

octavo score

An Elm We Lost

*for tenor and baritone soloists,
SATB chorus and orchestra*

David Gompper

Program Notes

An Elm We Lost, written during the summer of 2002 in various locations including Sion, Vienna and Banff, was a commission from the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center in Cedar Falls, Iowa. I incorporate two texts by Marvin Bell, poet laureate for the state of Iowa: *An Elm We Lost* and *Catalog with Illustrations*. The former poem creates a structural framework, and the latter is embedded into the middle of the composition, as a reflection—a moment in time—and sung by the two soloists. In setting the poem, I took Marvin's short poem, fragmented the lines and presented the textural phrases starting from the end and working in reverse. My composition is a threnody—a lamentation—intended to commemorate the first anniversary of the events of 11 September 2001. This is reflected in the music by step-wise descending thirds, a spondaic rhythm (long-long) in the coda with a further fragmentation of the poem, presenting only the nouns and verbs, sung as a hocket in turn by the two soloists (the twin towers) and chorus (those lost to us, like the dead). I owe a debt of gratitude to Beverly Everett, who suggested the initial idea of the work and its instrumentation, and which led to its eventual commission.

An Elm We Lost

On it we wrote a little essay
about who loved who.
Shade moves in the grass, never still,
and they still do.

Catalog with Illustrations

The beauty of an old desk blotter where ink stains grew into the shapes
of ships in a turbulent ocean,
and the ticking of the clock in the sunlight thickened by dust.
The clacking of the typewriter keys, the big zipper sound of the
carriage return,
and the sound of the struck bell muffled in the drapes.
The air was rich with time, when there was still time.
The letter ripened slowly in the typewriter.
The minute hand took a second to move one digit.
Under the glass that covered the desktop, a map and family photos.

-Marvin Bell (used with permission)

Instrumentation

Percussion I —

- Crotales (upper octave)
- Glockenspiel
- Chimes (Tubular Bells) - *middle C plus the full upper octave needed*
- 2 Suspended Cymbals (high, medium)
- 2 Tam-tams (medium, low)

Percussion II —

- Marimba (4-1/3 octave) - *B2 up to the highest C*
- Vibraphone

Percussion III —

- (2) Timpani - *29" & 32", or 26" & 32", depending on individual drum ranges*
- crotales (use perc I)

Harp

Piano

Tenor and Baritone solo

SATB Chorus

Strings

Duration: 12'

to the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center, University of Northern Iowa

An Elm We Lost

for tenor and baritone soloists, SATB chorus and piano

Marvin Bell

David Karl Gompper (2002)

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

1 **Quiet, flowing** $\text{♩} = 60$ 8^{va} 8^{va} *bring out R. H.*



6



9



13

4

16 **A**

S. *p* *legato*
Do _ _ _ _ still _ do _

A. *p* *legato*
Do _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ still _

T. *8*

B. *4*

A

f *dim.* *p*

19

S. and _ they still do and they _ still _ do _ still

A. Do _ still _ do _ _ _ they still and _ they still do _ _ do _ still and

T. *8* *p*
Still they _ do _

B. *4*

22 *poco* *mp*

S. do and they still do still

A. they still do still ne - ver still still do

T. still do and they still do still

B. *p* *mp*
and they and

25 *p*

S. do ne - ver still ne - ver still in the

A. ne - - ver ne - ver still grass ne - ver

T. do and they still ne - ver still grass ne - ver

B. *p*
they still do ne - ver still, moves

27

S. grass moves in the grass

A. in the grass ne - ver in the grass

T. moves in the grass

B. the grass and they still

mp



30

S. *mp* the grass moves ne - ver the grass moves ne - ver *cresc.*

A. Shade moves in the grass and they still *cresc.*

T. Shade moves in the grass and they still *cresc.*

B. do shade moves in the *cresc.*

32

S. *mf* still, shade moves and they still do

A. *mf* do, still do *p* Shade

T. *mf* do, still do *p* Shade moves

B. *mf* grass moves *p* the

36

S. *p* Shade moves in the grass *f*

A. *f* moves in the grass

T. *f* moves in the grass

B. *f* grass in the grass

40

Musical score for measures 40-43. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 43.

