# **Breathing Place**

For SATB Choir and Piano

Aileen Sweeney Words: Martin Raymond

(2020)





#### **Breathing Place**

"We cannot belong simply by being in a place. We have to give it our full attention."

John Burnside - poet.

Breathing in, breathing out
Breathing space, breathing place
Walk with us, see our land
Morning mist on Stuc a Chroin
Evening sun fires the Ben
Night falls on Inversnaid
Deer haunt the velvet dark
Salt lick, Atlantic winds
Feel the pines tug your hair
Rain beads on stalks of grass
Drops on wire, notes on staves
Tang of thyme under foot.

Weather changing, water rising
What we love, what we lose.
Glen Falloch slips away
Ardlui floods again
Geese will fly in other skies.
Endless lochs, mountain scree
Rocks of age standing bare
Nothing lasts forever here
Five hundred million years
To consecrate this place
Watch it go in our time.

Land that breathes, land that saves.
In the tress, in the lochs
Beds of peat, stands of birch
Holding carbon storing water
Keeping us from our harm.
Fail to plant, fail to tend
Lose the way, miss the path
This great lung starts to choke
Make it last, so we might too
Breathing space, breathing place
Breathing still, breathing yet
Breathing in, breathing out.

## **Programme Note:**

This piece was written for The Helensburgh Oratorio Choir as part of the "Adopt a Composer" scheme run by Making Music in partnership with Sound and Music, in association with BBC Radio 3. It is funded by The PRS Foundation, Philip and Dorothy Green Trust and Creative Scotland.

Through getting to know the choir, it became clear that Helensburgh and the surrounding area of Loch Lomond is very important to the members and that this love for the area they live in, should be the main focus of the piece.

Unfortunately, the effects of climate change are causing a serious threat to the Loch Lomond. Soon, it may cease to exist as we know it. The rise in global temperature is causing flooding across The National Park and the oversaturation results in landslides in the surrounding areas. The changes in rainfall patterns and seasonal temperatures see species under dual pressure to adapt to warmer and wetter climates with new plant diseases emerging. Some species such as the Artic char are highly endangered due to the rise in water temperatures.

However, drastic measures are being taken to protect our National Park and Loch Lomond itself is a fantastic resource in the fight against climate change. The trees alone hold approximately 2.5 milion tonnes of carbon and the peatlands holding 20 milion tonnes. However we can't rely on Loch Lomond alone to save itself. We must take small measures ourselves every day to fight climate change.

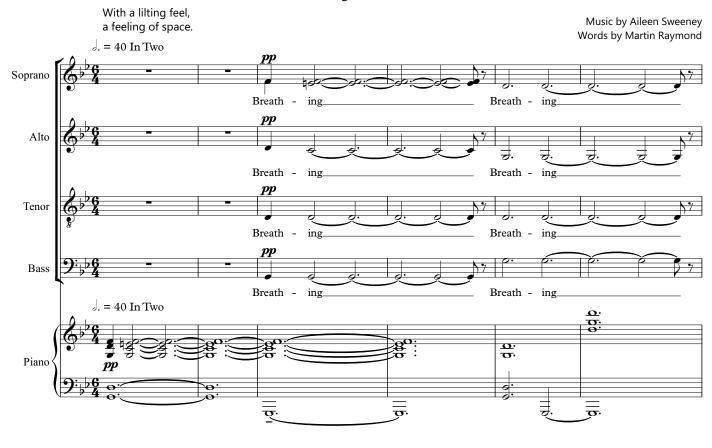
Duration: circa 12 minutes

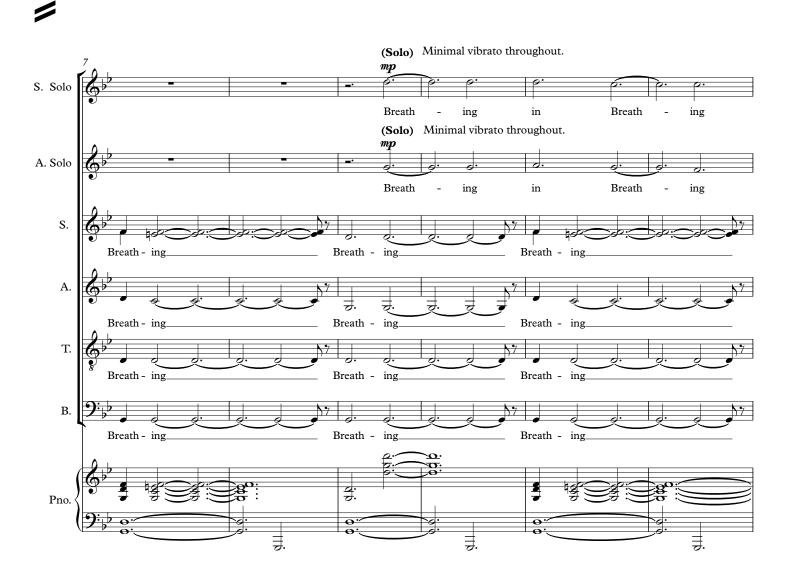
### **Performance Directions for Pianist at Letter C:**

