

Vera Ivanova

# ***A thirst for water***

**for SATB choir (with divisi) and Organ**

*Commissioned by Jeffrey Bernstein for Pasadena Master Chorale*



**Duration: 5 minutes**

**2024**

Title: "A thirst for water" for SATB choir (with divisi) and Organ  
Music: Vera Ivanova, ASCAP, @Vera Ivanova Music, 2024  
Poetry: Rachel Kaufman. The text is used with the author's permission.

Program Note:

"A thirst for water" was commissioned by and premiered on May 11, 2024, by the Pasadena Master Chorale, directed by Jeffrey Bernstein. It is dedicated to my mother, who has been my biggest supporter and the endless source of inspiration. She is celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the day of the premiere of this piece.

The poem is written by young and talented poetess Rachel Kaufman, who I met at the *Helene Wurlitzer Foundation* in Taos, New Mexico, where we were both in residence in the summer of 2023. Her imaginative and beautiful poem evokes associations with deeply connected processes in nature, the earth's fragile ecosystem and the frequent draughts followed by devastating rainstorms in Southern California (and many other parts of the world).

While setting her poem to choir, I took an approach of a meditative yet monumental reflection on the theme. I have been fascinated by the chain-like structure of the poem and have multiplied these intended repetitions of the words even more to create the textures painting nature and its force. In this setting you will also hear Organ. From the very beginning it sets the mood and harmonic background, which shifts are highlighted with changes of registers. Additionally, I brought into the score some percussion instruments, mimicking water, thunder, and wind.

Original text of the poem:

*A thirst for water, when water, for land, when land, for  
sky, when sky, for earth, when earth, for cloud, when  
cloud, for rain, when rain, for cover, when cover,  
for wind, when wind, for heat, when heat, for  
spring, when spring, for snow, when snow, for  
here, where it is dry, wet, dark, bright, and  
secret from the rest.*

-Rachel Kaufman

Performance note:

This piece is composed for choir with divisi and organ. To mimic the sounds of rain, water, wind and sizzling heat, I included in the vocal parts limited use of aleatoric repetitions of same words and pitches, as well as consonant sounds and syllables (such as *Sh-*, *Pheuw-Shee*, *Ts-*) which should be performed as unpitched sounds. I also included small percussion instruments in Organ part (Rain Stick, Whirly Tube A4, Thunder or String Drum) and vocal parts (egg and motion shakers, Kenari bracelet). All percussion instruments can be provided by the composer at request. If for some reason percussion parts cannot be performed, the piece can be performed without percussion.

The suggested organ registers and stops are marked in the score, and here is the table of specific stops for the performance at the First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, CA (listed in performance order):

I – The Great Keyboard Manual;  
 II – The Swell Keyboard Manual;  
 Pedals.

Note: other manuals (Choir, Solo) can be used at the discretion of the organist.

Manuals	Indication in the Score	Stops on Organ at First United Methodist Church
II	Light Fl 2'	Piccolo 2
I	Soft Principal 8'	Second Diapason 8
Pedals	Soft 16'	Bourdon 16, Lieblich Gedeckt 16
Pedals	+Principal 16' 8'	Contrabass 16, Octave 8
Pedals	Soft 16' 8'	Bourdon 16, Lieblich Gedeckt 16, Bourdon 8'
II	Flutes 8' 4'	Flute Celeste 8', Flute 4'
Pedals	+ Bourdon 32'	+ Bourdon 32'
II	Flutes 8'	Flute Celeste 8'
II	Principle 8' 4'	Diapason 8, Octave 4
	-Swell to Pedal	Turn off Swell to Pedal
II	-4	Turn off Octave 4

Vocal Ranges:

The image shows four staves of musical notation, each representing a different vocal range. The staves are labeled on the left as Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each staff contains a single note on a five-line staff. The Soprano staff is in treble clef with a note on the second line (G4). The Alto staff is in treble clef with a note on the second space (A3). The Tenor staff is in treble clef with a note on the first space (G3), and an '8' is written below the staff. The Bass staff is in bass clef with a note on the second space (G2). All staves have a 4/4 time signature.

Score

# A Thirst For Water

Text by Rachel Kaufman

for SATB choir and organ

Music by Vera Ivanova

Adagio ♩ = 72

The score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Organ, and a Soft 16' pipe. The organ part includes staves for Light Fl 2', Soft Principal 8', and Soft 16'. The tempo is Adagio with a metronome marking of ♩ = 72. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The organ part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *mp*. The choir part includes lyrics: "A thirst for wa - ter,". The organ part includes performance instructions: "Rain Stick (flip and leave standing) L.V." and "Full Swell (no reeds) Sw to Gt, Sw to Ped". The score also includes a +Principal 16' 8' instruction.

# A Thirst For Water

2

16

S *mp* wa - - - - ter, *f* wa - ter,

A *mp* wa - - - - ter, *f* wa - ter,

T *mp* wa - - - - ter, *f* wa - ter, wa

B *mp* wa - - - - ter, *f* wa

16

Org. *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

*8<sup>va</sup>*

21

S *p* wa - ter, wa - ter, wa - wa - wa - ter,

A *p* wa - ter, wa - ter, wa wa wa - ter,

T *p* wa wa wa - - - - ter

B *mp* *p* wa - ter,

21

Org. *p*

*8<sup>va</sup>*