

a quiet life

Aran Browning

a quiet life

Duration: ca. 19 minutes

ca. 16 minutes (with coda)

With this project, I wanted to create a relevant, relatable and accessible work which explores a community of different people who come together to sing. The piece delves into what it's like to be a part of a community choir, highlighting and sharing the other elements off-stage that the audience don't usually see; from membership change to organising lifts, performance nerves to finding a place to rehearse. Accompanying video, produced by Alan Cameron, encapsulates this, expanding the bounds of the work to go outside the concert while also allowing for reflection.

The text comes from and is inspired by a series of poems by Joyce Begg, one of the founding members of the Strathendrick Singers. Written for the choir at different stages throughout its history, these are conversational and personal, which is reflected in their setting, with interplay between parts, melancholic harmonies and shifting rhythms.

I endeavoured to create a challenging yet approachable work incorporating ideas including falsetto, slides/glissandos, a more independent piano part and frequently changing time signatures.

Getting to know the choir really informed this and allowed the work to become more collaborative - a piece created with the Singers, about the Singers and for the Singers. A quiet life follows their story from its 'casual beginnings' to its thriving present and future - another 'ten more years at least!'

This work was originally developed for and performed by the Strathendrick Singers as part of the Adopt a Composer scheme, funded by Creative Scotland and the Philip and Dorothy Green Music Trust, and run by Making Music, in partnership with Sound and Music and BBC Radio 3.

As part of Adopt a Composer's Legacy Project, this customisable version gives the opportunity for other choirs to contextualise the piece to their story and community. Gaps in the lyrics allow a choir to enter text relevant to them. Another version of this score which includes the original text for reference is also available. If you are considering major changes to existing text or would like support with incorporating alternate lyrics, such as those which would affect or alter rhythm, contact the composer through Making Music. Including video, which reflects and captures being in your choir, to start and end the piece is encouraged.

Performance Directions

Pause between each movement (including between 3 and coda if used) except movements 2 and 3.

Beginning video enters with piano at the start of the piece with piano repeating as shown (bars 1-8) until video fades out with the choir then beginning to sing (bar 13).

Ending video begins when piano enters (bar 52 in mvt. 5, 34 in coda) with piano repeating as shown (bars 57-64 in mvt. 5, 38-45 in coda) until video fades out then continues.

During movement 2, 'we'll go on singing', the tenor part reaches high pitches where falsetto may be required. Basses who are able to should support the tenor line in these moments.

T. we'd ra-ther they stayed with

The notation shows a tenor line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics 'we'd ra-ther they stayed with' are written below the notes.

Glissando from the starting note to smoothly reach, though not re-sing, the connected note.

T. sing - ing. Ca_rol

The notation shows two tenor lines in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The first line shows a glissando from G4 to A4, with the lyrics 'sing - ing.' below. The second line shows a melody in 6/8 time: G4, A4, B4, C5, with the lyrics 'Ca_rol' below.

Instrumentation

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

Movements

1 - from casual beginnings

2 - we'll go on singing

3 - our voices soar

4 - there's much more involved

5 - from those early days

(coda - can be used as an alternate ending after movement 3, in place of 4/5)

