

Light

for SATB voices divisi

Christopher Churcher

(2024)



Composed in March 2024 for Somerville Choir

First performance: 02/06/2024

Light

Light, my light, the world-filling light,
the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life;
The light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love;
The sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.
The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light.
Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light.
The light is shattered into gold [on every cloud, my darling,
and it scatters gems in profusion.]*

The heaven's river has drowned its banks
and the flood of joy is abroad.

Rabindranath Tagore 1861-1941

* text omitted at the discretion of the composer

Duration: c. 4'30"

Composer's Note

Light draws on the radiant imagery of Tagore's poem, a powerful meditation on yearning, inner illumination, and the redemptive power of love to lift the darkness of suffering. For Tagore, light encompasses both stillness and radiance: a quiet, luminous opening gradually comes alive, gathering impulse through unfolding rhythmic lines that evoke the delicate, graceful flight of butterflies, and the tender perfume and colour of lilies and jasmines. The music rises toward a climax, returning to the poem's opening invocation: "Light, my light, the world-filling light.

Christopher Churcher

Light

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Christopher Churcher
b.2004

Slow and graceful ♩ = 68

p tranquillo

Soprano: Light, my light, the

Alto: (rest)

Tenor: *pp* Light

Bass: *ppp* *mm* *pp* *ah*

5

S. world fil - ling light, the eye - kis - sing light, heart -

A. *p* light, the eye - kis - sing light, *mp*

T. *p cresc. poco a poco* my light, the light, *mp*

B. *p cresc. poco a poco* my light, the light, *mp*

9 rit. *p* *mf*

S. sweet - ening light! Ah, the

A. heart - sweet - ening light! *mp* *p*

T. heart - sweet - ening light! *mp* *p*

B. heart - sweet - ening light! *mp* *p*

heart - sweet - ening light!

12 A little faster $\text{♩} = 78$ *dim.*

S. light dan - (ah) at the

A. light dan - (ah) at the

A. *mf* light dan - ces, my dar - ling, at the *dim.*

T. *mf* Ah, the light dan - ces, at the *dim.*

T. *mf* Ah, the light dan - ces, my dar - ling, at the *dim.*

B. *mf* Ah, the light dan - ces, my dar - ling, at the *dim.*

B. *mf* Ah, the light dan - ces, at the

16

S. cen - tre of my life; *dim.* ah

A. cen - tre of my life; *dim.* ah *mp*

T. cen - tre of my life; the light strikes, my dar - ling, the *mp*

B. cen - tre of my life; the light strikes, my dar - ling, the *mp*

cen - tre of my life; the light strikes, my dar - ling, the

molto rit.

20

S. *p* *mf* *p*
love;

A. *p* *mf* *p*
chords of my love; the sky

T. *mf* *pp*
chords of my love; the sky

B. *mf* *pp*
chords of my love; the sky

chords of my love;

S. *p* the sky

A. *p* op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the earth,

T. *p* op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the earth,

B. *p* the sky op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the

p the sky op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the

S. *mp* op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the earth, The

A. *mp* the sky op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the

T. *mp* laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the earth,

B. *mp* earth, the sky op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver

mp earth, the sky op - ens, the wind runs wild

S. *p sub.* but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of light the sky

A. *p sub.* earth, The but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of light *mf* the

T. *p sub.* the sky op - ens, The but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of

B. *p sub.* the sky op - ens, spread their sails on the sea of

spread their sails on the sea of

30 *mf*

S. op - ens, the but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of

A. *mf* but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of light the sky

T. *mf* light the but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of light the sky

B. *mf* light op - ens, the but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of

mf light op - ens, the but - ter - flies spread their sails on the sea of

32 *f*

S. light Li - lies and

A. *f* light Li - lies and

T. *f* op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the earth

B. *f* light op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the

f light op - ens, the wind runs wild, laugh - ter pas - ses o - ver the

34 *mf*

S. jas mines surge up on the crest of the waves of light surge up on the

A. *mf* the sky op - ens, Li lies and jas mines surge up on the crest of the waves of

T. *mf* sky op - ens, Li lies and jas mines surge up on the crest of the waves of

B. *mf* earth, sky op - ens, the wind runs wild, on the crest of the waves of

36 *p sempre cresc. poco a poco*

S. crest of the waves of light on the crest of the waves of light the

A. light Li lies and jas mines surge up on the crest of the waves of light on the

T. light on the crest of the waves of light on the crest of the waves of

B. light li lies and

mp cresc.

38 *rit. solo soprano* *f*

S. light on the waves of light oh

A. light on the waves of light is shat - tered in - to

T. light surge up on the waves of light on the waves of light in - to

B. jas mines surge up on the crest of the waves of light is shat - tered in - to

40 *f*

S. gold the light oh

A. gold the light is shat - tered in - to gold oh

T. gold is shat - tered in - to gold oh

B. gold the light oh

gold the light

42 *ff*

S. Light, my light the world - fil - ling light the

A. Light, my light the world - fil - ling light the

T. Light, my light the world fil - ling

B. Light, my light the world fil - ling

my light world - fil - ling light the

46 *rit.*

S. eye - kis - sing light heart - sweet - ening light

A. eye - kis - sing light heart - sweet - ening light

T. light the eye - kis - sing sweet - ening light

B. light the eye - kis - sing heart - sweet - ening light

eye - kis - sing light heart - sweet - ening light

eye - kis - sing light heart - sweet - ening light

51 *mf espress.*

A. The heav - en's ri - ver has drowned its banks and the

T. *pp* and the

B. *mm* ri - ver drowned and the *pp*

ah

55 *pp sotto voce*

S. light

A. flood of joy is a broad the

T. *cresc.* flood of joy is a broad the

B. *cresc.* flood of joy is a broad the

is a broad

59

S. *p sotto voce* light

A. *p sotto voce* light

T. *mp dolce* hea - ven's ri - ver has drowned its banks and the

B. *mp dolce* hea - ven's ri - ver has drowned its banks and the

ah

63 *dim.* **pp** 9

S. *ligh(t)*

A. *light* *ligh(t)* **pp**

T. *flood of joy is a - broa(d)*

B. *flood of joy is a - broa(d)*

flood of joy is a - broa(d)

67 *rit.*

S. *(ah)*

A. *ligh(t)* **pp**

T. *broa(d)* *p* *mm*

B. *p* *mm*

mm