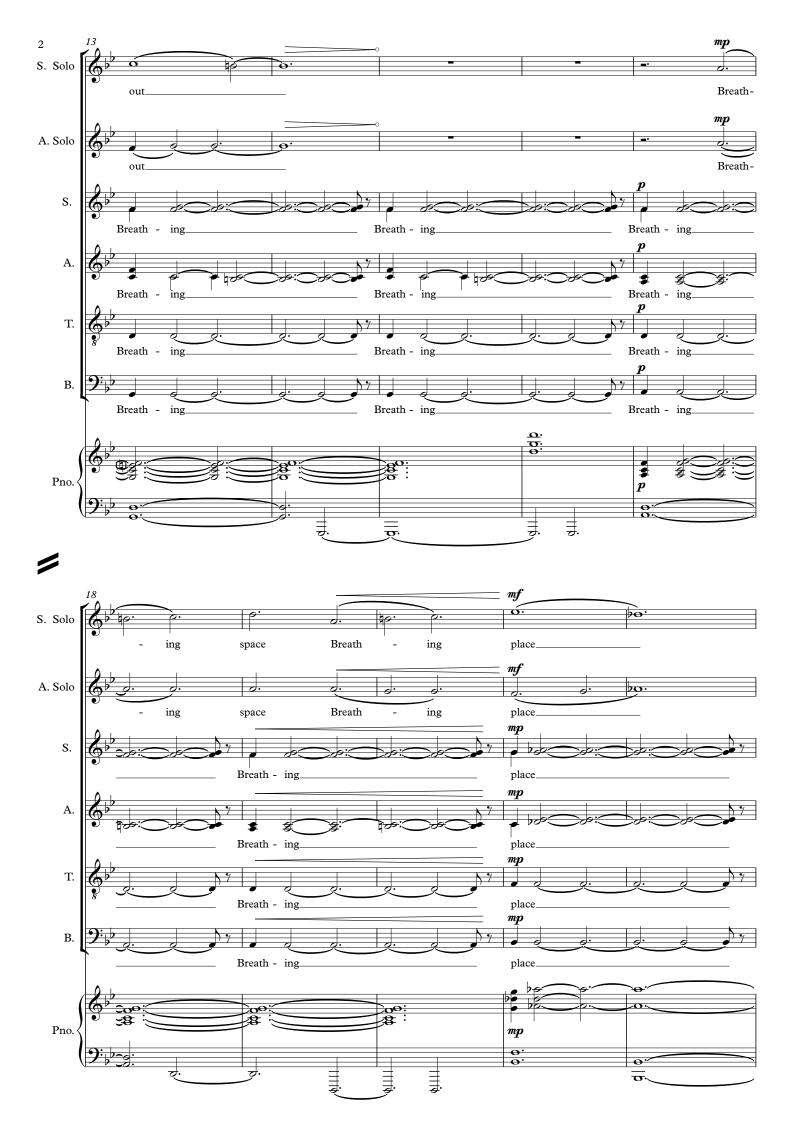
The diamond notation shows that the chord should be played silently and then be held down with the sostenuto pedal. Regular note heads show when the notes should be sounded. A soft beater should be used to "strum" the strings softly on the inside of the piano and the chord should be left to ring until the next strumming of the chord. Follow the directional arrows for whether the chord should be "strummed" in an upwards or downwards movement.