44

Musical score for measures 44-47. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand has a more active accompaniment with eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo) in measure 45 and *f* (forte) in measure 47.

48

Musical score for measures 48-51. The right hand has a melodic line with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking in measure 49. The left hand features a bass line with a 3/4 time signature change in measure 50.

52

Musical score for measures 52-56. The right hand has a melodic line with a *p* (piano) marking in measure 54. The left hand has a bass line with a 4/4 time signature change in measure 56.

57

B ♩ = 120

Musical score for measures 57-61. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with a *p* (piano) marking in measure 57. The left hand has a bass line with a *ped.* (pedal) marking in measures 57, 59, and 61.

62

Musical score for measures 62-65. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with a *rall.* (rallentando) marking in measure 64. The left hand has a bass line with a *ped.* (pedal) marking in measures 62, 63, 64, and 65.

67 recitative *mf*

T. The beau - ty of an old desk blot - ter

B.

sfz

Ped.

69 *mf*

T.

B.

The beau - ty of an old desk blot - ter where ink stains

Ped.

71 *(as if one voice, blend)*

T. in - to the shapes of ships in a tur - bu - lent

B. grew in - to the shapes bu - lent o - cean

73

T. *8* and the tick - ing of the clock by dust _____

B. the clock in the sun - light thick - ened by dust _____

p

Red.

76

T. *8* *(faster)* *(articulate)* the big zip - per sound of the

B. *(faster)* The clack - ing of the type - writ - er keys,

Red.

79

T. *8* car - riage re - turn, and the

B. car - riage and the sound of the struck *(pure tone; non-vib)*

D Tempo I ♩ = 60

D Tempo I ♩ = 60

mp

81

T. *mf* sound of the struck bell — muf-fled in the drapes and the sound of the bell

B. bell — muf-fled in the drapes — and the



83

T. **E** *mf* The air was rich with

B. sound, muf-fled in the drapes *mf* The air was rich with

S. — — — — —

A. — — — — — *p* The

T. — — — — — *p* The

B. — — — — —

E *mf*

85

T. time when there _____ was _____ still

B. time when there _____ was _____ still

S.

A. air was rich with time when there was still time

T. air was rich with time when there was still time

B.

(8)

87

T. *time.* The air was rich with

B. *time.* air was

S. *mp*
The air was rich with time The air was rich with

A. The air was rich with time when there The air was

T. *8* The air was rich with time when there was still _

B. *mp*
The air was rich with time when

(8)

89

T. time when there was still

B. rich with time air was

S. time the air was rich with time

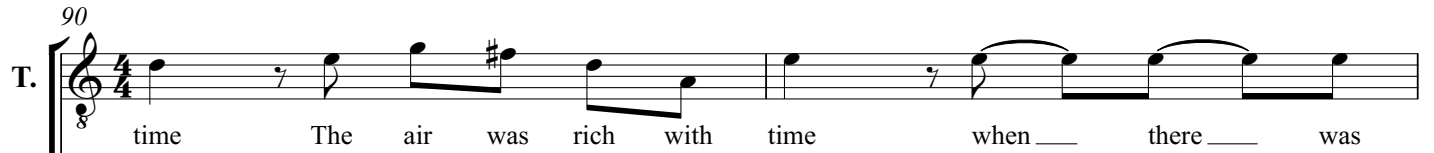
A. rich with time rich with time The

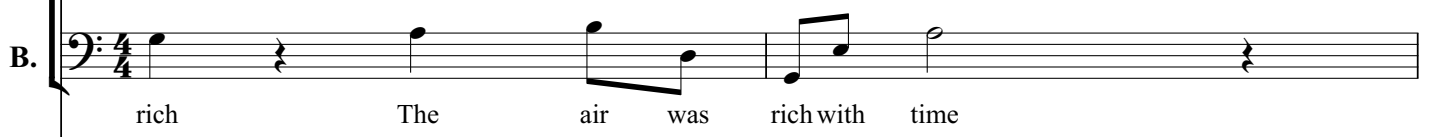
T. time rich with The air was rich with

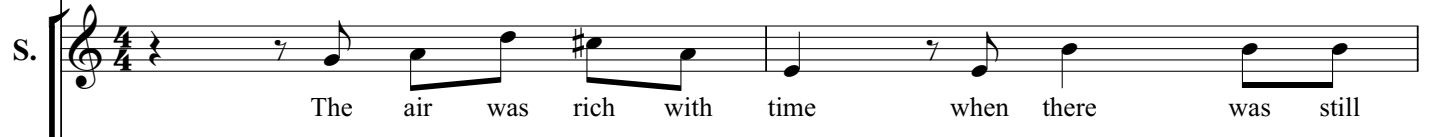
B. there was still time the air was rich

