

MEETING THE SUN

Movement 3: 'This Lovely Day'

Listening Guide

Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin was asked to write *Meeting The Sun* to commemorate the centenary of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or 'Anzac', landings at Gallipoli in 1915. It is a piece of music that has been composed for children's choir and concert band, which is a large group of woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. *Meeting The Sun* is in five sections (or movements) and lasts for about 18 minutes in total.

The third movement of *Meeting The Sun* by Elena Kats-Chernin is called 'This Lovely Day'. It is a musical setting of a poem written by Robert Ball. Ball served in the Australian Army in the Second World War in New Guinea, as did his wife, Sylvia.



The poem, 'This Lovely Day', speaks of Robert Ball's longing for his loved ones while he is far away amid the dangers and uncertainties of war. Here is the poem:

Should I be many miles away
When you next think of me,
Remember well this lovely day
That I bequeath to thee.

Should I be many years away;
Exiled in foreign lands,
Remember well this lovely day,
Our intertwining hands.

The words and all the promises
Sincerely spoken now,
The little ways of happiness
That are my sacred vow.

Through each and every lonely night
May you come back to me,
And may the shadows leap to light
In sweet serenity.

Should I be lost within the storm
That future days may bring,
Remember well this lovely morn
The joy and every thing.

Should I be changed in any form,
Or worn, or weary be,
Remember well this lovely morn
And smile the same on me.

And should the sunshine wrinkle
With a single tear or two,
May the stars above me twinkle
With the likeness of you.

No matter where my footsteps wend,
How torturous the trail,
I know that to my journey's end,
My heart shall never fail.

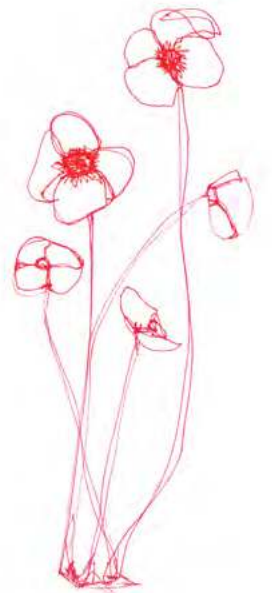
THIS LOVELY DAY

The music to this poem is mostly quiet and has an even, rolling pulse. After a woodwind and piano introduction, the choir sings the first verses to a melody that has only three notes. The section to the words 'with a tear or two' is sung in harmony and has a thicker musical texture. On the words 'should I be years away', the three note melody returns, but with an added counter-melody in the soprano voices. The music gradually becomes quieter and thinner towards the end where the accompaniment figure is finally played by the vibraphone alone.

Activity 1: Research

Find the following words from the poem 'This Lovely Day' and explain what they mean:

1. bequeath
2. sacred
3. vow
4. morn
5. likeness
6. intertwining
7. serenity
8. wend
9. torturous



Activity 2: Listening

First, listen to the whole of 'This Lovely Day'.



Next, listen to bars 17–32 at least five times while reading the score.



'This Lovely Day (bars 17-32)

Robert Ball Elena Kats-Chernin

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system (bars 17-22) includes parts for Flutes and Piccolo, Clarinets and Saxophones, Bass Clarinets and Bassoons, Horns, Piano, Vibraphone, and Choir. The second system (bars 23-32) includes parts for Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet/Saxophone, Bass Clarinet/Bassoon, Horn, Piano, Vibraphone, and Choir. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The choir lyrics are: "Should I be ma-nymiles a-way When you nextthink of me, Re-mem-ber well this love-ly day" and "The words and all the pro-mi-ses Sin-cere-ly".

28

Fl./Pic.

Cl./Sx.

B. Cl./Bsn.

Hn.

Pno.

Vib.

Choir

spo-ken now, The lit - tle ways of hap - pi - ness

mp

mp

mp

mp

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for rehearsal mark 28. It features seven staves: Flute/Piccolo (Fl./Pic.), Clarinet/Saxophone (Cl./Sx.), Bass Clarinet/Bassoon (B. Cl./Bsn.), Horn (Hn.), Piano (Pno.), Vibraphone (Vib.), and Choir. The Flute/Piccolo part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Clarinet/Saxophone part plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Bass Clarinet/Bassoon part has a similar rhythmic accompaniment. The Horn part has a melodic line starting in the third measure. The Piano part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Vibraphone part has a melodic line starting in the third measure. The Choir part has the lyrics: "spo-ken now, The lit - tle ways of hap - pi - ness". The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present in several parts.

Answer the questions about the score and recording.

1. Who is the lyricist?
2. Who is the composer?
3. What is the time signature?
4. Which instruments are not playing in bar 17?
5. Which instruments play the lowest note in this score?
6. What is that note?
7. How many different pitches do the choir sing?
8. What are those pitches?
9. How loud is the music in bar 17?

Extension question:

10. How does the composer achieve a gentle, soothing effect with this music?

Activity 3: Performance

Play the choir melody from This Lovely Day on the instrument of your choice:



Wedding of Bob and Sylvia Ball, Lae, Papua, New Guinea, 10 November 1945, (photograph), courtesy Jenny Nuttall

Activity 4: Composition

Set the words 'We will remember them, lest we forget' (words by Laurence Binyon, 1914) to music using only the notes A, B and C.

You may find that improvising on these notes on a keyboard or xylophone helps you to create a tune. Remember that the notes need to fit the words, and that your piece needs to be sung (not just played on an instrument).

You may like to perform your composition to the class on your own, or work in pairs.

Find a way of recording your composition, whether it be using music notation, writing down the letter names of the note you use for each syllable or making an audio recording of your work. You may record your piece in more than one way.

Activity 5: Creative Writing

Imagine you are Robert Ball's granddaughter or grandson and you find the poem 'This Lovely Day' in some old papers at home. Imagine how you would react. Would you feel a sense of empathy or gratitude towards Robert? Would you admire his sense of courage? Or imagine how he overcame hardship? Write a short poem to Robert in reply to 'This Lovely Day'.

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Music Education Writer and Arrangements

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History Advisor

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Director, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway

Composer, *Meeting The Sun*

Elena Kats-Chernin

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PO BOX 127
Concord NSW 2137
Australia
<http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au>

Performers, *Meeting The Sun*

Sydney Children's Choir, Conducted by Lyn Williams OAM
and Sam Allchurch
Royal Australian Navy Band, Sydney Detachment,
Conducted by LEUT Steven Stanke

Recording, *Meeting The Sun*

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ABC Classic FM Team: Stephen Adams, Project
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Designer

Rosalia Catalano

Style Guide

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