



The Light

for Two Narrators and Chamber Orchestra

Texts from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers,
Deuteronomy, John, and Revelation

Music by Mark Feezell

Duration: 24 minutes



Instrumentation

2 male narrators (Moses and John)

Flute
Oboe
Bb clarinet
Alto saxophone
Bassoon

French horn
Trumpet
Trombone
Tuba

Percussion I: 2 timpani, tubular bells, crash cymbals, medium suspended cymbal, wind chimes, tambourine, maracas, vibraslap, slapstick, claves, and low wood block

Percussion II: marimba, glockenspiel, xylophone, medium suspended cymbal
Piano

8 violins (4-part divisi)
6 violas (3-part divisi)
3 cellos
1 double bass

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Plot Synopsis

In the spirit of oratorio, *The Light* is a concert piece that relates a story. The work opens with the creation of light. In the second scene, God has already completed the creation of the earth. Placing Adam and Eve into the garden to tend it, he allows them to eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent appears, and Adam and Eve succumb to his evil influence. As the scene closes, God banishes them from the Garden of Eden, and a sword blocks their return.

Many generations have passed when Scene Three begins. Moses relates a story from the time that Israel spent in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. The people had become frustrated with Moses and with God, and God sent serpents among them. After many of them died, they appealed to Moses to pray to the Lord on their behalf. God's answer was for Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. Whoever looked at the serpent would live. The music that follows this story of redemption in the wilderness initiates a transition to the fourth scene: John's vision of ultimate redemption.

John speaks in Scene Four. New Jerusalem descends from heaven, with the River of Life and the Tree of Life ready to bring healing to the nations. Sadly, not all are welcomed to the city of John's vision, and the drama pauses to give respectful consideration to their fate. Finally, the fifth scene celebrates the eternal victory over sin, death, and the serpent of Eden.

Performance Notes

I have endeavored throughout to be explicit in my notation of dynamics, articulations, and other performance instructions. Please contact feezell@drfeezell.com for sample recordings and parts. Further background on the piece is also available by accessing the associated dissertation essay at the University of North Texas at www.library.unt.edu or at www.drfeezell.com.

Dynamics marked are the desired resultant amplitude; a *piano* marking in one instrument should be the same amplitude as the same marking in another instrument. The loudest point of the piece should be the climax in measure 411. The suggested tempi are intended to promote a correct dramatic pacing, but may need to be adjusted for a particular performance space. All tremolos are unmeasured, with the appropriate speed being determined by the performers. In many cases a single melodic line is spread across several instruments; the connection among the different instruments should be as smooth as possible, so that the unity of the melodic line can be heard clearly. Accidentals remain in effect for the entire measure.

Both narrators should remain on stage for the duration of the piece, although they may be seated when not speaking for an extended period of time. They should be positioned in front of the orchestra, with Moses on the conductor's left and John on the conductor's right. At no time should the orchestra cover the speaking parts; to help prevent this, the narrators should be amplified. The narrators should speak with conscientious attention to the nuances of emotive meaning in each phrase of the texts. Rhythmically notated sections should sound as close to speech as possible while strictly following the notated rhythm. The narrators should begin speaking text in boxes at the beginning of the measure containing the box, and speak slowly enough to finish the text at the end of the arrow to the right of the box. It is permissible to insert pauses into the text in these boxes, but the delivery should be natural. If filling the length of the arrow causes an unnaturally slow delivery, a shorter delivery time is permissible.

Percussion Performance Instructions

The Light requires two percussionists. Percussion I plays the tubular bells (chimes), low wood block, claves, slapstick, vibraslap, maracas, tambourine, standard metal wind chimes, medium suspended cymbal, crash cymbals, and two timpani (26" and 29"). The piece can be performed with a standard set of tubular bells, but a set of tubular bells with the high G extension is preferable.

Percussion I Staff Assignments:

The image shows a musical staff for Percussion I. The staff is divided into three sections: Tubular Bells (Chimes), Non-pitched Percussion, and 2 Timpani. The Tubular Bells section shows a melodic line with notes and accidentals. The Non-pitched Percussion section shows various percussion symbols like wood block, claves, slapstick, vibraslap, maracas, tambourine, wind chimes, med. sus. cym., and crash cymbals. The 2 Timpani section shows a single note with a pitch line.

Percussion II plays a medium suspended cymbal (which can be shared with percussion I), marimba, xylophone, and glockenspiel. Figure 16 lists the staff notation and symbols for the percussion II part.

