

The Soul's Expression

Sonnet
for SATB Choir (divisi)

Music by
John Muehleisen

Text by
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*Commissioned by The Esoterics
Eric Banks, Artistic Director and Conductor*

*To Eric Banks and The Esoterics,
with gratitude for their support
of the creation of new choral works*

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION

WITH stammering lips and insufficient
 sound
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling
 interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and
 height
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual
 ground !
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime
 and whole,
And utter all myself into the air.
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would
 perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Performances Notes

1. Final consonants should be placed on the rest following the note(s) on which the syllable occurs.
2. Unless otherwise noted, when the women or men are divided in three parts (SSA, SAA, TTB, or TBB), divide the voices evenly between the three-parts. Three-part divisi that should be performed as distributed amongst the voices is noted as “div. as written.”

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Elizabeth Barrett Browning

John Muehleisen (2006)

Andante agitato ♩ = 80

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Sopranos

Altos

Tenor

Bass

mp *sempre*

With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring

mp *sempre*

With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring lips,

3 *mp* *sempre* 4

S

With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring lips,

A

sempre

stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring lips, With

T

lips, With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring

B

With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring lips,

5 *(mp)* 6

S With stamm'-ring lips, With stam-mer-ing lips and

A *(mp)* stamm'-ring lips, With stam-mer-ing lips and

T *(mp)* lips, With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring

B *(mp)* With stamm'-ring lips, With stamm'-ring lips,

7 8 *mf*

S in-suf - fi - cient sound I strive___ and strug - gle

A in-suf - fi - cient sound I strive___ and strug - gle

T lips, With stamm'-ring lips, I strive___ and strug-gle I

B With stamm'-ring lips, I strive___ and strug-gle I strive___ and

9 10 11 *ff* *mp*

S I strive___ and strug - gle to de - liv - er right___ That

A I strive___ and strug - gle I strive___ to de - liv - er right___ That

T strive___ and strug - gle I strive___ and strug - gle to de - liv - er right___ That

B strug - gle I strive___ and strug - gle I strive___ to de - liv - er right___ That

S *(mp)* 12 *f* 13 14 *f*
mu - sic of my na - ture, day and night day and

A *(mp)* 2 *f*
mu - sic of my na - ture, day and night day and

T *(mp)* 2 *f*
mu - sic of my na - ture, day and night

B *(mp)* 2 *f*
mu - sic of my na - ture, day and night

S *f* 15 16 *ff* 17 *ff*
night With dream and thought and feel - ing in - ter - wound,

A *f* *ff* >
night and thought and feel - ing in - ter - wound,

T *f* *ff* > *mf*
day and night and feel - ing in - ter - wound, And

B *f* *ff* > *mf*
day and night in - ter - wound, And

S 18 19 *mp* 20 21 *f* 22
With oc - taves of a mys - tic depth and height

A *2 mp* *f*
With oc - taves of a mys - tic depth and height

T *f* *mp* *f*
in - ly an - swer - ing all the senses round With oc - taves of a mys - tic depth and height

B *f* *mp* *f*
in - ly an - swer - ing all the senses round With oc - taves of a mys - tic depth and height

23 *p* 24 25 *ff* 26 27

S Which step out grand-ly to the in - fi - nite

A Which step out grand-ly to the in - fi - nite

T Which step out grand-ly to the in - fi - nite From the dark edg - es of the

B Which step out grand-ly to the in - fi - nite From the dark edg - es of the

28 29 30 Sop. Solo: I *mf* 31 32 struggle to out-bear

S This song of soul Through

A This song of soul Through

T sen-su - al ground! This song of soul Through

B sen-su - al ground! This song of soul Through

33 34 35 36 37 *tutti mp* 38 *molto cresc.* *accel.*

S por-tals of the sense, And ut - ter all my -

A por-tals of the sense, And ut - ter all my -

T por-tals of the sense, And ut - ter all my -

B por-tals of the sense, And ut - ter all my -

39 *ff* 40 *ff* 41 G.P. 42 *p* 43

S self in - to the air. But if I did it, —

A self in - to the air. But if I did it, —

T self in - to the air. But if I did it, —

B self in - to the air. But if I did it, —

Slower $\text{♩} = 68$

44 *f* 45 46 *f* 47 48 *f* *poco rall.*

S as the thun-der-roll Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would

A as the thun-der-roll Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would

T as the thun-der-roll Breaks its own cloud, Ah

B as the thun-der-roll Breaks its own cloud, Ah

49 *mp* 50 *mp* 51 *molto cresc.* 52 53 *ff*

S per - ish there, Be - fore that dread a - po - ca - lypse of soul.

A per - ish there, Be - fore that dread a - po - ca - lypse of soul.

T Be - fore that dread a - po - ca - lypse of soul.

B Be - fore that dread a - po - ca - lypse of soul.

a tempo *molto rall.*