

love

is

the

SATB
choir

every

only

god

text: e.e. cummings

andrew may

2002

love is the every only god

Program note

E.E. Cummings published his poem, "love is the every only god," in 1940, shortly after World War II began. In spite of the violence and turmoil of the time, this poem celebrates the joy and power of both divine and earthly love. My setting is a small expression of hope that love may still transform "a thing all small and sad—man" into a thing of beauty, like the deep song of the sea, or the brightness of the illimitable stars.

"love is the every only god" from COMPLETE POEMS: 1904-1962, by E.E. Cummings, Edited by George J. Firmage, is used with the permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright (c) 1940, 1968, 1991 by the Trustees for the E.E. Cummings Trust.

Text: love is the every only god

love is the every only god

who spoke this earth so glad and big
even a thing all small and sad
man, may his mighty briefness dig

for love beginning means return
seas who could sing so deep and strong

one queerying wave will whitely yearn
from each last shore and home come young

so truly perfectly the skies
by merciful love whispered were,
completes its brightness with your eyes

any illimitable star

Notes on Performance

- In each range there is one solo line. These may be sung by a single soloist throughout; alternatively, the various solo passages may be assigned to several different singers.
- In sections K, L, and M, where "box" notation is used, each singer should repeat the given musical fragment independently, at a tempo of his or her choosing, following the conductor's dynamic indications. The conductor should cue the beginning of each "box," but singers in a section should not all begin at once. The conductor will set the pacing by indicating crescendos and diminuendos, and by conducting the passages that are in measured time. The tempo here is up to the conductor, but the duration of a line of music should be about 20 to 25 seconds (from the start of section K to the beginning of measured time on p. 11; and again from the end of measured time in section L to beginning of section M). The effect of these various fragments overlapping at different speeds is meant to be like the movement of waves seen under starlight: all reflecting differently in complex and varied patterns, but all reflecting the same basic light and shape.
- *Glissandi* are written as thin diagonal lines, and should take up most of the note values in which they appear.
- Accidentals carry through the bar, but not across octaves.

love is the every only god

Andrew May
2002

♩ = 56

pp *f* *ff*

Soprano
love_____ love_____ love

Alto
pp *f* *ff*
love_____ love_____ love

Tenor
pp *f* *ff*
love_____ love_____ love

Bass
pp *f* *ff*
love_____ love_____ love

8

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

S
love_____ love_____ love is the e - ve - ry

A
p *mf* *p* *pp*
love_____ love love love love_____

T
p *mf* *p* *mf*
love_____ love is the e - ve - ry

B
p *mf* *p* *pp*
love_____ love_____ love_____

love is the every only god, p. 2

14

S
love_ is the e - ve - ry on - ly

A
is the e - ve - ry love is the e - ve - ry on - ly

T
is the e - ve - ry love is the e - ve - ry on - ly

B
is the e - ve - ry the e - ve - ry on - ly

19

S
god_ the e - ve - ry on - ly god_

A
god_ the e - ve - ry on - ly god_

T
god_ the e - ve - ry on - ly god_

B
god_ the e - ve - ry on - ly god_

B

26 *pp*

S the e - ve-ry on - ly god who spoke this

A *pp* the e - ve-ry on - ly god _____

T *pp* the e - ve-ry on - ly god _____

B *pp* the e - ve-ry on - ly god _____ *f* who spoke this

S *f* earth so glad and big *p* who spoke *mp* who spoke this

A *p* who spoke this earth so glad and

T *p* who spoke this *f* earth so glad and big

B earth so glad and big who spoke this

35

S
earth who who spoke this earth so glad and big

A
big who spoke this earth so glad and big

T
who spoke this earth so glad and big so glad and big

B
earth so glad so glad and big

C

39

S
e - ven a thing all small all small and sad man,

A
e - ven a thing all small and sad man,

T
e - ven a thing all small and sad man,

B
e - ven a thing all small and sad all small and

44

S *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *mf* *f*
 man, man, may his migh - ty, migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty brief

A *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *mf* *f*
 man, man, may his migh - ty, migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty brief

T *mf* *f* *p* *f*
 man, man, migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty brief

B *f* *p* *f*
 sad _____ man, migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty migh - ty brief

50

S *p* *pp* D
 migh - ty brief man, _____ may his migh - ty brief - ness dig _____

