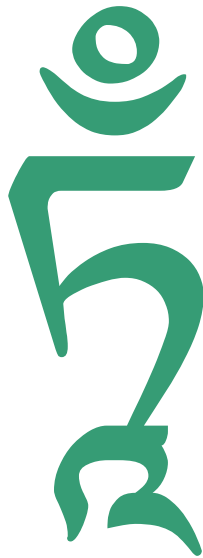


Les sons de l'été
(Concerto scenico No. 1 in G Major)
Composed by James D. Haley
Composer's Notes



Front cover: Tibetan uchen script for the seed syllable (bīja) tām, which is the essence of Goddess Tārā Herself.

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Dedication

"Les sons de l'été" (French: "The Sounds of Summer"; IPA: Le sɔ̃ də l'e.te) is dedicated to the following:

First and foremost, to a girl named Raylene, whom I met on the day of June 23, 1994, at a percussion camp in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Without the inspiration of her compassion and kindness accompanied by her heavenly beauty, not only would this work not exist but its author would have ceased to be a part of the world long ago. She became my "Fairest of Summer" and hers is the likeness after which the Fairest One of this work was originally fashioned.

To Susan Clothier, former director of Tecumseh High School Band. Her willingness to entertain the beginning stages of my long, slow development in composition directly benefitted and sustained this work in its early stages.

To the late Carolyn Daugherty, former director of Tecumseh High School Choir. Without her expert training, as well as dedication to exposing her students to a wide range of inspiring works, the choral portions of this work would not exist. And, despite the strength of her own convictions, she always understood and more than tolerated the fact that some of us felt differently—she included us in every way regardless.

To my late grandmother "Nanny" Bettie Ruth Haley, who allowed me to use her piano as a child and always took an interest in what I came up with. Many of the early themes of this work were composed on the piano in her living room.

To the Goddess Tārā, who has guided me since childhood, appearing in forms I would understand and using methods specifically bent toward me with a perfect compassion and an inexhaustible patience.

Foreword

"Les sons de l'été" began as part of a small collection of experimental themes scrawled on staff paper beginning in 1992 by a twelve-year-old boy teaching himself to play his grandmother's piano. At that point in time, the operative idea was to create something similar to Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" cycle, with the first theme being named "Song of Summer". However, this idea never really coalesced and was set aside for two years.

Before my first year in high school, I was asked to participate in a three-day-long summer music camp for percussionists on the Oklahoma Baptist University campus in Shawnee, Oklahoma, a stop in the Yamaha Sounds of Summer tour. This was in order to practice xylophone before the upcoming marching season. This event was held at the towering, majestic Raley Chapel.

For some time before this, despite my young age, I had considered love a "hope beyond hope" for myself, so lost in a sea of hatred I had been for most of my life. I had hardened my heart and placed any such notions outside my attention or desire, or so I believed.

That was when I met Raylene.

The first thing I noticed about her was that she was constantly laughing and smiling. She seemed unapproachable for someone like myself, in my ignorant bias based on her physical appearance alone. But then, as we directly interacted, she proved to be the kindest to me that anyone had ever been, even though

we only just met. She was good-natured and humorous, witty, light-hearted to her core, and talented with her xylophone. I was drawn in yet further by the incredible blue and yet somehow also vague shade of her eyes. I was rapidly growing more and more fond of her, without even realizing it at first.

Then, in one particular moment on the second day, while we were in the practice room together, chatting and simply having a good time, she laughed, and met my gaze across our xylophones, and smiled at me in a way that radiated tenderness and Light, along with a certain *je ne sais quoi* essence that seemed to playfully chide me for my humor. This memory burned into my soul in an instant and melted my heart.

Her smile, I cannot and will not ever forget it.

Suddenly I was struck dumbfounded and silent. In that moment time crawled to a stop and it seemed as if though a golden beam of divine Light shone down from the heavens specifically onto her, while Light equally radiated from within her, silver and golden all at once.

She was the One! Unquestionably, the emanation of a Goddess. I suddenly felt as if though the reason I was here—or even, the reason that I existed at all in this world—was to find her, in this place, at this time. The hands of Fate had surely been set in motion by our mere meeting. That split second of a moment finally passed and I smiled back at her, without giving so much as a hint of what I had just felt and seen in her and how she had been so completely transfigured in my sight.

For the rest of the short time we had together I could think about nothing else. I went to eat lunch on my own and could barely touch my food. My hands were shaking, my palms were sweaty, and my stomach ached, especially when I realized we only had one more day together. We passed by each other outside the chapel at one point, and she sweetly hailed me by name, a name that had been more often used in bitter mockery than as a herald of friendship, so much to the point that I hated to hear it most of the time. It felt special to hear it coming from her in such dulcet tones.

The next day at dawn, practicing outside the chapel, I saw the rays of the morning Sun filtering through her long golden hair as strands of it drifted gently in the hot summer wind, giving off an aura like a halo. She was radiant like the Sun and Moon, perfect from the beginning; now to me both Morning and Evening Star. I felt like I should fall down and worship her. I wanted to dwell in her presence forever. I fell completely, utterly, and hopelessly in love.

But I was still trapped in Darkness. In my fear and self-loathing I could not even so much as tell her how much I appreciated her kindness, or that I desperately hoped that she would come to the event again the next year, and certainly not that I had fallen for her so completely. I failed to even properly say goodbye, instead hurrying back to the practice room to fetch my belongings after the concert. When I returned a couple of minutes later, already burning with regret, she was nowhere to be found.

I wept bitterly after departing for the last time.

Despite the long winding path my life took after that, and in many ways because of it, I was never able to forget her or the experience I had at the camp. Though we would never be more than mere acquaintances, she had played what I came to believe was an appointed role in my life: she had awoken in me knowledge of Love, and of Hope; a vision of Light; and a will to continue my Life no matter how dark it otherwise seemed. She had given me a new vision of the Goddess and Her Gifts of Gold, a vision which would repeatedly return at my times of greatest need.

This was when I started this musical work, "Les sons de l'été" (a French translation of the percussion camp's name), in earnest, with the aim of dedicating it to her. My ultimate goal was to try to share that vision of Light I had been granted in the only seemingly sufficient way: an opus approaching the *Gesamtkunstwerk* via the weaving of poetry, dramatic storytelling, and genuine expressions of belief into the music.

The music took shape through a great number of inspirations all around me, from the pieces we performed in the school band, chorus, and musicals; to the video games I was playing (with particular debt to *The Legend of Zelda* series and *Super Castlevania IV*); and to the mere few brief tantalizing snippets of orchestral works available to me in the pre-Internet age.

An emphasis on percussion was an obvious objective, with inspiration taken from Philip Glass and Steve Reich. My tendencies toward minimalism, which as a concept was explained and validated to me by Susan Clothier, my band director, were also influenced strongly by the latter. A harmonic language developed based on and grown out of, initially, the endings of works such as "Salvation is Created" and "The Majesty and Glory of Your Name", heavily emphasizing the sound of the add-2 chord. Suspensions and upper extensions typically also found in jazz, Latin, and New Age music became prominent. Strong emotions came to be expressed through modern techniques of polychords, polytonality, tone clusters, open voicings, and driving polyrhythms, informed lightly by composers like Schönberg, Stravinsky and Bartók.

In my nascent teenage rebellion, I envisioned a work explicitly intended to possess an edge of heresy against the status quo. I was becoming more and more disillusioned with the tenets of Abrahamic religion, particularly as espoused within American Evangelicalism, with its endorsement of divine violence and anger, personal guilt and shame, eternal retribution, rampant patriarchal authoritarianism, and rejection of personal spiritual revelation. So, I made a choice to buck its strong grasp on the world of Western musical art in preference for overtly occult and pagan themes.

Inspired heavily by the much exaggerated myths of Beethoven's legendary Immortal Beloved (the movie would come out only a bit after this), I ultimately sought the guidance of a spiritual muse, who was made in the image of this girl in my mind's eye, to further elucidate the story the work should tell. This Goddess would be known by many names:

- Fairest of Summer
- Maiden of Gold
- First of the Seven
- The One of Light

Bringing in the pre-existing theme of the cycle of seasons from my previously shelved work, I began as such, augmenting this concept by making of it an epic allegory: with the Summer comes the Fairest One, beloved by one She calls the Chosen; and with Winter come four opponents, herein called the Winter's Heirs. Beginning in August of 1994, I wrote a series of poems detailing this cosmology to which the music would be settings.

As my knowledge of esoteric concepts was scant at the time and would only expand later as I studied diverse systems of belief during my time in college, this cosmology would be colored at first by simple foundational ideas like the Platonic elements, numerology, the cycles of time, celestial bodies, sacred geometry, the concept of yin-yang, and linguistic characteristics adapted from the Book of Revelation. Later it would be further informed by elements of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Shaktism, Thelema,

Theosophy, and ultimately, Buddhism, in ways I found harmonious with my original work.

As the work progressed I realized various connections to earlier visionary dreams I had in 1990, as a child of 10 years of age, and again later in 1992, of a group of seven figures who recurred throughout human history, across space, time, and even different dimensions of reality (a concept I would later identify as being cognate with the emanations of bodhisattva activity). The Fairest One, having an affinity with elemental Light, was meant to be the First of these Seven, their leader, representing supreme spiritual power and radiating the purest aura of divinity. Her Chosen would then be the One of Shadow, who follows Her always, as an intentional break with usual dualistic attitudes toward Light and Darkness.

A conscious choice later emerged to embrace a form of radical feminism in this cosmology, as the One of Shadow has rendered over any authority or power that should ever be ascribed to him completely to the Fairest One, whom he esteems and treasures as the One Most High. As such, it acts to explain in an allegorical fashion why the true Darkness—that natural element of shadows and night which can protect, conceal, and heal—steps aside for Light. It offers a vision in which all aspects of existence are considered part of an ultimate Oneness after the successive collapse of all dualistic distinctions. The work then proceeds as a sanitized depiction of the *hieros gamos*, and a reflection of the principle of *Shivashakti*—a holy, righteous union of Two as One, where, as in the high tantra, personified compassion and wisdom are united.

This notion of the Chosen as the One of Shadow is to contrast with the "false darkness" that is often ascribed to evil. The four Winter's Heirs appear in this work ultimately as a representation of the personal demons I spent many years fighting—depression, low self-esteem, fear, and especially anger. In the same way that these obstacles interfered in my life, the Winter's Heirs appear here, having made a horrible vow to always pursue the Seven and attempting to oppose them in all their works, regardless of any karmic penalties they may incur. Even so, the Seven seek to turn the Four back to the Dharma through compassion and to see them become protectors of the Path.

