



Leipzig · London · New York



Image credit: NASA

Alec Roth

Earthrise

Contemporary

Earthrise

*“People are always asking what we discovered when we went to the Moon.
What we discovered was the Earth.”*

Dick Gordon, Apollo 12 astronaut

WHAT IS EARTHRISE?

The first photograph of planet Earth was taken on 24 December 1968 by the astronauts of the Apollo 8 mission. The image, captioned ‘Earthrise’ caused a world-wide sensation on its publication early in 1969.

Arguably the most important image in the history of mankind, its influence on the environmental movement was immediate and profound.

A CHORAL CELEBRATION

Alec Roth’s choral work *Earthrise* is available for choirs – large or small, amateur or professional – to celebrate this iconic image, which is of such importance for us today.

The picture of our small blue planet in the vast darkness of space showed clearly its great beauty, but also its great vulnerability.

“It was the most beautiful, heart-catching sight of my life... raging nationalistic interests, famines, wars, pestilence don’t show from that distance.”

Frank Borman, Apollo 8

We live in a distracted world on the brink of environmental catastrophe, but what is to be done? The Gaia-theory scientist James Lovelock insists that to mobilise public opinion, appealing to reason is not enough. We must develop an *emotional* connection to the Earth “by harnessing the power of metaphor and myth, ancient wisdom and sacred texts”. And, of course, music.

THE TEXT

“It suddenly struck me that that tiny pea, pretty and blue, was the Earth. I put up my thumb and shut one eye, and my thumb blotted out the planet Earth.”

Neil Armstrong, Apollo 11

The astronaut’s words bring to mind the Prophet Isaiah’s vision of a God’s-eye view of the Earth: “Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket. Look, the islands are like a fine dust.” These and other visionary words taken from ancient sources form the text of *Earthrise*, sung in Latin. The words, translated into the language of the audience may be projected during the performance as well as being available in programme books and as online downloads.

THE MUSIC

“Can there have been any more inspiring vision this century than that of the Earth from space? We saw for the first time what a gem of a planet we live on. The astronauts who saw the whole earth from Apollo 8 gave us an icon.”

James Lovelock, *Homage to Gaia*, 2000

The music of *Earthrise* is a 25-minute meditation on this icon and falls into three main sections:

Part 1 – Man’s Drive to Explore and Exploit

Part 2 – Contemplation of the Earth Seen from Space

Part 3 – A Plea for True Wisdom and Understanding

TWO VERSIONS

Choir (SATB) with accompaniment ([EP73224](#))

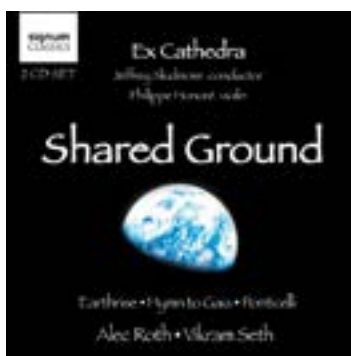
The choir part is suitable for choirs, large or small. A small semi-chorus (minimum six singers SSATBB) has slightly more challenging material. A small solo role is undertaken by a tenor from the semi-chorus. Accompaniments available: organ; or piano (4 hands); or string orchestra (with optional percussion); or full orchestra.

Unaccompanied Choir in 40 parts ([EP73223](#))

The scoring uses the same voices and format as the motet *Spem in Alium* by Thomas Tallis: eight five-part choirs – SATBB. An optional “continuo” part is available for chamber organ/bass.

RECORDING

The 40-part unaccompanied choir version is recorded by Ex Cathedra on Signum (SIGCD270), available on CD, digital download and streaming (Apple Music; Spotify etc.).



The album is also available on [YouTube](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details please contact James Joslin, New Music Promotion Manager, Edition Peters:

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Alec Roth's music is striking for its rich, beautifully crafted choral textures, ecological and metaphysical subject matter, and references to the great heritage of European choral music. Earthrise is a fabulous choral work in three movements with the sort of poly-choral, lushly harmonised climaxes that send shivers down the spine.

Richard Morrison, *The Times, London* 11 February 2012