

## 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 John's 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 those 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-notated 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](http://alfred.com).

Commissioned by the Vietnam Veterans' Ensemble.  
First performance Feb.7,1988 in New York City, by the Gregg Smith Singers, Russell Gloyd conducting.

# Truth

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

Poem by  
**ROBERT PENN WARREN**

Music by  
**DAVE BRUBECK**

Tempo (♩ = 76)

SOPRANO *p* *Eerie sound*  
Truth is what you can - not tell. Truth is for the

ALTO *p* *Eerie sound*  
Truth is what you can - not tell. Truth is for the

TENOR *mp* *Eerie sound*  
Truth is what you can - not tell. Truth is for the

BASS *mp* *Eerie sound*  
Truth is what you can - not tell. Truth is for the

PIANO  
Tempo (♩ = 76)  
*mp* (Optional for rehearsal only)

Words © 1978, 1979, 1980 by Robert Penn Warren

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4

*mp*

grave. Truth is on - ly the flow - ing shad - ow cast By the

*mp*

grave. Truth is on - ly the flow - ing shad - ow cast By the

8

grave. Truth is on - ly the flow - ing shad - ow cast By the

grave. Truth is on - ly the flow - ing shad - ow cast By the

*mp*

3

7

*mf*

wind - tossed elm when sun is bright and grass well - groomed.

*mf*

wind - tossed elm when sun is bright and grass well - groomed.

8

wind - tossed elm

wind - tossed elm

*mf*

10

*p* Truth is the down - y feath - er you blow from your lips to shine in *mf*

*p* Truth is the down - y feath - er you blow from your lips to shine in *mf*

*pp* Truth

*pp* Truth

13

sun - light. Truth ov - er and ov - er

sun - light. Truth ov - er and ov - er

*mf* Truth is the trick that His - to - ry,

*mf* Truth is the trick that His - to - ry,

16 *like a sigh*

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Oh ov - er a - gain ov - er a - gain

*like a sigh*

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Oh *cresc.* ov - er a - gain ov - er a - gain *mp*

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Ov - er and ov - er a - gain, plays on us. It's *mp*

Musical staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Ov - er and ov - er a - gain, plays on us. It's

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Musical staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

shape shad - ow *p* And its *decresc.*

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

shape shad - ow And its

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

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

Musical staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

shape is un - clear in shad - ow or bright - ness *p* *decresc.*

Musical staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

Musical staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and a 3-measure triplet of eighth notes.

21

ut - ter - ance the whis - per we strive to catch or the

ut - ter - ance the whis - per we strive to catch or the

*pp* Oh catch or the

*pp* Oh catch or the

*pp* *ff*

*pp* *ff*

23

scream of a lo - co - mo - tive

scream of a lo - co - mo - tive

scream cross - ing cross - ing cross - ing scream of a lo - co - mo - tive

scream cross - ing cross - ing cross - ing scream of a lo - co - mo - tive

25

des - per - ate - ly blow - ing for the trag - ic cross - ing

des - per - ate - ly blow - ing for the trag - ic trag - ic cross - ing cross - ing

des - per - ate - ly blow - ing for the trag - ic trag - ic cross - ing cross - ing

des - per - ate - ly blow - ing for the trag - ic trag - ic cross - ing cross - ing

27

Truth is the curse laid up - on us in the Gar - den. *pp*

Truth is the curse laid up - on us in the Gar - den. *pp*

Truth *pp*

Truth *pp*

29

*rit.*

*a tempo mp cresc. e accel.*

Truth is the Ser - pent's joke,

Truth

*rit.*

*a tempo mp cresc. e accel.*

Truth is the Ser - joke,

Truth

*rit.*

*a tempo mf cresc. e accel.*

Truth

And is the sun - stung

*rit.*

*a tempo mf cresc. e accel.*

Truth

And is the sun - stung

*rit.*

*a tempo cresc. e accel.*

32

dust dev - il that swirls on the lee side of God when He draw - ses

dust dev - il that swirls on the lee side of God when He draw - ses



35 *mf* *rit.*

Truth Truth

*mf* *rit.*

Truth Truth

*mf* *Mysterioso* *rit.*

Truth is the long so - lil - o - quy Of the dead all their long

*mf* *Mysterioso* *rit.*

Truth is the long so - lil - o - quy Of the dead all their long

*mf* *Mysterioso* *rit.*

38 *Eerie like an echo* *a tempo*

all their long night. Dead

*Eerie like an echo* *a tempo*

all their long night. Dead

*mf a tempo*

night. Truth is what would be told by the dead

*mf a tempo*

night. Truth is what would be told by the dead

*Eerie sound like an echo* *a tempo*

*mf*

41

*mf* and thus ful - fill

*mf* and thus ful - fill

*like an echo*

8 If they could hold con-ver - sa - tion with the liv - ing ful - fill

*like an echo*

If they could hold con-ver - sa - tion with the liv - ing ful - fill

44

*rit.* *pp* Sing like a whisper from the grave

ob - li - ga - tion to us Their ac - cum - u - lat - ed

*rit.* *pp* ob - li - ga - tion to us Their ac - cum - u - lat - ed

*rit.* *like an echo* *pp* ob - li - ga - tion to us Their ac - cum - u - lat - ed

*rit.* *like an echo* *pp* ob - li - ga - tion to us Their ac - cum - u - lat - ed

wis - dom must be im - mense. \_\_\_\_\_

wis - dom must be im - mense. \_\_\_\_\_

8 wis - dom must be im - mense. Truth is what you can - not tell.

wis - dom must be im - mense. Truth is what you can - not tell.

*rit. Dramatic ppp*

Truth is for the grave. \_\_\_\_\_

*rit. Dramatic ppp*

Truth is for the grave. \_\_\_\_\_

*rit. Dramatic ppp*

8 Truth is for the grave. \_\_\_\_\_

*rit. Dramatic ppp*

Truth is for the grave. \_\_\_\_\_

*rit. Dramatic ppp*

*NOTE: Always play bracketed chords even if sung a cappella.*