Midnight Sun Songs

for youth choir and piano trio

words and melodies by students in
Yellowknife, Norman Wells, Hay River,
Fort Smith, Fort Simpson and Inuvik
in the Northwest Territories, Canada

music and arrangement by
Jeffrey Ryan

commissioned by
Northern Arts and Cultural Centre
and the Gryphon Trio
as part of the Listen UP! NWT project 2015
Programme Note:

For the 2014/15 season, the Gryphon Trio partnered with the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre for a far-reaching instalment of the Trio's Listen Up! project. Students in six communities throughout Canada's Northwest Territories wrote poetry around the theme of The Elements, then worked with composers Jeffrey Ryan and Carmen Braden to develop melodies for their poetry. These melodies became the source material for Midnight Sun Songs, a collection of six songs for youth choir and piano trio composed and arranged by Jeffrey Ryan. Midnight Sun Songs received its world premiere in May 2015 at Yellowknife's Northern Arts and Cultural Centre, performed by a 70-voice youth choir comprised of students from the six participating communities, accompanied by the Gryphon Trio and conducted by Rob Kapilow.

And Morning Will Have Come is the first song of the collection, and expresses how the elements are always all around us.

Earth (Winter, Summer) is the second song of the collection, and explores the idea of Earth through the land and the seasons.

Water Dance is the third song of the collection, and explores Water through the many ways it manifests in our lives.

Air, We Need You is the fourth song of the collection, and explores the idea of Air through our dependence on it for life but also through the sensations it gives us.

Fire Song is the fifth song of the collection, and explores Fire through both its beauty and its destructive power.

The Elements We've Had Since Birth is the sixth song of the collection, and expresses how important the elements are in so many aspects of our lives.

Performance Note:

The six movements of the Midnight Sun Songs may be performed separately, or in any combination. The opening spoken chant may be performed as a processional if desired.

The piano reduction in the choral part is for rehearsal only.
MIDNIGHT SUN SONGS

AND MORNING WILL HAVE COME

words and melodies by
Simon Pittman, Tori Haogak, and Maggie Hodgson

Air, what fills our lungs with life
Fire, what heats our homes at night
Earth, what holds us up to stand
Water what quenches the thirst at hand

Awesome earth, glowing fire, hovering wind and growing water
While it is raining from above, fire erupts in a faraway land
Earth never ceasing, continues to spin
Wind flies as the night howls

The wind blows and fire glows on a dark and stormy night
As the stars shine, we leave behind our worries in the past
But soon enough the sun will rise and morning will have come

EARTH (WINTER, SUMMER)

words and melodies by
Mary-Anne Muyambo, Alisha Hardisty, and Aisling Dunn

Winter is coming
Summer is ending so soon
Time to have cocoa

Oh how lovely the winter is
White snow falling
Days are getting better and better

Green, reluctant, agile, solid and springy
As it dips and sways, it bows to the earth
and salutes the sky
Twirling and flipping by and by

Tickling your toes and itching your nose:
Grass

Green, reluctant, agile, solid and springy
A soft and squishy blanket that covers the earth:
Grass
WATER DANCE
words and melodies by
Leandra Bjornson, Savannah Beaulieu, Tyson Mistaken-Chief,
Aimee Jacobs, Kristal Gambler, Elizabeth Kikoak, and Amanda Grace Butler

Water can be as cold as the Arctic ice
Or as warm as a summer day

Water is clear
Smells like nothing
Could sound like waves
Makes you feel fresh
But it tastes like nothing

Water is me
Water comes out of my eyes
Water is like glass
Water is my drink
Water is me

I can see it hit the bottom and hear it splash
I feel calm when the water falls and the liquid flows

Shimmering water, sparkling in the sun
Freezing are your toes
You soon start to slip, laughing with your friends
Soon we are warm, memories will last

Rivers run to seas
Run to oceans, run to waterfalls
Flowing gracefully, flowing freely, on and on