Percussion II Staff Assignments:

medium sus. cymbal
(share with perc. I)

A musical staff with a treble clef. Above the staff are four labels in boxes: 'Mar', 'Glsp', 'Xyl', and 'medium sus. cymbal (share with perc. I)'. The staff contains a single note on the first line (F4) for each of the first three instruments, followed by a double bar line. After the double bar line, there is a single note on the first line (F4) with an 'x' above it, representing the cymbal.

Mallet Symbols for both percussionists:

Two-tone (no symbol)

A list of mallet symbols, each in a box. The symbols are: a circle on a stick (Medium Rubber), an 'X' on a stick (Brass), a solid circle on a stick (Hard Plastic), a starburst on a stick (Soft Yarn), and a starburst on a stick (Medium Yarn).

Medium Rubber

Brass

Hard Plastic

Soft Yarn

Medium Yarn

The percussionists may be off-center from the conductor if necessary. Also, it may be desirable for percussion I to reverse the position of the timpani and tubular bells. The glockenspiel and xylophone may be turned sideways if this is more convenient. This is only a suggested arrangement; other arrangements may suit particular performers or performing spaces better.

Suggested Percussion Arrangement:

A diagram showing the layout of a percussion section. At the top is a box labeled 'Conductor'. Below it is a box labeled 'Orchestra'. To the right of the orchestra are boxes for 'Mar' and 'Xyl'. Below these are boxes for 'Perc. I' and 'Perc. II'. In the center is a box for 'Glsp'. To the left of these boxes is a large box containing various percussion instruments: a set of timpani, a set of tubular bells, a set of xylophones, a set of maracas, a set of glockenspiels, a set of cymbals, a set of snare drums, and a set of tom-toms.

Texts

The narrative uses excerpts from the New International Version (within the limits of NIV fair use guidelines)¹ and 7 public domain translations: the American Standard Version (1901), the Darby translation (1890), the Douay Rheims Bible (1899, Catholic version), the King James Version (1611, KJV), the Noah Webster Bible (1833), the Weymouth New Testament (1913), and the World English Bible.² I have paraphrased some texts slightly in places to maintain dramatic continuity, but the alterations have been kept to a minimum. References are indicated in the footnotes.

Scene 1: The Light

Scripture below title in score: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was Jesus lifted up,³ in order that every one who trusts in Him⁴ should not perish, but have eternal life.⁵

Moses and John together: In the beginning...⁶

M: ...God created the heavens and the earth.⁷

Both: In the beginning...⁸

J: ...was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.⁹

Both: In the beginning...¹⁰

M: The earth was without form¹¹ and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep,¹² and the Spirit of God moved over the waters.¹³

M: [And] God said, "Let there be light."¹⁴

J: In him was Life; and that Life was the Light of men.¹⁵

Scene 2: The Judgment

M: The LORD God created the man Adam and the woman Eve¹⁶ and placed them into the garden of Eden to¹⁷ take care of it.¹⁸

M: He commanded them,¹⁹ "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;²⁰ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you will certainly die."²¹

M: Now the serpent was more crafty than any animal.²² The serpent said to the woman, "You won't certainly die, for God knows that in the day you eat the fruit, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."²³

M: The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a pleasure for the eyes, and the tree was to be desired²⁴ to make one wise.²⁵ So she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband, and he ate.²⁶

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² See <<http://www.ebible.org>>.

³ cf. John 3:14, KJV

⁴ John 3:15 Weymouth

⁵ John 3:15 KJV

⁶ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 KJV

⁷ Genesis 1:1 Darby

⁸ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 KJV

⁹ John 1:1 KJV

¹⁰ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 KJV

¹¹ Genesis 1:2 Webster

¹² Genesis 1:2 Darby

¹³ Genesis 1:2 Douay Rheims

¹⁴ Genesis 1:3a NIV

¹⁵ John 1:4 Weymouth

¹⁶ cf. Genesis 1:27 KJV

¹⁷ cf. Genesis 2:15 KJV

¹⁸ Genesis 2:15 NIV

¹⁹ cf. Genesis 2:16a KJV

²⁰ Genesis 2:16b NIV

²¹ cf. Genesis 2:17 Darby

²² Genesis 3:1 Darby

²³ Genesis 3:4-5 World English Bible

M: That day²⁷ the LORD God banished²⁸ Adam and Eve, and he set the flame of the flashing sword toward the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.²⁹

J: This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light,³⁰ because their deeds were evil.³¹

Scene 3: The Serpent in the Wilderness

M: Many generations after Adam, the Lord called me, Moses, to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt,³² but the people became impatient on the way.³³

M: They spoke against God, and against me, saying, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?"³⁴

M: And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and many died.³⁵

M: So the people came to me, and said, "We have sinned; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us."³⁶