a quiet life

1 - from casual beginnings

Aran Browning

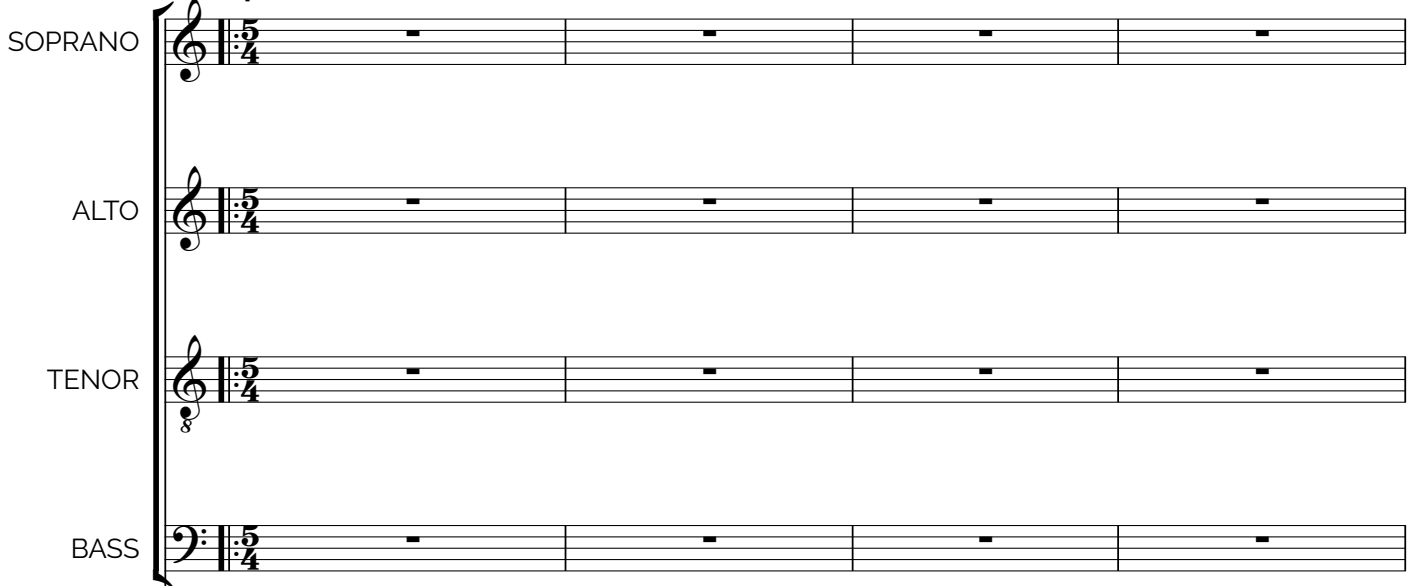
Optimistic, ♩=120

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS



Video starts alongside piano which repeats until choir reaches front, then continue.

Piano

pp *cresc.*



5

Pno.



9

Pno.

p



13 *mp*

S. Fan-cy start - ing up_ a choir so some of us_ can sing?

A. *mp*
I'm not sure a-bout it per-haps

Pno.

16 *mp*

S. Why don't we set up_ a choir for all of us_ to

A. I could just do ta- cet_

Pno.

19

S. learn? And let us re-as- sure_ your

A. *mp*
What if I de- ferred my voice may be stirred... let_ your fears_

T. *p*
my voice may be stirred...

Pno.

22

S. fears from ca - su - al be - gin - ings_ of

A. sub-side from ca - su - al be - gin - ings_ of

T. they'll hear us grow_ from_

B. they'll hear us grow_ from_

Pno.

25

S. home-ly ses-sions sing- ing.

A. home-ly ses-sions sing- ing.

T. —

B. —

Pno.

30

S. *mp* Spread the word fill the

A. *mp* Spread the word fill the

Pno.

35

S. for days on end whis-pers went._____

A. for days on end whis-pers went._____

T. *p* through the town went._____

B. *p* through the town went._____

Pno.

40

S. *mf*
Have you heard, have you had your au - di-tion set? Au-

A. *mf*
Have you heard, have you had your au - di-tion set? Au-

T. *mf*
have you had Au-

B. *mf*
have you had Au-

Pno. *mp* *mf* *8va*

44

S. di-tion yet? Ah

A. di-tion yet? Ah

T. di-tion yet? Ah

B. di-tion yet? Ah

Pno. *f* *p* *8va*

51 *mp*

S. They came from

Pno.

55

S. coul-dn't sing a note, o- thers as if__

A. *p* Some__ coul-dn't sing a note, o- thers as if__

Pno.