A *p* *pp*
 migh - ty brief man, _____ dig _____

T *p* *pp*
 migh - ty brief may his brief - ness dig _____

B *p* *pp*
 migh - ty brief brief - ness dig _____

love is the every only god, p. 6

56 *mf* *f* *p*

S dig dig

A *mf* *f* *p*
dig dig

T *mf* *f*
dig dig

B *mf* *p* *f*
dig man, may his migh - ty brief - ness

60 *pp* *p* *f*

S for love

A for love

T for

B dig for love

love is the every only god, p. 7

65 *mp*

solo for love be - gin - ning means re - turn

f *pp*
S love for love

f *pp*
A love for love

solo *mp*

love be - gin - ning

pp
T love for love

f *pp*
B love for love

The musical score is written for a solo voice and five vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score begins at measure 65. The solo part features a triplet of eighth notes. The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) have lyrics 'love for love' and are marked with dynamics *f* and *pp*. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the solo part and lyrics 'love be - gin - ning'.

F

70

solo *p* be-gin - - - - ning *f* means re - turn____ *mf* seas who could

S *p* love_____

A *p* love_____

solo be-gin - ning means re - turn____ *f* seas who could sing_____ *mf*

T *p* love_____

B *p* love_____

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece titled "love is the every only god, p. 8". The score is arranged for a soloist and a SATB choir. The soloist parts are in treble clef, while the SATB parts are in their respective clefs (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The soloist parts feature dynamic markings of *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The SATB parts are marked *p*. The lyrics are: "be-gin - - - - ning means re - turn____ seas who could" for the first soloist and "be-gin - ning means re - turn____ seas who could sing_____" for the second soloist. The SATB parts all sing "love_____". A box containing the letter "F" is located at the top right of the page. The number "70" is written above the first soloist staff.

love is the every only god, p. 9

G

77

solo
sing so deep and strong — one queer-ying wave — one

S
sing so deep and strong — one — wave —

solo
one — wave —

A
sing so deep and strong — one wave —

solo
so deep and strong — one queer - ying wave —

T
sing so deep and strong — one wave —

B
sing so deep — so deep and strong one wave —

84

The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top staff is for a solo voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "queer - ying wave _____ will white - ly yearn _____". The second staff is for a Soprano (S) voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "one _____ one wave _____ will _____ yearn _____". The third staff is for another solo voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "one _____ wave ³ _____ one _____ wave ³ _____ one _____ wave _____ will white - ly yearn". The fourth staff is for an Alto (A) voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____". The fifth staff is for a solo voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "one queer - ying wave _____ one _____ wave _____". The sixth staff is for a Tenor (T) voice in treble clef, with lyrics: "one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____". The seventh staff is for a solo voice in bass clef, with lyrics: "one _____ queer - ying wave _____ one _____ wave _____". The eighth staff is for a Bass (B) voice in bass clef, with lyrics: "one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____". Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are also triplets marked with a '3' and a slur.

queer - ying wave _____ will white - ly yearn _____

one _____ one wave _____ will _____ yearn _____

one _____ wave ³ _____ one _____ wave ³ _____ one _____ wave _____ will white - ly yearn

one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____

one queer - ying wave _____ one _____ wave _____

one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____

one _____ queer - ying wave _____ one _____ wave _____

one _____ wave _____ will _____ yearn _____

love is the every only god, p. 11

I

88 *ff* *mp* *mp*

solo
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn from each last shore

S
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

solo
ff *mp*
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn from each last

A
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

solo
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

T
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

solo
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

B
ff
one queer - ying wave will white - ly yearn

93

from each last shore and home come young

S and home come young

from each last shore and home come young

A and home come young

from each last shore and home come young

T and home come young

from each last shore and home come young

B and home come young

I

99 *p* *f* *p* *p* *mf*

S home come _____ young _____ so tru - ly per-fect-ly the skies _____

A home come _____ young _____ so tru - ly per-fect-ly the skies _____

T home come _____ young _____ so true _____

B home come _____ young _____ so true _____

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score is in a single system with four staves. The lyrics are: "home come _____ young _____ so tru - ly per-fect-ly the skies _____" for Soprano and Alto; "home come _____ young _____ so true _____" for Tenor and Bass. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). There are crescendo and decrescendo hairpins, and a box containing the letter "I". A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a "3" above it. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a common time signature.

