

So Beauty on the Waters Stood

TTBB a cappella

words by Ben Jonson

music by Sheena Phillips, based on the song of the same name by
Alfonso Ferrabosco (c. 1580 – 1628)

This piece is based on – and culminates in – Ferrabosco’s beautiful song *So Beauty on the Waters Stood*, from Jonson’s *Masque of Beauty*. Melodic fragments of Ferrabosco’s song appear throughout, first in a depiction of Chaos, and then in another song from the same *Masque*, *When Love At First Did Move*, describing how Love emerged from that chaos to brighten the world and make it beautiful. The figures of Chaos return, but this time separated into the four elements Earth, Water, Air and Fire, now working harmoniously together, and clearing the path for a choral realization of Ferrabosco’s song (originally performed by “a loud Tenor” and lute).

duration c. 4:30

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So Beauty on the Waters Stood

When Love, at first, did move
From out of chaos, brightened
So was the world, and lightened
As now!
As now!
As now!
Yield, night, then, to the light,
As blackness hath to beauty.
It was for beauty, that the world was made⁺,
And where she reigns, Love's lights admit no shade.
Love's lights admit no shade.

So beauty on the waters stood
When Love had severed earth from flood!
So when he parted air from fire,
He did with concord all inspire!
And then a motion he them taught
That elder than himself was thought,
Which thought was, yet, the child of earth,
For Love is elder than his birth.

Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637)

Two lines of the original are omitted, and spelling has been modernized.

+ Ben Jonson's footnote: "An agreeing opinion, both with *Divines* and *Philosophers*, that the great *Artificer* in love with his own *Idea*, did, therefore, frame the world."

The two stanzas above appear as songs in Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* (1608), an extravagant homage to the court of King James I and Queen Anne that drew on classical philosophy to extol Love and beauty. As Jonson tells it, Love was the prime force behind the creation of the universe. It was Love that first emerged from Chaos, brightening the world and making it beautiful. It was Love that separated the elements of earth and water, air and fire and brought them into harmony. And Love is older than anything, even the most ancient motions of the universe, and certainly than any human thought.

So Beauty on the Waters Stood

Two songs from Jonson's *Masque of Beauty*

Words by Ben Jonson

Music by Sheena Phillips
based on a song by Alfonso Ferrabosco (c. 1580 - 1628)

Andante con moto ♩ = 96

f *agitato*

("s" strongly percussive)

The musical score is arranged for four voices: T1 (Tenor 1), T2 (Tenor 2), B1 (Bass 1), and B2 (Bass 2). It is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' with a metronome marking of ♩ = 96. The dynamics are marked 'f' (forte) and 'agitato' (agitated). The lyrics are 'Cha - os!' repeated throughout. The score is divided into three systems, with measures 8, 7, and 13 marked at the beginning of each system. The first system (measures 8-11) shows the vocal entries. The second system (measures 7-10) continues the vocal lines. The third system (measures 13-16) concludes the vocal parts. The instrumental parts (T2, B1, B2) provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs. A large, semi-transparent watermark 'SAM' is visible across the center of the page.

più mosso c. ♩ = 104

so beauty 2

19 *p dolce*

T1 8 When Love, at first, did move from out of

T2 8 When Love, at first, did move from out of

B1 *p misterioso* Oh, oh, oh,

B2 *p misterioso* Oh, oh, oh,

27 *mf*

T1 8 Cha - - - os, bright - ened So

T2 8 Cha - - - os, bright - ened So

B1 *mf* bright - ened So

B2 *mf* bright - ened So

33

T1 8 was the world, and light - - - - ened As

T2 8 was the world, light - - - ened As

B1 was the world, and light - - - - ened As

B2 was the world, and light - tened, light-ened, As

so beauty 3

39

mp *p*

T1 now! As ³ now! As now!

T2 now! As now! As now!

B1 now! As now! As now!

B2 now! As ³ now! As now!

più mosso ♩ = 108

45

f *sonore*

T1 Yield, night, then, to the light,

T2 Yield, night, then, to the light,

B1 Yield, night, to the light,

B2 Yield, night, to the Light,

50

p cresc. *mf*

T1 as black - ness hath to beau - ty:

T2 as black - ness hath to beau - ty:

B1 as black - ness hath to beau - ty:

B2 as black - ness hath to beau - ty:

57 *mp dolce* *cresc.*

T1 It was for beau - - - ty that the world was made, And

T2 *mp dolce* It was for beau - ty that the world was made,

B1 *mp dolce* It was for beau - ty that the world was made,

B2 *mp dolce* It was for beau - ty that the world was made,

64 *mf*

T1 where she reigns, *cresc.* Love's *mf* lights ad - mit no

T2 And where she reigns, *cresc.* Love's *mf* lights ad - mit no

B1 And where she reigns, Love's *mf* lights ad - mit no

B2 Love's lights ad - mit no

70 *p dolce*

T1 shade. Love's *p dolce* lights ad - mit no shade.

T2 shade. Love's *p dolce* lights ad - mit no shade.

B1 shade. Love's *p dolce* lights ad - mit no shade.

B2 shade. Love's *p dolce* lights ad - mit no shade.

l'istesso tempo

77

T1

T2

B1

B2

p

p legato

Air,

Wa - - - - ter, wa - - - -

p sereno

Earth, earth,

85

T1

T2

B1

B2

mp animato ("fire" pronounced "fie-ya")

Fi - - - re! fi - - - re!

mp cresc.

air,

mp cresc.

ter, wa - - - ter, wa ter,

mp cresc.

mf cresc.

Earth, earth,

90

T1

T2

B1

B2

mf

Fi - ³ - - re! Fi - - ³ - re!

mf

air....

mf cresc.

f

wa - - - - ter, wa - - - ter...

f

Meno mosso ♩ = 90 sereno

so beauty 6

96 soli *mp*

T1 Ah, *mf* (mel.) Ah,

T2 *mp* So beau-ty on the wa-ters stood When Love had

B1 So beau-ty on the wa-ters stood When Love had

B2 *mp* So beau-ty on the wa-ters stood When Love had sev-er'd

102

T1 Ah,

T2 sev-er'd earth from flood! So when he part-ed air from fire,

B1 sev-er'd earth from flood! So when he part-ed air from fire,

B2 earth from flood! So when he part-ed air from fire,

108

T1 Ah, Ah,

T2 He did with con-cord all in-spire! And then a mo-

B1 He did with con-cord all in-spire! And then a mo-

B2 div. He did with con-cord all in-spire! And then a mo-tion

114

T1
8

T2
8

B1

B2

tion hee them taught, That el - der than him - self was thought,

tion he them taught, that el - der than him - self was thought

he them taught, that el - der than him - self was thought,

120

T1
8

T2
8

B1

B2

Ah, el - der than his birth.

Which thought was yet the child of earth, For Love is el - der than his birth.

Which thought was yet the child of earth, For Love is el - der than his birth.

Which thought was yet the child of earth, el - der than his birth.

125 *mp* *poco rit.*

T1
8

T2
8

B1

B2

Ah, For Love is el - der than his birth.

mp Which thought was yet the child of earth, For Love is el - der than his birth.

mp Which thought was yet the child of earth, For Love is el - der than his birth.

mp Which thought was yet the child of earth, For Love is el - der than his birth.