

The Light

for Two Narrators and Chamber Orchestra

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

Music by Mark Feezell / DrFeezell.com

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 visit 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 <https://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

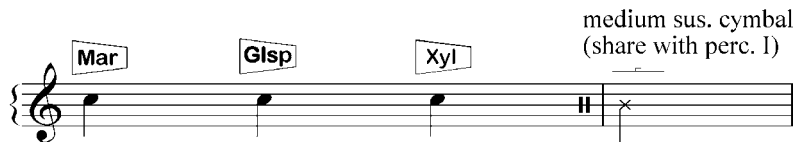
The Light requires two percussionists. Percussion I plays the tubular bells (chimes), low wood block, claves, slapstick, vibra-slap, maracas, tambourine, standard metal wind chimes, medium suspended cymbal, crash cymbals, and two timpani (26" and 29"). The piece can be performed with a standard set of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

Percussion I Staff Assignments:

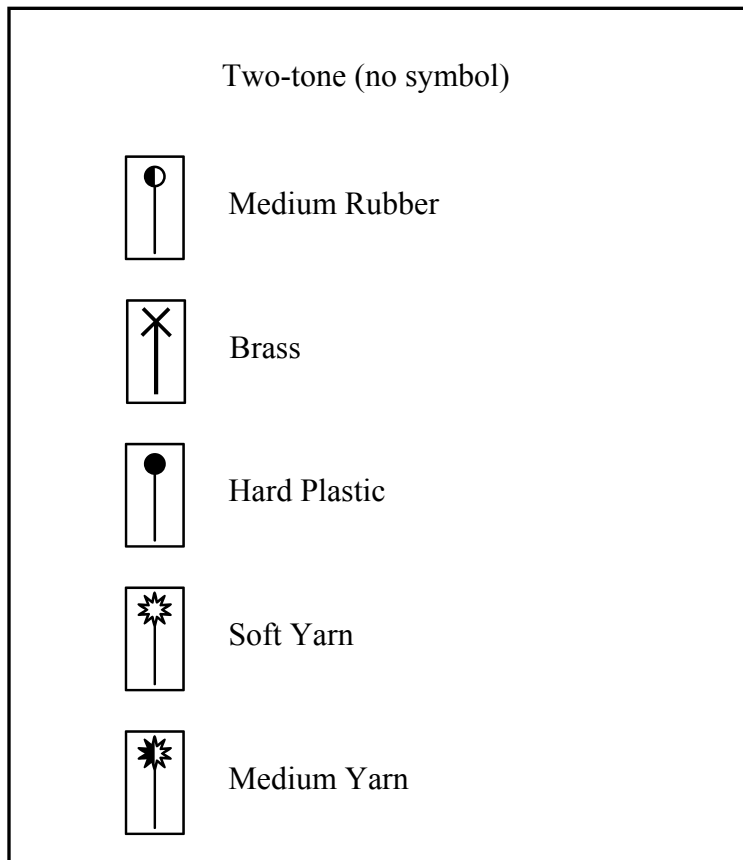
The image shows three musical staves for Percussion I. The top staff, labeled 'Tubular Bells (Chimes)', contains a melodic line with notes and accidentals. The middle staff, labeled 'Non-pitched Percussion', contains various percussion symbols with arrows pointing to specific instruments: low wood block, claves, slapstick, vibra-slap, maracas, tambourine, wind chimes, med. sus. cym., and crash cymbals. The bottom staff, labeled '2 Timpani', contains notes for starting pitches.