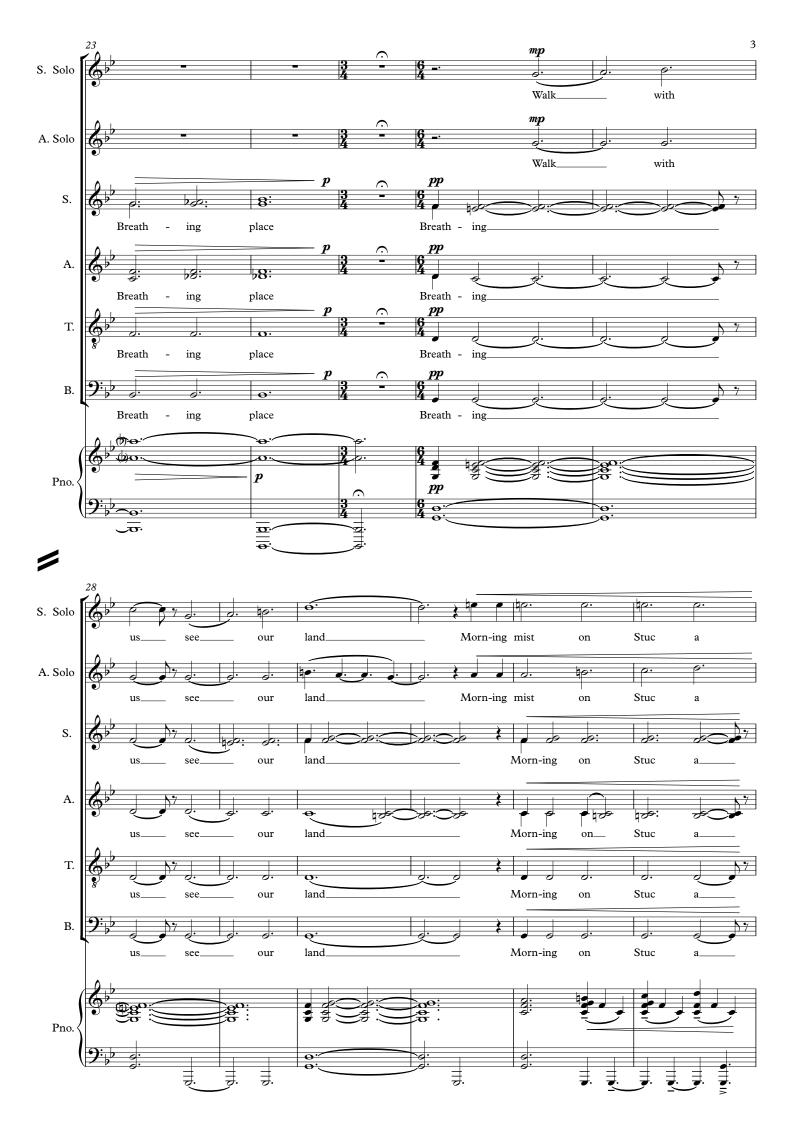
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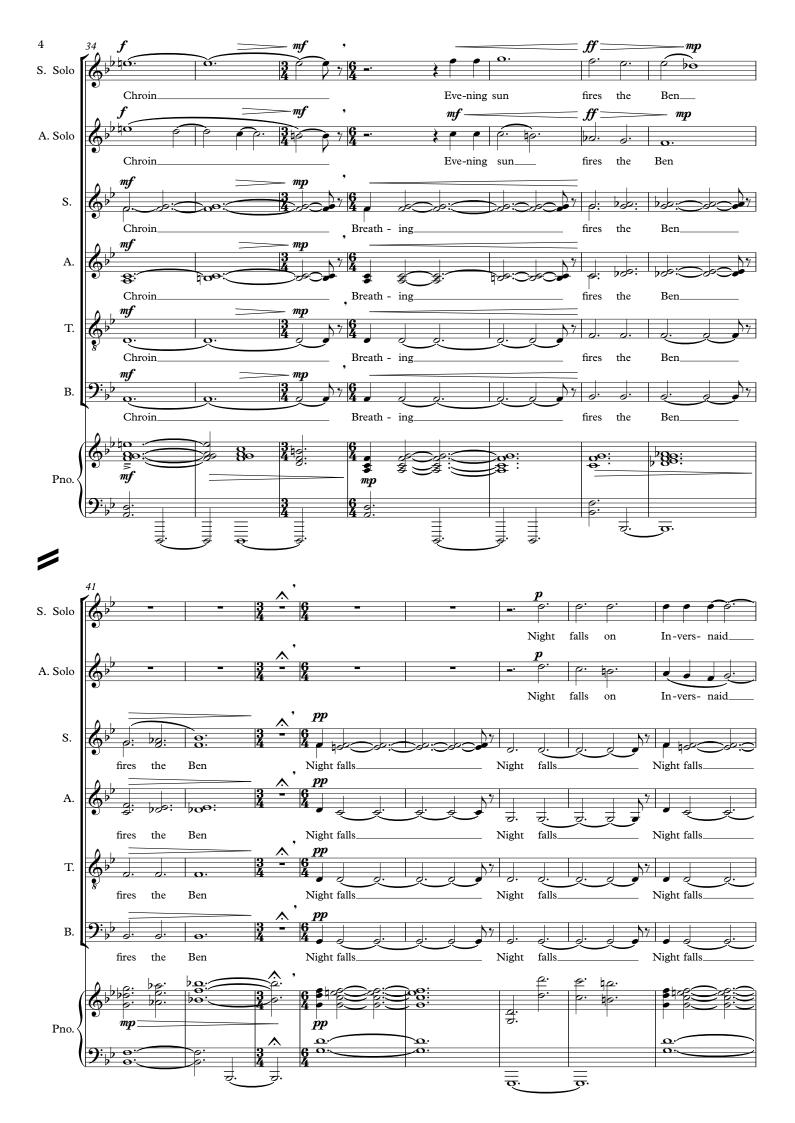
for the Helensburgh Oratorio Choir











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