M: And I prayed for the people.³⁷

M: The LORD said to me, "Make a fiery serpent,³⁸ and set it up as a sign: whoever looks at it will live."³⁹

Scene 4: New Jerusalem

J: I, John, the disciple of Jesus, was in the Spirit,⁴⁰ and I saw a new heaven and a new earth.⁴¹

J: I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,⁴² and bringing with it the glory of God.⁴³

J: There will be no night there.⁴⁴ The city has no need of the sun nor of the moon,⁴⁵ for the very glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is Jesus, the Lamb of God. The nations will walk in its light.⁴⁶

J: There will be no more sorrow there, nor any more pain.⁴⁷ The LORD God will re-create all things.⁴⁸ He himself will be with them,⁴⁹ and he will wipe away all tears from their eyes.⁵⁰

J: In that city, death will not exist any more.⁵¹ I saw there the river of the Water of Life, bright as crystal,⁵² proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.⁵³ In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side,⁵⁴ stood the tree of life.⁵⁵ It produced twelve kinds of fruit, yielding a fresh crop month by month, and⁵⁶ the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.⁵⁷

²⁴ Genesis 3:6 Darby
²⁵ Genesis 3:6 KJV
²⁶ Genesis 3:6 Darby
²⁷ cf. Genesis 3:23a KJV
²⁸ Genesis 3:23a NIV
²⁹ Genesis 3:24 Darby
³⁰ John 3:19 ASV
³¹ John 3:19 KJV
³² See Exodus 12:51 KJV
³³ Numbers 21:4 KJV
³⁴ Numbers 21:5 Webster
³⁵ Numbers 21:6 Webster
³⁶ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster
³⁷ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster
³⁸ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster
³⁹ cf. Numbers 21:8 Douay Rheims
⁴⁰ cf. Revelation 1:9-10 KJV
⁴¹ Revelation 21:1 Webster
⁴² Revelation 21:2 KJV
⁴³ Revelation 21:11 Weymouth
⁴⁴ Revelation 22:5 Weymouth
⁴⁵ Revelation 21:23 Darby
⁴⁶ Revelation 21:23-24 World English Bible
⁴⁷ cf. Revelation 21:4 Webster
⁴⁸ cf. Revelation 21:5 Weymouth
⁴⁹ Revelation 21:3 NIV
⁵⁰ Revelation 21:4 Webster
⁵¹ cf. Revelation 21:4 Darby
⁵² Revelation 22:1 Weymouth
⁵³ Revelation 22:1 Douay Rheims
⁵⁴ Revelation 22:2 Darby
⁵⁵ Revelation 22:2 NIV
⁵⁶ Revelation 22:2 Weymouth
⁵⁷ Revelation 22:2 World English Bible

J: God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.⁵⁸ He who believes in him is not judged.⁵⁹

J: He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.⁶⁰ For the unbelieving, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.⁶¹

Scene 5: The Beginning

J: Behold, Jesus is coming soon! His reward is with him, and he will give to each person according to what he or she has done.⁶² Blessed are those who have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.⁶³

M: A God of faithfulness without deceit, just and right is he.⁶⁴

J: The Lord is worthy to receive glory and honour and power.⁶⁵

M: Praise the greatness of our God!⁶⁶ He is the Rock.⁶⁷

J: He has created all things.⁶⁸

M: All his ways are righteousness.⁶⁹

J: He is the Word who came in the flesh.⁷⁰

M: The LORD your God is a consuming fire.⁷¹

J: He is the bright and morning star.⁷²

J: The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let him that hears say, "Come."⁷³ He who is thirsty, let him come.⁷⁴ And whoever will, let him take the water of life, freely.⁷⁵

Both: He is Alpha...

J: ...and Omega,...

Both: ...the beginning...

J: ...and the end,

Both: ...the first...

J: ...and the last.⁷⁶

⁵⁸ John 3:16 NIV

⁵⁹ John 3:18 World English Bible

⁶⁰ John 3:18 World English Bible

⁶¹ cf. Revelation 21:8 World English Bible

⁶² cf. Revelation 22:12 NIV

⁶³ Revelation 22:14 World English Bible

⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 32:4b Darby

⁶⁵ cf. Revelation 4:11 KJV

⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 32:3 NIV

⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 32:4 Darby

⁶⁸ cf. Revelation 4:11 KJV

⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 32:4b Darby

⁷⁰ John 1:14 Weymouth

⁷¹ Deuteronomy 4:24 NIV

⁷² Revelation 22:16 KJV

⁷³ Revelation 22:17 Darby

⁷⁴ Revelation 22:17 World English Bible

⁷⁵ Revelation 22:17 Webster

⁷⁶ Revelation 22:13 KJV