



The American Prize
2015 Finalist

Three Songs of the Soul
II. The Soul Considers
Its Nearness to God

SATB *a cappella* with *divisi*



Poem by Jan Luyken

Music by Rebecca Oswald
(1997)



Duration 4:10



Rebecca Oswald Music
rebeccaoswald.com

Rebecca Oswald (b. 1958) is an award winning composer and lifelong pianist. Her catalogue includes music for piano as well as other solo instruments, various chamber ensembles, string and full orchestra, art songs, all types of choral ensembles including chorus with orchestra, a clarinet concerto, and an opera. She has also written music for film and games. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree, *summa cum laude*, in music theory and composition from Westminster Choir College (1998), and a Master of Music degree in music composition from the University of Oregon School of Music (2001). For more information please visit rebeccaoswald.com or write to rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com.

Rebecca Oswald

Three Songs of the Soul

II. *The Soul Considers Its Nearness to God*

SATB *a cappella* with *divisi*

Program notes:

The Soul Considers Its Nearness to God is the second in a choral set entitled *Three Songs of the Soul*. Jan Luyken (1649-1712), a native of Amsterdam, lived a secluded life as a poet, artist, and engraver. The English translations of these three poems (Frank J. Warnke, tr.) first appeared in the Winter 1958 issue of *Comparative Literature* (Volume 10:1). In this choral setting, the melodies and harmonies aspire to express the meaning and beauty of the poet's metaphysical ideals. Within lightly extended tonality which develops throughout the piece via expanding and contracting harmonic progressions and modulations, each voice has its own lyrical life.

The engraving on the cover, "*De Musikant*," is from *Het Mensylek Bedryf*, a collection of engravings made in the studio of Johannes Luiken (another spelling of Jan Luyken) and his son Caspaares (Caspar). and was published in Amsterdam in 1694.

Requests:

- (1) Please report all U.S. performances of this work to BMI (classical@bmi.com) and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com) by emailing a JPG or PDF of a program, flyer, poster, or ticket showing the title of my programmed work(s) and my name (Rebecca Oswald).
- (2) Similarly, please report all non-U.S. performances to the host country's national performance rights organization, to BMI (classical@bmi.com), and to me (rebecca@rebeccaoswald.com).

Many thanks! I hope you and your choir enjoy singing *The Soul Considers Its Nearness to God*.

— *Rebecca Oswald*



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The Soul Considers its Nearness to God

I thought that Godhead made its home afar,
Enthroned beyond the moon and every star,
And often lifted up my eyes
Thither with deep and heartfelt sighs;
But when it pleased Thee to illuminate me,
I saw no heavenly light descend to greet me;
But at my spirit's deepest root,
All was lovely, all was sweet.
For Thou cam'st from the depths and outwards spread,
And like a well my thirsty heart was fed;
So was it, God, that Thee I found
To be the ground beneath my ground.
Then I rejoiced that Thou, my highest dearest
Wert closer to me than my earthly nearest!
All disproportion fled from me,
My heart was pure, as it should be.
No heights, no depths, shall separate us twain;
I melt in God, my Love; we shall remain
One soul, one heavenly flesh and blood,
The being and the mind of God.
It must occur; O help, eternal Lord,
To turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

Jan Luyken

English translation by Frank J. Warnke

The Soul Considers Its Nearness to God

from *Three Songs of the Soul*
SATB a cappella

Words by Jan Luyken
English translation by Frank J. Warnke

Music by Rebecca Oswald

Gently (♩ = 132)
mp

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

I thought that God - head _____ made its home a - far, _____ En - throned be -

Gently (♩ = 132)
mp

Piano (reh. only)

9 *mf* *f*

S
A
T
B

yond the moon and _____ ev - 'ry star, _____ And of - ten _____ lift - ed

9 *mf* *f*

9 *mf* *f*

17 *mf*

S up my eyes Thith - er with deep and heart - felt sighs;

A up my eyes Thith - er with deep and heart - felt sighs;

T up my eyes Thith - - - er with deep and heart - felt sighs;

B up my eyes Thith - - - er with deep and heart - felt sighs;

