# Pamela J. Marshall

# The Future of Life

SATB chorus, trombone, piano



#### **First performance**

The Master Singers Adam Grossman, Music Director Darren Acosta, trombone October 28, 2007 First Parish Church, Lexington, Massachusetts, USA

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# The Future of Life

For SATB chorus, trombone, piano By Pamela J. Marshall

Commissioned by The Master Singers of Lexington, Massachusetts, Adam Grossman, Music Director

Inspired by the book "The Future of Life" by Edward O. Wilson

Duration 30 minutes

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#### **Acknowledgements**

The texts for movements II, III, IV, and VI are adapted from "The Future of Life" by Edward O. Wilson.

The poem for movement VII is "The Song" by Anne Baring, first published in 1996 in "The Divine Feminine" by Anne Baring and Andrew Harvey, and used with the kind permission of Anne Baring.

The poem for movement VIII is "Grand Grand Mother is returning" by Judy Grahn from her book-length poem, *The Queen of Wands*.

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#### **Texts**

#### **Bottleneck: A Letter to Henry**

Adapted from "The Future of Life", Prologue, xxii-xxiv

Henry, my friend, ...the living world is dying; the natural economy is crumbling beneath our busy feet. We have been too self-absorbed to foresee the long-term consequences of our actions, and we will suffer a terrible loss unless we shake off our delusions and move quickly to a solution.

Science and technology led us into the bottleneck. Now science and technology must help us find our way through and out. Surely the rest of life matters. Surely our stewardship is its only hope.

The race is on between the forces that destroy the living environment and the forces that might save it. We are inside a bottleneck of overpopulation and wasteful consumption.

There are encouraging signs. Population growth is slowing, so there may be only 8 to 10 billion people by century's end. It should be possible for all those people to have a decent standard of living and to shelter most of the world's plants and animals too.

You searched for essence at Walden and you hit upon an ethic with a solid feel to it: nature is ours to explore forever; it is our crucible and our refuge; it is our nature home; it is all these things. Save it, you said: in wildness is the preservation of the world.

Science and technology led us into the bottleneck. Now science and technology must help us find our way through and out. Surely the rest of life matters. Surely our stewardship is its only hope.

#### Pay Mother Her Due

Adapted from "The Future of Life"
Chapter 5 How Much Is the Bioshere Worth? p.105-106;
Chapter 7 The Solution, p.182-183
Homo sapiens,
Industrious, bipedal apes with opposable thumbs,
we've won Darwin's lottery.

Habitats shrink; species decline; put them on the Red List; forget to notice when they disappear.

But we chip away at the other miracles around us.

Can we measure what is being lost? Can we protect what is being lost?

Pay now or pay later

Protect a sample of all Earth's ecosystems: the bill...pay it now, only 28 billion Pay now or pay later

Manage the protected tropical wilderness: the bill... pay it now, only 4 billion Pay now or pay later

Protect the Earth's hotspots of diversity: the bill... pay it now, only 24 billion Pay now or pay later

Not now, wait, pay it later:

Recreate, manufacture, reinvent what Mother Nature used to provide: the bill... Wait, not now! Wait, not now; pay it later, it's trillions, 33 trillion

Pay Mother her due!

#### **How Spiders Came to Hawaii**

Adapted from of "The Future of Life," Chapter 3 Nature's Last Stand, p.46
Stand tall on a leaf or twig
Spin silken strands out into a passing breeze
Let the threads grow and grow, longer, longer
Until you feel a tug
Let go
And sail upward
Ride the wind to anywhere

### **A Bequest**

From of "The Future of Life," Chapter 3 Nature's Last Stand, p.77

We bequeath to you the synthetic jungles of Hawaii and a scrubland where once thrived the prodigious Amazon forest, along with a few remnants of wild places we chose not to lay waste. Your challenge is to create new kinds of plants and animals by genetic engineering and somehow fit them together into free-living ecosystems. We understand this feat may prove impossible. We are certain that for many of you even the thought of doing so will be repugnant. We wish you luck. And if you go ahead and succeed in the attempt, we regret that what you manufacture can never be as satisfying as the original creation. Accept our apologies, and accept this audiovisual library. It illustrates the wondrous world that used to be.

#### The Bee-Song

By Anne Baring, titled "The Song"

Beehive source Trellised womb Mother of all beginnings

Hold me
Gather me
Feed me
With the honey-nectar
From the hive.

Nourished
I will sing
The Bee-song
The long-forgotten threnody
Of praise to thee.

#### **Grand Grand Mother is returning**

By Judy Grahn

The egg is always being made and making, always getting laid and laying; thread is being spun and spinning, truth is being found and finding, getting all unwound and winding, being all unsnarled and snarling, and the Grand Grand Mother is returning

that's all I know

Don't suppose it will be as it is remembered in time past

time present is a different unpredicted picture

time future happens only in the mind

Worlds are always ending and beginning, tales are getting learned and learning, birds are always taking off and landing; the sky is ever being turned around, and turning; the tree is ever being stood upon and standing; and the flame is getting burned and burning

Grand Mother is returning don't expect the past, expect whatever happens, men are moving, more than ever women are just wakening; Grand Grand Mother is returning

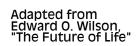
that's all I know













































Adagio J = 70











































## Interlude

Pamela J. Marshall

































# Grand Grand Mother is returning





































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### Selected Music by Pamela J. Marshall

#### Orchestra

Triptoe Suite (2222-4221, 1pc, timp, strings) in 4 mvts
Through the Mist (2222-2220, harp, 3pc, timp, strings) in 3 mvts
A chill wind in autumn (solo voice, 2222-4221-3pc, strings)
Traditional Christmas (treble chorus or soloist, 2222-4221, harp, 3pc, timp, strings)
Three Appalachian Carols (2222-4231, harp, 2pc, timp, strings)

#### Keyboard

Suite for harpsichord or piano For piano: Daydream, Stomp, Imagine That Time Stops Wordless Prayer for piano or organ Playbook (Pacem Composing Project) for piano

#### Vocal

The Future of Life for SATB chorus, trombone, piano Weaving the World for SATB chorus, oboe, piano Windshine for SATB chorus and cello Wordless Prayer for SATB chorus

Body and Soul Vol.1 for mezzo-soprano and string trio Body and Soul Vol.2 for soprano, flute, cello, piano Ariel's Songs for high or medium voice and piano Remember the Old Songs for high voice and piano Sky's Mirror for voice and cello A chill wind in autumn for voice and piano

#### Strings

Arcanum for solo violin, Soliloquy for solo cello Elusive Sleep for cello and piano Pascal's Theorems for cello and doublebass Truth Becoming for string quartet

#### Winds & Brass

Waves and Fountains for oboe, horn, piano
Wanderer for brass quintet
Colored Leaves for solo horn
"wild horn whose voice the woodland fills" for 8 horns
Black Bear Dance for horn quartet (or choir) and drums

#### Recordings

Noises, Sounds & Strange Airs (Clique Track): Soliloquy and Sky's Mirror Mandolin X 4 (Plucked String Inc.): Mandolin Night for mandolin performed by Neil Gladd Enigmatica (Uncommon Strings): Blue-Gold Variations from Loosely Blue for mandolin ens. Holidays of the New Era (ERMMedia): "Windshine" for SATB and cello