PROGRAM NOTES

"Truth," my choral setting of a poem by Robert Penn Warren, the first poet laureate of the United States, was premiered by the Gregg Smith Singers, Queens College Choir and a brass ensemble at the Shubert Theatre in New York in 1988. It was part of a benefit concert for Vietnam veterans organized by the Vietnam Veterans Ensemble Theatre Company under the auspices of Joseph Papp. When I was approached by the Theatre Company to write a new piece for the program, I read many of the famous war poems from the First and Second World Wars searching for an appropriate text. I had met Robert Penn Warren through a mutual friend, John Coleman, and had spent some wonderful evenings with both in James home in Connecticut. At Christmas John gave me an anthology of Warren’s poems. I had no idea that I would find what I was looking for when I opened the book. The poem that struck me was not about war, but about truth. When I read these opening lines “Truth is what you cannot tell. Truth is for the grave.” I immediately thought of my own experience in war and how every soldier takes the truth with him to his grave. Warren understood this “truth” as applied to life. It was an inspiring text.

— Dave Brubeck

Dave Brubeck (1920-2012)

A jazz pianist who is noted for his improvisational skills, Dave Brubeck is also the composer of many fully realized works, including choral hymns, orchestral, chamber music, ballet suites, a string quartet, solo pieces for piano, violin & voice, and large-scale works for chorus and orchestra. He has been designated a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress and a "Jazz Master" by the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, please visit alfred.com.
Commissioned by the Vietnam Veterans' Ensemble.  

**Truth**

for S.A.T.B. voices divisi and optional piano

**Poem by**
ROBERT PENN WARREN

**Music by**
DAVE BRUBECK

Tempo ($q = 76$)

**SOPRANO**

\[ p \]

Eerie sound

\[ \text{Truth is what you can not tell.} \]

**ALTO**

\[ p \]

Eerie sound

\[ \text{Truth is what you can not tell.} \]

**TENOR**

\[ \text{mp} \]

Eerie sound

\[ \text{Truth is what you can not tell.} \]

**BASS**

\[ \text{mp} \]

Eerie sound

\[ \text{Truth is what you can not tell.} \]

**PIANO**

\[ \text{Tempo ($q = 76$)} \]

\[ \text{(Optional for rehearsal only)} \]
Truth is only the flowing shadow cast by the grave.

Wind-tossed elm, when sun is bright and grass well-groomed.
Truth is the down-y feather you blow from your lips to shine in sunlight.

Truth is the trick that History, over and over
like a sigh

Oh like a sigh

Oh cresc.

over and over again, plays on us. It's

over and over again, plays on us. It's

cresc.

p

shape Read - ow

shape Read - ow

shape is un - clear in shad - ow or bright - ness

shape is un - clear in shad - ow or bright - ness

p And its
decresc.
decresc.
decresc.
decresc.
utterance the whisper we strive to catch or the

Oh__

scream of a locomotive

scream of a locomotive

scream of a locomotive

scream of a locomotive
desperately blowing for the tragic crossing

Truth is the curse laid upon us in the Garden.

pp
Truth is the long so-licit-omy of the dead all their long

Mysterioso

Eerie like an echo

a tempo

all their long night.

Dead

Eerie like an echo

a tempo

all their long night.

Truth is what would be told by the dead

Mysterioso

Eerie sound like an echo

a tempo

all their long night.

Truth is what would be told by the dead
If they could hold conversation with the living, fulfillment like an echo.

If they could hold conversation with the living, fulfillment like an echo.

Sing like a whisper from the grave, obligation to us. Their accumulated like an echo. Obligation to us. Their accumulated like an echo. Obligation to us. Their accumulated like an echo.
Wisdom must be immense. Truth is what you cannot tell. Truth is for the grave. Note: Always play bracketed chords even if sung a cappella.