

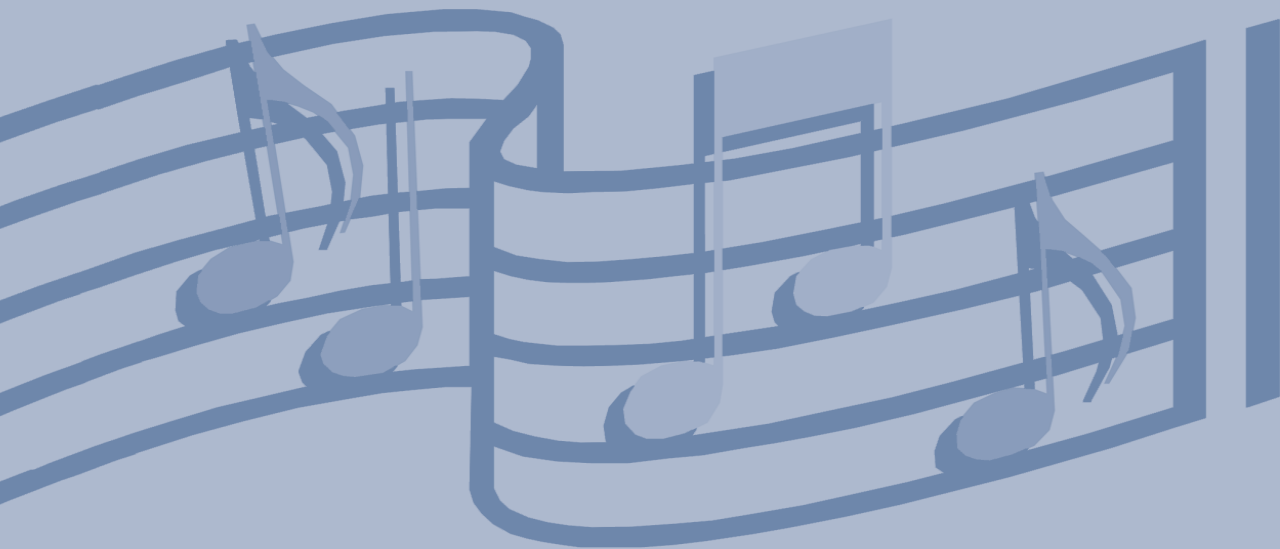
AMARA  
Rommereim

SATB, unaccompanied

WW1610

# AMARA (Breath of Grace)

SATB with Opt. Saxophone



Music by  
**John Rommereim**



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## About the Work

*Amara* is an Igbo word for “grace.” The title for this piece was suggested by my wife Angela Voos, with help from her Nigerian friend Chinyere Ukabiala. After listening to me play and sing it at the piano, she told me that the directness and simplicity of the tune, and especially the calm breaths between phrases, seemed to evoke, for her, a sense of grace. I think this title suits the music perfectly. Since there is no text, and since there’s no linkage to any particular belief system or religion, each singer and listener can fill in the blanks on their own as to what grace is, and how this song might enact it.

The moments of silence are an important element of the piece, and they require a sense of calm on everyone’s part. Try to let go of any sense of impatience or hurry. In a few spots in the score, the breaths are notated explicitly using crossed note heads. The idea here is just for the singers to be aware of breathing together, and, perhaps, for each singer to think about breathing in a sense of grace. This is not meant to be a theatrical device at all, or anything that is noticeable from the audience’s perspective, it’s just a suggestion for how the singers might think about their breath in this piece.

*Amara* can be performed with or without the saxophone solo. The solo part grew out of an improvisation by jazz saxophonist Mark Laver. Mark responded to what the choir was singing, and invented his own solo that rides along and weaves in and out of it. The notated part comes as close as possible to one of Mark’s improvisations as it was recorded in concert in April of 2016. We have added chord symbols in the saxophone part to open up the possibility that jazz players may find their own interpretation. It’s important that the choir should be together rhythmically, but, especially in the slower parts of the piece, the saxophone can float along without being in lock step with the choir. A recording of the version with saxophone is available at [waltonmusic.com](http://waltonmusic.com).

