

Breath

for voice and piano

[Version 3 – Tenor]

Music by Keith Hamel

Lyrics by Olive Senior

Commissioned by the 46th Eckhardt-Gramatté
National Music Competition 2023 in voice

Duration: 8'40"

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Performance Notes

Breath is a setting of 3 poems by Olive Senior and is intended to be performed as a single work. The sound of audible breath (inhales and exhales) is a feature of the work and, when indicated in the score, the singer should make the breath sounds audible to the listener without them being too exaggerated. The exact duration of the audible breaths is somewhat flexible; the singer can take some liberties with the duration, dynamic level and quality of the breath sounds, but each should capture the character that is indicated in the score.

T is for Time Wasting

OPENING TIME

Waste time	Spend time	Save time
While away time	Devote time to	Seize time
Pass time	Ahead of time	Make time
Mark time	In good time	Keep time
At whatever time	In no time	Measure time
Lose time	On time	Timetable

Endless time	For a time	Time Sensitive
All the time	Another time	Time of one's life
Over time	In time	Time honoured
At one time	The nick of time	Time consuming
At the same time	Just in time	Time worn
Timeless	At that time	Time expired
Lifetime	Time Out	

CLOSING TIME

L is for Less

There's no vaccine for Mother Earth.
The cure is more of a withdrawal:

Less
 toxicity
Less
 extraction
Less
 plundering
Less
 consumption

A poisoned earth is squeezing us to death

Ease up.
Nature is sending out an S. O. S.

The only cure:
Less is more.

B is for Breathe

It takes one's breath away: a man dying during a pandemic
that takes away one's breath, no ventilator but one brave
spectator, recording

his last breath, his need *please*

somebody

taking the knee on the neck from men who from birth
breathed in tainted air, imbibed a foul history, burning
crosses

still smoldering

I can't breathe

like the hot breath of anger consuming the cities
we have breathed this before
this white head this
burning sensation in the throats of
The numerous ones held down and

mama

mama

I can't

Come on, George Floyd, breathe in the timeless rhythm
of Mother Earth waiting for you, for all her lost children,
for justice

I'm through

I'm through

Poems are taken from *Pandemic Poems - First Wave* © 2021 Oliver Senior and are used
with permission.

Breath

Music: Keith Hamel

Lyrics: Olive Senior

for voice and piano
[Version 3 - high male voice F3 - A4]

T is for Time Wasting

♩ = 96

First system of the musical score. It consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano line in treble clef, and a piano line in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piano part features a sixteenth-note accompaniment in the right hand and rests in the left hand. The vocal line has a rest in the first measure, followed by a quarter note 't' in the second measure, and a quarter note 't k' in the third measure. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and accents (>). An 8va line is indicated above the piano part.

Second system of the musical score, starting at measure 5. The time signature changes to 4/4, then 2/4, and then 3/4. The piano part has rests in the first two measures, followed by a sixteenth-note accompaniment in the third measure. The vocal line has a rest in the first measure, followed by a half note in the second measure, and a quarter note 't' in the third measure. Dynamics include mezzo-piano (*mp*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), and pianissimo (*ppp*). A 'slow audible inhale' instruction is present. An 8va line is indicated above the piano part.

Third system of the musical score, starting at measure 9. The time signature changes to 4/4, then 3/4, and then 3/4. The piano part has a sixteenth-note accompaniment in the first measure, followed by a triplet in the second measure, and a sixteenth-note accompaniment in the third measure. The vocal line has a quarter note 't' in the first measure, followed by a half note 'ime' in the second measure, and a half note '(m)' in the third measure. Dynamics include mezzo-piano (*mp*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), pianissimo (*pp*), and piano (*p*). An 8va line is indicated above the piano part.

