
OUR RHYME

for choir (SATB a capella)

JACOB BERANEK

PROGRAM NOTES

Adapted from John Keats's poem, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, this love song describes an image of a young couple: a "bold" young man (the "happy melodist") serenades a "fair" young woman "beneath the trees." The two lovers yearn to be together, but it is impossible as the image is engraved on an ancient vase (hence Keats's title). The text marvels at both the heartache and the beauty of the young lovers' situation. On one hand, the two can never kiss each other, even though they are "winning near the goal," but at the same time, there is still joy because the moment "cannot fade." The young man finds solace in the fact that, though he falls short of his "bliss," he will forever love the young woman and she will forever be beautiful. In the end, Keats delivers the moral of the story in some of his most famous lines: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Our Rhyme is a musical depiction of this tale, illustrating both the paradoxical joy and sad longing of Keats's two young Greek lovers. This setting of the poem begins and ends with Keats's final lines, creating an arc of passionate storytelling in between two bookends. As the composition develops—eventually employing a pair of soloists to represent the young couple—it strikes its apex, emphasizing the lyrics "More happy love!" Here, after a moment of silence and a brief return to the original material, the soloists make one final, longing gesture together, still knowing they will never kiss. The choir envelops them, softly echoing "Beauty! Truth! Love!"

This piece is dedicated to Kathi Schnedl, who will never fail to inspire me, and also to Dr. Patrick Mulrooney, under whose dedicated direction I first learned this text.

—Jacob Beranek

WINNER of the 2017 Edwin Fissinger Prize for Choral Composition

First Performance: March 18, 2018, Peace Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND,
North Dakota State University Concert Choir, Dr. Jo Ann Miller, director

TEXT (adapted by composer)

Truth, beauty is truth, truth beauty,
That is all you know on earth,
and all you need to know.

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Who can express a flowery tale more sweetly
than our rhyme?

Heard melodies are sweet,
but those unheard are sweeter;
Not to the sensual ear, but more endeared.

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees,
Thou canst not leave thy song!

Bold Lover, never canst thou kiss!
Though winning near the goal, yet do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

And I, the happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs, forever new;
More happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed.

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees!
More happy love, happy love!

Truth, beauty is truth, truth beauty.
Who can express a flowery tale more sweetly
than our rhyme?

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
But, never, never can we kiss.

That is all you know,
and all you need to know.
All you know.
Truth! Beauty! Love!

duration: c. 5' 15"

Our Rhyme

SATB *a cappella*

John Keats

Jacob Beranek

ASCAP

Warmly, with feeling (♩ = c. 54)

Soprano
Truth, beau - ty is truth, truth beau - ty, that

Alto
Truth, beau - ty is truth, truth beau - ty, that

Tenor
Truth, beau - ty is truth, truth beau - ty, that

Bass
Truth, beau - ty is truth, truth beau - ty, that

Piano (for rehearsal only)
Warmly, with feeling (♩ = c. 54)

S
is all you know, all you know.

A
is all you know, all you know.

T
is all you know, all you know.

B
is all you know, all you know.

Piano (for rehearsal only)

Text: adapted from *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819), by John Keats, 1795-1821 (PD).

Music: newly composed, copyright by composer.

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poco accel. *mp* **a tempo** ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 54$) *mf*

S All you know on earth, need to know.

A All you know on earth, and all you need to know.

T All you know on earth, and all you need to know.

B Truth, know on earth, and all you need, need to know.

Moving forward ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$)

S Thou still un - rav - ish'd bride of qui - et - ness,

A Thou un - rav - ish'd bride of qui - et - ness,

T Thou un - rav - ish'd bride of qui - et - ness, thou fos - ter - child of si - lence

B Thou still un - rav - ish'd bride of qui - et - ness, thou fos - ter - child of si - lence,

Moving forward ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$)