It is largely thanks to those personal demons that this piece took more than 30 total years to finish, being worked on in a periodic fashion throughout that time. As such, it has become a tapestry woven from nearly my entire lifetime of experiences.

While this began as a work of joy and of exploring the feelings of being in love, it became inevitably interwoven with sadness and loss. While the main characters of this story are said to be the emanations of bodhisattvas, we do witness them experience one strong attachment—to one another. This ultimately reveals the Noble Truth of dukkha: that there is no attachment, no matter how seemingly holy or blessed its purpose, which is not suffering. It is in this way that they teach us.

I now humbly present this work to the world and hope that it acts as a source of inspiration to those who hear it. Any merit which might be found in it is hereby dedicated to the benefit of all sentient beings; may they all find liberation.

James D. Haley

Compiled from notes on March 2, 2024

On Buddhism

This work contains inspiration from many diverse sources. As I embraced Buddhism later on in my life, I made a decision to amend various parts of it to become more harmonious with the Dharma. This especially includes the various mantras and practices which are presented as being part of the culture in which this story takes place. These are practices which have benefitted me enormously and which I have thus been motivated to share via such demonstration. I expressly disclaim any authority or authorization to formally teach them.

Let me be very clear that nothing in this work is meant to make any attempt at amending or redacting Buddhist thought or canon; this is only a story, highly allegorical, of my own spiritual journey. Where any idea still appears that might be thought of as antithetical to such beliefs, these are only (and sometimes intentionally, with acute awareness) indicative of my own graspings and delusions that I have yet to overcome. As far as discussion of my personal ideas and dreams takes place, I make no assertion that they should necessarily be found to hold any truth or value for others.

Buddhist concepts referenced are largely drawn from the perspectives of the Tibetan Vajrayana schools, from which most of my personal practice is derived.

Mantras utilized are only those openly taught by various traditions (largely those of Surya Gupta and Atisha) and widely regarded to require no direct transmission or empowerment to merely recite or to "front visualize".

The practice of the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās, which occurs in movement three, is likewise taught openly by many teachers and can, according to those I follow, be recited by anyone. It is drawn from a widely available Sanskrit version of the text found in the Degé Kangyur, an 18th century compilation of Tibetan sutra and tantra teachings.

It is widely believed that one should cultivate bodhicitta, or the intent to benefit all sentient beings through awakening, before utilizing such texts. Performers may wish to take this into consideration before participating in the work, in case their personal convictions prevent them from such recitations.

Instrumentation

Soloists:

- Flute (representing the Fairest One)
- Vibraphone (representing the Chosen; motor is not used)
- Piano

Chorus:

- SATB chorus with basso profundo section
 - Basso profundo range: C2 required, B1 optional
- Boy soprano chorus (A5 required for highest line; may double with other main chorus lines during any section not explicitly orchestrated, or if writing is outside individual performers' ranges)

Strings (full orchestral section, maximum two-part divisi):

- Violin I (12-14)
- Violin II (12-14)
- Viola (12)
- Violoncello (12)
- Contrabass (8; C1 extension, five-string bass, or low C tuning required)

Idiophone Ensemble (suggest front-stage placement alongside soloists when practical):

- Chimes
- Crotales (full set)
- Glockenspiel
- Marimba, one instrument with two players, or two instruments (5-octave recommended; omit missing low octave in bass lines when necessary)
- Orff Alto Metallophone (C4-A5; preferred but optional if second vibraphone available; professional chromatic instrument with pedal—à la Peripole-Bergerault—is required)
- Orff Alto Xylophone (C4-A5; preferred but optional if second marimba available; play part on second marimba with harder mallets if this instrument is not available)
- Timpani (minimum 4)
- Xylophone (full-size instrument required, with F#6 bar minimum)

Percussion:

- Bongos (2), played by hand
- Brake Drums (3 minimum, of varied timbre, struck with hard mallet or hammer)
- Cabasa
- Claves
- Concert Bass Drum (use covered two-headed mallet capable of rolls)
- Concert Snare Drum
- Congas (2)
- Cowbell
- Crash Cymbals (1 pair; marching cymbal techniques required)

- Drum Kit, with 1 kick drum, snare drum, hi-hat, 2 crash cymbals, 1 ride cymbal, 1 splash cymbal, and 3 toms (high, mid-high, low)
- Gong Ageng (48" minimum) or large Buddhist temple Bowl Gong (crash-like tam-tam is **not** acceptable; instrument should be predominantly low-pitched and deeply resonating. The gong is always allowed to ring out fully.)
- Maracas (2)
- Marching Snare Drum (kevlar head, drum-corps-style tuning)
- Marching Tenor Drums (1 set of 4 plus 2 spock drums; drum-corps-style tuning)
- Mark Tree
- Shaker
- Suspended Cymbal
- Temple Blocks (2)
- Triangle
- Vibraslap
- Wood Block

General Notation Tips

Some notation in the score for "Les sons" may require explanation:

- Arpeggios are ascending if the direction is not explicitly notated.
- Glissandos in flute, marimba, and xylophone lines are diatonic, never chromatic. For flute this means the scale notes of the current key; for keyboard percussion, it is a sweep of the C scale notes on the lower level of bars.
- Marimba rolls of four-note chords should be performed using the ripple roll technique (four distinct strikes, in various order as per the player's interpretation).
- Notes allowed to decay completely (particularly in percussion and piano lines) are indicated with a slightly offset "laissez vibrer" (small tie-like arc) rather than the more common open full tie, as MuseScore 3.2 does not properly support the latter.
- Sections marked as "Tempo di Huapango" are performed traditionally as 6/8 alternating with 3/4. MuseScore does not support the alternating time signature notation needed for this (as used previously in "West Side Story", for example), so it is notated strictly as 6/8 with proper beaming of notes. The tempo should remain consistent throughout in any case, and 2-3 polyrhythms are common throughout.

Story

In the Beginning...

In the Dawn of Time, eons before the proper rise of our own world system, the One of Darkness once dwelt alone, or so he misbelieved, and in his despair he committed a grave error, bringing about servants of ego fashioned from the primordial energy. For 400,000 years there was quiescence, but all dwelt in delusion and ignorance.

But at last from the depths of the luminous void there came at unawares the One of Light. Her voice resounding with a peal of thunder and a roar like a lion, She proclaimed a complete and perfect Dharma which echoed throughout all worlds. The One of Darkness, thereafter called the One of Shadow, prostrated himself without hesitation before Her beauty and Her terrible splendour and proclaimed, "Truly you are First, Fairest, and Most High!"

He gave over whatever power and dominion had been ascribed unto him to Her instead, keeping none for himself, and set Her upon a golden throne to rule all realms of Heaven and Earth. Ever he now stands upon Her Right Hand, giving glory to Her in perpetuity. And ever now, Shadow gives way to Light, its glory permeating throughout space, with Shadow only revealed in its absence, following after it as though a servant.

In time their Love bore fruit and the elemental principles which form the foundations of an uncountable number of material worlds arose—the Children of Light. Together these Seven sang a Song, and that Song became the providence of an illusory existence based in its continuing vibrations.

And such is the rightful order, but some of those servants of Darkness who were begat before Her coming, enamoured of their own clinging to ego, did not embrace or recognize this and they refused to bow to Her. In their rebellion they did great evil, sewing discord into the fabric of Samsara with their own terrible song, and from this comes the darkness that does not yield to Light, and the Four, who have also been called the Winter's Heirs, whose horrible vow is to oppose the Seven in all of their emanations. The Four must, in time, be turned to the Dharma and abandon this error so that all suffering may sooner end.

Much Later...

In a distant world in a time to us yet unknown we find ourselves on the day of the Summer Solstice. A young lad awakens at dawn after having dreamed of a bright, shining Goddess. Breaking out of the lingering depression which has long dogged him, he decides to visit the ongoing Solstice Festival at the Temple of Light. What he finds there will forever change his life, as well as the arc of history itself.

(Story will continue further in the notes for each section.)

Notes by Section

Prefatory

A soprano soloist (the same selected for performance of Movement I, Theme 2) should recite the following poem just before the beginning of the prelude, at the front of the stage under solitary lighting:

The Spring of Hope is aglimmer with Light,
The Winter of Despair is long of Night.
Betwixt the two, the intrepid wander.
Let them hear now the Sounds of the Summer:

Prelude

Home key/mode: G Major

Dates of Composition: Late Summer/Fall 1994; 1999; 2003; 2009; 2019

All poem text in this section should be presented to the audience, preferably via real-time projection.

The Prelude is a loose setting of the first free-form poem written for the work in August 1994, not long after the percussion camp. I was enamoured at the time with the works of W. H. Auden and Stevie Smith, for reference on the styles I was attempting to emulate. The poem is itself entitled "Les sons de l'été". It tells the complete story in summary, as told by the Chosen long after its events have passed:

The Sounds of Summer have come
Like a surging tide they roll in,
And fill the air with a glorious song.
With them has arrived a Beauty so fair
Bearing gifts of Gold:

Life
Light
Love
Hope

With united cause and hearts of joy
We celebrate the season until the Autumn's Dawn.
Then Fate meanders,
Destiny loses its way;
The cold Winter brings its Heirs:

Death
Darkness
Sorrow
Despair

And, alas, the Beauty leaves along with the surging tide
The Sounds of Summer are gone...

But they are sure to return.

One of the earliest themes to have been written for what became "Les sons", surviving from its original incarnation as the "Sonata of the Seasons", is the "Song of Summer", which first occurs here in the vibraphone beginning at bar 12.

The earlier theme beginning at bar 3 is actually a back-adaptation from the "Song of Winter's Heirs", which was afterward recontextualized as being a corruption of this initial presentation.

The ostinato in the first violin line was the first instance of something I originally referred to and conceived of as a "cycle song", wherein some brief idea would repeat almost endlessly. Another such

instance written around the same time occurs later in Movement II. It was an element inspired by and drawn from certain 20th century composers' techniques such as those of Steve Reich, and was later reinforced in 1997 by similar ideas appearing in Koji Kondo's work for *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, especially "Creation of Hyrule".

The drop into the key of C major for the Autumn's Dawn and coming of the Winter's Heirs from the G of the initial themes is also a remaining primordial idea wherein the key of G or the G major add 2 chord represented Day, and C major would represent Night. This idea still remains here half-buried like an archaeological artifact from an earlier civilization. It also reoccurs in the transition to the second movement, which is in C and has its story placed in the evening after the Solstice Festival concludes.

The theme used for Death and Sorrow was an early deliberate experimentation with polychords and chaotic atonality.

