

Premiered on October 3, 2016 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana—Greg Gallagher, Tenor Soloist

PROGRAM NOTES

JOHN MUIR *and* MRS. CARR

When John Muir was a student at the University of Wisconsin, he was a frequent caller at the house of Dr. Ezra S. Carr. The kindness shown him there, and especially the sympathy which Mrs. Carr, as a botanist and a lover of nature, felt in the young man's interests and aims, led to the formation of a lasting friendship. He regarded Mrs. Carr, indeed, as his "spiritual mother," and his letters to her in later years are the outpourings of a sensitive spirit to one whom he felt thoroughly understood and sympathized with him. These letters are therefore peculiarly revealing of their writer's personality. Most of them were written from the Yosemite Valley, and they give a good notion of the life Muir led there, shepherding, guiding, and tending a sawmill at intervals to earn his daily bread, but devoting his real self to an ardent scientific study of glacial geology and a joyous and reverent communion with Nature.

ABOUT *the* SONGS

The five letters which provide the lyrics for the songs (adapted by the composer) were selected for their range of topics and sentiments. Some portray the wildlife in the mountains ("Glacier Birds . . ."). Others extol the beauty of the Sierra ("Mountain Glory," "Yosemite Falls"). One expresses the whimsical/temperamental personality of the author ("Ice!"). And the final letter ("Sequoia") speaks reverently of the great trees, in a language both naturalistic and sacred. They are the "greatest light in the woods, the greatest light in the world."

The musical settings, especially in the piano accompaniment, are quite programmatic. Glacier birds scamper up and down the keyboard in tone clusters. "Icy" glissandi float off. The great trees take root in large, block chords, and waterfalls cascade down in scales.

There is personality in the letters. The bond between John Muir and Mrs. Carr (whom he addresses formally) is one of great kinship—a blending of the souls, a "spiritual romance." As he marvels at the beauty of the wilderness, he writes ardently, "I wish that you could see this . . ." When he learns that Mrs. Carr, the botanist (whose plants suffer from the frost), dislikes ice, he chides her, and creates a "mock argument" over the value of glacial ice.

The songs begin with an ascent into the mountains. They close with the return to the coast, to the magnificent Sequoia trees, where John Muir camps for the night in the company of a squirrel. Charmingly, he writes "Therefore, my Carr, goodnight."

5. DESCENT: "SEQUOIA"

[SQUIRRELVILLE, SEQUOIA COUNTY NUT TIME]

Behold the King in his glory, King Sequoia! Behold! Behold! Behold! Some time ago I left for Sequoia, and have been at his feet; fasting and praying for light. For is he not the greatest light in the woods? And is he not the greatest light in the world? Where are such columns of sunshine brought to earth?

See Sequoia reaching for the skies, every summit modeled in curves, as if pressed into unseen moulds, warm in the amber sun. How truly Godful in stature! Today, King Sequoia bowed down to me down in the grove as I stood gazing. Behold the King in his glory, King Sequoia!

The sun is set and the star candles are lit to show me the way—little Douglas squirrel and I off to bed. Therefore, my Carr, goodnight. You ask, "When are you coming down?" Ask the Lord—Lord Sequoia! Behold!

Descent: “Sequoia”

for Tenor Solo, TTBB Chorus, and Piano

John Muir (1838–1914)
Altered and with additional words
by G. Walker

Gwyneth Walker

Introduction to Descent: “Sequoia”

At a stately tempo ♩ = 92

f triumphantly

Tenor 1
Tenor 2

Bass 1
Bass 2

Be - hold the King in his glo - ry! Be - hold the King Se -

f triumphantly

Be - hold the King in his glo - ry! Be - hold the King Se -

At a stately tempo ♩ = 92

Piano

8^{va}

8^{vb}

5

T1
T2

8

quo - ia! Ma - jes - tic! The King of Heav - en! The

B1
B2

quo - ia! Ma - jes - tic! The King of Heav - en! The

9

poco *mf*

T1 8 great - est light in the world! the

T2 8 great - est light in the world! the

B1 *poco* *mf* great - est light in the world! Reach - ing in - to Heav - en blue, the

B2 *poco* *mf* the world! Reach - ing in - to Heav - en blue, the

13

rit. *p*, *a tempo* (♩ = 92) *f*

T1 8 in - fi - nite sky! Be - hold!

T2 8 in fi - nite sky! Be - hold!

B1 *p*, *f* in - fi - nite sky! Be - hold! _____

B2 *p*, *f* in - fi - nite sky! Be - hold! _____

continue directly into next song without break

Descent: "Sequoia"

[Squirrelville, Sequoia County Nut Time]

Grandly ♩ = 92

f triumphantly

T1
T2

B1
B2

Se - quo - ia! Se - quo - ia!

f triumphantly

Se - quo - ia! Se - quo - ia!

Grandly ♩ = 92
the majestic Sequoia trees

5

Tenor Solo *f*

T

T1
T2

B1
B2

Se - quo ia! Se - quo - ia!

Se - quo - ia! Se - quo - ia!

The musical score is written for a choir and piano. It features five staves: two for Tenors (T1, T2), two for Baritone/Bass (B1, B2), and one for Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Grandly' with a quarter note equal to 92 beats per minute. The score begins with a piano introduction of eighth notes in both hands. The vocal parts enter with a 'triumphant' melody, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and accents. The lyrics 'Se - quo - ia!' are repeated. A 'Tenor Solo' section follows, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic, where the Tenor 1 part has a melodic line while the other parts provide harmonic support. The score concludes with a final piano chord.