Dancing past a forest
River flowing, river roaring
Dancing to the waterfall, on and on

AIR, WE NEED YOU
words and melodies by
Sage Dimsdale, Leesha Setzer, Simone Hipfner, and Ariah Thomas

Air, we need you
So we can breathe and live
We are nothing without you
We all take what you give

Feel the wind in your hair
Hear the wind and I don't care
You see the wind and I say "Where?"
Taste the wind over there
Swoosh, swoosh, goes the wind
Through my air and on my skin
Touches the sky like a bird
With a comforting feeling on its wings

Air we need you
So we can breathe and live

**FIRE SONG**

*words and melodies by*

Madison Loutit, Krish Sharma, Gabrielle Kirby, Wynter Trudeau, and Krizzia Concepcion

Destruction and heat, blazing embers destroy
This is a war of vast flames
And if this is to end in fire, then we shall all burn together

Feel the fire, the rage inside
See the smoke, it comes around you
It is just beginning

I can see it destroy and hear it roar
I feel happy when the flame burns, when the fire flickers

Dancing, burning, full of sound
Fire sparks flying around and around
The smell of burning wood dances in the air
Sparks fly, up, up, higher, higher
Ashes fall from the sky like a blizzard on a winter night

Dancing, burning, full of sound
Fire sparks flying around and around
Ashes fall from the sky like a blizzard in the night

**THE ELEMENTS WE'VE HAD SINCE BIRTH**

*words and melodies by*

Paige Gillis, Justin Stewart, McKenzy Mullen, Pyper Rehm, and Kelsey Robson

We might not know this, but it's true: the elements have a special job to do

Fire, water, wind and earth, the elements we've had since birth

Fire, water, wind and earth
Fire is the flame, the flame we use
Wind blows at amazing speed
And wind keeps us cool as it zooms past you like a breeze

The wood is burning and soon it will vanish
Earth's soil is so rich and its sky is so blue
It's something you need
Water wanders through a lake
Fire flickers in the night sky
Wind brings spring to mind
Earth is our place of birth
We hold the elements for all we're worth

Fire can burn you, fire can be used for camp, but fire can be hot
We live on the earth, we live in harmony here, yet we die on earth
We drink lots of water, yet we pollute most of it. Keep the water clean
We breathe the air, but we also pollute the air. Keep the air clean

It flows swiftly through the trees
Whether it icy wind or breeze
Singing a song of the winds

Its solid shell and powerful stones set the ground apart
Such bold power makes tingling bones, but the beauty calms hearts
Cackling is all that is heard
Burning is all that is felt
The wickedness spreads and the innocent stand tall

The end has come but this is the new beginning
It cleanses the world
In the end, water sweeps it all away, so we no longer weep.

Without the earth, who would tend the flame?
Without the flame, who would know of pain?
Without the pain, who would know of love?
Without the love, who would have a spirit?
And without the spirit, how could we let the wind sing us all to sleep?

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And Morning Will Have Come
(#1 from Midnight Sun Songs)

words and melodies by
Simon Pittman, Tori Haogak,
and Maggie Hodgson
music and arrangement by
Jeffrey Ryan

CHORAL

Air, what fills our lungs with life.
Fire, what heats our homes at night.
Earth, what holds us up to stand.
Water, what quenches the thirst at hand.

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Earth, what holds us up to stand. 

Water, what quenches the thirst at hand. 

Air, what fills our lungs with life. 

Fire, what heats our homes at night.
Fire, what heats our homes at night.
Earth, what holds us up to stand.
Water, what quenches the thirst at hand.
Air, what fills our lungs with life.

Fire, what heats our homes at night.
Earth, what holds us up to stand.
stand.

Water, what quenches the thirst at hand.

If processing, everyone in place by now

Air, what fills our lungs with life.

Fire, what heats our homes at

night.