Movement I

The overarching story of Movement I sees the Chosen and the Fairest first meet at the Temple of Light on the day of the Solstice Festival, fulfilling an ancient prophecy which foretells the return of the Winter's Heirs, and the coming-again of the Seven, a vastly ancient order of bodhisattvas who appear in every age of every world system to work for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.

Theme 1, "Solstice Festival"

Home key/mode: G Mixolydian, shifting to G Major

Dates of Composition: August 1994; 1999; 2023; Spring 2025

All bold-captioned poem text in this section should be presented to the audience, preferably via real-time projection.

The primary vibraphone chorus theme of "Solstice Festival" was again one of the earliest conceived portions of the work, written in August 1994 almost immediately after my experiences at the percussion camp as explained in the foreword. The intent of this section was always to present an idealized version of those events within the mythological context of the story.

This theme is nakedly inspired heavily by "America!" from "West Side Story", by Leonard Bernstein, and is not attempting to hide that inspiration in any way. "West Side Story" was my high school band's field show for the 1994-1995 season, and we also studied the work at the same time in Honors English I and in choir as well, so I came to be intimately familiar with it. I saw how its themes of love tinged with tragedy fit well with my own ongoing work. As such I chose to honor one of my own favorite parts of it with this reference.

Initial ideas which formed the backbone of this theme included the idea to use the piano as a percussive rhythm instrument, and the idea to utilize the mixolydian mode, lending a sort of dream-like, unsettled, mystical vagueness to the tonality which represents the Chosen's awakening and subsequent restless wanderings, culminating in his meeting with the Fairest One. There is a certain boldness as well, which represents his willingness to engage with Her despite his fears.

The violin line at bar 21 prefigures a portion of the song sung by the Fairest One in Movement II's "Reply of the Fairest". Throughout, the violin line in this section should be assigned to a soloist, as indicated in the score.

The xylophone solo recapitulates the first theme from the Prelude, which also later reappears, corrupted, in the "Song of Winter's Heirs".

Beginning at bar 77 until the end, the melodic lines prefigure the first theme of the "Song of the Seven".

The figure which occurs in the melody across measures 96 to 98 is a leitmotif which emerged at first subconsciously and then was later expounded upon intentionally. Named "Thou art Queen of Heaven" after its first composed instance in "Plea Unto the Fairest", written in 1994, it represents the Goddess in this work.

Despite this being one of the first musical themes to be composed, I did not write an actual full poem or other text to go with this section until late 2023 when it was finally completed. Portions of the poem are

adapted from an earlier account of these events which I made in 1998 in the form of my term paper for college Freshman Comp I. The poem with captions, which begins to advance the story, follows:

[Character: The Chosen One - Awakening]

Dawn breaks high clouds with yellow-orange Light
A reprieve from my heart's darkest Night
On the longest, brightest day of all,
I go at last to Solstice Festival.

[Narrator: Setting]

Follow this young lad well
To the land where Fairest of Summer dwells
And, as his Fate guides him right,
To the Shadow of the Temple of Light!

[Character: The Chosen One - Setting]

Like a royal palace in its might
Reaching up to Heaven's immense height
A Beacon of Hope against Death's glare, ^[1]
Lighthouse of Love in the sea of Despair.

[Narrator: The Fairest One Appears]

Lost in din and revelry of raucous crowd,
Dressed in gold and purest white, ^[2]
One with Light endowed!
With Her eyes lovely blue,
And Her long shining golden-blond hair
Adrift upon hot Summer air,
Her heart a Star so bright! ^[3]

[Character: The Chosen One - He sees the Fairest]

Suddenly I see Her standing there,
Adorned with Seven Stars upon Her crown, ^[4]
Ring so bright upon Her hand so Fair, ^[2]
Compassion in Her heart for all around.

[Character: The Fairest One - They meet]

One of Shadow, have no fear!
Sing your song, and I will hear;
Learn my Name, and I will stay near.

[Action: She plays Her xylophone]

[Character: The Chosen One - He learns Her Name]

Your Name! Like the Face of the Sun! ^[5]

[Narrator]

The Exalted One! ^[5]

[Character: The Fairest One - She calls him Chosen]

For You are the Chosen!

[Narrator]

He jests, She laughs and smiles!

[Character: The Chosen One - Time crawls to a stop for him as he witnesses Her smile]

Your laugh, Your smile!

Lo!

Now I behold the Light...

The Light of the Fairest One!

Footnotes:

1. ↑ "Beacon of hope" and "lighthouse of love" are phrases referenced in a dedicational speech by John Wesley Raley which were engraved into a plaque which could be found in the foyer of Raley Chapel.
2. ↑ ^[2.1] ^[2.2] After visionary dreams I had in 1992 and 1999.
3. ↑ Referencing the name of the Goddess Tārā, one meaning of which is "Star".
4. ↑ *Liber CDXVIII: The Vision & The Voice*. The Cry of the 9th Aethyr, Which is Called ZIP.
5. ↑ ^[5.1] ^[5.2] Numerological reference: Let those with wisdom discern Her Name, for its number is 548: Face of the Sun, The Exalted One.

Theme 2, "Exhortation of the Goddess of Light and Praises to the Maiden of Gold"

Home key/mode: G Major

Dates of Composition: March 2024; December 2024 (vibraphone solo); December 2025 (percussion)

In the moment that time crawls to a stop for the Chosen, he recalls his dream of the night before in which a great golden Goddess appeared to him, urging him to arise from his despondency and attend the Solstice Festival. As the Goddess reveals Herself again, the Chosen offers up a series of praises in turn to She whom he now realizes is Her mortal emanation in the form of the Fairest One, the Maiden of Gold.

Composed initially in March 2024 after a poem written in 2023 to replace the original material from 1994, which adhered to sonata-form variations. The lines of poetry are largely drawn from Marian hymns ("Alma Redemptoris Mater", "Ave Regina caelorum"), the medieval poetry of the Carmina Burana ("Ave formosissima"), and the revelatory passage in the final book of "The Golden Ass" by Apuleius. The synchronicity of these wildly varied sources in describing the Divine Feminine (with each other, with the myriad praises of Goddess Tārā, and with the original material I wrote as a teenager who possessed no conscious knowledge of these sources whatsoever) inspired me to bring them together in a definitive fashion.

The poem is as follows, with the seven couplets alternating between the soprano ("F", representing the Goddess of Light) and the baritone ("C", representing the Chosen), with the final praise by the Chosen being five lines:

F: Ego sum mater naturalis omnium rerum
 C: Ave, virgo prudentissima, tota pulchra es!
 F: Domina et gubernatrix omnium elementorum
 C: Ave, virgo formosissima, gemma pretiosa!
 F: Prima mundi progenies
 C: Ave, virgo gloriosa; super omnes speciosa!
 F: Princeps potestatum divinarum
 C: Ave, virgo generosa; Ave, mundi rosa!
 F: Ex qua mundo lux est orta
 C: Ave, virgo sacrata, mundi luminar, quae Solem accendit!
 F: Illa quae tenet Potestatum Auream in manu sua
 C: Ave, Regina caelorum, quae Tellus in gyrum vertit!
 F: Porta manes et stella maris
 C: Ave, Regina mundi; Tibi, astra responsura!
 C: Mortem pedibus calcas;
 C: Ad te tempora tendunt,
 C: Et di gaudent,
 C: Elementaque domita sunt!

And a translation into English:

F: I am the natural mother of all things
 C: Hail, maiden most-wise, you are all-beautiful!
 F: Mistress and governor of all the elements
 C: Hail, maiden most-fair, precious gem!
 F: The initial progeny of worlds
 C: Hail, glorious maiden, lovely beyond all others!
 F: Chief of powers divine
 C: Hail, noble maiden; Hail, rose of the world!
 F: From whom Light has entered the world
 C: Hail, Holy maiden, Light of the World, who kindles the Sun!
 F: She who holds the Golden Power in Her hand ^[1]
 C: Hail, Queen of Heaven, who turns the Earth in its orbit!
 F: Gate of Spirits and Star of the Sea
 C: Hail, Queen of the World; To you, the stars respond!
 C: You trample Death underfoot;
 C: To you the seasons turn,
 C: And the gods rejoice,
 C: And the elements are in subjugation!

Sprechstimme for these lines is notated as rubato, meaning that the rhythm can be somewhat loose and is within the interpretation of the performers; lines should largely finish where notated in order to keep time. Pitch should rise and fall mostly as indicated but no particular range is prescribed.

The entire piece uses the same harmonic progression as the first theme of the "Song of the Seven", and the flute melody prefigures the melodic line as well, which together are meant to provide bookends to the entire work.

As the vibraphone transitions to melody, its line is optionally taken over by an Orff alto metallophone (the alternative being a second full vibraphone). As noted in the instrumentation section, this instrument must be of a professional model with full chromatic bar set and sustain pedal if used as such. Its presence in the work, along with the use of other Orff instruments and the youth choir, represents the naïveté and innocence of youthful love, evoking a coming of age for the Chosen.

The motif which occurs in the flute line in the final measures is called the "Regina mundi" motif, and becomes a frequently recurring leitmotif for the character of the Fairest One hereafter.

Footnotes:

1. ↑ Reference to the *mitsuuroko*, or Three Scales, of Benzaiten (Vajra Sarasvati); or, in their depiction in *The Legend of Zelda* series of video games, the Triforce. Three equilateral golden triangles as one, thusly circumscribed: a sigil of the supreme Triune Goddess.

Theme 3, "Hail Now the Light of the One"

Home key/mode: G Mixolydian, G Major

Dates of Composition: June 16-21, 2024; December 2024 (violin/marimba duet); Spring 2025

Returning from his divine vision to mundane situational awareness, without so much as a moment having passed, the Chosen now perceives the girl he just met as the Fairest One, the legendary One of Light, who is First of the Seven, also called the Maiden of Gold, who comes upon the tide of Summer bearing the Gifts of Life, Light, Love and Hope. Having seen in Her both the Light of Sun and Moon, he feels now as if the world itself revolves around Her alone. They sing a song together as the festival surrounding them comes to a conclusion for the day.

The chorus recapitulates the theme from the previous section, which should occur after long enough of a caesura so that the audience thinks that section has finished, but should be surprised to have the theme suddenly return, more quiet and subdued than before.

This transitions into a recapitulation of the themes of "Solstice Festival" as we return to our previous setting. However, the chorus (including boy sopranos) and full string sections are now present and are brought fully to bear in what is to date my most expansive orchestration.

