

Commissioned for the Chancel Choir at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland,  
Michael T. Britt, Minister of Music

# The Heavens Delight

for SATB Chorus and Organ

“There’s a Song in the Air”

Gwyneth Walker

by Josiah G. Holland (1819–1881)

adapted by Gwyneth Walker

With motion ♩. = 54

*sparkling, as stars*

Organ

*f*

3

*f*

*as if looking up at the stars*

5

*mf accomp.*

Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions

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7 A  
*unis. mf with enthusiasm*  
S  
A  
T  
B  
There's a song in the air! \_\_\_\_\_

A  
*p*  
*p*

9  
S  
A  
T  
B  
*unis. mf with enthusiasm*  
There's a star in the sky! \_\_\_\_\_

Sparkling Solo (*a star*)  
*mf*  
3 3

11

S  
A

T  
B

There's a moth - er's sweet

3 3

13

S  
A

T  
B

prayer

and a ba - by's soft

3 3

15

**B** rit.

S And the stars rain their fire while the

A And the stars rain their fire while the

T cry. And the stars rain their fire while the

B

*mf*

**B** rit.

17

(rit.)

Slower

*f* accel.

S Heav - ens de - light, The child is born this

A Heav - ens de - light, for the child of God is born this

T Heav - ens de - light, for the child of God is born this

B

(rit.) Slower *f* accel.

20 **Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

S  
night.

A  
night.

T  
B  
night.

**Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

22

S  
A  
*mf*  
There's a tu - mult of joy

T  
B  
*mf*  
Joy!

*sparkling*

*p*

*p accomp.*

25 C

S  
A

o'er the won-der-ful birth, for our

T  
B

Joy! the won-der-ful birth,

C

*p*

28

S  
A

dear, sweet boy has blessed the earth.

T  
B

Our Sa-vior has come, has

3 3 3 3 3 3

**D** rit.

31

S  
A

And the stars rain their fire

T  
B

come to earth. while the

**D** rit.

*mf*

33 (rit.)

**Slower**

*unis. f* accel.

S

The child is born this

A

for the child of God is born this

T  
B

Heav - ens de - light, for the child of God is born this

(rit.) **Slower** accel.

*f*

36

Tempo I (♩. = 54)

E

S  
night.

A  
night.

T  
night.

B  
night.

Tempo I (♩. = 54)

E

as falling stars

39

rit.

*p* reverently

S  
In the

*p* reverently

A  
In the

*p* reverently

T  
In the

*p* reverently

B  
In the

In the

rit.



42 **F** *Slower, freely*

S  
light of the stars comes a beau - ty un - furled, as the song from a - far has swept

A  
light of the stars comes a beau - ty un - furled, as the song from a - far has swept

T  
light of the stars comes a beau - ty un - furled, as the song from a - far has swept

B  
light of the stars comes a beau - ty un - furled, as the song from a - far has swept

**F** *Slower, freely*

(*p* for rehearsal only)

45

S  
o - ver the world. Ev - ry heart is a flame with the beau - ti - ful song. *f* *div.* *with growing excitement*

A  
o - ver the world. Ev - ry heart is a flame with the beau - ti - ful song. *f*

T  
o - ver the world. Ev - ry heart is a flame with the beau - ti - ful song. *f*

B  
o - ver the world. Ev - ry heart is a flame with the beau - ti - ful song. *p* *with growing excitement*

(*p* for rehearsal only)

S  
A  
T  
B

in the homes of all na - tions, sal -  
in the homes of all na - tions, sal -  
the homes of all na - tions, the homes of all na - tions, sal -  
homes of all na - tions, the homes of all na - tions, the homes of all na - tions, sal -

*p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

Play *accel. poco a poco*

Man.

*(accel.)*

**G** *Tempo I* (♩. = 54)

51 *(cresc.)*

*fecstatic*

S  
A  
T  
B

va - tion has come. We re - joice in the light, we re -  
va - tion has come. We re - joice in the light, we re -  
va - tion has come. light,  
va - tion has come. light,

*(cresc.)* *fecstatic* *f*, *div. (f)* *(cresc.)* *f*, *div. (f)*

*(accel.)* **G** *a tempo* (♩. = 54)

54

S  
joice in the song. \_\_\_\_\_ We \_\_\_\_\_ sing through the night with a

A  
joice in the song. \_\_\_\_\_ We \_\_\_\_\_ sing through the night with a

T  
song. \_\_\_\_\_ with a *unis.*

B  
song. \_\_\_\_\_ with a *unis.*

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**H**

*rit.*

**Slightly slower**

57

S voice of one. We shout to the bril - liant Heav - en - ly light,

A voice\_ of one. We shout to the bril - liant Heav - en - ly light,

T voice\_ of one. We shout to the bril - liant Heav - en - ly light, *div.*

B voice of one. We shout to the bril - liant Heav - en - ly light, *mf* for the

**H**

*rit.*

**Slightly slower**

Man.

60

S *mf* the Hope of all A - ges is

A *mf* the Prince of Peace, the Hope of all A - ges is

T *mf* the Prince of Peace, the Hope of all A - ges is

B child of God, the Hope of all A - ges is

*mf*

*accel.*

**Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

63

S  
A

*f*

born this night. And the

T  
B

*f*

born this night.

*accel.*

**Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

*f*

66 **I**

S

stars rain their fire, stars rain their fire, stars rain their fire, *div.*

A

stars rain their fire, stars rain their fire, stars rain their fire, *div.*

T

fire, fire, fire, *div.*

B

fire, fire, fire, *div.*

**I** *sparkling*

69 *rit.* **Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

S and the Heav - ens de -

A and the Heav - ens de

T and the Heav - ens de -

B *unis.* and the Heav - ens de -

*rit.* **Tempo I** (♩. = 54)

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71

S  
light!

A  
light!

T  
light!

B  
light!

3:10

September 20, 2013  
New Canaan, Connecticut

### Program Notes

The text for *The Heavens Delight* is adapted from the poem “There’s a Song in the Air” by Josiah G. Holland. A recurrent and very beautiful image is that of the stars raining fire at the glorious time of Christ’s birth. One can picture the sky ablaze with wonder. Thus, the lyrics for the refrain have been expanded into:

*And the stars rain their fire while the Heavens delight,  
for the child of God is born this night.*

The small dissonance of a semitone (C-sharp and D) is heard in the Alto and Soprano notes in the chord for the word *stars*. For this is a tiny bit of brightness in the sky. Near the end of the anthem, the Tenors and Basses sing descending phrases of the fire falling from the skies. The organ accompaniment is characterized by rapid, sparkling patterns in the high range of the keyboard. Descending falling stars can be heard as well.

All elements of the music endeavor to capture the stellar brilliance of Christmas Eve.

*We sing through the night with a voice of one!*

**Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)**

For information about the composer, please visit her website.

[www.gwynethwalker.com](http://www.gwynethwalker.com)