59

S. rust had got their throat__ and_ yet most

A. *mf* rust__ most folk could tell if__ the__

T. *p* got__ theirthroat most__

B. *p* got__ theirthroat most__

Pno. *mf*

63 *p* *f* *mp*

S. notes and at last we got a quo - - rum

A. *mp* *f* *p* notes and at last quo - - rum

T. notes and at

B. notes went up or down and at

Pno. *f* *p*

68 *mf*

S. could_ make a de - cent sound.

A.

T. *p* *mp* who de - cent sound.

B. *p* *mp* could de - cent sound.

Pno. *p* *mp* *p*

73 *p* *mf* *p dim.*

S. The dragged on be- yond be -

A. *p* *mp*
as to u-ni-form on

T. *p*
The dragged on

B. *p* *mp*
dis-cus- sions dragged on

Pno. *mp* *pp*

78 *p*

S. - lief.

A. *p*

T. *p*

Pno.

84

S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.

pp
pp
pp
pp
p

91

S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.

We practised in the

98

T. *mf*

B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

105

T. *mf*

B. *mf*

Pno.

111

A. *p*
At

T. *f*

B. *f*

Pno. *f*

117

S. *p* ven - ue_

A. last a bet - ter ven - ue_

T. *p* a bet - ter ven - ue_

Pno.

122

S. was found where our voi - ces could soar

A. was found where our voi - ces could soar

T. was found where our voi - ces could soar

B. *p* found where our voi - ces could soar

Pno.

128

S. *mf*
and make a fine sound. Though pre - mi - ses

A. *mf*
and make a fine sound. Though pre - mi - ses

T. *mf*
and make a fine sound. Though pre - mi - ses

B. *mf*
and make a fine sound. Though pre - mi - ses

Pno. *mf*

134

S. are vi - tal the mu - sic counts the most

A. are vi - tal the mu - sic counts the most

T. are vi - tal the mu - sic counts the most

B. are vi - tal the mu - sic counts the most

Pno.

140

S. — that's___ why_ a

A. — that's___ why_ a

T. — that's___ why_ a

B. — that's___ why_ a

Pno.

146

S. is___ all___ we re- quire, *p*

A. is___ all___ we re- quire, *p*

T. is___ all___ we re- quire, *p*

B. is___ all___

Pno. *p*

152

S. all that we, we re - quire to come and_ *ff*

A. all that we, we re - quire to come and_ *f*

T. all that we, we re - quire to come and_ *f*

B. to come and_ *f*

Pno. *f*

158

S. join_ the ha - ppy cho-rus the ha - ppy cho - rus the ha - ppy

A. join_ the cho-rus the cho - rus the

T. join_ the cho-rus the cho - rus the

B. join the join the join the

Pno. *ff*

161

S. cho - rus to join the choir.

A. cho - rus the choir. To T.

T. cho - rus the choir.

B. join the choir.

Pno.

Contemplative, ♩.=52

SOPRANO

ALTO *(ppp)* Sustain note throughout section, stagger breathing.
Ah _____

TENOR *pp* (Falsetto when required)
We rem-i-nisce, it's great to look back, to think of names. _____

BASS _____ names.

Piano

Contemplative, ♩.=52

8

A. (ah)

T. We miss them so, _____ it's ve - ry true to say

B. _____

Pno.

Sustain throughout section, stagger breathing.