This theme was written initially between June 16 and June 21, 2024, and was the last part of "Les sons de l'été" for which the first draft script was both started and finished, bringing the work to thematic completeness and closing a chapter of my life. This is poetic to me since the main theme of "Solstice Festival" was one of the first parts to be written, and this recapitulation was finished on the eve of a Summer Solstice marked by the rise of a Strawberry Full Moon. This was just two days short of 30 years after this work's initial inspiration, a goal I had intentionally set out to meet beginning in 2018.

Note that in measure 11 an indication is given for ***poco rall., sostendo***; the tempo should reduce by at least 1 BPM, perhaps more, with a sense of holding back. The chorus should exaggerate and lengthen the forte-piano into crescendo (especially compared to any MIDI rendering available). Once the ensemble proceeds to beat 4 in the measure, the hesitation should immediately release and the tempo of eighth notes in the percussion lines should then match the upcoming 134 BPM of the Huapango theme (this is notated as 67 BPM in the original score, due to how MuseScore functions across the change in time signatures).

A violin and marimba duet was added in very late 2024 to bring the piece into an ABACA form, repeating the initial vibraphone theme three times (the third being the elaborated variation as a duet with the flute in the conclusion). This duet is a recapitulation of the "Song of Summer" from the prelude, and its appearance here is a resurrection of an idea I had earlier tried but failed to execute back in 1999. As the first theme to be composed which became part of "Les sons", its inclusion here becomes even more poetic.

The chorus recites a brief poem in the introduction which I wrote for this section based on my account of the morning of the third day of camp in the foreword, speaking of those feelings in the way they existed when I first had them but here addressing the Fairest within the context of the story:

[Main chorus]

O, my Fairest One,
My Morning and my Evening Star;
To me, both Sun and Moon Thou art;
The Fairest of the Summer,
My Love!

[Basses]

O, Fairest One,
The One of Light,
Who rules o'er all my heart,
My Love!

Movement II

The story of Movement II sees the Chosen realize that he has fallen deeply in Love with the Fairest One. As evening sets in, he contemplates Her beauty and Her perfect compassion, and then invokes Her many Names and sings to Her a song of his Love. She manifests to him again and returns his affections in a song of Her own.

Theme 1, "Genesis of Everlasting Love"

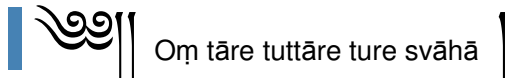
Home key/mode: C Major

Dates of Composition: Fall 1994; Summer 2023

Another ostinato-dominated "cycle song", and also one of the themes written very early in 1994 after my experiences at the camp. Though, much of the material was initially born in the form which occurs later in theme 3, and was then back-adapted into theme 1. This movement was always intended to adhere to an overall A-B-A form as part of an initial attempt to fit into the classical sonata form (this became less important over time as the overall piece developed in a more free-form fashion).

The first instance of the heart mantra of Tārā Who Protects from the Eight Great Fears is featured here in the chorus. I seek to honor Her with everything I do, especially including my music, as She first emanated to me in a form of Sarasvati (Tārā Candra-kānti), who is Goddess of poetry and music and therefore Queen of all muses and the true enlightened source of divine inspiration. This is of symbolic importance here in particular because it was my fear, in the form of anxiety, which prevented the real me from doing what I felt I should have done, and what the Chosen here succeeds in doing—speaking the truth about his feelings to someone about whom he cares greatly.

This mantra is:



Meaning, roughly:

OM! O Tārā! I entreat you, O Saviouress! O Swift One! Hail!

- Tāre represents salvation from mundane dangers and suffering.
- Tuttāre represents deliverance into the spiritual path conceived in terms of individual salvation.
- Ture represents the culmination of the spiritual path in terms of deliverance into the altruistic path of universal salvation (the bodhisattva way).

There are seven total recitations of the heart mantra in the second movement, by design.

The occurrence of the son clave rhythm which appears here (with earlier instances occurring more cryptically in movement I) is an allusion to the drumline exercise "Double Time" by Bret Kuhn, found in the "Yamaha Sounds of Summer" booklet as was distributed at the percussion camp in 1994.

The presence of the optional Orff alto xylophone (the alternative being a second marimba) is another reference to youthful naïveté and innocence, along with the earlier use of the Orff metallophone and the presence of a youth choir in this work.

Interlude 1, "Plea Unto the Fairest"

Home key/mode : A Minor, continuously shifting until in A Flat Major

Dates of Composition: 1994; 1999; 2018-2019

"Plea Unto the Fairest" was another of the original poems written in 1994 following my experiences at the percussion camp. I had really begun to realize how much I longed for and missed that girl; my heart ached to see her again. As such, I wrote this lamentation as a prayer for her return:

O my Love,
The Fairest of the Summer,
O come thou unto me,
This I pray.
Come thou this day.

The theme as played by the piano is the original version of the song, written in 1994, without lyrics, which was inspired in part by a visionary dream from 1992. The harmonic progression was intentionally exotic and experimental, as I had been learning more about alterations and wanted to use as many as possible while trying to maintain overall coherence. This lent itself to a series of chromatic approaches with the goal to land in the key of A-flat major.

As time wore on the idea continued to elaborate itself further and further in my mind, to the point that I have conceived of multiple versions of it which branch off in parallel like the innumerable realities of the quantum many-worlds hypothesis. It required some effort to exercise discipline and constrain that multitude of possibilities to the "mere" five songs which here run simultaneously.

Between 1999 and 2018, the other verses were added, and this portion of "Les sons" was the first to utilize chorus in its instrumentation as a result - all other instances were added to the other themes after that point. The chorus symbolize all the people of the world who long for the return of the Fairest as First of the Seven.

Soprano verse:

O my Love,
The First of the Seven,
With Life, Light, Love, and Hope,
Thou art Queen of Heaven
And all the Earth!

Alto verse:

Maiden of Gold!
The One of Light,
Who was, and is, yet is to come. ^[1]

Tenor verse: [2]

Raiment of Sun,
Moon upon thy brow,
The Ring of Five Wisdoms
Which shines upon thy hand
Makes my heart yours to command,
O Queen of all the Earth!

The basso profondo sing another instance of the heart mantra of Tārā. This was the first instance of mantra to be added to "Les sons" chronologically, which was inspired around late 2019 through similar use by the YouTube creator, musician, artist, and philosopher Rebecca E. Tripp, in her "Chant of Light" cover of the "Prelude of Light" theme from *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. This line was originally musically inspired by the process of elaboration that medieval plainchant underwent as time wore on into the 14th century, where the original monophonic line would remain underneath the novel material added by brilliant composers like Machaut.

Her Ring, mentioned before, is first here identified as the "Ring of Five Wisdoms". It was the manifestation of this phrase in my dream which served as a guide to me regarding what path I should follow in life, as the Five Wisdoms run deep in the core of Buddhist ideology, and are especially revered in Vajrayana with highly elaborated iconography—something of which I had neither conscious knowledge nor any exposure to at the time I had that dream and had to deliberately seek out in order to understand. This Ring is not so much to be understood as a material object as it is a symbol with many layers of meaning.

The final figure in the flute line as the Fairest One appears to listen to the love song of the Chosen is the first chronological occurrence of the "Regina mundi" motif (being the second occurrence in the work after one was later added to movement I).

The rubato tempo marking of this section particularly means that the director should allow the tempo to ebb and flow with the tension and release of the harmonic progression—the general shape of *ritardando* and *accelerando* are indicated, but the exact magnitudes are left to interpretation. My suggestion would lean toward more extension and elongation in general.

Caesura between this section and the next should be short but not *subito*.

Footnotes:

1. ↑ An instance of Her identity as a Triune Goddess, in this case existing in the three times. She has always been, is always, and will always yet again become manifest in the world. It was with a certain mischievous delight that I co-opted this phrasing of the concept from Biblical verse.
2. ↑ Entirely after a visionary dream I had in 1999. The word choice and phrasing also deliberately hint at the figure of the Woman Clothed with the Sun from the Book of Revelation, whom I view as an archetype of the Goddess attempting to manifest within a spiritual framework otherwise mostly hostile to Her Truth.

Theme 2, "Love Song to the Fairest of the Summer"

Home key/mode: A Flat Major

Dates of Composition: Fall 1994; 1999; 2019; 2022; Spring 2025

Setting of a love poem originally intended directly toward Raylene, the text of which was written on notebook paper in 1994 during a band bus trip. The poem, repurposed to speak of the character of the Fairest One as an allegorical target of these feelings, follows as such:

Heaven and Earth both call out your name
 They both proclaim your eternal fame
 All around you lie beauty and Light
 I'll always follow you through the Night
 O,
 Fairest of Summer, Maiden of Gold ^[1]
 First of the Seven, Power untold!
 Our Fates are bound in this Holy task
 Your Gift of Love is all I will ask,
 For,
 All of my Life I've wandered astray
 I've never seen the full Light of Day,
 But now that I've found your radiant Light,
 I'll never lose myself in the Night,
 No!
 Heaven and Earth both call out your name
 They both proclaim your eternal fame
 All around you lie beauty and Light
 I'll always follow you through the Night,
 O,
 Fairest One!

The main theme was composed very early in 1994. Around 1999 I augmented the original song by adding what has become the violin line and an initial ideation of the percussion parts, and between 2019 and 2022, I introduced additional lyrics to go with them:

Footnotes:

1. ↑ This verse originally just repeated the first verse. When the poem was recontextualized to address the character of the Fairest One, this text was added instead, allowing for less repetition and further elaboration of the praise to the Fairest.

Fairest of Summer,
First of the Seven!
You are One Most High
Since the Dawn of Time,

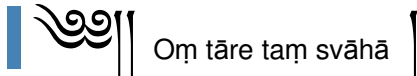
With the Ring of Five Wisdoms
Upon your Right Hand!
One who was, and is, yet still shall come,
The Fairest,

You are Queen of my heart,
Goddess of my world,
I will sing your Holy Name
In all of the Earth!
[One of Light, Praise your Holy Name!]

The violin line, contrabass line, soprano line, and tenor line should each be assigned to soloists, up until the indicated beats of bar 40 (with "*tutti*" marking), at which point the entire respective sections should enter.

The basso profondo sing a mantra of Goddess Kurukulla, who is the fifth of the Twenty-One Tārās in Atisha tradition, and is a fierce red emanation of Tārā who magnetizes and attracts beings and happenings in accord with the Dharma. She is here invoked three times in the wish that the forces represented allegorically in this story by the Fairest and the Chosen be brought together for real, within our world and all others, to the benefit of all beings. This was the third such instance of mantra to be added, sometime during 2022 or 2023.

