

Forest Song

*commissioned by Choirs Aotearoa
for the National Choral Academy Massed Choir*

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Programme Note:

Forest Song is an ode of gratitude to Aotearoa's native environment. It speaks of the beauty of the deeply reciprocal relationship between the land and its people. It is perhaps this interconnectedness that often makes us feel relaxed, peaceful and at home in nature. The piece is a reminder of our co-dependency with nature and the importance of appreciating and protecting it.

Text:

When I came to your shore
I touched an unknown soil
and felt ancient roots crawl beneath my feet.

I placed my ear upon damp ground
and heard my own heart-beat pound
as earth's great silence listened back.

I pressed my nose against a kauri tree
inhaling, exchanging breath
with the Lord of the Forest.

Now this land is in my every breath,
these trees are my lungs.

Additional text:

Ngahere forest

The remaining Māori and Latin words used throughout are the names of native New Zealand plants and trees.

Performer Note:

When an instruction is given to improvise "at free rhythm or tempi as dictated by breath," this indicates that the performer should sing/chant/whisper using the patterns of their natural breath. The individuals involuntary need to inhale or exhale should dictate their improvisation of the corresponding material.

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The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble, consisting of eight staves labeled S. 2, A. 2, T. 2, B. 2, S. 3, A. 3, T. 3, and B. 3. A large, bold, red watermark reading "SAMPLE" is superimposed across the first four staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano). It also features performance instructions such as "inhale", "exhale", and "Pitched hum". Phonetic symbols like [ɔ], [a], and [u] are placed below the notes. The text "a niente" appears above the notes in staves S. 3 and A. 3. At the bottom left, a box contains the text: "*Pronounced as the separate syllables of 'ngahere'".

S. 2 *inhale* *p* *exhale* *p*

A. 2 *Pitched hum* *p*

T. 2 *inhale* *p* *exhale* *p* he*

B. 2 *inhale* *p* *exhale* *p* he*

S. 3 *Pitched hum* *p* a niente Ng

A. 3 *Pitched hum* *p* a niente Ng

T. 3 *inhale* *p* *exhale - like a gust of wind* [a] [u]

B. 3 *inhale* *p* *exhale - like a gust of wind* [a] [u]

*Pronounced as the separate syllables of 'ngahere'

4 18 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p*

S. 1 [a] Nga*

A. 1 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p* **pp**
[a] Nga* kawakawa/makomako/horopito/rāta**

T. 1 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p*
[a] Nga*

B. 1 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p*
[a] Nga*

S. 2 a niente

SAMPLE

T. 2 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p*
[a]

B. 2 a niente *p* inhale exhale *p*
[a]

S. 3 *p* a niente

A. 3 *p* re* a niente
re*

T. 3 *p* a niente
re*

B. 3 *p* a niente
re*

**Each singer should choose one of the provided words and chant it at free rhythm as dictated by breath on the given pitch.

Section left intentionally blank

SAMPLE

S. 2
he*

T. 2
he*

B. 2
he* *pp*
(kamahi/kaikawaka/tarata/pūiri)**

S. 3
p
re*

A. 3
p
re*

T. 3
p
re*

B. 3
p
re*

**Each singer should choose one of the provided words and chant it at free rhythm as dictated by breath on the given pitch.

6 27

S. 1 *mp*
 came _____ When I came to your shore I touched an un-known soil _____

A. 1 *a niente* *pp*
 _____ au-stra - lis*

T. 1 _____

B. 1 _____

S. 2 *a niente* *p* *pp* *pp*
 _____ When I came _____ ex - cel - sum*

A. 2 *a niente* _____

T. 2 *a niente* _____

B. 2 _____

S. 3 *pp* *pp*
 _____ ex - cel - sum*

A. 3 *pp*

 (kowhai/kahikatea/tōwai/mingimingi)**

T. 3 *pp* *pp*
 _____ a - ga - this*

B. 3 *pp*

SAMPLE

*Repeat the boxed melodic idea at free rhythm and tempi as dictated by breath.

