

Malcolm Dedman

What is Earth?

for SATB choir (divided) *a cappella*

2001, reprinted in 2008

What is Earth? was commissioned by Oliver Barton for the Henbury Singers in Bristol, UK

Duration: 5 mins

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What is Earth?

Text by the Composer and Bahá'u'lláh

<i>Alto solo (spoken)</i>	What is this earth, then?
<i>Choir</i>	The earth is a planet, a home for all the living creatures.
<i>Bass solo (spoken)</i>	Isn't earth one of the elements?
<i>Choir</i>	According to ancient mythology, earth is one of four elements: Fire, Earth, Air and Water. It is not an element of chemistry.
<i>Tenor Solo (spoken)</i>	I thought earth was dry land!
<i>Choir</i>	Earth is one of the materials of dry land and is rich in minerals for plants to grow.
<i>Soprano solo (spoken)</i>	But isn't earth also the collective inhabitants of the globe?
<i>Alto solo (sung)</i>	Listen to what Bahá'u'lláh said:
<i>Choir</i>	"The earth is but one country, and all mankind its citizens." *
<i>Choir (spoken)</i>	"Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home." **

* from 'Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh', page 116.

** from 'Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh', page 127.

PERFORMING NOTES

What is Earth? may be sung by a choir of between 20 and 30 singers.

Note 1: Graphic Notation, from bar 1: Whilst making a 'Sh' sound, change the shape of the mouth cavity to alter the relative pitch of the sound, in accordance with the line height and shape. Follow dynamics and any other instructions.

Note 2: Box Notation, e.g. from bar 7 in tenors and basses: The phrase within the box is to be repeated until the conductor gives a signal to stop (arrow at bar 14). For larger choirs, the maximum number of singers for these phrases is indicated (e.g. bar 6 in the basses). The singers must not be in time with one another during the boxed repetitions, but should stick to one of the conducted beats so that each singer can be one, two or three eighth notes out of step with one another. In order for this to happen, each singer chooses a rest of between 0 and 2 eighth notes at random before repeating. After the signal to stop at bar 14, the singers have up to two quarter note beats to stop singing, even if in the middle of a phrase.
Instructions vary slightly for later appearances of this notation, as indicated in the score.

Note 3: Diamond shaped note heads, from bar 14: These indicate that the text is to be *spoken* to the given rhythm. The relative pitch of the voice is indicated but, in general, this is normal speech inflection.

Note 4: Long held notes, from bar 15: It is important that these sound as if in one breath. This can be achieved by 'staggering' the breathing, if necessary, (i.e. the singers take their breath at different times).

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$\text{♩} = 88$

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

See page 2, Note 1

mf

Sh

S.

A.

T.

B.

See Page 2, Note 2

2 tenors only

3 basses only

p

pp

pp

n

+0, 1
or 2
eighth
note
rests

S.

A.

T.

B.

Remaining tenors enter on different beats

Remaining basses enter on different beats

STOP

See Page 2, Note 4

pp

f

mf

p

p

Sh

Solo, See Page 2, Note 3

The

What is this earth, then?

f

3

n

mf *poco rit.* crea - tures.