This mantra of Red Tārā is:



Interlude 2, "Fairest Dawn"

Home key/mode: A Flat Major transitioning to C Major

Dates of Composition: 2023

This short interlude was written entirely in 2023 to provide a bridge modulating back to the key of C from the A-flat of the second theme. It was the first portion of the work completed to introduce crotals, an instrument of which I was previously unaware. It is entirely based around the already-established "Thou art Queen of Heaven" motif.

Lyrics:

Ah! Hail now the Light of the Fairest One!

Caesura between this section and the next should be minimal.

Theme 3, "Reply of the Fairest"

Home key/mode: C Major

Dates of Composition: Fall 1994; Solo: 1999; Spring 2023

Recapitulation of the themes of the first part of the second movement. As mentioned before, those themes were originally conceived of in the form they occur here.

The most extensive solo for the flautist occurs in this section as the Fairest One returns the affections of the Chosen and the Two symbolically become One. This fulfills the prophecy of union between the Fairest and Her Chosen, unexpectedly bringing them both to the brink of true enlightenment and unleashing their powers to enact siddhi (miracles). The flute solo was composed in 1999.

It is worth pointing out before the end of this section that several parts of the second movement's foundational material owe some degree of inspiration to the popular hit song, "Water Runs Dry", by the R&B vocal group Boyz II Men, which was released on August 30, 1994. This is especially evident in the repeating, descending four-chord pattern used for themes 1 and 3, and in the use of snare patterns in all three main themes. It is also an inspiration for the "Regina mundi" motif, which is similar in motion to that song's hook.

The heart mantra of Tārā occurs again, with three of its repetitions in the form of a kirtan originally composed by the late Canadian therapist, composer, and spiritual teacher Pamela Holm, which appears arranged here with the gracious permission of her sister, Heather Holm. I found Pamela's website, still maintained by her sister, by pure auspicious chance while suffering from a case of composer's block while finalizing this section in the spring of 2023. It meshed so well with the existing material that I had no choice but to consider it mandatory to add here once permission was obtained.

Pamela's page for the song can be found here:

<https://pamelaholm.ca/2020/01/om-tare/>

During the kirtan, the flautist makes a couple of quotations:

1. The "Regina mundi" motif is elaborated at measure 28.
2. A quotation from an independent work of mine entitled, "The Ring of Five Wisdoms, #1", occurs at measure 32.

Movement III

In the third movement the people recognize the Fairest One as the prophesized return of their sovereign queen and as an emanation of the Glorious Great Goddess. They bear Her back to the Temple of Light to crown Her, as the Chosen stays by Her Right Hand throughout. However, the Winter's Heirs soon appear, violently invading and threatening the Fairest One, the Chosen, and the people.

Acting with perfect compassion, the Fairest One refuses to fight and instead chooses to flee, trusting in the now fully revealed prophecy which states that if the Four come, then the Seven will also return in full. She goes to find and awaken the rest of them, promising to return on the tide of the next Summer while urging the Chosen not to fall into the deceptions of the Winter's Heirs.

Theme 1, "Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās and the Coronation of the Fairest One"

Home key/mode: G Major, G Phrygian

Other major keys/modes: G Phrygian Dominant, E Flat Major, G Dorian, G Aeolian


Dates of Composition: Winter 1994/1995 (Song of Autumn's Dawn); 2023; Spring 2025

The union of the Fairest and the Chosen which took place at the end of the second movement unleashes a eucatastrophe of enlightened activities as they perform miracles among the people, healing, restoring, protecting, and teaching. The people recognize the fulfillment of prophecy and now understand the Fairest One to be the return of their sovereign queen.


As the people bear the Fairest One back to the Temple of Light, they recite the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās. The Chosen accompanies Her, remaining always by Her Right Hand, as She is anointed, invested, crowned, and finally borne unto the Golden Throne.^[1]

Aside from the practice of the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās, several other harmonious mantras are recited during the various phases of the coronation, creating a sort of musical mandala (a ritually envisioned assembly of meditational deities in Vajrayana Buddhism). These include:

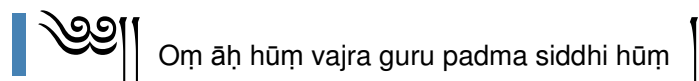
The mantra of bodhisattva mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara, from whom Tārā Herself is said to have emanated when he shed a tear of great compassion as, having freed all the worlds of sentient beings, he turned around and looked only to see them already filled again with beings needing his help. When his tear touched the Earth, it formed a lake, and within that lake arose a lotus. The lotus bloomed and, sitting in the middle of it was the Goddess Tārā, who said, "Despair not, for I will help you." She then returned to his eye. Among Her various lives, one was as a princess in a distant world system who would achieve Buddhahood through a million years of meditation. Part of Her great vow would be to always be reborn in the body of a woman, to demonstrate that enlightenment knows no such distinctions as gender. This mantra is:

 Om maṇi padme hūṃ |

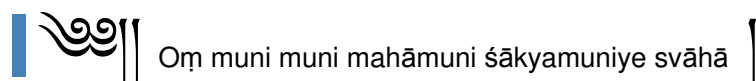
The mantra of Amitābha, Buddha of Infinite Light, the guru of Tārā and from whom Avalokiteśvara is said to emanate. One of the Five Wisdom Buddhas, Tathāgata of the western Pure Land of Sukhāvatī, and highly revered throughout all schools of the Mahayana. This mantra is:

 Om amitābha hrīḥ |

The mantra of Guru Padmasambhava, a highly revered teacher credited with the third turning of the Wheel in teaching of the Vajrayana, and is said to have tamed all the many gods and demons of Tibet. He is considered an emanation of Amitābha. His consorts, including Yeshe Tsogyal, were considered to be emanations of the Five Wisdom dākinīs, who are themselves emanations of Vajravahni, a High Tantric manifestation of Tārā. This mantra is:



The mantra of Shakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha most often thought of when the word "Buddha" is used, the one who first turned the Wheel of Dharma in our world. The night before his enlightenment, Tārā appeared to protect him from a horde of demons, whom She defeated using Eight Great Laughters. He soon after called upon Tārā in the form of Phra Mae Thorani, the Earth Goddess, to bear witness to his enlightenment against Māra, whence She caused the whole world to shake in six directions. She then wrung a great flood of water from Her long hair, washing away the armies of Māra entirely. After this, the Buddha taught the Sutra of Tārā Who Protects from the Eight Great Fears, and the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās themselves. This mantra is:



The full text of the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās and a translation into English, which are too extensive to provide in this section, are provided in Appendix III, along with additional explanatory material.

The backing music of the Dharani chants is inspired by *Trionfo di Afrodite* 1. Canto amabeo di vergini e giovani, by Carl Orff, while simultaneously turning the subject matter completely on its head: whereas the ancient Greek and Latin sources of Orff's work speak only of a brutal patriarchy reinforced through arranged marriage and obligatory consummation, with proto-fascist overtones of the maiden "owing" her virginity to family and to state, this work instead speaks of an enlightened Divine Feminine and of compassion—the high, selfless form of Love.

Challenges faced in writing this section included experimenting with unstable modes, resisting the temptation to collapse them immediately into a relative major or minor; and use of drones while maintaining harmonic variation and general interest.

The modes used during the invocation and dharani chants include, in order of appearance:

- G Phrygian dominant (note non-standard key signature for choral parts)
- G Phrygian (indicated with E flat major key signature)
- E-flat major (simply shifted into from G Phrygian in the first instance)
- G Dorian (indicated with F major key signature)
- G Aeolian (standard minor; indicated with B flat major key signature)

The four-bar triumphal theme which first occurs at bar 16, in section B, is called the "Song of Autumn's Dawn", and was the only portion of this section as it now exists to have been written before 2023. It was composed between tests at a scholastic meet sometime in late 1994 or the first quarter of 1995.

The flute and vibraphone duet quote from a previously independent work of mine entitled "Union of the Sun and Moon", after a passage from one of the Seventeen Tantras of Dzogchen, which is found on

Wikipedia (these teachings are normally held secret, as they require explanation from a qualified teacher). I had been previously undecided as to whether that theme would become part of "Les sons" or not, and finally decided to use it here.

The theme underlying the seventh, fourteenth, and twenty-first dharanis is a pre-statement of the choral dialogue from the first theme of the "Song of the Seven".

The vibraphone figure in measure 203 prefigures the ending baritone line of the "Song of the Seven" and is a leitmotif I refer to as "In the Name of Heaven". It is an approximately reversed statement of the "Regina mundi" motif and is associated specifically with the Chosen.

Footnotes:

1. ↑ This image of the Fairest One being enthroned, penned in 2023, was evidently based subconsciously on an earlier dream-vision from 1992 which I had forgotten until June of 2024, when my later work on "Destiny Loses Its Way" suddenly triggered in me the recovery of a set of repressed memories from that period in my life.

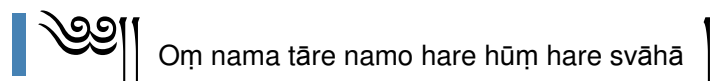
Interlude 1, "Fate Meanders"

Home key/mode: G Major transitioning to E Minor

Dates of Composition: February-March 2024

After the coronation of the Fairest, She abides in the Temple of Light with the Chosen until the first leaves of Autumn fall. As one last dusk settles in, the chorus sings the wrathful mantra of Tārā, and the Chosen suddenly sees dark storm clouds begin to gather on the horizon, the first harbinger of the coming of the four Winter's Heirs.

The wrathful mantra of Tārā, usually said seven times at dusk, praises and supplicates Her for Her enlightened activities of subjugation and protection, and it is as follows:



Written in February and March 2024 to provide a bridge between theme 1 and the latter portions of Movement III.

Theme 2, "Destiny Loses Its Way"

Home key/mode: E Minor, shifting immediately to a "fake" C# Locrian, then shifting to B Minor, and finally transitioning to A Minor; ends in polytonal C/F# conclusion as transitions into "Song of Winter's Heirs"

Dates of Composition: April-June 2024

The Four, otherwise known as the Winter's Heirs, invade the domain of the Fairest One and Her Chosen. The two respond with all their might and a great contest of wills ensues, but the demons prevail against all odds and throw down the gates of the Temple of Light. There, as the people flee in terror, they prepare to cast a vile spell that threatens to tear apart the world.

Begun during the last week of April 2024 and finished in the first week of June, immediately after finalizing "Flight of the Fairest One". This theme recapitulates the melodies of the triumphal passages of "Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās and the Coronation of the Fairest One" but reframed in darker and more unstable tonalities. The idea of the chaos being brought on by the invasion of the Winter's Heirs is reflected in this uncertainty.

The first part to be composed was the percussion ensemble rhythm, which preceded any other ideas about where to take the work in this section. This was again based around the 3-2 son clave rhythm, which serves once more as an allusion to "Double Time" by Bret Kuhn.