12 (long inhale) [regular but audible breathing] (exhale) (inhale) (exhale)

3/4

pp

17 (inhale) (exhale) (inhale) (exhale)

mp

8va

6

3

21 *f* (gasp inhale as if surprised) *p* *mp* *f*

ch k t k t p d k [t] - ime [mm]

pp *pp*

2/4 3/4

25 *f*

t t t time

mf *f*

3/4

29

t t t time *mf* Op - en - ing time

32

t t t time *f* Waste time Spend time Save time

35

While a - way time *mp* De - vote time to

38

Seize time Pass time a - head of time Make time Mark time In

41

good time Keep time Meas-ure time Lose time

44

Waste time Spend time Save time At what-ev-er time

48

In no time Meas-ure time Lose time On time

51

Time ta ble t t t t t t t t time End-less time

55

For a time Time sen-sit-ive All the time A-noth-er time

59

Time of one's life t t t t t t t time

63

O - - ver time In time Time hon-ored

67

At one time The nick of time Time con-sum-ing

70 *mp*

At the same time Just in time Time worn

73

Time - less At that time Time ex - pired

77

Keep time Meas - ure time Lose time Waste time Spend time Save time

80

Seize time Pass time A - head of time Make time Mark time In time

84

Life time Time out Clos - ing

88

f (slow inhale as if taking a lot of breath)

time

f *p*

smear with pedal

92

mf = 132

Waste time Spend time Save time Seize time Pass time Make time Mark time Lose time

94

ff (quick exhale as if exhausted)

Keep time Pause time On time In time Time Out

L is for Less

slow relaxed inhale
(as if smelling
the flowers)

(relaxed
exhale)

98

♩ = 84

mp

p

Musical score for measures 98-101. The vocal line consists of rests. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand with sixteenth-note runs, marked with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand has rests. Measure 101 includes a triplet of sixteenth notes.

102

mp

There's no vac-cine ___ for Moth-er Earth. ___

Musical score for measures 102-105. The vocal line has lyrics: "There's no vac-cine ___ for Moth-er Earth. ___". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand with a triplet of eighth notes, marked with a *ppp* dynamic. The left hand has rests. Measure 105 includes a triplet of eighth notes.

106

The cure ___ is more of a with - - drawl:

Musical score for measures 106-108. The vocal line has lyrics: "The cure ___ is more of a with - - drawl:". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand with a triplet of eighth notes, marked with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand has rests. Measure 108 includes a triplet of eighth notes.

109

mf

Less tax-ic-i-ty ___ Less ___

Musical score for measures 109-112. The vocal line has lyrics: "Less tax-ic-i-ty ___ Less ___". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand with a triplet of eighth notes, marked with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand has rests. Measure 112 includes a triplet of eighth notes.

113

ex - trac - tion_ Less_ plun - der - ing Less_ ex - ploi - ta - tion

117

Less_ con - sump - tion_

121

A poi - soned_ earth_ is squeez - ing us_ to_ death_

125

Ease up. Na - ture_ is send - ing you_ an S. O. S. (s...) (turn into an exhale)

129

mf The on - ly cure: *p* Less is more.

134

B is for Breathe

long slow inhale
(with a bit of a struggle)

♩ = 60

138

142

mf It takes one's (audible inhale) breath a - way:

145

a man dy - ing dur - ing a pan - dem - ic

148

mp that takes a - way one's breath, *f* no *mp*

mf smear with pedal

151

ven - til - lat - or but one brave spect - at - or, re - cord - ing

155

mf his last breath, *p* (audible inhale)

158

his need _____ please _____

smear with pedal

161

some - bo - dy _____

164

tak - ing the knee _____ on the neck from men who from birth

167

(audible inhale)

breathed in tain - ted _____ air,

smear with pedal

170

mf

im - bibed a foul his - tor - y burn - ing

p

173

f

cross - es still smould - er - ing

mf

176

f (raspy inhale)

I can't breathe

ff *mp*

smear with pedal

180

mf

like the hot breath of an - ger con - sum - ming the cit - ies

183

f (raspy inhale)

we have breathed this be - fore

186

mf

this white heat this burn - ing sen - sat - ion in the throats of the

189

f *ff* *mf*

num - er - ous ones held down and

smear with pedal

192

mp *p*

ma - ma ma - ma I can't

196

f

Come on, George Floyd,

(lh)

p

199

(audible inhale)

breathe in the time - less rhy - thm of Moth - er Earth

(lh)

(lh)

(lh)

202

wait - ing for you, _____ for

(lh)

mf

pp

smear with pedal

205

mf

all her lost child - ren, for just - ice

mp

smear with pedal

209

meno mosso

mf

for just - ice

p

pp

smear with pedal

213

mp

(inhale)

p

(short inhale)

I'm

through

I'm

through

ppp