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:

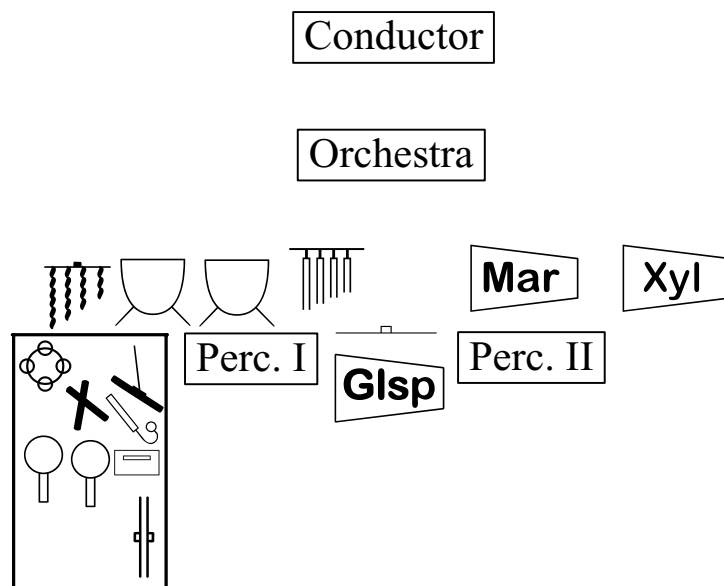


Mallet Symbols for both percussionists:



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:



Texts

The narrative uses excerpts from public domain translations: the American Standard Version (ASV, 1901), the Berean Standard Bible (BSB, 2023),¹ the Darby translation (1890), the Douay Rheims Bible (1899, Catholic version), the Noah Webster Bible (1833), the Weymouth New Testament (1913), and the World English Bible (WEB).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 below.

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 to keep it.¹⁷

M: He commanded them,¹⁸ "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden;¹⁹ 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."²⁰

M: Now the serpent was more crafty than any animal.²¹ 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."²²

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 desired²³ to make one wise.²⁴ So she took of its fruit, and ate, and gave also to her husband, and he ate.²⁵

¹ Free resources and databases are available at BereanBible.com.

² The World English Bible is in the public domain at <https://ebible.org/web/>

³ cf. John 3:14, WEB

⁴ John 3:15 Weymouth

⁵ John 3:15 WEB

⁶ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 Darby

⁷ Genesis 1:1 Darby

⁸ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 Darby

⁹ John 1:1 Darby

¹⁰ Genesis 1:1 Darby, John 1:1 Darby

¹¹ Genesis 1:2 Webster

¹² Genesis 1:2 Darby

¹³ Genesis 1:2 Douay Rheims

¹⁴ Genesis 1:3a Darby

¹⁵ John 1:4 Weymouth

¹⁶ cf. Genesis 1:27 BSB

¹⁷ cf. Genesis 2:15 BSB

¹⁸ cf. Genesis 2:16a BSB "And the LORD God commanded him,"

¹⁹ Genesis 2:16b WEB

²⁰ cf. Genesis 2:17 Darby

²¹ Genesis 3:1 Darby

²² Genesis 3:4-5 World English Bible

²³ Genesis 3:6 Darby

²⁴ Genesis 3:6 WEB

M: That day the LORD God banished²⁶ 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.²⁷

J: This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light,²⁸ because their deeds were evil.²⁹

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,³⁰ but the people became impatient on the way.³¹

M: They spoke against God, and against me, saying, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?"³²

M: And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and many died.³³

M: So the people came to me, and said, "We have sinned; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us."³⁴

M: And I prayed for the people.³⁵

M: The LORD said to me, "Make a fiery serpent,³⁶ and set it up as a sign: whoever looks at it will live."³⁷

Scene 4: New Jerusalem

J: I, John, the disciple of Jesus, was in the Spirit,³⁸ and I saw a new heaven and a new earth.³⁹

J: I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,⁴⁰ and bringing with it the glory of God.⁴¹

J: There will be no night there.⁴² The city has no need of the sun nor of the moon,⁴³ for the very glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is Jesus, the Lamb of God. The nations will walk in its light.⁴⁴

J: There will be no more sorrow there, nor any more pain.⁴⁵ The LORD God will re-create all things.⁴⁶ He himself will be with them,⁴⁷ and he will wipe away all tears from their eyes.⁴⁸

J: In that city, death will not exist any more.⁴⁹ I saw there the river of the Water of Life, bright as crystal,⁵⁰ proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.⁵¹ In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side,⁵² was the tree of life.⁵³ It produced twelve kinds of fruit, yielding a fresh crop month by month, and⁵⁴ the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.⁵⁵

²⁵ Genesis 3:6 Darby

²⁶ cf. Genesis 3:23a BSB: "Therefore the LORD God banished him..."