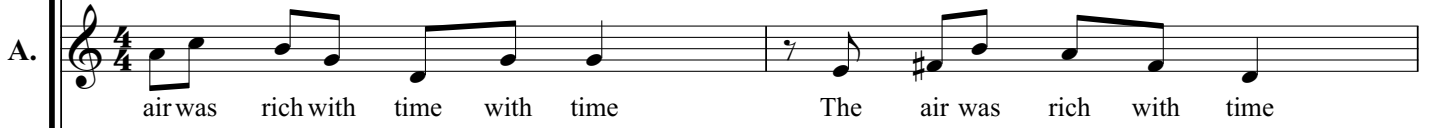
(8)

90

T.  time The air was rich with time when there was

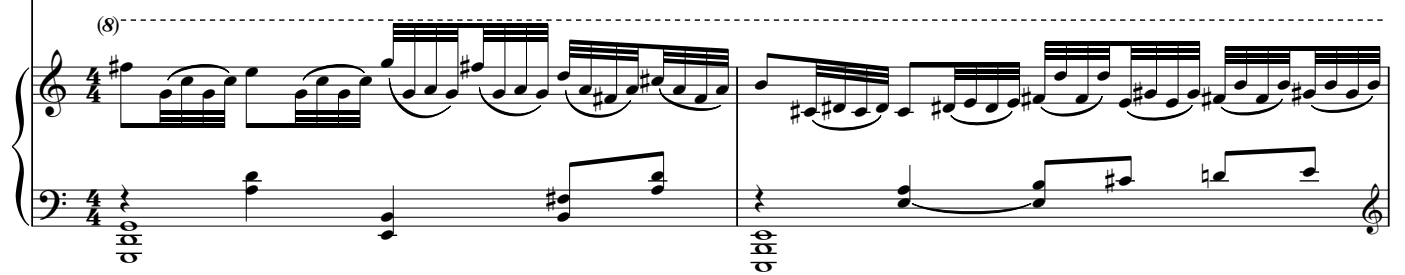
B.  rich The air was rich with time

S.  The air was rich with time when there was still

A.  air was rich with time with time The air was rich with time

T.  time The air was rich with time when there

B.  The air was rich with time when there was still time The



92

rit.

T. *still* *time*

B. *when there was still time*

S. *time* *The air was rich with time*

A. *the air was rich with time, when there was still*

T. *was still still time*

B. *air was rich with time*

(8) *rit.*

F ♩ = 60

94 **Meno mosso**

T. *The air was rich*

B. *The air was rich with time* *The*

S. *pp* (mm)

A. *pp* (mm) *time*

T. *pp* (mm)

B. *pp* (mm)

Meno mosso **F** ♩ = 60

pui f

Red.