-John Rommereim

## About the Composer

John Rommereim is Blanche Johnson Professor of Music at Grinnell College, where he conducts the Grinnell Singers and the Grinnell Oratorio Society, and teaches composition. His choral works have been performed by distinguished ensembles across the U.S., including Magnum Chorum, the Princeton Singers, VocalEssence, Voces Novae, Roomful of Teeth, and The Rose Ensemble, for whom he served as 2008-09 composer-in-residence. Dr. Rommereim has composed a chamber opera, songs, electronic music, and works for piano, organ, guitar, flute, saxophone quartet, brass quintet, and string quartet. He also regularly performs improvisatory music as a pianist together with jazz saxophonist Mark Laver.

Dr. Rommereim is the recipient of commissions and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Composers Forum, the Iowa Choral Directors Association, the Iowa Composers Forum, the Iowa Arts Council, and VocalEssence. He has conducted the Grinnell Singers on concert tours across the U.S., and in Estonia, Finland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. During his early years at Grinnell College, Dr. Rommereim founded a professional early music ensemble, the Baroque Orchestra of Iowa, which employed some of the country’s finest baroque specialists.

Dr. Rommereim is also recognized as an accomplished singer. He has performed all three of Schubert’s song cycles, and he has appeared as baritone soloist for choral/orchestral works such as Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, Brahms’s *German Requiem*, Verdi’s *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams’s *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*, J. S. Bach’s *Cantata 131*, “*Aus der Tiefe*,” and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*.

Duration: Approx. 4:45

# Amara

(Breath of Grace)

SATB divisi with opt. Saxophone\*

Music by  
JOHN ROMMEREIM (b. 1958)  
Saxophone improvisation by MARK LAVER

$\bullet$  = ca. 50

Saxophone  
(score in C)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano  
(for rehearsal only)

\* Separate B $\flat$  and E $\flat$  saxophone parts available for free download at [waltonmusic.com](http://waltonmusic.com).

\*\* Each phrase throughout should have shape through dynamics and intensity.

\*\*\* Gentle breath

[illegible]



13

rit. a tempo

*pp* *f* *mp* *mf*

hm oh hm oh hm oh

8

16

(♩ = ♩)

*mp* *f* *p*

hm oh oh

*mp* *f* *mf* *p*

hm oh oh oh

*mp* *f* *p*

hm oh oh

*mp* *f* *p*

hm oh oh

Piano accompaniment

21

rit. a tempo

*f*

*mp*

oo ah

oo ah

oo oh

oo ah



25 *accel.*

The musical score consists of six staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, marked with *mf*. It features an *accel.* (accelerando) instruction at the beginning. The melody includes a sixteenth-note triplet, a sixteenth-note sextuplet, and a quarter-note triplet. The bottom five staves are vocal parts, each starting with a piano (*mp*) dynamic. They are arranged in a SATB format (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass). Each vocal part has a vocal line with lyrics 'ah' and a corresponding piano accompaniment line. The piano accompaniment for the vocal parts is written in a simplified style, using block chords and single notes. The piano part at the bottom is a full piano accompaniment, also in treble and bass clefs, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line with chords and single notes. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score ends at measure 28.

*mf*

*mp* *cresc.*

ah ah ah

*mp* *cresc.*

ah ah ah

*mp* *cresc.*

ah ah ah

*mp* *cresc.*

ah ah ah

(♩ = 108)

29

6

*pp* *f*

*f*

oh ah

*f*

oh ah

*f*

oh ah

*f*

oh ah

33

The musical score is written for a vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is E major (three sharps). The tempo and meter are indicated by the 3/4 time signature. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The vocal parts are written in a four-part setting, with the Soprano part at the top and the Bass part at the bottom. The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The lyrics 'oh' and 'ah' are written under the vocal notes. The score is numbered 33 in the top left corner.