Earth, what holds us up to stand.

Water, what quenches the thirst at hand.

(optional repeat if needed)

clap
While it is raining
from above,
fire erupts

ing fire, hovering

wind and growing water.

optional div.
(may omit lower line)

- morning choral -
flies as the night

howls.

howls.

Awe some earth, glow ing fire.

Awe some earth, glow ing fire.
The wind blows and fire glows on a dark and stormy night.

As the stars shine

we leave behind our worries

(Maggie Hodgson/Norman Wells)
- morning choral -

P

\( \text{rit. to} \quad \text{\( \frac{d}{48} \) \, \text{meno mosso, gently} \) \)

in the past. But soon enough the sun will rise and morning will have come.

\( \text{molto rit.} \)
Earth (Winter, Summer)
(#2 from Midnight Sun Songs)

words and melodies by
Mary-Anne Muyambo,
Alisha Hardisty, and Aisling Dunn
music and arrangement by
Jeffrey Ryan

\( \text{\textcopyright 2015 Jeffrey Ryan and the students} \)
- earth choral -

Days are getting better and better.

poco rit.  \( \text{C} \) \( \text{D} \)

\( \text{mp} \) \( \text{A tempo, warmly and joyously} \)

Green, re-

luc-tant, a-gile, so-lid and spring-y.

As it dips and sways, it bows to the
earth and salutes the sky.

Twirling and

flip-ping by and by.

Tick-ling your toes and

itching your nose:

grass.

Green, re-luc-tant, a-gile, so-lid and spring-y.
A soft and squishy blanket that covers the earth:

grass,
Water can be as cold as the Arctic ice, or as warm as a summer day. Water is clear. Smells like nothing. Could sound like waves. Makes you feel fresh. But it tastes like nothing.
(Tyson Mistaken-Chief/Inuvik)

Water is clear. Smells like no-thing. Could sound like waves. Makes you feel fresh.

But it tastes like no-thing.

Water is clear. Smells like no-thing.

Water is my drink.

Water is clear. Smells like nothing. Could sound like waves. Makes you feel fresh.

But it tastes like nothing.

I can see it hit the bottom and hear it splash.

(Aimee Jacobs/Hay River)

(unis)

\textit{- water choral -}
I feel calm when the water falls and the liquid flows.

Shimmering water,

sparkling in the sun. Freezing are your toes. You soon start to slip, laughing with your friends. Soon we are warm.
molto rit.  

Me-mo-ries will last.

Amanda Grace Butler/Yellowknife

ri-vers run to seas.  Run to o-ceans, run to wa-ter-falls.

Flow-ing grace-ful-ly, flow-ing free-ly.  On and on.  Danc-ing past a

for-est.  Ri-ver flow-ing, ri-ver roar-ing.  Danc-ing to the
water fall.

On and on.

-Mm-

On and on.

-Mm-

On and on.

-Mm-
Air, We Need You
(#4 from Midnight Sun Songs)

words and melodies by
Sage Dimsdale, Leesha Setzer,
Simone Hipfner, and Ariah Thomas
music and arrangement by
Jeffrey Ryan

Senza misura

(A tempo \( \frac{\smiley}{\bullet} = 120 \))

\( A \)

\( f \) unpitched

pp

Whoo-sh!

\( \text{hold pedal down to m. 10} \)

(Sage Dimsdale/Fort Simpson)

\( mf \)

Air,

we need you

so we can breathe

and

live.

We are no-

thing

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- air choral -

without you. We all take what you give.

hold pedal down to m. 27

Whoo-sh!
Feel the wind in your hair.

Hear the wind and I don't care.

You see the wind and...
I say "Where?"

Taste the wind o -

ver there.

Whoo-sh!

Whoo-sh!
- air choral -

(Simone Hipfner/Yellowknife)

Swoosh, __  swoosh, __

4.

57.

57.

57.

60.

60.

63.