8

T
8
glo - ry, King Se - quo - ia! Be -

T1
T2
8
Se - quo - ia! Se - quo - ia!

B1
B2
Se - quo - ia! Se - quo - ia!



11

T
8
hold! Be - hold! Be - hold!

T1
T2
8
Be - hold! Be - hold! Be - hold! Be - hold!

B1
B2
Be - hold! Be - hold! Be - hold! Be - hold!



Slightly faster ♩ = 100, *with motion*

15 *mf*

T 8 Some time a - go I left for Se - quo - ia, and have been at his feet;

T1

T2

B1

B2

Slightly faster ♩ = 100, *with motion*

a gentle background

p

Leo.

18 *f triumphantly*

T 8 fast - ing and pray ing for light. For is he not the great - est

mf

T1

T2

mf

B1

B2

Ah,

Ah,

f

Leo.

21

The musical score is for a choral and piano setting of 'The Light of the World'. It features a Tenor soloist (T), two Tenors (T1, T2), two Basses (B1, B2), and a piano accompaniment. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'light in the woods? And is he not the great - est'. The piano part includes a large 'f' (forte) dynamic marking and a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The score is marked '21' at the top left. A large, diagonal watermark 'Is Not Only' is visible across the bottom right of the page.

T

light in the woods? _____ And is he not the great - est

T1

T2

B1

B2

And is he not the great - est

And is he not the great - est

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

24

T
8 light in the world? _____ Where are such col - umns of

T1
T2
8 light in the world?
umns.

B1
B2
light in the world? _____

Vox.
Vox.

27 *mf* *rit.*, *a tempo* (♩ = 100)

T 8 sun - shine brought to earth?

mf *rit.*, *a tempo* (♩ = 100)

p with excitement and wonderment

30 *unis. p*

T1 See Se-quo - ia reach-ing for the skies, _____

T2 See Se-quo - ia reach-ing for the skies, _____

B1 *unis. p*

B2 See Se-quo - ia reach-ing for the skies, _____

8va -----

(Leo.)

33

T1 ev - 'ry sum - mit mod - eled in curves, as if

T2 ev - 'ry sum - mit mod - eled in curves, as if

B1 ev - 'ry sum - mit mod - eled in curves, as if

B2 ev - 'ry sum - mit mod - eled in curves, as if

8va -----

loco

(Leo.)

36

T

8

p *mf* *rit.*

warm in the am - ber

T1

T2

8

mf

pressed in - to un - seen moulds, warm in the am - ber

B1

B2

8

mf

pressed in - to un - seen moulds, warm in the am - ber

mf *rit.*

Slowly, triumphantly

39

T

8

sun. How tru - ly God - ful in stat - ure, ———

T1

T2

8

sun. ———

how tru - ly God - ful in stat - ure! ———

B1

B2

8

sun. ———

how tru - ly God - ful in stat - ure! ———

Slowly, triumphantly

P

8

—

[illegible]

47

Grandly ♩ = 92

f

Be - hold the King in his glo - ry, King Se -

Grandly ♩ = 92

mf

f

[illegible]

54 *a tempo* (♩ = 108)

p gently

8va

loco as the setting sun

57 *p* gently, as night approaches

T The sun is set and the star can - dles are lit to show me the

(Ped.)

61

T 8 way— lit - tle Doug - las *squirrel and I off to bed. _____

Reo. 3 3 3 5

65

T 8 There - fore, my Carr, good - night.

More relaxed ♩ = 100
tenderly

More relaxed ♩ = 100
tenderly, very gentle tremolo

8va

Reo. 3 3 3 3

68

T 8 There - fore, my Carr, good - night. You ask, "When are you com - ing

rit. Slower, *mf* freely, conversationally

rit. Slower

88

Reo. 3 3 3 3

mf

*a reference to the Douglas fir, the home of the squirrel!

Tempo I (♩ = 92) *triumphantly*

71

T down?" Ask the Lord, Lord Se - quo - ia!

T1 O ask the Lord, the Lord Se -

T2 O ask the Lord, the Lord Se -

B1 O ask the Lord, the Lord Se -

B2 O ask the Lord, the Lord Se -

, Tempo I (♩ = 92) *triumphantly*

Piano accompaniment for measures 71-74.

75

T Be - hold! Be -

T1 quo - ia! O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold!

T2 quo - ia! O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold!

B1 unis. *mf* quo - ia! O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold!

B2 quo - ia! O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold!

Piano accompaniment for measures 75-78.

78

T
8
hold! Be - hold! *cresc. to end* Be -

T1
T2
8
O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold! O be - hold, O be - *cresc. to end*

B1
B2
O be - hold, O be - hold, O be - hold! O be - hold, O be -

cresc. to end

81 *rit. to end*

T
8
hold! Be hold! *ff*

(*cresc.*) *ff*

T1
T2
8
hold! Be - hold! Be - hold! *ff*

(*cresc.*) *ff*

B1
B2
hold! Be - hold! Be - hold! *ff*

rit. to end

(*cresc.*) *ff*

loco

(8vb) *loco*