

J O A N S Z Y M K O

The Ancient ones

a setting of a poem by
Patricia Reis
for
SSA CHORUS
piano, native frame drum
& speaker



Joan Szymko (b.1957)

Joan Szymko's choral music is regularly performed at regional, national and international choral festivals, competitions and conferences. Utilizing a familiar music vocabulary, she creates works that are nonetheless fresh and engaging; compelling and inspiring, her text selections are as notable as her music. Szymko is widely recognized as a foremost American composer of exceptional repertoire for women's choir. The American Choral Director's Association recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in America by selecting her as the recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010.

Joan Szymko lives and works in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. As resident composer she enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Portland based Do Jump! Movement Theater, (1995-2012) creating vocal underscoring for major touring productions. A dynamic conductor, she has served on the choral music faculty of Portland State University (2013-15) and has led Aurora Chorus as Artistic Director since 1993. As a visiting artist, Szymko workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad.

Patricia Reis is a writer and author of the memoir *Motherlines, Women's Voices* (with Nancy Cater), *The Dreaming Way, Daughters of Saturn*, and *Through the Goddess*. She is the creator/producer of the DVD, *Arctic Refuge Sutra*. She has a BA from the University of Wisconsin in English Literature, an MFA from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in Sculpture. In 1986, she earned an MA from the Pacifica Graduate Institute in Depth

Psychology and has a private psychotherapy practice. Patricia Reis has held positions as faculty, lecturer, and dissertation advisor and has mentored and facilitated many artists and writers in bringing their work to fruition. She divides her time between Portland, Maine and Nova Scotia.
— from www.patriciareis.net

The Ancient Ones

From the beginning,
We have been with you.
We are the ancient ones
And we remember.

We remember the time when there was only Love,
The time when all breathing was one.
We remember the seed of your being
Planted in the belly of the vast, black night.
We remember the red cave of deep slumber.

The time of forgetting,
The sound of your breath,
The pulse of your heart.
We remember the force
of your longing for life,
The cries of your birth
bringing you forth.

We are the Ancient Ones
And we have waited
and watched.

You say that you cannot remember that time
That you have no memory of us.
You say that you can not hear our voices
That our touch no longer moves you.
You say there can be no return
That something has been lost,
That there is only silence.

We say the time of waiting is over.
We say the silence has been broken.
We say there can be no forgetting now.
We say listen.
We are the bones of your grandmother's grandmothers.
We have returned now.
We say you cannot forget us now
We say we are with you and you are us.
Remember Remember.

Commissioned by Women of Note (Winnipeg Canada)
for their 25th Anniversary Season— Building Bridges to Our Community

The Ancient Ones

poem by Patricia Reis

Joan Szymko

The musical score is for a three-part vocal setting (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and piano accompaniment. It is in 2/2 time and the key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 40. The score begins with a Soprano line: "From the be - gin - ning We have been with you." The Alto and Tenor lines provide harmonic support with sustained notes. A large green watermark "for perusal only" is overlaid on the score. The second system starts at measure 5 and includes the lyrics: "We are the An - cient Ones" and "And we re - mem - ber." The tempo is marked as "poco rit." with a quarter note = 46. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and rests in the left hand. The score concludes with a "Ped." (pedal) marking and a fermata.

9 UNISON *mf*

S A

We re-mem-ber the time when there was on-ly love,

mp *mf*

12

S A

The time when all breath-ing was one. We re-mem-ber the seed of your be-

for perusal only

15

S A

- ing Plan-ted in the bel-ly of the vast black night. We re-

- ing Plan-ted in the bel-ly of the vast black night. We re-

p *p*

19 Unison

S
A

mem - ber the red_ cave of_ deep slum - ber.

perc.

traditional Native frame drum, struck with beater

mf

p

mp

mf

pedal simile

23

S
A

mf

The time of for - get - ting, _____ The sound of your breath, _____ The pulse of your

for perusal only

mf

mf

mf

f

26

S

f

mf

heart. _____ We re - mem - ber the force of your long - ing for life, _____ The cries of your

A

f

mf

heart. _____ We re - mem - ber the force of your long - ing for life, _____ The cries of your

f

mf

SPEAKER: You say that you cannot remember that time / That you have no memory of us

39

♩ = 108

mp

Alto: Oh

43

SPEAKER: You say that you cannot hear our voices

mf *mp*

That our touch no longer moves you.

add S2: Oh

Oh

mf *mp*

for perusal only

46

You say there can be no return, that something has been lost, that there is only silence.

Oh

END SPEAKER

49

mf *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

53

S *f*
We are _____ we are the An - cient Ones. _____

A *f*
We are, _____ we are _____ the An - cient Ones. _____

simile

57

ff

ff

60

ff

8^{vb}

Unison Slower $\text{♩} = 46$
dim.

63 *f*

S
A

Oh Oh

67 *mf* 4-part voicing *f*

S
A

We say the time of wait-ing_ is o - ver_ We say the si - lence_ has been

We say the time of wait-ing_ is o - ver_ We say the si - lence_ has been

N.B. N.B.

71 *mf* *mp*

S
S

bro - ken._ We say there can be no for - get - ting now,_ We say

A
A

bro - ken._ We say there can be no for - get - ting now,_ We say

mf *mp*

75

S
S

lis - ten, _____ lis - ten, _____ lis - ten. _____ *mf*

A
A

lis - ten, _____ lis - ten, _____ lis - ten. _____ *mf*

78

S
S

lis - ten. _____

A
A

lis - ten. _____

f

our grand - moth - er's

our grand - moth - er's

f

for perusal only

81

S
S

grand - moth - ers. _____ We have re - turned now. _____ lis - ten. _____

A
A

grand - moth - ers. _____ Lis - ten, lis - ten, lis - ten. _____ We say you

mp *f*

84 3-part voicing

f

S We say you can-not for-get us now, We say we are

S We say you can-not for-get us now, We say we are

A can-not for-get us now, you can-not for-get us now, We say we are

for perusal only

87 *rit.*

with you and you are us, and you are us. Re-

with you and you are us, and you are us. Re-

with you and you are us, and you are us. Re-

rit.

90 $\text{♩} = 46$

S *mf*
mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

S *mf*
mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

A *mf*
mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

mf *mp*

for perusal only

94 *mp* *p*

Re - mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

mp
Re - mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

mp
Re - mem - ber. Re - mem - ber.

p

mp *p*