99 *freely*

T. *slow-ly in the type-writ-er* *The min-ute hand took a*

B. *let-ter ri-pened slow*

(slightly accel) *(slight slowing)* *a tempo* *freely*

Red. *Red.*

18 102

T. *f* *a tempo*

se-cond to move un-der the glass

B. to move one di - git

Red. *Red.*

105

T. *a map*

that co-vered the desk-top and fam-ily pho-tos

B. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

108

cresc. *f* *p*

112

pp bring out L. H. *cresc.*

mp

116

mf *cresc.*

120

122

T. *mf* who loved

B. - - - - -

S. *f* who loved who loved

A. *f* who loved who loved

T. *f* who loved who loved

B. - - - - -

126

T. *f* a - bout es - say a - bout

B. *f* who a lit - tle a - bout

S. who a - bout a lit - tle es - say a - bout

A. who a - bout a lit - tle es - say a - bout

T. who a - bout a lit - tle es - say a - bout

B. *f* who a - bout a lit - tle es - say a - bout

20 130

T. *8*
 who loved who

B.
 who loved who

S.
 who loved who a - bout who loved who

A.
 who loved who a - bout who loved who

T. *8*
 who loved who a - bout who loved who

B.
 who loved who a - bout who loved who

134 **H**

S. *p*
 we wrote who loved a - bout who a - bout

A. *p*
 we wrote who loved a - bout who a - bout

T. *p*
 we wrote who loved a - bout who a - bout

B. *p*
 we wrote who loved a - bout who a - bout

H

T. *f* on it we wrote on it we

B. *f* on it we wrote on it we

S. *cresc.* *f* a lit - tle es - say on it we wrote a

A. *cresc.* *f* a lit - tle es - say on it we wrote on it we

T. *cresc.* *f* a lit - tle es - say on it we wrote on it we

B. *cresc.* *f* a lit - tle es - say on it we wrote on it we

f *Red.*

T. wrote on it we wrote

B. wrote on it we wrote

S. *dim.* lit - tle es - say a - bout a - bout who loved

A. *dim.* wrote on it we wrote on it we wrote a - bout who loved

T. *dim.* wrote on it we wrote on it we wrote a - bout who loved

B. *dim.* *p* wrote on it we wrote

T. *mf*

B. *mf* moves still still

S. *p* Shade *poco* grass ne - ver

A. *p* who *poco*

T. *p* who *poco*

B. *p* who

I Piu Mosso ♩ = 66-69

mf

147

T. wrote who

B. still ne - ver es - say loved

151

T. still do

B. still

mf *dim.*

155 **J**

T. *8* shade moves grass still

B. shade moves grass still

S. *p* we wrote who loved a - bout _____ who _

A. *p* we wrote who loved a - bout _____ who _

T. *p* we wrote who loved a - bout who loved _

B. *p* we wrote who loved a - bout who loved _

J

p

158

T. *8* ne - ver wrote es - say

B. ne - ver wrote es - say

S. loved who we wrote on it we wrote a lit - tle

A. loved who we wrote on it we wrote a lit - tle

T. *8* who we wrote on it we wrote a lit - tle

B. who we wrote on it we wrote a lit - tle

161

T. *f*
 who who loved who loved loved

B. *f*
 loved who loved who loved loved

S. *cresc.* *f* *dim.*
 es - say a-bout who loved on it we wrote a-bout who loved, _____ loved, _____

A. *cresc.* *f* *dim.*
 es - say a-bout who loved on it we wrote a-bout who loved who loved, who

T. *cresc.* *f* *dim.*
 es - say a-bout who loved, we wrote a - bout who loved _____ loved _____

B. *cresc.* *f* *dim.*
 es - say a- bout_ who loved, we_ wrote a - bout who loved _____ loved _____

cresc. *f*

172

The musical score consists of six staves. The top two staves are for Tenor (T.) and Bass (B.), both in treble clef with an 8va octave sign. The next two staves are for Soprano (S.) and Alto (A.), both in treble clef. The fifth and sixth staves are for Tenor (T.) and Bass (B.), both in treble clef. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The piece concludes with a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'moves ne - ver', 'moves ne - ver', 'still do', and 'still do'. The piano part includes a *mf* dynamic marking.

T. 8

B.

S. moves ne - ver

A. moves ne - ver

T. still do

B. still do

mf

177

T.  who

B.  still

S.  wrote do _

A.  loved

T.  es - say _ who

B.  es - say _ still



The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and some chords. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes, including a prominent bass line with eighth notes.

184

T. *p*
loved do (mm)

B. *p*
do (mm)

S. *p*
(mm)

A. *p*
still (mm)

T. *p*
loved (mm)

B. *p*
do (mm)

mp
dim.
Ped.

190 *mf* *pp*

T. *mf* *pp*

B. *mf* *pp*

S. *mf* *pp*

A. *mf* *pp*

T. *mf* *pp*

B. *mf* *pp*

pp

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains measures 190 through 195. It features five systems of vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass) and a grand staff for piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are written in treble clef, while the piano accompaniment is in grand staff. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *pp* (pianissimo), along with hairpins indicating crescendos and decrescendos. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The vocal lines are melodic and often feature long notes with ties across measures.