At first an idea existed to interpolate in portions of the later themes of the movement, to create a sort of "dialogue" between the Fairest and the Chosen on one side, and their opponents on the other. I abandoned that idea after finishing theme 3 and instead decided to recapitulate the theme 1 melody, which is originally adapted from "Union of the Sun and Moon."

Despite being apparently setup for an E minor key by the previous interlude, the chord progression takes us into seemingly unknown territory, shifting between borrowed C# minor and C# major chords. The initial melodic passage, a flute and piano duet, firmly lands into a C# Locrian modality, but never actually commits to it, continuing to dodge what would be the C# diminished "root" by substituting the borrowed minor or major in an alternating pattern.

Notably the two main characters' leitmotifs ("Regina mundi" and "In the Name of Heaven") appear here, but are both quoted by the opposite character, as if the two are calling one another's names. At the end, we hear the "Regina mundi" motif one more time, but now in a minor chord phrasing as the Fairest and the Chosen are approached directly by the Four.

The vibraphone line in the second verse then shifts to the B minor reflected by the key signature, but again breaks its own mold by landing on B major. When the flute re-enters alongside the vibraphone, a dramatic and transcendent modulation to the key of A minor takes place with an impossibly hopeful C add 2 chord ringing out. As this hope decays in the face of the Winter's Heirs' seemingly unstoppable rampage, the sound becomes more and more minor with a firm landing on A minor with the minor second imposed.

In many ways this is meant to reflect the emotional whirlwind of my experiences in the summer of 1994, discovering feelings of acceptance, friendship, and even love, and then immediately being required to return to a bleak reality without those treasures. This is also reflected in the oxymoronic nature of the title, which is drawn from a line of the original poem—"Destiny loses its way"—a hard-learned lesson about placing faith in false hopes.

As mentioned in the section for theme 1, the act of composing this work had unexpected beneficial effects on me, causing me to rediscover a series of repressed memories, some of which had been subconsciously encoded into this work previously. I had paused my work immediately after composing the second verse for the vibraphone, took a nap, and then abruptly experienced that revelation upon awakening. This has helped me in a way to gain needed insights into many of the ideas and feelings expressed in this piece.

Theme 3, "Song of Winter's Heirs"

Home key/mode: C Major + F# Major (simultaneous, polytonal)

Dates of Composition: Winter 1994; 1999; 2003; 2019; Spring 2025

Having invaded the Temple of Light and gained an upper hand despite the powers of the Fairest and the Chosen, the Winter's Heirs sing their song, a wicked spell intended to tear them apart from one another and prevent the return of the Seven:

Death, Darkness, Sorrow, and Despair, Gather them all!

Now the Winter comes to us, its cold and bitter heirs.

We who were born into Primeval Night
Shall never bow unto the One of Light!
We, now before you, seek to destroy you;
You shall fall, you shall die,
We shall reign on high!

[Character: The Fairest One]

Despair not, O Chosen One...


So ends the hopeless love
Of the Fairest and Her Chosen;
Never shall the Seven gather,
Scattered far upon the surging tide!

[Character: The Fairest One]

...For I shall return!

We shall reign on high!

In opposition, the basso profondo section sings the mantra of Tārā Zhengyi Mitubma:

 Om täre tuttäre ture vajra taka hana litsa phaṭ svāhā |

This calls upon a form of the seventh of the 21 Tārās, who is wrathful and black like storm clouds. She opposes war, weaponry, and black magic, and offers protection from enemies both external and internal. She is said to crush the yantras, or magic diagrams, of all foes to dust. This represents the eventual inevitability of defeat for the Four, even if they may gain a temporary apparent victory. More than this, it represents my own declaration that I will no longer surrender to the forces in my own life that these allegorical characters represent.

The use of polytonality is used to create an aura of danger and wrongness as the song verges on chaos—several parts remain in C major while others simultaneously play in F# major, allowing for frequent use of notes a diminished fifth apart. This was one of many very experimental ideas I had as a young teen; I was constantly trying new techniques. Most of them would end up disastrous, but I always liked how this one

worked out.

We hear here the last words of the Fairest One to occur in "Les sons", and the last line for the flute soloist as a result, as She urges the Chosen not to fall into the snares of Despair, who is particularly targeting him with powerful attacks meant to bring about complete hopelessness. The musical phrase used for this urging (spelling out a major seventh chord) emerges as a new leitmotif—"O Fairest One"—in the final parts of the work, representing the grace and influence of the Fairest One lingering long after her departure.

This theme was originally composed in very late 1994, near the holiday season, as I began to doubt the idea I would ever see the girl who inspired me so much again, and experienced a more acute pain from that realization. It was partially inspired by the plainchant style of "Triptych 1. Musicks Empire", by Lloyd Pfautsch.

It was expanded to include the soprano line sometime between 2003 and 2009, and then finalized around 2019 as I began the final push of work. Though this final version is for chorus, I had not actually ever committed to that orchestration until after adding chorus to "Plea Unto the Fairest", as calling for a chorus for only one section of this work seemed like a stretch; afterward, I began to incorporate it throughout "Les sons". The mantra sung by the bass line was added in 2019, though the music itself was pre-existing—the ability to recontextualize it as a mantra recitation was simply auspicious.

Theme 4, "Flight of the Fairest One"

Home key/mode: Indefinite

Dates of Composition: Winter 1994 (piano); May 2024; November 2024; Spring 2025

The Fairest chooses to flee from the violence of the Winter's Heirs and search for the remaining Five of the Seven, whose appearance is prophesized to soon follow. Three of these foes—Death, Darkness Unyielding, and Sorrow—pursue Her, intent on stopping Her through any means. With the protection of the Goddess, She ultimately eludes them. Despair, the fourth Heir, remains behind to obstruct and torment the Chosen.

This theme was initially composed as the eight-bar polyrhythmic piano figure alone, and until 2024, no other portion had been written. I struggled with this theme perhaps the most of all parts of "Les sons," with something of a genuine apprehension and distaste (I might compare this to J.R.R. Tolkien's unwillingness to drink from a cup inscribed with the incantation of the One Ring). It was born of the feelings of mental instability I suffered as a teenager who was dealing with deep clinical depression and severe isolation, and the pain of feeling as though I had lost sight of the vision of Light which I was earlier shown, resulting in self-assigned feelings of guilt and shame.

After sitting idle for almost 30 years in a nearly forgotten EZNOTE piano roll file, the eight bars of piano were expanded into this orchestration in a period of one week in May 2024.

One might ask, "why compose such a thing at all," then, but it has become necessary to embrace it as part of letting go of a dream held onto for too long, which had become a hindering attachment to me. While this represents a sad ending to the story of "Les sons" insofar as the Fairest and the Chosen must be separated, even if temporarily, it is an ending which mostly^[1] reflects the reality I have endured as far as the original allegory is concerned.

The piano line was composed to constantly center around three sounds—the diminished chord, the major seventh chord, and hollow quartal harmonies—without much respect to tonality otherwise, drenched in chromaticism. In retrospect an analysis of the harmony might lead to the conclusion that it drifts chromatically in and out of a C Dorian flat-five scale, but that was certainly not a conscious choice in the initial composition. Instead rather there was a strong degree of inspiration taken from the sounds of tornado sirens, as well as video game boss stage music^[2] to create a representation of a dangerous, chaotic evil presence which engages with the righteous in a spirit of sacrilege, mockery and scorn.

The difficult polyrhythm of the piano line was inspired by a particular choral work I performed during high school but its title has escaped my memory. It was a conscious return to percussive use of the piano meant to oppose the upbeat, dance-derived instance of such which occurs in the first movement.

In November of 2024 I added additional marching-style percussion, as well as chorus, to the final verse of this theme. The text selected was drawn from two different Tibetan prayers, one to Goddess Mārīcī and the other to Goddess Ekajaṭī, the two attendants of Tārā who are protectors of Her mandala. I was inspired to add these prayers in defense of the Dharma and all those who might be harmed by the frightening political developments taking place in the United States. Within the context of the story, they represent the peoples' prayers for the deliverance of the Fairest One from danger. The prayers are as such:

From "In Praise of the Goddess Mārīcī" by Jigme Lingpa:

ཨོཾ་ལྷ་མོ་འོད་ཟེར་ཅན་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།།

om, lhamo özer chenma la chaktsal lo

Om! Homage to the goddess Mārīcī!

ཁྱོད་ལ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་པ་ཙམ་གྱིས།།

khyö la solwa tabpa tsam gyi

Simply by praying to you,

དག་ཡི་དཔུང་ནི་རྣམ་པར་ཆོས་ཤིག།

dra yi pung ni nampar chom shik

May the hosts of opposing forces be destroyed!

From "Brief Offering Prayer to Ekajaṭī" by Mipham Rinpoche:

ཧཱུྃ།ཀུན་རྩ་བཟང་མོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཁྲོས་པའི་རྩལ།།

hung, kuntuzangmo yeshe tröpé tsal

Hūṃ! Wrathful expression of the wisdom of Samantabhadri,

དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མོ་ཨ་ཀ་ཇ་ཱི་མ།།

ying kyi gyalmo ekadzati ma

Mother Ekajaṭī, Queen of Space,

གསོལ་ལོ་མཆོད་དོ་བཅོལ་བའི་ཕྱིན་ལས་མཛོད།།

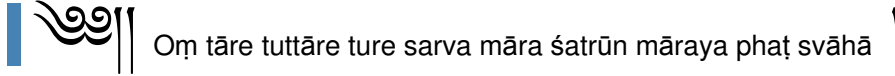
sol lo chö do cholwé trinlé dzö

We supplicate you! We offer to you! Carry out the entrusted activities!

A Tibetan pronunciation guide is provided in Appendix II.

The presence of marching percussion instruments and techniques here is an obvious reference to this work's origin. If extra dramatic flair is desired, the players of these instruments could actually march with them on harnesses, emerging just as their parts in the third section begin, to be joined downstage, or even offstage entirely, by the crash cymbal player. Incorporation of visuals (at the player's or staff's discretion) would then also be encouraged.

A proper transition from the prior section, as well as an additional mantra recitation, were finally added in May 2025. This is the mantra of Tārā Māra-sūdanī-vaśitottama-dā, the red-black Tārā (8th of 21) who is Conqueror of Māras and Enemies, which are personifications of our internal afflictions. This mantra was added as a deeply personal prayer for release from attachments related to this work. This mantra is:



Footnotes:

1. ↑ In May of 2024, just as I was finishing this portion of the work, and in the midst of otherwise greatly unfortunate events, I was suddenly afforded an opportunity to participate in an act of charitable giving alongside Raylene, under her direction, to help counteract those events. I believe it is only through sincere repentance and dedicated practice that I could be granted that chance, and I give thanks to the Goddess for answering my prayers as such.
2. ↑ Influential examples would include the *Super Mario Bros.* castle theme and, in particular, the theme from the ninth and final dungeon of *The Legend of Zelda* for the NES.