17

S. *ppp* an - oth - er day. Ah_____

A. *(ppp)* an - oth - er.____ *p* And in a - mong

T. *(pp)* we'd ra - ther they stayed with us_ to sing,____ oth - er day. *p* And in a - mong

B. *ppp* sing,____ oth - er day.

Pno. *f* *p*

Ped. *8^{vb}*

25

S. *mp p* on._____

A. *mp* the names of those long gone, oth - ers' sup - port goes on. Through no - one's

T. *mp* the names of those long gone, oth - ers' sup - port goes on. Through no - one's

B. *p mp* sup - port goes on and

Pno. *f* *p*

Ped. *8^{vb}*

31

S. *mf* *mp*
our. They're there on

A. *mf* *mp*
fault our mem-bers change, our lea-ders we'd ne-ver re-ar-range. They're there on

T. *mf* *mp*
fault our mem-bers change, our lea-ders we'd ne-ver re. They're

B. *p* *mf* *mp*
ne-ver re-ar-range. They're

Pno. *f* *mp*

(8)-----

38

S. through thick and thin, they smile their way through each and ev-ry

A. through thick and thin, they smile their way through each and ev-ry

T. through, they smile through each and ev-ry

B. through, they smile through each and ev-ry *mf*

Pno. *f* *mp* *f*

44 *mf* *p*

S. *mf* *p*
din. With such a

A. *mf* *p*
din. such a so - cial, so - cial bunch

T. *mf* *p*
din. we could-n't

B. *mf*
din.

Pno. *p*

50

S. Ca_rol sing - ing,

A. the par-ties, cheese, wine, bar - be-cues. Ca_rol sing - ing,

T. lose cheese, wine, bar - be- cues.

B. *p*
cheese, wine, bar - be- cues.

Pno.

55

S. *p* in hap - py mem - 'ries are

A. *p* hap - py mem - 'ries are

T. *p* eve-nings in _____ years_ with hap - py mem - 'ries are

B. *p* eve-nings in _____ years_ with hap - py mem - 'ries are

Pno.

59

S. full. Mem o- ries

A. full. Mem o- ries

T. full. Mem o- ries

B. full. Mem o- ries

Pno. *mp* *f*

63 **Anticipating**, ♩=66

Pno. *p*

67

S. *mf*
hear_ our

A. *mp*
hear_ our

T. *p*
ears_____ hear,

B. *p*
So long_____ as ears_____ can hear,

Pno.

72

S. mu - sic lin - ger-ing, lin - ger-ing. We'll go on_____

A. mu - sic lin - ger-ing, lin - ger-ing. We'll go on_____

T. *mf*
mu - sic lin - gers,_____ lin-ger-ing. We'll go on_____

B. *mf*
mu - sic lin - gers,_____ lin-ger-ing. We'll go on_____

Pno. *mf*

77

S. sing - ing, sing - ing, We'll go on sing - ing,

A. sing - ing, sing - ing, We'll go on sing - ing,

T. sing - ing, sing, sing - ing. We'll go on sing - ing,

B. sing - ing, sing, sing - ing. We'll go on sing - ing,

Pno.

82

S. *pp* sing - ing ten more years, ten more years

A. *pp* sing - ing ten more years, ten more years

T. *pp* sing, sing - ing ten more years, ten more years

B. *pp* sing, sing - ing ten more years, ten more years

Pno. *pp*

87

S. *mp cresc.*
at - - - least. *lf*

A. *mp cresc.*
at - - - least. *lf*

T. *mp cresc.*
at - - - least. *lf*

B. *mp cresc.*
at - - - least. *lf*

Pno. *mp cresc.*

90

S. they want mu - sic, we'll pro - vide a

A. they want mu - sic, we'll pro - vide a

T. they want mu - sic, we'll pro - vide a

B. they want mu - sic, we'll pro - vide a

Pno.

3 - our voices soar

Freely, ♩=80

ff

S. feast. _____ Re - lease and sing. _____ Free, our voi -

A. feast. _____ Re, re - lease and sing. _____ Free, our voi -

T. feast. _____ Re - lease and sing. _____ Free, our voi -

B. feast. _____ Re - lease and sing. _____ Free, our voi -

Freely, ♩=80

ff

Pno. *ff* (8).....

12

S. ces soar. _____

A. ce soars. _____ *mp* Re - lease, _____ ease, _____ re -

T. ce soars. _____ *p* Re - lease, _____ ease, _____ re -

B. ce soars. _____ *p* lease, _____ ease, _____ re -

Pno. *fff* *p* (8).....

