

Grassland

from *Unsung: If the Earth Could Sing*

SSAA choir (divisi), cello, & percussion

Duration ca. 5:00

MUSIC BY

Katerina Gimón

WORDS BY

Lauren Peat



KATERINA GIMÓN
composer

INSTRUMENTATION

SSAA (divisi)

Cello

Percussion (one player)

Bongos and the percussionist's choice of instrument(s) for the wind sounds texture.

PROGRAM NOTE

Grassland is the third movement in *Unsung: If the Earth Could Sing*, an environmentally inspired choral cycle and collaboration between composer Katerina Gimon, poet Lauren Peat, and conductor Elise Naccarato. *Unsung* centers around the question “if the earth could sing, what would it tell us”? The environmental crisis has been called the “biggest threat modern humans have ever faced” (United Nations, 2021) and *Unsung* aims to shed light on its impact on Canadian landscapes in particular, using choral music as a form of advocacy and a voice for change. Each movement of *Unsung* focuses on a different geographic region of Canada, moving loosely from East to West, and is sung from the perspective of the landscape or weather event (in the case of the first movement).

Grasslands focuses on the disappearing native grassland in the Canadian Prairies (only about 25% remain) and the species that rely on them to survive. The tone of this movement is quite mournful and intimate, aiming to bring to life the subdued and intricate beauty of this region.

For more about *Unsung* and *Grassland* visit: www.katerinagimon.com/unsung.

The creation of this work was made possible by the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.



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PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Amplification:

- For optimal balance (especially with larger choirs) amplification of the cello is recommended.
- For the spoken solo, amplification is encouraged. Alternatively, if desired the spoken solo may be pre-recorded and played through loudspeakers.

Movement and staging:

- Through not required, movement and staging for this work are encouraged. For inspiration, please see Myriad Ensemble's videos of *Unsung* on their YouTube channel.

TEXT

Please see the following page to read the text in its original formatting.

THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

SOLITARY SPEAKER:¹

“the Canadian Prairies are vanishing
faster than the Amazon rainforest, the
Great Barrier Reef....”

GRASSLAND:

anyone who looks hard knows
that sameness is not surplus.
our variation swelled and flowed,
an oceanic address.

our sameness was not surplus.
warblers found within our blaze
an oceanic address.
where are all the birds that graced us?

bison browsed within our blaze,
turned their thick bodies earthward.
where are all the herds that grazed us?
our stillness now a song unheard.

turn your tall bodies earthward,
any ear who listens knows—
wherever silence goes unheard,
earth’s music stalls and slows.

¹ The Speaker’s lines are slightly adapted from a *Canadian Press* headline: “Canadian Prairies vanishing faster than Amazon rainforest, Great Barrier Reef: conversation group.” Reprinted in the *National Post*, December 15, 2016.

CREATIVE TEAM

Katerina Gimon, composer



Katerina Gimon is an acclaimed Canadian composer recognized for her uniquely dynamic, poignant, and eclectic compositional style. Her music has been described as “sheer radiance” (Campbell River Mirror), “imbued...with human emotion” (San Diego Story), and capable of taking listeners on a “fascinating journey of textural discovery” (Ludwig Van). In her works, she draws influence from a myriad of places—from the Ukrainian folk music of her heritage to indie rock, as well as from her roots as a songwriter. Her compositions are performed widely across Canada, the USA, and internationally. Katerina is the composer in residence for Myriad Ensemble and lives in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. www.katerinagimon.com

Lauren Peat, poet



Lauren Peat is a poet, essayist, and translator. Her work has appeared in Arc Poetry Magazine, Asymptote, The Malahat Review, and World Literature Today, among other places, and is featured in the repertoire of acclaimed choral ensembles across North America. In other lives, she toured internationally with an award-winning chamber choir, waited tables at the foot of a 12th century château, and served as an interpreter for a film festival in southern Mexico. She now lives in Vancouver, Canada. www.laurenpeatwrites.com

Elise Naccarato, conductor



Elise Naccarato is a dynamic and innovative conductor, whose journey in choral music began in the Hamilton Children’s Choir, igniting a lifelong passion that has shaped her career. As the founder and Artistic Director of Myriad Ensemble, an adult upper-voices choir based in Burlington, Ontario, Elise has established a niche for working with adult treble voices and crafting a sound that is ubiquitous, rich in colour and full of life. With Elise’s leadership and vision, Myriad Ensemble is committed to raising the voices of women and non-binary composers through the collaboration, exploration and performance of adult upper-voice choir repertoire. www.elisenaccarato.com

Grassland

Mvt. 3 from *Unsung: If the Earth Could Sing*

Lauren Peat

Katerina Gimon

Mournful ♩ = 66 ----- 20 - 30 " -----

SA **Spoken solo:** "the Canadian Prairies are vanishing faster than the Amazon rainforest, the Great Barrier Reef..."

*Wind Sounds (small group + percussion)

Mournful ♩ = 66 ----- 20 - 30 " -----

Vc *sul pont.*
p ----- *mp* ----- *n* ----- *p* ----- *mp* ----- *n*

A
8 *tutti*
p ----- *mp* ----- *p* ----- *mp* ----- *p*

S
An - y - one who looks hard knows _____ that same - ness is not sur - plus.

tutti
p ----- *mp* ----- *p* ----- *mp* ----- *p*

A
An - y - one who looks hard knows _____ that same - ness is not sur - plus.