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SAMPLE

The image shows a musical score for a section that is mostly blank, with a large red watermark 'SAMPLE' overlaid. The score is arranged in a system with six staves, labeled S. 2, A, T. 2, B. 2, S. 3, and A. 3, T. 3, B. 3. The staves are connected by horizontal lines. The lyrics are: 'a - ga - this*' for T. 2, '(kamahi/kaikawaka/tarata/pūiri)**' for B. 2, and 'so-pho-ra*' for A. 3 and B. 3. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined. The watermark 'SAMPLE' is written in large, bold, red capital letters across the center of the page.

S. 2

A

T. 2

B. 2

S. 3

A. 3

T. 3

B. 3

a - ga - this*

(kamahi/kaikawaka/tarata/pūiri)**

so-pho-ra*

so-pho-ra*

ng

ng

ng

ng

ng

ng

S. 1 *mp* *p*
ground

A. 1 *mp* *pp* *mp* *p*
I placed my ear u - pon damp ground ground

T. 1 *p* *pp* *mp* *p*
damp ground ground

B. 1 *p* *pp* *mp* *p*
damp ground ground

S. 2 *p*
ng

A. 2 *mp* *p*
I plac my ear u - pon damp ground.

T. 2 *pp*
damp ground

B. 2 *p* *pp* *p*
damp ground and heard my own heart beat

S. 3 *mp* *p*
my ear u-pon damp

A. 3 *mp* *p*
my ear u-pon damp

T. 3 *mp* *p*
damp

B. 3 *mp* *p* *p*
damp and heard my own heart beat

SAMPLE

Section left intentionally blank

SAMPLE

S. 2 *p* heart-beat pound *mp* u - pon damp ground *p* as earth's great si - lence

A. 2 *p* heart - pon *mp* - pon damp ground *p* as earth's great si - lence

T. 2 *p* heart-beat pound *mp* u - pon damp ground

B. 2 *mp* pound u - pon damp ground

S. 3 *p* heart - beat heart - beat pound *p* as earth's great si - lence

A. 3 *p* heart - beat heart - beat pound *pp* as earth's great si - lence

T. 3 *p* heart - beat heart - beat pound

B. 3 *p* pound heart - beat heart - beat pound

63 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

S. 1 list-ened, list-ened, list - ened, list-ened back, back

A. 1 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

list-ened, list-ened, list-ened back

T. 1 *pp* *whispered* *mf*

aristotelia serrata / podocarpus totara*

B. 1 *p* *whispered* *mf*

piper excelsum / vitex lucens*

S. 2 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

list-ened, list-ened, list-ened back, back

A. 2 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

list-ened list-ened, back

T. 2 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

List - en back

B. 2 *mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

List - en back

S. 3 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

list-ened list-ened, list-ened back

A. 3 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp* *stagger breath*

list-ened list-ened back ng

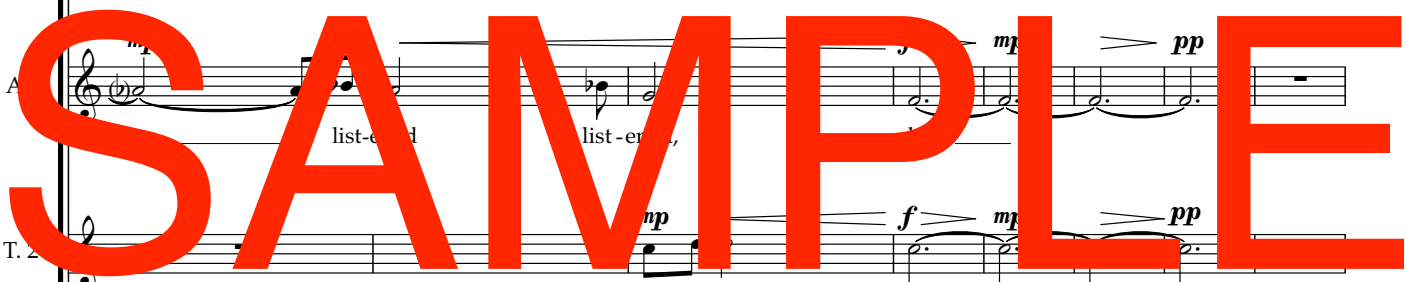
T. 3 *mp* *f* *mp* *pp*

List - en back

B. 3 *mf* *f* *mp* *pp*

List - en back

**Each singer should choose one of the provided words and whisper it at free rhythm as dictated by breath. Emphasise sibilant sounds.