33

*p* *mf* *mp*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

oh oh ah

oh oh ah

oh oh ah

oh oh ah

oh oh ah

37

*f* *ff* *mp* *mf*

oh ah

oh ah

oh ah

oh ah

oh ah

41

slowing

*f* *p* *pp*

*ff* *mf* *mp*

oh oo

*ff* *mf* *mp*

oh oo

*ff* *mf* *mp*

oh oo

*ff* *mf* *mp*

oh oo

46 **Tempo I**

The musical score consists of six systems of staves. The first system is a single treble staff with measures 46-51. Measures 46-48 are in 4/4 time, measure 49 is in 3/4, measure 50 is in 2/4, and measure 51 is in 3/4. Dynamics are *p*, *mf*, and *mp*. The second system has five staves (treble, four grand staves) in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The third system has five staves in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The fourth system has five staves in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The fifth system has five staves in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The sixth system has five staves in 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and a 'hm' marking.

51

This musical score page contains measures 51 through 54. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 in measure 52 and back to 5/4 in measure 54. The vocal line includes lyrics: 'hm', 'oo', and 'hm'. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *mp*. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and various rhythmic patterns.

51

*pp* *p* *mp*

hm oo hm

*pp* *pp* *mp*

hm hm hm

*p* *mp*

oo hm

*pp* *pp* *mp*

hm hm hm

8

55

The musical score is written in A major (three sharps) and begins at measure 55. The right hand features a complex melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including triplets, sextuplets, and dynamic markings: *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *f*. The left hand provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. The piece concludes with a fermata on the final note.

mm mm oo

mm mm oo

mm hm oo

mm hm oo



58

The musical score consists of six staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a five-measure rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, and ending with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *f*, and *mp*. The bottom five staves are grouped by a brace on the left and represent vocal parts. Each vocal staff begins with a whole note rest, followed by a melodic line in 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures. The vocal parts include lyrics: "oo", "oh", and "oh oo". The piano accompaniment at the bottom is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), featuring arpeggiated chords and moving lines in the right hand, and sustained chords and moving lines in the left hand.

*pp* *f* *mp*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

oh oo oh oh oo oh oh

62

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature. The second staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature. The third staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature. The fourth staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature. The fifth staff is a single melodic line in bass clef, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of three sharps. It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a bass clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature. The sixth staff is a piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. It contains measures 62 to 65. Measure 62 has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. Measure 63 has a 2/4 time signature. Measure 64 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 65 has a 3/2 time signature.

*p* *hm* *hm*

*p* *hm* *hm*

*p* *hm* *hm*

*p* *mp* *hm*

66

rit.

*pp* *ppp*

hm mm

*pp* *ppp*

hm mm

*pp* *ppp*

hm oo mm

*pp* *ppp*

hm oo mm

## Other works for SATB Choir

*Ave Maris Stella*  
Blake Wilson  
SSAATTBB • WW1616

*Circa Mea*  
Mark Burrows  
SATB • WW1614

*Cum Sancto Spiritu*  
Hyo-Won Woo  
SATB divisi • WW1637

*Dirshu Adonai*  
Kenneth and Kirsten Lampl  
SATB divisi • WW1638

*Hallelujah*  
Patrick Hawes  
SATB divisi • WW1644

*Kodutee*  
Pärt Uusberg  
SATB divisi • WW1643

*The Maid of Culmore*  
arr. Joseph Gregorio  
SATB divisi • WW1618

*Remembering*  
Joan Szymko  
SATB divisi • WW1640

*Wintertide*  
arr. Ola Gjeilo  
SATB divisi • WW1609

*The Wisdom of the Moon*  
Susan LaBarr  
SATB divisi • WW1634