

decketh joy, water destroy

for soprano, flute, clarinet, harp, cello, double bass, & percussion

music by
Ryan Suleiman

text by
Ralph Waldo Emerson

2018

decketh joy, water destroy

approx. 10'

Performance Notes

Lighting: It is preferred that the performance includes a small number of lighting effects, but a performance without them is acceptable. Lighting directions are included boxed text on p. 3, 19, 24, 26, and 31.

Conductor: the piece may be performed with or without a conductor. However, rehearsal K onward should not be conducted. See page 26.

The soprano reads directly from the score.

Any questions, especially regarding the notation in rehearsal F & J-K, may be directed to the composer.

Version for piano & soprano: a version of this song for soprano and piano with the same rehearsal and measure numbers is also available. Inquire with the composer for more information.

Percussion Key / Instrument List

Bass Drum Suspended Cymbal Triangle

vibes + crotales* + pitched gongs**

*only lower octave needed
**only C4, G4, B4 needed

Program Notes

Water has always fascinated artists. It mesmerizes through the intrinsic beauty of its physicality and its complex relationship with us humans. In our own time, we can be awestruck by its beauty and cognizant of the destruction it increasingly brings in this century, each year more than the last. The text is Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem, "Water":

The water understands
Civilization well;
It wets my foot, but prettily,
It chills my life, but wittily,
It is not disconcerted,
It is not broken-hearted:
Well used, it decketh joy,
Adorneth, doubleth joy:
Ill used, it will destroy,
In perfect time and measure
With a face of golden pleasure
Elegantly destroy.

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Ralph Waldo Emerson
text

Begin with a neutral stage lighting.
Audience may be partially lighted.

Ryan Suleiman
music

delicate, spacious, misterioso ♩ = c. 56

The musical score is written for a chamber ensemble and includes the following parts:

- soprano:** A vocal line with a 3/4 time signature, mostly consisting of rests.
- flute:** A melodic line starting with a *p* dynamic, featuring a long phrase with a slur and a crescendo to *mp* and *p*.
- clarinet in Bb:** A melodic line starting with a *p* dynamic, mirroring the flute's phrasing.
- harp:** A line with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature, marked *mp*. It includes a chordal texture and a trill in the final measure.
- percussion:** A line with a 3/4 time signature, marked *mp*, featuring sustained chords and a trill in the final measure.
- cello:** A line with a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature, marked *p*, featuring a long phrase with a slur and a crescendo to *mp*.
- double bass:** A line with a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature, marked *p*, mirroring the cello's phrasing.

The score is in 3/4 time and ends with a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *tri.* (trill). A *Ped.* (pedal) marking is present for the cello. A *Bb / G#* chord is indicated for the harp. A *5* fingering is shown for the harp's final note. A *** marking is present in the cello part.

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A

4 8

s. *mp*
The wa - ter_

fl. *f* *p* *pp*

cl. *f* *p* *pp*

hp. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* (mute) *mp*

perc.

crot. *mf*

vc. *p* *f* *p* *pp* *mp*

db. *mp*