mine.**

**This page has been intentionally omitted.
(You know why.) A complete perusal score may be
purchased through any music store or dealer.**

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70

Ten
groove, Don't be a-fraid, don't be a-fraid,

Bar
Don't be a-fraid, don't be a-fraid, Don't be a-fraid, don't be a-fraid,

Bass
groove, don't be a-fraid, Don't be a-fraid, don't be a-fraid,

75

Ten
mf
Don't be a-fraid to get in - to a groo - woo - woo - woo - woo-woo -

Bar
mf
Don't be a-fraid to get in - to a groo - woo - woo - woo - woo-woo -

Bass
mf
Don't be a-fraid to get in - to a groo - woo - woo - woo - woo-woo -

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

80

Ten *gliss* woove! *p* Let

Bar *gliss* woove! *p* Let

Bass *gliss* woove! *p* Let

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* * *Ped.* *Ped.*

B

86

Ten gra - vi - ty have its way with you. Re -

Bar gra - vi - ty have its way with you. Re -

Bass gra - vi - ty have its way with you. Re -

p *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

94

Ten
 volve a - round some - thing lu - mi - nous, *mf*

Bar
 volve a - round some - thing lu - mi - nous, *mf*

Bass
 volve a - round some - thing lu - mi - nous, *mf*

4

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

102

Ten
 Wheel, whirl, slide, col - lide, *sfz* Hu(m), *sfz* cir - cle, cy - cle, am - ble and gam - bol* and

Bar
 Hu(m), *sfz* thru(m), *sfz* thru(m),

Bass
 Wheel, whirl, slide, col - lide, cir - cle, cy - cle, am - ble and gam - bol* and

full, resonant

mf

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

* ...Or is it "gamble?" Hmmm...

110

Ten *mf* flow! _____ cir-cum - na - vi - gate,

Bar *mf* re - so - nate, ra - di - ate, in - no - vate, re - no - vate, os - cil - late, fluc - tu - ate, cir-cum - na - vi - gate,

Bass *sfz* Hu(m), _____ thru(m), _____

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

118 **C**

Ten *f* Bloom _____ per - i - o - di - cally, _____

Bar *f* Bloom _____ per - i - o - di - cally, _____

Bass *f* Bloom _____ per - i - o - di - cally, _____

f *opt.*

Ped. *Ped.*

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148

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

154 **D**

Ten

Bar

Bass

p Know that an - ni - hi - la - tion's pos - si - ble an - - y - -

p Know that an - ni - hi - la - tion's pos - si - ble an - - y - -

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

160

Ten

Bar

Bass

time, _____

time, _____

Ped.

165 *mf*

Ten
but ex - spect a bright to - mor - row's com - ing

Bar
but ex - spect a bright to - mor - row's com - ing

Bass
but ex - spect a bright to - mor - row's com - ing

Alt. Pno.

mf

Red. Red. Red.

170 *f*

Ten
an - y - way!

Bar
an - y - way!

Bass
an - y - way!

f

Red.

174

Ten
an - y - way!

Bar
an - y - way!

Bass
an - y - way!

vz.
Ped.

178

Ten
an - y - way!

Bar
an - y - way!

Bass
an - y - way!

8va
Ped.

Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

A Palette To Paint Us As We Are (Gerald Rich)
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01
SSA, piano • SEA-014-02

Beware the Winter Settin' In (Alexander)
SATB, Celtic band, opt. children's choir • SEA-139-00

Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs (Boblett)
SATB • SEA-078-00

Cherish Your Doubt (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-063-01
SSAA, piano • SEA-063-02

Die Gedanken Sind Frei (German protest song, arr.)
SATB, piano • SEA-087-00

Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door (Norman Naylor)
SATB • SEA-071-00

Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm (Yehuda Amichai)
SATB • SEA-026-01

Faith Is the bird that feels the light (Tagore)
SSA • SEA-068-00

Fighting Over What We Believe (Alexander)
SATB, soloists, piano • SEA-099-01

Finally On My Way To Yes (Pesha Gertler)
SSATB, piano • SEA-019-00

Folks, I'm Telling You (Langston Hughes)
SSATB, piano • SEA-027-00

Glen Song (Scott Bates)
SSATB, piano • SEA-025-00

Handles (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-148-00

How To Sing Like a Planet (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-105-01

If You Can Walk You Can Dance (Zimbabwean Proverb)
SAB, piano, claves • SEA-022-03
TBB, piano, claves • SEA-022-05
SSA, piano, claves • SEA-022-06
SATB, piano, claves • SEA-022-07

Immortal Love (John Greenleaf Whittier)
SATB • SEA-017-00

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (Polish carol, arr.)
SSA • SEA-020-00

Jump! (Ray Bradbury)
SSA, string quartet • SEA-090-00

Kindling (Alexander)
SATB, chamber ensemble • SEA-123-00
SATB, piano • SEA-123-09

Let it Matter (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-125-03
SATB, piano • SEA-125-04

No Other People's Children (Alexander)
1-4 part choir, soloist, piano • SEA-141-03

...or a musician (Philip Dacey)
SATB, orchestra • SEA-007-00

A Palette To Paint Us As We Are (Gerald Rich)
SA, piano • SEA-014-00
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01

Praise Wet Snow Falling Early (Denise Levertov)
SATB, piano • SEA-015-00

Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery (Alexander)
SSAA • SEA-091-00

Same Birds (David Allen Evans)
SATB • SEA-128-00

Song of Kabir (Kabir)
SATB • SEA-119-00

The Gate is Open (Sister Peronne Marie Thibert)
SATB • SEA-097-01

They Have Freckles Everywhere (Alexander)
SSAA, piano • SEA-076-00

To Make a Prairie (Emily Dickinson)
SSA, piano • SEA-016-00

We Lift Up Our Hearts (Richard Fewkes)
Unison children's choir, SATB, piano • SEA-021-00

We Remember Them (Sylvan Kamens, Jack Riemer)
SATB, piano • SEA-083-01

Where there Is Light in the Soul (Chinese proverb)
SAB • SEA-070-00
SATB • SEA-070-01
SSA • SEA-070-02
TBB • SEA-062-03

When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled (Thurman)
SATB • SEA-062-00
TTBB • SEA-062-02
SSAA • SEA-062-04
SATB, flute • SEA-062-05

Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills (Prefontaine)
SSAA • SEA-058-00