²⁷ Genesis 3:24 Darby

²⁸ John 3:19 ASV

²⁹ John 3:19 NWB

³⁰ See Exodus 12:51 BSB

³¹ Numbers 21:4 DAR

³² Numbers 21:5 Webster

³³ Numbers 21:6 Webster

³⁴ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster

³⁵ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster

³⁶ cf. Numbers 21:7-8 Webster

³⁷ cf. Numbers 21:8 Douay Rheims

³⁸ cf. Revelation 1:9-10 BSB

³⁹ Revelation 21:1 Webster

⁴⁰ Revelation 21:2 BSB

⁴¹ Revelation 21:11 Weymouth

⁴² Revelation 22:5 Weymouth

⁴³ Revelation 21:23 Darby

⁴⁴ Revelation 21:23-24 World English Bible

⁴⁵ cf. Revelation 21:4 Webster

⁴⁶ cf. Revelation 21:5 Weymouth

⁴⁷ Revelation 21:3 WEB

⁴⁸ Revelation 21:4 Webster

⁴⁹ cf. Revelation 21:4 Darby

⁵⁰ Revelation 22:1 Weymouth

⁵¹ Revelation 22:1 Douay Rheims

⁵² Revelation 22:2 Darby

⁵³ Revelation 22:2 WEB

⁵⁴ Revelation 22:2 Weymouth

⁵⁵ Revelation 22:2 World English Bible

J: God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.⁵⁶ He who believes in him is not judged.⁵⁷

J: He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name⁵⁸ of God's only Son.⁵⁹ For the unbelieving, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.⁶⁰

Scene 5: The Beginning

J: Behold, Jesus is coming soon! His reward is with him, to give to each person according to what he or she has done.⁶¹ Blessed are those who have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.⁶²

M: A God of faithfulness without deceit, just and right is he.⁶³

J: The Lord is worthy to receive glory and honour and power.⁶⁴

M: Declare the greatness of our God!⁶⁵ He is the Rock.⁶⁶

J: He has created all things.⁶⁷

M: All his ways are righteousness.⁶⁸

J: He is the Word who came in the flesh.⁶⁹

M: The LORD your God is a consuming fire.⁷⁰

J: He is the bright and morning star.⁷¹

J: The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let him that hears say, "Come."⁷² He who is thirsty, let him come.⁷³ And whoever will, let him take the water of life, freely.⁷⁴

Both: He is Alpha...

J: ...and Omega,...

Both: ...the beginning...

J: ...and the end,

Both: ...the first...

J: ...and the last.⁷⁵

⁵⁶ John 3:16 BSB

⁵⁷ John 3:18 World English Bible

⁵⁸ John 3:18 World English Bible

⁵⁹ John 3:18 Weymouth

⁶⁰ cf. Revelation 21:8 World English Bible

⁶¹ cf. Revelation 22:12 BSB

⁶² Revelation 22:14 World English Bible

⁶³ Deuteronomy 32:4b Darby

⁶⁴ cf. Revelation 4:11 Darby

⁶⁵ cf. Deuteronomy 32:3 BSB: "For I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Ascribe greatness to our God!"

⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 32:4 Darby

⁶⁷ cf. Revelation 4:11 Webster: "...for thou hast created all things..."

⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 32:4b Darby

⁶⁹ John 1:14 Weymouth

⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 4:24 BSB

⁷¹ Revelation 22:16 Darby

⁷² Revelation 22:17 Darby

⁷³ Revelation 22:17 World English Bible

⁷⁴ Revelation 22:17 Webster

⁷⁵ Revelation 22:13 Webster