17 *mf*

25 *mp* Joyfully (♩ = 72) *f marcato*

S But when it pleased Thee to il-

A But when it pleased Thee to il-

T But when it pleased Thee to il - lum - i - nate _

B But when it pleased Thee to il - lum - i - nate _

25 *mp* Joyfully (♩ = 72) *f marcato*

32

S lum - i - nate me, I saw no heav'n - ly light de - scend —

A lum - i - nate me, I saw no heav'n - ly light de - scend —

T me, I saw no heav'n - ly light de - scend to

B me, I saw no heav'n - ly light de - scend to

32

38 *mp legato*

S — to greet me; But at my spir - it's deep - est root, —

A — to greet me; But at my spir - it's deep - est root, —

T greet me; But at my spir - it's deep - est

B greet me; But at my spir - it's deep - est

38 *mp legato*

44 **Gently** (♩ = 132)

p *pp*

S All — was love-ly, — all — was sweet. — For

A All — was love-ly, — all — was sweet. — For

T root, All — was love-ly, all — was sweet. — For

B root, All — was love-ly, all — was sweet. — For

44 **Gently** (♩ = 132)

p *pp*

52 *p*

S Thou cam'st from the depths — and — out - wards spread, — And like — a well — my

A Thou cam'st from the depths — and — out - wards spread, — And like — a well — my

T Thou cam'st from the depths — and — out - wards spread, — And like a well my

B Thou cam'st from the depths — and — out - wards spread, — And like — a well my

52 *p*

60

S *mf* *f*
thirst-y heart was fed; So was it, God, that Thee I

A *mf* *f*
thirst-y heart was fed; So was it, God, that Thee I

T *mf* *ff*
thirst-y heart was fed; So was it, God, that Thee I

B *mf* *f*
thirst-y heart was fed; So was it, God, that Thee I

60

68

S *mf* *mp*
found To be the ground be - neath my ground.

A *mf* *mp*
found To be the ground be - neath my ground.

T *f* *mp*
found To be the ground be - neath my ground.

B *mf* *mp*
found To be the ground be - neath my ground.

68

Joyfully (♩ = 72)
f marcato

S Then I re - joiced _____ that Thou, my high - est dear - est Wert

A Then I re - joiced _____ that Thou, my high - est dear - est Wert

T Then I re - joiced that Thou, my high - est dear -

B Then I re - joiced that Thou, my high - est dear -

78 **Joyfully** (♩ = 72)
f marcato

83

S clos - er to me _____ than my earth - ly near -

A clos - er to me _____ than my earth - ly near -

T est Wert clos - er to me than my

B est Wert clos - er to me than my

83

88

S *p* *legato*
est! All dis - pro -

A *p* *legato*
est! All dis - pro - por - tion — fled from me,

T *mf* *legato*
earth - ly — near - est! All dis - pro - por - tion — fled from me,

B *mf* *legato*
earth - ly near - est! All dis - pro -

88

93

S *mp*
por - tion fled from me, My heart was pure, as it should

A *mp*
— My heart was pure, as it should

T *mp*
— My heart was pure, as it should

B *mp*
por - tion fled from me, My heart was pure, as it should

93

98 Gently (♩ = 132)

p *mp*

S be. _____ No heights, no depths, shall sep - a - rate us

p *mp*

A be. _____ No heights, no depths, shall sep - a - rate us

p *mp*

T be. _____ No heights, no depths, shall sep - a - rate us

p *mp*

B be. _____ No heights, no depths, shall sep - a - rate us

98 Gently (♩ = 132)

p *mp*

106

mf

S twain; _____ I melt in God, my Love; we shall re - main _____

mf

A twain; _____ I melt in God, my Love; we shall re - main _____

mf

T twain; _____ I melt in God, my Love; we shall re - main

mf

B twain; _____ I melt in God, my Love; we shall re - main

106

mf

113

ff *f*

S One soul, one heav'n - ly flesh and blood, The

A One soul, one heav'n - ly flesh and blood, The

T *f* *ff* *f*
8 One soul, one soul, one heav'n - ly flesh and blood, The

B *f* *ff* *f*
One soul, one soul, one heav'n - ly flesh and blood, The

113

ff *f*

120

mp

S be - ing and the mind of God.

A be - ing and the mind of God.

T *mp*
8 be - ing and the mind of God.

B *mp*
be - ing and the mind of God.

120

mp

Prayerfully (♩ = 120)

128

p *mp*

S It must oc - cur; O help, e - ter - nal Lord, To

A It must oc - cur; O help, e - ter - nal Lord, To

T It must oc - cur; O help, e - ter - nal Lord, To

B It must oc - cur; O help, e - ter - nal Lord, To

128 **Prayerfully** (♩ = 120)

p *mp*

(non rit.)

132

p *pp*

S turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

A turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

T turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

B turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

132

p *pp*

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