Interlude 2, "Gone Upon the Surging Tide"

Home key/mode: A Flat Major

Dates of Composition: June 12, 2024; Amended late 2024 and again in Spring 2025.

As the Chosen expels Despair from the Temple of Light, the people mourn the departure of their beloved Fairest One and declare their intent to await Her return.

Written entirely in one day on June 12, 2024, to provide better connectivity between the previous and following sections, and to more fully utilize the boy soprano chorus. This section makes reference to the original poem, beginning with two lines taken from it directly:

Alas, the Beauty leaves
Along with the surging tide;
And here, I shall abide,
In the Shadow of the Temple of Light,
'Til once more She comes to us!

The chorus should begin during the extended ring-out of the piano and drums at the end of the previous theme, when they have nearly but not entirely decayed.

The ending was extended slightly later in 2024, to provide one final instance of the "Regina mundi" motif and to better transition into the next theme. There should be no caesura at all between the end of the final note here and the gong hit at the beginning of the next theme.

Theme 5, "Song of Despair"

Home key/mode: A Flat Major

Dates of Composition: 1994-1995; November-December 2023

The Chosen is unfortunately not entirely successful at avoiding the snares of Despair and sings a harrowing lament as he realizes that the Fairest One has been forced to flee and that he cannot know when She might ever return:

Now Fate has turned and torn us apart,
I never knew such wrath could be wrought,
No!
All Light is gone and, though yet I pray,
No sign has come to herald the Day,
O, Fairest One...

I thought that I could Love you fore'er,
Now you are gone and all is Despair,
O...
O, Fairest One...

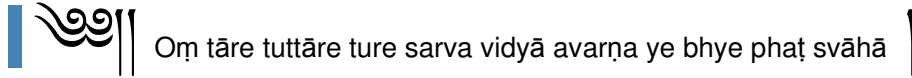
This brings the third movement to an end.

The theme of Movement II, Theme 2, "Love Song to the Fairest of the Summer", reappears, but with distinct harmonic distortions which echo with grief.

This theme was originally planned, and an early version of it written, in 1994, but it had been expunged from the work previously as I felt it to be far too dark, my having gone so far as to physically destroy the score page upon which I had written it. However, in very late 2023, as I was dealing with an extremely stressful and emotional time in my life,^[1] this theme suddenly regained currency, and I reintroduced it, rewritten from scratch along a similar idea. This process ultimately helped me get through that time.

This was the second theme to utilize crotales, after "Fairest Dawn".

The mantra of Tārā Apavādi-pramardanī is sung by the chorus, here meant to help guard the mind of the Chosen from falling further into grief, depression, and possibly even insanity:



This is seemingly the most commonly recited and openly taught mantra of the seventh Tārā, originating in the Atisha lineage. It is a mantra upon which I have learned to rely and treasure dearly for protection from my internal enemies as well as external dangers.

As indicated in the final bar, all non-vocal musicians lacking mechanical obstructions should bow their heads as the final hit is played on the gong, and hold that position until the caesura between the third movement and the finale begins. Violin, viola, and vocal musicians can join as their notes end. As the gong decays, consider dimming or killing any stage lighting as well if such is practical, to symbolize the exodus of the One of Light.

Footnotes:

1. ↑ I had discovered, suddenly and somewhat by accident, what had become of Raylene in April 2023 in the wake of a tornado striking Raley Chapel, an event which had brought her back to the forefront of my thoughts. This reawakened many feelings which would not be able to find fruition in this lifetime and reignited a period of struggle against all those internal enemies. I made the choice to try to make contact with her in late October of that year in an attempt to, at the least, banish my regret of never having thanked her or said goodbye to her—of never having let her know that her kindness had a vast impact on me. Regardless of my motivations, this proved to be a choice which threw my mind into a chaos for which I was not prepared.

Finale, "Song of the Seven"

Home key/mode: G Major

Date of Composition: Late Spring/Early Summer 2023 (theme 1); 1999 (theme 2)

With the Fairest One having fled to find and awaken the rest of the Seven, the Chosen stirs and arises from the webs of Despair, as the Fairest had implored him to do with Her parting words. He then speaks the following prophecy, a poem I wrote in 1999 immediately after having a series of visionary dreams to which I have previously alluded. It recounts a part of the original dream from my childhood regarding a group of seven individuals who are reborn in every age and whose destinies inevitably always bring them back together. It hopefully promises an ultimate defeat and repentance of the Winter's Heirs after the long eons of their rebellion.

Those who Hate may rule ten thousand years,
But then the time of their demise draws near
When Two unite, their Love a righteous pow'r,
All Sorrow and Despair shall it devour,
Then come Five more
Who hear the call
From beyond the ancient Door

Lightning bolts shall split the sky ^[1]
When Fairest of Summer has arrived,
Earth shall answer with thunderous cry,
The Ring of Five Wisdoms now revived!

The Winter's Heirs at last must take their flight
As they bear witness to the might
Of Seven Holy Bodhisattvas: ^[2]

One of Brilliant Shining Light,
One of Darkness, Shadow, Night,
One of Wind and One of Fire,
One of Earth from valley shire,
One of Water, springs sublime,
And One of Moon, Seasons, Time

O let Them come this day! ^[3]

The chorus elaborate and comment on the poem in real time with a dialogue which passes between the various parts during three separate passages:

Tenor:

All Sorrow and Despair shall it* devour,

Soprano

*...the Light of the One,

Alto:

The Fairest One,

Bass:

The One I shall Love for all Time,

All:

One Most High!

Tenor:

The Winter's Heirs at last must take their flight

Soprano:

...And bow to the One,

Alto:

The Fairest One,

Bass:

The One who has turned the Wheel,^[4]

All:

One Most High!

Tenor:

One of Brilliant Light and One of Night

Soprano:

The Fairest One of Light

Alto:

And he is Her Chosen

Bass:

The Chosen, upon Her Right Hand for all of Time!

Soprano:

The Whirling Winds and Flaming Fire! ^[5]

Alto and Tenor:

Earth shall sing!

Tenor:

Floods shall ebb and flow, the Sun shall rise

Alto:

The One of Time

Soprano:

The Children of Light draw nigh

In the name of the Fairest One Most High!

Bass:

I pray, let Them come this day.

Alto and Tenor:

The Name of Heaven and All the Earth!

Baritone:

Let Them come this day!

Musically, the first theme was written in late spring and early summer of 2023. The other lyrics sang by the chorus were also written at that time. It replaced a much earlier idea which was too chaotic, incomplete, and too ugly to salvage.

The second theme beginning at bar 44 dates to 1999 and was always intended to fit with the final portion of the poem.

The violin theme at the start should be assigned to a soloist as indicated.

Footnotes:

1. ↑ This four-line stanza was originally composed as part of a different poem called "Song of Time". As I laid down my pen after writing it, at 2:43 AM on August 30, 2003, at that very moment a crashing roll of thunder broke the previous peace of the morning. Twelve days later, at 8:15 AM on Thursday, September 11, as I attempted to continue the work, another lightning bolt struck Raley Chapel. To say that these events had an effect on me would be an understatement indeed. I decided to incorporate those lines into this poem during 2023 while assembling the final version of this song. An account of the latter event is available here:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20221206102356/https://www.okbu.edu/news/2003/09/lightning-causes-brief-fire-in-raleigh-chapel.html>
2. ↑ Originally "Seven Warriors", revised later as I learned of the concept of the bodhisattva and of their enlightened activities.
3. ↑ Originally the title counted as a line of the poem, making 21 lines. This exhortation appears in the musical version to play that role and to allow for the final conclusion.
4. ↑ To "turn the Wheel" is to teach the Dharma. This is referring, in fullness, to the manner in which Tārā has acted as guru and Buddha to me. A deeper meaning is also intended as crediting Raylene, as she is symbolized by the Fairest One, with the initial revelation which set me on this course, especially inspired in light of my late discovery that she has since lived a life filled with bodhisattva-like compassion toward everyone around her, acting, perhaps unknowingly, as a teacher in her own right.
5. ↑ These three lines are inspired by a passage from Gerald Kemner's "Now, Shout!", which is a choral setting of Psalm 104, which describes all the same elements in a similar manner.

Appendices

Appendix I: Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide

Pronunciation is indicated with both IPA symbols and English examples which fit an average mid-American accent.

Vowels [1]

a	- [ʌ]; a in "yam", may be shortened to [e] as in "pet", or [ɐ], u in "nut"
ā	- [aː]; a in "father"
i	- [ɪ]; i in "sit"
ī	- [iː]; ee in "seek"
u	- [ʊ]; u in "suit"
ū	- [uː]; oo in "tool"
ṛ	- [ɾ]; ri in "cringe", or sometimes an even darker sound similar to "rue"
ṝ	- [ɾː]; ree in "reed"
e	- [eː]; a in "bale"
ai	- [aɪ]; ai in "aisle"
o	- [oː]; o in "cope"
au	- [aʊ]; o in "cow"
ṁ	- [ɔ̃]; nasalization when intermediate; m in "hum" when final
ḥ	- [h]; subtle aspirated echo of preceding vowel

Consonants

Gutturals

These sounds are pronounced from the throat.

k	- [k]; k in "bike"
kh	- [kʰ]; kh in "blockhead" (aspirated) [2]
g	- [g]; g in "guitar"
gh	- [gʱ]; gh in "ghastly" (aspirated)
ṅ	- [ŋ]; ng in "king" (nasal)

Palatals

These sounds are produced with the body of the tongue touched to the front portion of the palate.

c	- [t͡ʃ]; ch in "chop" [3]
ch	- [t͡ʃʰ]; ch in "chat" (aspirated)
j	- [d͡ʒ]; j in "jog"
jh	- [d͡ʒʱ]; like "jh" sound in "bridgehead"
ñ	- [ɲ]; n in "onion" (nasal)

Retroflex [2]

These sounds are produced by curling the tongue into the space between the alveolar ridge and the palate.

- ɖ - [ɖ]; ɖ in "stable"
- ʈh - [ʈʰ]; ʈh in "table" (aspirated)
- ɗ - [ɗ]; ɗ in "dart"
- ɗh - [ɗʰ]; ɗh in "redhead" (aspirated)
- ɳ - [ɳ]; ɳ in "gentle" (nasal)

Dentals

Produced by touching the tongue to the teeth.