106

f *mf* *mp*

by mer-ci-ful love by mer-ci-ful love by mer-ci-ful

p *mp*

S by love by mer-ci-ful

f *mp*

by mer-ci-ful love whis - pered

p *mp*

A by love whis - pered

f *mp*

by mer-ci-ful love whis - pered

mp

T by love whis - pered

mf

by mer-ci-ful love

mp

B by love whis - pered

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a choral piece. It features seven staves: a solo line and SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) parts. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are also accents and slurs. The lyrics are: 'by mer-ci-ful love by mer-ci-ful love by mer-ci-ful whis - pered by love whis - pered'. The solo part has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of each phrase. The SATB parts have various rhythmic patterns, including quarter notes, half notes, and eighth notes. The Soprano part has a long note with a slur in the second measure of the first phrase. The Alto and Tenor parts have similar patterns. The Bass part has a long note with a slur in the second measure of the first phrase.

love is the every only god, p. 15

J

The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top staff is labeled 'solo' and contains the lyrics 'love whis - pered were, _____'. The second staff is labeled 'S' and contains the lyrics 'love whis - pered were, _____ com - pletes its bright - ness _____ com-pletes its'. The third staff is labeled 'solo' and contains the lyrics 'were, _____'. The fourth staff is labeled 'A' and contains the lyrics 'were, _____ com - pletes its bright - ness _____ com-pletes its'. The fifth staff is labeled 'solo' and contains the lyrics 'were, _____'. The sixth staff is labeled 'T' and contains the lyrics 'were, _____ com - pletes _____ com - pletes _____'. The seventh staff is labeled 'B' and contains the lyrics 'were, _____ com - pletes _____ com - pletes _____'. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *p*. A box with the letter 'J' is positioned above the first staff. The score includes musical notation such as notes, rests, and slurs.

solo
love whis - pered were, _____

S
love whis - pered were, _____ com - pletes its bright - ness _____ com-pletes its

solo
were, _____

A
were, _____ com - pletes its bright - ness _____ com-pletes its

solo
were, _____

T
were, _____ com - pletes _____ com - pletes _____

B
were, _____ com - pletes _____ com - pletes _____

117

S
bright - ness ___ with your eyes ___ with your eyes ___

A
bright - ness ___ with your eyes ___ with your eyes ___

T
with your eyes ___ with your eyes ___

B
with your eyes ___ with your eyes ___

ff *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

K

126

S
a - ny

A
a - ny

T
eyes

B
eyes

tempo changing ad lib.
♩ = 40 ~ 80

f

repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent

mp *pp*

tempo changing ad lib.
♩ = 40 ~ 80

f

repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent

mp *pp*

tempo changing ad lib.
♩ = 40 ~ 80

mp *pp*

tempo changing ad lib.
♩ = 40 ~ 80

mp *pp*

repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent

love is the every only god, p. 17

L

The score is for five voices: solo, S, solo, A, T, and B. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/2. The lyrics are "a - ny il - li-mi-ta-ble star_____".

Solo: Starts with a crescendo to *pp*. A box contains the notation for "a - ny" with *tempo ad lib.* and $\text{♩} = 40 \sim 80$. An arrow points from the box to the end of the staff, with the instruction "repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent". The staff ends with a crescendo to *f*.

S: Starts with a crescendo to *pp*. A box contains the notation for "a - ny" with *tempo ad lib.* and $\text{♩} = 40 \sim 80$. An arrow points from the box to the end of the staff, with the instruction "repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent". The staff ends with a crescendo to *f*.

Solo: Starts with a crescendo to *pp*. A box contains the notation for "a - ny" with *tempo ad lib.* and $\text{♩} = 40 \sim 80$. An arrow points from the box to the end of the staff, with the instruction "repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent". The staff ends with a crescendo to *f*.

A: Starts with a crescendo to *pp*. A box contains the notation for "a - ny" with *tempo ad lib.* and $\text{♩} = 40 \sim 80$. An arrow points from the box to the end of the staff, with the instruction "repeat for duration of arrow, each singer independent". The staff ends with a crescendo to *f*.

T: Starts with a crescendo to *p*. The notation includes a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics are "a - ny il - li-mi-ta-ble star_____".

B: Starts with a crescendo to *p*. The notation includes a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics are "a - ny il - li-mi-ta-ble star_____".

love is the every only god, p. 18

145

M

solo

S

solo

A

T

B

pp

pp

pp

pp

mp

pp

mp

pp

a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble

a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble

a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

love is the every only god, p. 19

N

rit. poco a poco al fine

The musical score consists of six staves, each representing a different voice part. The lyrics are: "a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star". The score includes musical notation with treble clefs for all parts, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is marked "rit. poco a poco al fine". There are trills (marked with a '3') in the vocal lines. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across notes. The word "star" is written on a long line that spans the end of the phrase.

solo
a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

S
star a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

solo
a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

A
star a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

T
a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star

B
a - ny il - li - mi - ta - ble star