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The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble, consisting of six staves. A large, bold, red watermark reading "SAMPLE" is superimposed over the center of the score. The staves are labeled as follows:

- S. 2**: Soprano 2. The staff is mostly blank, with a few notes and a dynamic marking of *mp* at the end. The lyrics "in - ha - ling," are written below.
- T. 2**: Tenor 2. The staff contains musical notation and lyrics "n - ha ling, ex - cl in - ha - li".
- B. 2**: Bass 2. The staff contains musical notation with dynamic markings *mp* and *mp*. It includes breath instructions: "inhale" and "exhale - like a gust a wind". The lyrics "[a]" and "[u]" are written below.
- S. 3**: Soprano 3. The staff is mostly blank, with a few notes and a dynamic marking of *mp* at the end. The lyrics "in - ha -" are written below.
- A. 3**: Alto 3. The staff contains musical notation with a dynamic marking of *p* and the instruction "stagger breath". The lyrics "ng" are written below.
- T. 3**: Tenor 3. The staff contains musical notation with dynamic markings *mp* and *mp*. It includes breath instructions: "inhale" and "exhale - like a gust a wind". The lyrics "[a]" and "[u]" are written below.
- B. 3**: Bass 3. The staff contains musical notation with dynamic markings *mp* and *mp*. It includes breath instructions: "inhale" and "exhale - like a gust a wind". The lyrics "[a]" and "[u]" are written below.

S. 1
ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex -

A. 1
transition from 'ng' to 'oh'

T. 1
mf
I

B. 1
mf
I pressed my nose a - gainst a kau - ri

S. 2
ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing,

A. 2
in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing,

T. 2
mf
I

B. 2

S. 3
- ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang - ing, in - ha - ling, ex - chang

A. 3
transition from 'ng' to 'oh'

T. 3
mf
[u] I pressed my nose a - gainst a kau - ri
exhale - like a gust a wind

B. 3
[u]



S. 1 *f*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest

A. 1 *f*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest

T. 1 *f*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest

B. 1 *f*
 ha - ling with the Lord of the Fo - rest

S. 2 *mf* *f*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest, Fo - rest

A. 2 *mf*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest

T. 2 *mf*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest, Fo - rest

B. 2 *mf* *f*
 ha - ling with the Lord of the Fo - rest Fo - rest

S. 3 *f*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest,

A. 3 *mf*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest,

T. 3 *mf*
 ha - ling, ex - chang - ing breath with the Lord of the Fo - rest,

B. 3 *mf*
 ha - ling with the Lord of the Fo - rest,

SAMPLE

Section left intentionally blank

S. 2

A. 2

T. 2

B. 2

S. 3

A. 3

T. 3

B. 3

p

mp

p

p

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

mp *mf* *p* *p* *inhale* *exhale*

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

mp *mf* *p* *p* *inhale*

Fo - rest

Now this land is

Fo - rest

Now this land is in my

Fo - rest, Fo - rest

[a]

Fo - rest

Now this

Fo - rest

[c]