24

S. *mf*
Free, our

A. *mf*
lease. Sing. free and sing! Sing! Free, our

T. *mp* *mf*
lease. Sing. free and sing! Free, our

B. *mp* *mf*
lease. Sing. free and sing! Free, our

Pno. *mf* *f*
8^{ub}

35

S. *f* *ff*
voi - ces, voi - ces soar.

A. *f*
voice, voi - ces soar.


T. *f* *solo p*
voi - ces, voi - ces soar. That feel - ing,

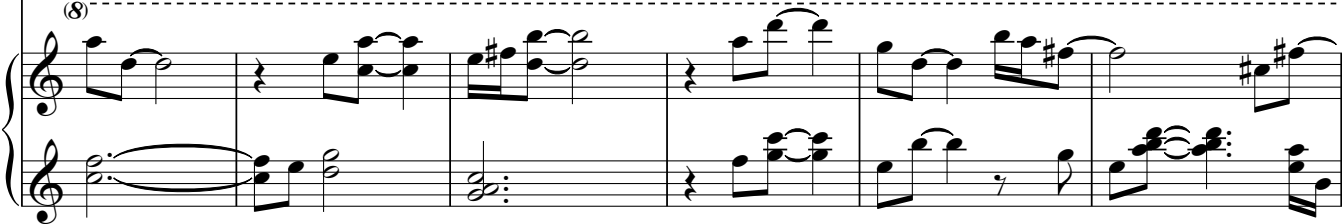
B. *f*
voice, voi - ces soar.

Pno. *ff* *mf* *pp*
8^{va}

(8)

45

T. 
that feel - ing of e - la - tion

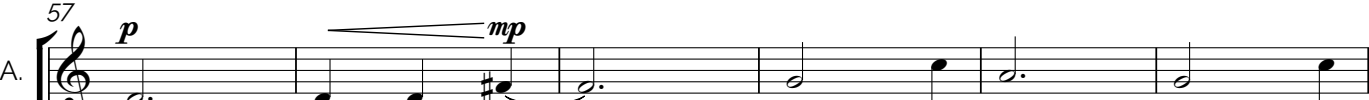
Pno. 

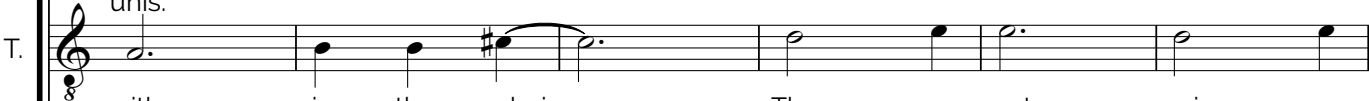
51

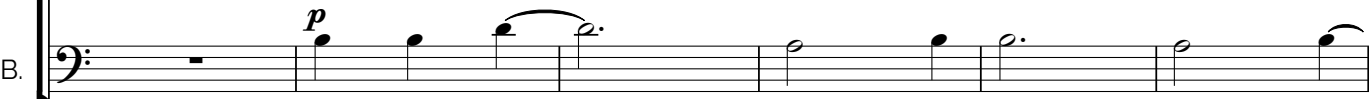
T. 
sing - ing. sing - ing brings, sing - ing brings


Pno. 

57

A. *p* 
mp
with - in the choir. The rap - port, voi - ces

T. 
with - in the choir. The rap - port, voi - ces

B. *p* 
mp
in the choir. The rap - port, voi - ces

Pno. 

63

S. *p*
And in that mo-ment re-lease and, and, and

A. *p*
soar. re-lease and,

T. *p*
soar. re-lease and, re-lease and,

B. *mp*
soar. Re -

Pno. *p*
8^{vb}

70

S. *f*
sing! Sing.

A. *f*
re - lease and sing! Sing.

T. *f*
re - lease and sing! Sing.

B. *f*
lease sing! Sing. Re - lease and

Pno. *f*

rit.

