

Love is

for SATB (divisi) + Trumpet in C

Music by John Muehleisen

Text by Rabi'a of Basra (c. 717–801)

Translation by John Muehleisen

*Commissioned by the Irvine United Congregational Church (Irvine, CA)
in celebration of Dr. John S. St. Marie's outstanding service
as the church's beloved Director of Music
from August 2010 through July 2018,
honoring not only his exemplary musical talents and gifts,
but also his love, kindness and support.*

Choir + trumpet version premiered by Nicholls State University Concert Choir,
conducted by Dr. John St. Marie; Dr. Matthew Swihart, trumpet

August 2019

Text

Love is
the sweetest tranquility,
and the highest joy, and the deepest deed,
and the name almost as vast
as God's name.

– *Rabi'a of Basra* (c. 717–801)

Translation by John Muehleisen

Program Note

Love is was commissioned by Irvine United Congregational Church (Irvine, CA) “in celebration of Dr. John S. St. Marie’s outstanding service as the church’s beloved Director of Music from August 2010 through July 2018, honoring not only his exemplary musical talents and gifts, but also his love, kindness and support.” I’m honored to have been asked to compose this work to honor John St. Marie’s tenure as Music Director at IUCC, especially because John himself asked that I write it. Composing a work to honor someone is always a daunting task, and I knew that finding the right text would be central to the work’s success, thus the choice of text was influenced by two factors First were the attributions in the commissioning statement about John’s character and spirit, especially those about his “love, kindness, and support,” virtues I have come to know personally through the course of this commission. Secondly, the choice of text arose out of discussions with John about what sort of text he would like for the piece, which he wanted to reflect the kind and loving spirit of his church family at IUCC. Once we had those parameters, I quickly stumbled upon the extraordinary poem by the 8th-century female Sufi mystic and saint, Rabi’a of Basra (c. 717–801) and was confident that it was the right text for the commission. Unfortunately, the translation I found seemed a bit pedantic and detached; instead, I wanted something more expansive and superlative, so I decided to create my own translation—something I’ve done more frequently over the past decade. After numerous attempts and reviews of various versions by poetically inclined friends, I shared it with John St. Marie, who I was relieved to find thought it quite fitting for the occasion. The text being quite short, I had to figure out how to spin forth a 4–5 minute work from just a few lines consisting of only four basic thoughts. The key to unlocking the music was in deciding that the piece would be a meditation on love with all its emotions, ranging from intimate to profound and from poignant to joyful, with the varied melodic and harmonic elements of the piece expressing that universe of emotions. In order to duplicate the impact of the accumulated images in the poem and to make it more of a meditation, I created two features in the piece: (1) I added meditative, textless interludes that allow the listener to reflect on the text just heard and (2) I created a structure in which the text would accumulate one thought at a time, always returning to the opening line of the poem when each additional thought is added. It has been a joy to compose this work, and through it I have grown to understand firsthand why the warm and loving congregation at IUCC—who have welcomed me with open arms—is so fond of John St. Marie as our friendship has grown deeper through this project and as I have come to know his humble and caring spirit over the course of this commission.

NOTE: The choir and trumpet version of *Love is...* was made at the request of John St. Marie for his Nicholls State University Concert Choir and their faculty trumpet professor, Dr. Matthew Swihart, all of whom premiered this version on Oct. 25, 2019 in the Mary and Al Danos Theater at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Duration: 6:00

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Rabi'a of Basra (c. 717–801)
Translation by John Muehleisen

John Muehleisen
2019

Andante luminoso ♩ = 66

2 4 6 *poco rit.* ----- *a tempo*

Trumpet in C

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano (Reh Only)

Love is Love is Love is Love is the Love is the Love is the Love is the Love

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Love is

C Tpt. *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

S
sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, Love is Love is Oo

A
sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, Love is Love is Oo

T
is Love is Love is Oo

B
is Love is Love is Oo

Pno. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* RH

C Tpt. *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *mf* *pp*

S
Oh Ah Love is the sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty,

A
Oh Ah Love is the sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty,

T
Oh Ah Love is

B
Oh Ah Love is

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Love is

24 *accel.* ----- **Poco piú mosso** ♩ = 76

C Tpt. *mf* *f* *ff*

S *stagger breathing thru m. 30* *ff*
and the high - est joy, high - est joy, high - est joy,

