

Deep River

Negro Spiritual

Arranged for 4-part male choir by William Arms Fisher (Copyright MCMXVI and MCMXVIII)

partially after the piano transcription by Coleridge-Taylor.

Edited for various instrumental ensemble constellations by Klaus Bjerre (2003)

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This version of Deep River is one I never met before, but as it has text all the way, it must be rooted in some tradition. It expresses its era and it sounds beautifully, so I want to make it available for very diversely composed groups, which can be quartets or 4-part-ensembles, all in the same key, the original of G major concert. No parts, only two-page playing scores, are provided. All versions can be mixed and/or can be played simultaneously, if the ensemble director distributes the available instruments to the voices in a way, which ensures a good balance. This is necessary, as the 3 upper voices all play the lead at some point:

The all bass clef version directs itself towards 3T-1B trombones, 4 euphoniums, 3 euphoniums and 1 bass tuba, 4 bassoons, or 4 celli.

The all treble clef version for 3 Bb tenor voices and 1 Eb bass voice directs itself towards 3 baritones/euphoniums and an Eb tuba. Or towards 3 tenor and 1 baritone saxophones. Or 3 bass clarinets and a contralto clarinet.

The all treble clef version for 2 Bb clarinets, Eb alto, and Bb bass clarinets will also allow a TC euphonium to play the Bass II voice.

The version in alto and bass clefs directs itself towards violas and celli.

The version for 4 horns in F has a very comfortable range for the upper voices. Nothing passes beyond D in the staff, but for a single E in the staff.

This piece can be programmed in any type of ensemble concert, but of course it is especially relevant for church ensembles. Hence I have added three versions, which will allow for doublings of the original octave. They shall just add a tonal flavour to the original octave. Therefore there are no parts for trumpets. Please be aware, that in a quartet performance all 4 performers should play either in the original octave or in the upper octave:

An upper octave quartet can play from the version for flutes, violins, and a Bb clarinet. This version may find use in church contexts.

The versions for

2 tenor recorders, bass recorder, and bass/great-bass recorder (or ensembles of these larger recorders)

and

2 soprano flutes, alto flute, and bass flute (or flute choir)

both will work well played on their own (or played with a mix of recorders and flutes).

Larger ensembles may benefit from the part for optional string bass and/or contrabass tuba, which has been derived from the piano part.

The arrangement reveals its choir origin by the *divisi* in the Bass II voice. In quartet settings the lower notes should be given preference, except maybe for bar #32. In larger ensembles the Bass II- players should split with the majority taking the lower notes (again maybe except for bar #32). In the recorder version some extra *divisi* are entered to make the part possible on the bass recorder.

Special considerations regarding the version for SSAB flutes:

As bass flutes rarely are available in larger numbers, the upper line of their *divisi* has been cued into the alto flute staff. A few extra *divisi* have been added in the bass flute staff to avoid the lowest range, where the setting allows for this. All full size notes are the original ones, all cue notes are by this editor.

This edition can be used together with the original version for male chorus and optional piano, if the two bars for solo piano are observed.

This edition can be used free of charge, but reports on readings and performances would be nice.

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