75

S. Free, our voi - ces soar.

A. Free, our voice soars.

T. Free, our voice soars.

B. sing! Our voice soars.

Pno.

4 - there's much more involved

Playful, ♩=96

S.

A.

T.

B.

Playful, ♩=96

Pno.

8

S. Can. It's hard - er than

A. How you Hard

T. How are you on stack-ing chairs, can you bake a few e-clairs? Hard.

B. Hard.

Pno.

13

S. *pp* Sell. _____

A. *pp* - er than you think to sing. _____ Sell. _____

T. *p* tick-ets,

B. *mp* sing and op-er - ate the sink, sell the tick-ets,

Pno. *p*

17

S. *mp* Hard - er_ to give out you'll need to shout! *f*

A. *mp* than_ you think no-ti - ces.

T. *f* *p* serve the drinks. It's hard.

B. *f* *p* serve the drinks. It's hard - er_

Pno. *f* *p*

22

S. *mp*
raf-fle gifts, how 'bout or-gan

A. *mp*
Would you help with raf-fle gifts, or-gan

Pno. *f* *p*

27

S. is-ing lifts? take down the stage? You know some-one who can page

A. is-ing lifts? Could you take down the stage? some-one who can page

T. *mp* *f*
Do you know? page

B. *mp* *f*
Do you know? page

Pno. *f*

32 *f* *pp* *p*

S. turn,___ turn?___ There's much more___

A. turn,___ turn?___

T. *f* *pp* turn,___ turn?___

B. *f* *pp* turn,___ turn?___

Pno. *pp* *p*

37 *mf* *p* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf*

S. in- volved___ than

A. than, much more___ in- volved, than

T. *pp* *mf* so much more in- volved much more___ in- volved, than

B. *pp* *mf* so much more in- volved

Pno. *mf* *p*

41

S. *mp*
sing - ing, _____ sing - ing with us. _____

A. *mp*
sing - ing, _____ sing - ing with us.

T. *mp*
sing - ing, _____ sing - ing with us. _____

B. *mp*
with us. _____

Pno. *mp*

45

S. *mp*

A. *mp sf mp*
Our _____ were _____ the best.

Pno. *p f p*

50

S. *sf* *mp* *pp* *mf*

A. *sf* *mp* *pp* *mf*

T. *pp* *mf*

B. *pp* *mf*

Pno. *f* *p*

54

T. *mp* *sf* *mp*

B. *mp* *sf* *mp*

Pno. *f* *p*

our ver sa —

We've done splen - did shows, — our ver sa —

59

S. *mf* til - i - ty_ no_ li - mit *f* knows.____

A. *mf* til - i - ty_ no_ li - mit *f* knows.____ *mp* We

T. *mf* no_ li - mit *f* knows.____

B. *mf* no_ li - mit *f* knows.____

Pno. *f* *mf* *ff* *p*

64

A. *sf* don't try to mes mer - ise_ *mp* or baf - fle._ we of - fer

Pno. *f* *p*

68

S. *mp* *mf*
in a raf-fle.

A. *sf* *mp* *mf*
in a raf-fle, in a raf-fle.

T. *mf*
raf-fle.

Pno. *f* *p* *ff*

72

S. *f* *ff*
Al-though a is all you re-quire,

A. *f* *ff*
Al-though a is all you re-quire,

T. *f* *ff*
Al-though a is all you re-quire,

B. *f* *ff*
Al-though a is all you re-quire,

Pno. *f*

74

S. *mf* there's much more in - volved *p* to sing in our choir.

A. *mf* there's much more in - volved *p* to sing in our choir.

T. *mf* there's much more in - volved *p* to sing in our choir.

B. *mf* there's much more in - volved *p* to sing in our choir.

Pno. *mf* *pp*

Lively yet reminiscent, ♩=112

mp

S. We've come a _____ way those _____

A. _____

T. _____

B. *mp*
We've come long way_ from ear-ly__ days..

Pno. *mp*

Lively yet reminiscent, ♩=112

7

S. *(mp)* our mu - sic _____ has won us. *mf* When

A. *mp* our mu - sic _____ has won us. *mf* When

T. *mp* our mu al pa-nache has won us_ praise. *mf* When

B. *(mp)* our mu al pa-nache has won us_ praise. *mf* When

Pno. *mf*

13

S. asked we'd per - form we heard the call. We've sung in_

A. asked we'd per - form we heard the call. We've sung in_

T. asked if we'd form we_ heard call. We've sung in_

B. asked if we'd form we_ heard call. We've sung in_

Pno.

19

S. *(mf)*

A. *(mf)*