A *stagger breathing thru m. 30* *ff*
and the high - est joy, high - est joy, high - est joy,

T *ff*
and the high - est joy, the high - est joy, high - est joy,

B *ff* Unis.
and the high - est joy, the high - est joy,

Pno. *accel.* ----- **Poco piú mosso** ♩ = 76

Love is

C Tpt. *mf* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

S *f* *mf* *mp* *(mp)*

A *f* *mf* *mp* *(mp)*

T *f* *mf* *mp* *(mp)*

B *f* *mf* *mp* *(mp)*

Pno. *f* *mf* *mp* *(mp)*

Love is Love is Ah Love is the
 Love is Love is Ah Love is the
 Love is Love is Ah Love
 Love Love is Love is Ah Love

C Tpt. *mf* *f* *mp*

S *f* *mf*

A *f* *mf*

T *f* *mf*

B *f* *mf*

Pno. *f* *mf*

sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, and the high-est joy, the high-est joy,
 sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, and the high-est joy, the high-est joy,
 is and the high-est joy, the high-est joy, and the
 is and the high-est joy, Unis. and the
 is and the high-est joy, the high-est joy, and the deep-est

C Tpt. *mf* *p*

S *mf* *p*
and the deep-est deed, the deep-est deed, the deep-est

A *mf* *p* Unis.
and the deep-est deed, the deep-est deed, the deep-est

T *p*
deep-est deed, the deep-est deed, the deep-est

B *p*
deed, the deep-est deed, the deep-est deed, the deep-est

Pno. *p* Unis.

C Tpt. *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *mf*

S *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *f*
deed, Ah Love

A *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *f*
deed, Ah Love

T *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *f*
deed, Ah Love

B *mf* *p* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *f*
deed, Ah Love

Pno. *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *f*

accel. *rit.* *a tempo* (♩ = 76)

C Tpt. *f* *ff* *mf* *mp*

S is Love is Love is

A is Love is Love is Love is

T is Love is Love is Love is

B is Love is Love is Love is

Pno. *ff* *mf* *mp*

60 62 64 66

Poco meno mosso ♩ = 72

C Tpt. *mf* *f* *f*

S *p* Love is the sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, and the high-est joy, the high-est joy,

A *p* Love is the sweet-est tran-quil-i-ty, and the high-est joy, the high-est joy,

T *p* Love is and the high-est joy, the high-est joy,

B *p* Love is and the high-est joy,

Pno. *p* *f*

68 70 72

Love is

74 76 78 80 rit. -----

C Tpt. *mp* *mf* *p*

S *mf* *p*

A *mf* *p*

T *mf* *p*

B *mf* *p*

Pno. *mf* *p*

and the deep-est deed, and the name al-most as vast as God's name.

and the deep-est deed, and the name al-most as vast as God's name.

and the deep - est deed, and the name al-most as vast as God's name.

and the deep-est deed, the deep-est deed, and the name al-most as vast as God's name.

82 84 86 88

Andante luminoso ♩ = 66

C Tpt.

S *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

A *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

T *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

B *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Love is Love is Love is Ah

Love is Love is Love is Ah

Love is Love is Love is Love

Love is Love Love is Love is Love

Pno. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Love is

St. mute

90 92 94

C Tpt. *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

S Ah Oh Oo *mp*

A Ah Oh Oo *mp*

T stagger breathing thru m. 103 *mp*

B stagger breathing thru m. 103 *mp*

is Love is Love Love is Love Love is

is Love is Love is Love is

Pno. 90 92 94 *mp*

96 98 100 102

C Tpt. *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

S *p* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

A *p* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

T *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

B *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

mm Love is Love is

mm Love is Love is

Pno. 96 98 100 102 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Love is

104 106 108

rit.

C Tpt. *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

S *p*
Love is

A *p* *mp* *p*
Love is Love is

T *p* *mp* *p*
Love is Love is

B *p*
Love is Love is *mp* *p*

Pno. *p*

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