S. earth is a pla-net, a home for all the li-ving crea -

A. *Tutti mp* Ah

T. *mp* gradually change to 'Ah' - - - Ah *p*

B. *mp* gradually change to 'Ah' Ah *p*

p **A tempo** *pp* +0.1 or 2 eighth note rests

S. tures. Ah

A. *p* *pp* Ah +0.1 or 2 eighth note rests

mf *p* *mp*

S. gradually change to 'Aw' - - - - - Aw STOP Aw

A. *mf* *p* *mf* gradually change to 'Aw' - - - - - Aw STOP Ac-

T. *mf* Sh

B. *mf* Solo, See Page 2, Note 3 *f* 3 Is-n't earth one of the e-le-ments?

S. *gradually change to 'Ah'* Ah

A. cor-ding to an - cient my - tho - lo - gy, earth is one of four

T. *mf* Ac - cord-ing to an - cient my - tho - lo - gy, earth is one of

S. It is not an

A. *mf* e - le - ments, *p* e - le - ments: Fire, Earth, Air and Wa - ter. *mp* It is

T. *mf* four e - le - ments: Fire, Earth, Air and Wa - ter.

B. *Tutti mp* Ah *p* *pp*

Meno mosso **A tempo**

S. e - le - ment, e - le - ment of che - mis - try.

A. not an e - le - ment, e - le - ment of che - mis - try.

T. *mp* It is not an e - le - ment of che - mis - try. *p* *pp* Eh

B. *mf* *f* Sh

S. *pp* *cresc.* Eh

A. *pp* *cresc.* Eh +0 or 1 eighth note rests

T. *cresc.* +0 or 1 eighth note rests

B. *pp* *pp* *cresc.* Eh

10 secs 3 secs

All voices getting faster and out of step until signal for next bar.

All voices, out of step, as fast as possible. Hold last note, stopping abruptly at signal for next bar.

S. *ff* *ffp* *ff* Ne ne ne ne ne ne ne ne

A. *ff* *ffp* *ff* Ne ne ne ne ne ne ne ne

T. *ff* *ffp* *ff* Ne ne ne ne ne ne ne ne

B. *ff* *ffp* *ff* Ne ne ne ne ne ne ne ne

2 secs 5 secs Più mosso, ♩ = 112

All voices, out of step, as fast as possible.
Stop abruptly at signal for next bar.

fff G.P. *fff* *ff*

S. La la la la la la la la Earth

A. La la la la la la la la Earth

T. G.P. *fff* Solo *ff*₃ Tutti *ff* Earth

B. La la la la la la la la Earth

4/4

S. is one of the ma - te - ri - als, Earth is one of the ma - te -

A. is one of the ma - te - ri - als, Earth is one of the ma - te -

T. is one of the ma - te - ri - als, Earth is one of the ma - te -

B. is one of the ma - te - ri - als, Earth is one of the ma - te -

f *mf* poco rit. - - - Tempo primo (♩ = 88)

S. - ri - als of dry land and is rich in mi - ne - rals for

A. - ri - als of dry land and is rich in mi - ne - rals for

T. - ri - als of dry land and is rich in mi - ne - rals

B. - ri - als of dry land and is rich in mi - ne - rals

poco rit. *fp* *A tempo* *p* *the others* *mf* *pp*

S. plants to grow. *Solo mf* But is-n't earth al-so the col
(solo sempre *mf*)

A. plants to grow. Sh *mf* *pp*

T. for plants to grow. Sh *mf* *pp*

B. for plants to grow.

S. lec-tive in-ha-bi-tants of the globe? *Tutti f* The

A. *Solo mf* Lis-ten to what Ba - há' - u'-lláh said: *Tutti f* The

S. earth is but one coun - try,

A. earth is but one coun - try,

T. *mf* The earth is but one

B. *mf* The earth is but one

S. *f* The earth is but one, *subito p* one

A. *f* The earth is but one, *subito p* one

T. coun - try, *f* The earth is but one *subito p*

B. coun - try, *f* The earth is but one *subito p*

S. coun - try, *pp* and man - kind, *mp* man - kind *molto rit.*

A. coun - try, *pp* and man - kind, *mp* man - kind

T. coun - try, *pp* and man - kind, *mp* man - kind

B. coun - try, *pp* and man - kind, *mp* man - kind

Meno mosso, ♩ = 72

S. *p* its ci - ti - zen(s). * n *pp*

A. *p* its ci - ti - zens. *pp* (spoken) 3 Thus will the earth be re-gar- ded

T. *p* its ci - ti - zens. *pp*

B. *p* its ci - ti - zen(s). * n *pp*

* Sopranos and basses, do not sound the 's' (in brackets) at the end of 'citizens'. Change to 'n' where indicated at bar 93 (sopranos) and bar 94 (basses).

S. *rit.* (spoken) 3 whispered one coun-try and one home. (m)

A. 3 whispered as one coun - try and one home, one home. (m)

T. (spoken) 3 3 whispered Thus will the earth be re-gard- ded as one coun-try and one home. (m)

B. 3 whispered one home. (m) *ppp*