T. *(mf)*

B. *(mf)* hall.

Pno.

26

S. *f* *mp*
Re-mem ber? That first con - cert

A. *f* *mp*
Re-mem ber? That first con - cert

T. *f* *mp*
Re-mem ber? That first con - cert

B. *f* *mp*
'Mem ber? That first con - cert

Pno.

34

S. *p*
back in

A. *p*
back in

T. *p*

B. *p*

Pno. *p*

40

S. *f* *ff*
To go on sing-ing ten more years at least.

A. *mf* *f*
To go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least.

T. *mp* *f*
To go on, to go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least.

B. *mp* *f*
To go on, to go on, to go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least.

Pno. *f*

46

S. If they mu-sic pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, a qui-et life is

A. They want mu-sic we'll pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, a qui-et life is

T. They want mu-sic we'll pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, a qui-et life is

B. If they mu-sic pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, a qui-et life is

Pno.

51 *fff*

S. far, is far from near!

A. far, is far from near! *ff*

T. far, is far from near! *ff*

B. far, is far from near! *ff*

Pno. *ff* *ff*

Piano begins as choir sits down one by one and turns to look at ending video.

55

Pno. *dim.*

Repeat until video ends, then continue.

60

Pno.

65

Pno. *p*

coda

Lively yet reminiscent, ♩=112

S. *mf* you re-mem-ber?

A. *mf* Do re-mem-ber?

T. *mf* re-mem-ber?

B. *mf* 'mem-ber?

Lively yet reminiscent, ♩=112

Pno. *ff* *f*

9

S. *f* *mp* *p* That first con - cert back in

A. *f* *mp* *p* That first con - cert back in

T. *f* *mp* That first con - cert

B. *f* *mp* That first con - cert

Pno. *p*

17

S.

A.

T. *p* To go on,

B. *p* To go on, to go on,

Pno.

23

S. *f* *ff* To go on sing-ing ten more years at least. If they mu - sic

A. *mf* *f* To go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least. They want mu - sic

T. *f* to go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least. They want mu - sic

B. *f* to go on, to go on sing-ing ten more years at least. If they mu - sic

Pno. *f*

28

S. pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, — a qui-et life is far, is far

A. we'll pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, — a qui-et life is far, is far

T. we'll pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, — a qui-et life is far, is far

B. pro-vide a feast. So long as ears can hear, — a qui-et life is far, is far

Pno.

33 *fff*

S. from_ near!

A. *ff* from near!

T. *ff* from near!

B. *ff* from_ near!

Pno. *ff* *ff*

Piano begins as choir sits down one by one and turns to look at ending video.

36

Pno.

Repeat until video ends, then continue.

38

Pno.

dim.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 38 through 42. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. A 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking is present in the first measure.

43

Pno.

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 43 through 46. Measures 43-45 continue the melodic and harmonic patterns from the previous system. Measure 46 is a double bar line followed by a repeat sign and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking, leading into the next system.

47

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 47 through 50. The right hand has a more active melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs. The left hand continues with a steady accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.