S. 1 *mp* Now this land is in my ev - 'ry breath *mf* *p*

A. 1 *mf* *p* *p* *inhale* *exhale*
land is in my ev - 'ry breath [ɔ]

T. 1 *mf*
Now this land is in my

B. 1 *mp* *mf* *p*
Now this land is in my ev - 'ry breath

S. 2 *p* *inhale* *exhale*
[ɔ]

A. 2 *mf* *p* *inhale*
ev

T. 2 *mf*
Now this land is in my ev - 'ry breath

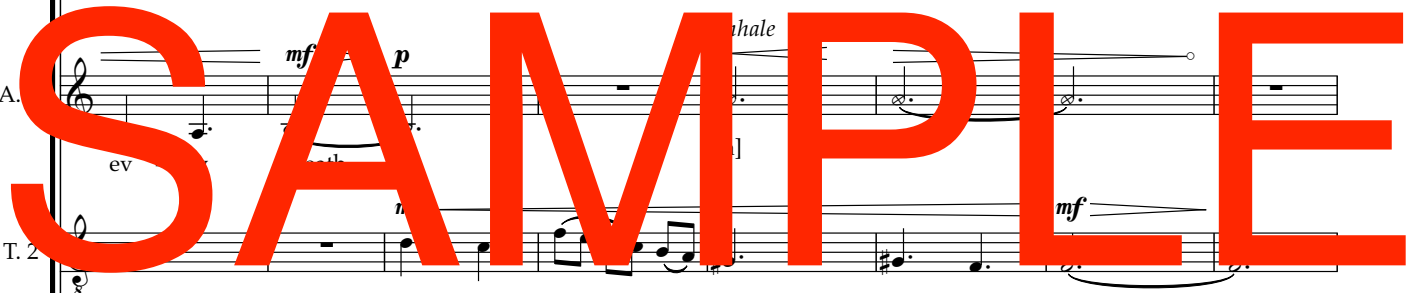
B. 2 *p* *inhale* *exhale*
[ɔ]

S. 3 *mf* *p* *p* *inhale* *exhale*
ev - 'ry breath [a]

A. 3 *mp*
Now this land is in my ev - 'ry breath

T. 3 *mf* *p* *inhale* *exhale*
land is in my ev - 'ry breath [ɔ]

B. 3 *mp*
Now this land is in my breath.



Section left intentionally blank

musical score for a vocal ensemble. The score is divided into six parts: S. 2, T. 2, B. 2, S. 3, A. 3, and B. 3. The lyrics are: "these trees are my lungs" and "these trees are my". The score includes dynamic markings (*mp*, *p*) and performance instructions (*delicately*, *inhale*, *exhale*). A large red watermark "SAMPLE" is overlaid on the score.

S. 2 *mp delicately* *p* *p*
these trees are my lungs _____ these trees are my

T. 2 *mp delicately* *p*
these trees are my lungs _____ trees are my

B. 2 *mp delicately* *p*
trees are my lungs _____

S. 3 *p inhale* *exhale* *mp delicately* *p* *p*
[a] _____ these trees are my lungs _____ these

A. 3 *mp delicately* *p*
trees are my lungs _____

T. 3 *mp delicately* *p* *p*
these trees are my lungs _____ these

B. 3 *p inhale* *exhale* *p delicately* *p*
[a] _____ trees are my lungs _____

S. 1
 ng _____ kawakawa/makomako/horopito**

A. 1
 ng _____

T. 1
 ng _____

B. 1

 [u]

S. 2
 lung ng _____

A. 2
 lung ng _____ (kamahi/kaikako/tarata)**

T. 2
 lung ng _____

B. 2

 [a] [u] [a]

S. 3
 trees are my lung ng _____

A. 3
 trees are my lung ng _____

T. 3
 trees are my lung ng _____

B. 3

 [a] [u] _____
 coprosma proprinqua/
 metrosideros robusta*

SAMPLE

*Each singer should choose one of the provided words and whisper it at free rhythm as dictated by breath. Emphasise sibilant sounds.

**Each singer should choose one of the provided words and chant it at free rhythm as dictated by breath on the given pitch.

Section left intentionally blank

continue hum until end

S. 2

A

T. 1

rātā/pūriri/mingimīngi**

exhale continue breath sounds until end in a natural breathing pattern (non-rhythmic)

B. 2

[u]

whispered

pseudowintera colorata / myrtus bullata*

S. 3

continue hum until end

A. 3

T. 3

(kowhai/kahikatea/tōwa)**

B. 3

A few individuals may create the sounds of native NZ birds or insects, fading out along with the choir. This should remain subtle within the texture of the choir.