Wind Sounds

A
Vc *mp* ----- *n* ----- *mp* ----- *n*

*Following the general shape of the graphics (for dynamic and sparsity), the singers and percussionist should mimic the sound of gentle rustling winds passing through a field of wheat. For the choir only: if possible, the wind sounds should move from one side of the choir to the other and taper off into silence. Examples of sounds include breath; "s", "sh" or "f" sounds; very airy whistles with minimal pitch, rubbing hands together, small misc. percussion, etc.

Grassland

13

S

A

Wind Sounds

Vc

mf *mp*

Our var-i-a-tion swelled and flowed,

mf *mp*

Our var-i-a-tion swelled and flowed,

ord.

mf *p*

19

S1

S2

A1

A2

Wind Sounds

Vc

p *mp* *p* *mp*

an o-ce-an-ic ad-dress. Our same-ness was not

p *mp* *p* *mp*

an o-ce-an-ic ad-dress. Our same-ness was not

p *mp* *p* *mp*

an o-ce-an-ic ad-dress. Our same-ness was not

p *mp* *p* *mp*

an o-ce-an-ic ad-dress. Our same-ness was not

return to your part

mp *p* *mp*

B

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The score will continue on the following page.

33 **rit.** **a tempo** **mp** **C** **mf**

S1
graced us? _____ Bi - son browsed with - in our

S2
graced us? _____ Bi - son browsed with - in our

A1
graced us? _____ Bi - son browsed with - in our

A2
graced us? _____ Bi - son browsed with - in our

Vc **rit.** **a tempo** **mp** **C** **mf**

37

S1
blaze, turned, _____ turned. _____

S2
blaze, turned their thick bod - ies earth-ward, turned their thick bod - ies earth-ward.

A1
blaze, _____ turned _____ earth - ward, turned earth - ward.

A2
blaze, turned earth - ward, turned earth - ward.

Vc

40

f

S1
Where are all the herds that grazed us? Where are all the herds that grazed us? Ah_

S2
Where are all the herds that grazed us? Where are all the herds that grazed us?

A1
Where are all the herds that grazed us? Where are all the herds that grazed us? Our

A2
Where are all the herds that grazed us? Where are all the herds that grazed us? Ah_

Vc
f

Perc.
f Bongo Drums
gentle, supportive groove, ad lib.

44

S1
ah

S2
our still - ness now a song, our still - ness now a song, a song_ un -

A1
still - ness now a song, our still - ness now a song, a song un - heard, a

A2
ah

Vc
f

Perc.

Grassland

47

S1
our still - ness now un - - heard.

S2
- heard, a song our still - ness now a song un - - heard.

A1
song un - heard, our still - ness now a song un - - heard.

A2
our still - ness now un - - heard.

Vc
3
dim. mp

Perc.
dim. mp

52

S1
mp *mf* *mp*
Mm (mm) morph vowel ah

S2
mp *mf* *mp*
Mm (mm) morph vowel ah

A
mp *mf* *mp*
Mm (mm) morph vowel ah

Wind Sounds
(small group + percussion)

Vc
mf IV IV

Grassland

D

57

mf

molto rit.

S1 

Turn your tall bod - ies earth - ward, _____ an - y ear who list - ens knows, _____

S2 

Turn your tall bod - ies earth - ward, _____ an - y ear who list - ens knows, _____

A 

Turn, turn your tall bod - ies earth-ward, an - y ear who list - ens knows, _____ wher-

Wind Sounds 

D

molto rit.

Vc 

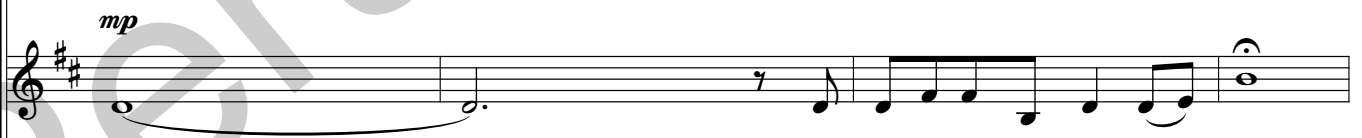
61

a tempo

mp

S1 


wher - ev - er si - lence goes _____ un - heard,

S2 

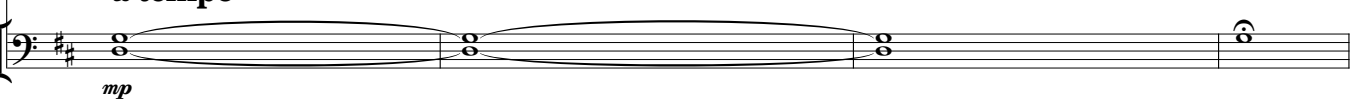
mm _____ wher - ev - er si - lence goes un - heard,

A 

- ev - er si - lence goes _____ wher - ev - er si - lence goes un - heard,

Wind Sounds 

a tempo

Vc 

mp

Grassland

65 **molto rit.** **a tempo**
p
 S1 oh (oh)
p
 S2 oh (oh)
p
 A earth's mu - sic stalls and slows.
 Wind Sounds
 Vc **molto rit.** **a tempo**

69 **molto rit.**
 S1 ah
 S2 ah mm *n*
 A ah
 Wind Sounds
 Vc **molto rit.** *n*