63.
- air choral -

Tou-
ches the sky like a

bird with a com-
forting feeling on its wings.

(Ariah Thomas/Fort Simpson)

Air, we need you so we can breathe.
Fire Song
(#5 from Midnight Sun Songs)

words and melodies by
Madison Loutit, Krish Sharma,
Gabrielle Kirby, Wynter Trudeau,
and Krizzia Concepcion
music and arrangement by
Jeffrey Ryan

Senza misura, freely, a dramatic plainchant (♩ = ca. 90)
(Madison Loutit/Hay River)

De-struc-tion and heat, blaz-ing em-bers de-stroy,

This is a war of vast flames, and if this is to end in fire,

then we shall all burn to-geth-er.

Feel the

©2015 Jeffrey Ryan and the students
fire. The rage in.

side. See the smoke, the

smoke. It comes a

round you. It is just
I can see it burning.

I can see it burning.

I feel happy when the flame burns.

I feel happy when the flame burns.

I feel happy when the flame burns.
- fire choral -

(Wynter Trudeau/Fort Smith)

Dancing, burning, full of sound.

Fire sparks, flying around and around.

The smell of burning wood dances in the air.
Sparks fly, up, up, up, higher, higher. 

Ashes fall from the sky.

like a blizzard on a winter night, a winter night, a winter night, a

winter night. Dancing, burning, full of sound.
Fire sparks, fire sparks, flyin’ round and round.

Ashes fall from the sky,

like a blizzard in the night,

in the night.

div. a few voices on top in the night.
The Elements We've Had Since Birth
(#6 from Midnight Sun Songs)

(Paige Gillis/Norman Wells)

Solo, spoken:
We might not know this, but it's true.
The elements have a special job to do.

Fi-re, wa-ter, wind and earth, the e-le-ments we've had since birth.

All: p chanted, softly but with energy

Fi-re, wa-ter, wind and earth, the e-le-ments we've had since birth.

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- elements choral -
the flame we use. Wind blows at amazing speed.

And wind keeps us cool as it zooms past you like a breeze.
The wood is burning and

soon it will vanish. Earth's soil is so rich

and its sky is so blue. It's something you

need.
Water wanders through a lake.

Fi-re flick-ers in the night sky.

Wind brings spring to mind. Earth is our place of birth.

We hold the elements for all.
we're worth.

Fire can burn you, fire can be used for camp, but fire can be hot.

We live on the earth,
we live in har-mo-ny here, __

yet we die on earth.

We drink lots of wa- ter, __

yet we pol- lute most of it.

Keep the wa-ter clean.

Keep the wa-ter clean.
We breathe the air but we also pollute the air.

Keep the air clean. Keep the air clean.

Keep the air clean.

It flows swiftly through the trees, whether icy wind or breeze,

(Kelsey Robson/Yellowknife)
- elements choral -

123

rit.

A tempo

mf

singing a song of the winds. Its solid shell and powerful stones

127

set the ground apart. Such bold power makes tingling bones,

131

rit.

A tempo

mp

but the beauty calms hearts. Cackling is all that is heard.

135

mp

mf

Burn ing is all that is felt. The wicked ness spreads
and the innocent stand tall.

The end has come but this is the new beginning. It cleanses the world. In the end, water sweeps it all away, so we no longer weep.

Without the earth, who would
solo or small group, sung **mp**

Who would tend the flame?  
Who would know of tend the flame?  

With-out the flame, who would know of pain?  

With-out the flame, who would know of pain?  

With-out the pain, who would know of love?  

With-out the pain, who would know of love?  

With-out the love, who would have a spir-it?  

With-out the love, who would have a spir-it?  

And with-out the spir-it, how could we let the have a spir-it?  

And with-out the spir-it, how could we let the have a spir-it?

(if previous passage was solo, add more voices to upper line from here)
wind sing us all to sleep?

157

161

12 - elements choral -