- t - [t]; t in "tea"
- th - [tʰ]; th in "boathouse" (aspirated)
- d - [d]; d in "desk"
- dh - [dʰ]; dh in "bloodhound" (aspirated)
- n - [n]; n in "nine" (nasal)

Labials

Sounds produced by the lips.

- p - [p]; p in "pie"
- ph - [pʰ]; ph in "cup hook" (aspirated)
- b - [b]; b in "butter"
- bh - [bʰ]; bh in "abhor" (aspirated)
- m - [m]; m in "mess" (nasal)

Semivowels

- y - [j]; y in "yard" (palatal)
- r - [ɾ]; r in "rule" (retroflex)
- l - [l]; l in "leaf" (dental)
- v - [v]; v in "vase" (labial)

Sibilants

- ś - [ʃ]; sh in "shawl" ^[4] (palatal)
- ṣ - [ʂ]; sh in "push" ^[4] (retroflex)
- s - [s]; s in "soul" (dental)

Aspirate

- h - [ɦ]; h in "hand"

Notes

1. ↑ In speech, long vowels with a macron above them would take approximately twice the time to pronounce as short counterparts, but this effect will be less prominent as a result of singing, reducing the overall difference between short and long vowels (especially as short vowels tend to also undergo lengthening in classical choral performance).
2. ↑ [2.1][2.2] All consonants followed by an "h" are aspirated. "th" and "ṭh" are pronounced like the "t" in target and "tr" in "trap", and not like "th" in "the". Likewise, "ph" is pronounced like the "p" in "partial" and not like "ph" in "pharaoh".
3. ↑ c is always pronounced "ch" and neither like an s nor like a k, with only the exception of conjuncts such as "cch" (see exceptional words below).
4. ↑ [4.1][4.2] ś and ṣ produce sounds similar to the sh in "shoe", with the difference being the position of the tongue in the mouth. The difference is probably neither perceptible nor reproducible by most who are not highly trained. Use the best approximation that can be produced.

Special cases

- Final ḥ is referred to as the visarga and is realized as a slight aspirated echo of the preceding vowel. This can usually be heard as a very slight, breathy "h", giving the vowel a roughened quality.
- Intermediate ṁ is referred to as the anusvāra and is nasalized into an "ng" sound, with the precise pronunciation depending on the following consonant.
- The consonant cluster "sv" is usually pronounced as "sw" in Buddhist liturgy, rendering for example "swāhā" rather than "svāhā".
- The consonant cluster "jñ" is usually pronounced as "gy" (hard g followed by a consonant y) in Buddhist liturgy, for example rendering "gyāna" for "jñāna".

Exceptional words in "Les sons de l'été"

Some of the words which occur in the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās have an exceptional pronunciation either because of their form being difficult to parse without thorough training, use of Sanskrit conjuncts, or because of tradition, which are outlined here. Some of these are pointed out in the score when they occur, for the benefit of the performers.

śaraccandra	: "sha-rak-chan-dra"
sahasra	: "sa-hast-ra" (seemingly a tradition not indicated formally)
kramākrānt	: "kra-ma-kran-tə" (poetic license exercised in recitations)
phaṭkāra	: "phet-ka-ra" - "phaṭ" is always "phet" or even (as here) "phet"
jvālā	: "dzhva-la" - j and v in quick succession as if one sound
vindhyaśca	: "vin-dhyash-cha"
dvirukta	: "dvi-ruk-ta" - d and v in quick succession as if one sound
tvavi	: "tva-vi" - t and v in quick succession as if one sound

Appendix II: Tibetan Pronunciation Guide

Pronunciation is indicated with approximate English examples which fit an average mid-American accent and other languages where necessary.

Vowels

- a - [a]; a in "father"
- i - [i]; ee in "see"
- u - [u]; oo in "cool", u in "rune"
- e - [e]; ay in "hay"
- o - [o]; o in "so"
- ö - [ø]; eu in French "feu", ö in German "Götteror"
- é - [e]; ay in "hay" (word-final)

Consonants

- k - [c]; k in "poker", "skull"
- kh - [cʰ]; c in "cull", "curb"
- g - [g]; g in "gasp"
- ng - [ŋ]; ng in "sing"
- ch - [tʃ]; ch in "chair"
- t - [t]; t in "stop"
- d - [d]; d in "debt"
- n - [n]; n in "nut"
- p - [p]; p in "spit"
- b - [b]; b in "bit"
- m - [m]; m in "me"
- ts - [ts]; ts in "patsey"
- dz - [dz]; z in "Mozart" or dz in "adze"
- w - [w]; w in "we"
- z - [z]; z in "zoo"
- y - [j]; y in "year", "young"
- r - [ɹ]; r in "drink"; word initial, rolled; word-final, r in "better"
- l - [l]; l in "lap", "low"
- lh - [l̥]; voiceless l, like "hl"
- sh - [ʃ]; sh in "show"
- s - [s]; s in "sit"
- h - [h]; h in "hello"

Appendix III: Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās Full Text and Translation

Elaboration

The practice of the Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās is a sutra teaching found in Vajrayana tradition. Versions of it in Tibetan and in Sanskrit can be found in the Degé Kangyur, along with an explanation of the benefits of the praise. Tārā practitioners recite this series of 27 total verses, plus invocation and praise to the mantra, 7 times, at least twice daily: at dusk and at dawn. Though lung and empowerment are not considered necessary for recitation of the Praise or for use with "front visualization" (envisioning Tārā in front of you at eye level during meditation), those are considered highly beneficial, and include the transmission of additional mantras and detailed sadhanas for each of the 21 forms of Tārā detailed within the praise (which are not included in this work).

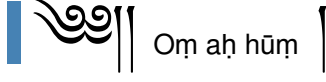
The last six verses of 27 are not part of the Praise proper but form an explanatory teaching by the Buddha in which he elucidates the Excellent Benefits of the Praises. The benefits are sometimes not recited at all, but at other times are included after the desired number of recitations of the 21 main verses. I opted not to include the Benefits as part of "Les sons" (instead, Shakyamuni Buddha is honored in their place with his mantra).

The 21 Tārās praises are recited in many different languages, including Tibetan, Sanskrit, and English. As I first learned the Praise in Sanskrit, I have deferred to the use of that version. The sound of the Tibetan version is supremely euphonic, however, and I definitely recommend listening to it.

There are as many as five different traditions of visualization for the mandala of the 21 Tārās, ranging from the highly intricate and oldest tradition of Surya Gupta where each Tārā has a different number of arms, different poses, and various Dharmic implements, to the vastly more simplified Atisha teaching where the Tārās are simply of different colors and dispositions. The reason for these differences is widely understood and accepted without any sort of dogmatic conflict: Tārā actually manifests in an unlimited, infinite number of forms. Other lists of Her emanations include 108 or as many as 1008 names, which merely scratch the surface of an unknowable vastness. Thus reduction to these 21 principal elements of enlightened activity is merely a helpful tool—a skillful means—for visualization of the fact that Tārā is ultimately One, having all the attributes of completely realized Buddha nature.

In the Surya Gupta tradition, the Praise of the Ninth Tārā also includes visualization of Her two attendants: the Goddess of the Dawn, Mārīcī, and the Goddess of Heaven and Supreme Protectress, Ekajaṭī. These attendants are themselves additional emanations of Tārā. These mantras are included in the Praise as recited here in "Les sons", albeit once each only (tradition is to recite them three times each, but this would constitute an actual invocation rather than a mere beneficial demonstration of praise, and would unreasonably extend the length of the section they occur within, so I avoid it here). In the Gelug variation of the visualization used here, the ninth Tārā is envisioned as principal Green Tārā (Tārā of the Khadira Fragrant Forest, who protects from all fears).

Normally the Praises are preceded by Refuge in the Three Jewels, and are followed with Dedication of Merits. Dedication of merit is included in "Les sons" as text, which should be displayed to the audience, to the accompaniment of the basic mantra of purification (not a specific part of 21 Tārās practice, but included here to seal purity of intent for this work), which is:



This compacted version is intended to serve as an introductory exposure to the practice only and should not be taken as a formal teaching, a task to which the composer is not qualified.

Sanskrit

Invocation:

om namo bhagavatyai
āryaśrī ekaviṃśati tārāyai

Praise to the mantra:

namastāre ture vīre
tuttāre bhayanāśini
ture sarvārthade tāre
svāhakāre namo'stute

The Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās:

namas tāre ture vīre
kṣaṇa dyuti nibhekṣaṇe
trailokya nātha vaktrābja
vikasat kesarodbhave (1)

namaḥ śata śaraccandra
sampūrṇa paṭalānane
tārā sahasra nikara
prahasat kiraṇojjvale (2)

namaḥ kanaka nīlābja-pāṇi
padma vibhūṣite
dāna vīrya tapaḥ śānti
titikṣā dhyāna gocare (3)

namas tathāga toṣṇīṣa
vijayā nanta cāriṇi
aśeṣa pāramitā prāpta
jina putra niṣevite (4)

namas tuttāra huṅkāra
pūritāśā digantare
saptaloka kramākrānt
niḥśeṣ ākarṣaṇa kṣame (5)

namah śakrā nala brahma
marud viśveśvar ārcite
bhūta vetāla gandharva
gaṇa yakṣa puraskṛte (6)

namas triḍiti phaṭkāra
parayantra pramardini
pratyālīḍha padanyāse
śikhi jvālā kulojjvale (7)

namas ture mahāghore
māra vīra vināśini
bhṛkuṭī kṛta vaktrābja
sarva śatru niṣūḍini (8)

namas trīratna mudrāṅka
hṛdayāṅguli vibhūṣite
bhūṣitā śeṣa dikcakra
nikara-sva-karākule (9)

[Mantras of the attendants (recite each three times)]:
oṃ mārīcī māṇ svāhā
oṃ ekajaṭī hūṃ svāhā

namaḥ pramuditoddīpta
mukuṭākṣipta mālīni
hasat prahasat tuttāre
māra loka vaśaṅkari (10)

namaḥ samasta bhūpāla
patal ākarṣaṇa kṣame
calada bhṛkuṭī hūṃkāra
sarvāpada vimocini (11)

namaḥ śīkhaṇḍa-khaṇḍendu
mukuṭā bharaṇoj-jvale
amitābha-jaṭā-bhāra
bhāsvara-kiraṇa-dhruve (12)

namaḥ kalpānta huta bhuga
jvālā mālāntara sthite
ālīḍha muditābaddha
ripu cakra vināśini (13)

namaḥ karatalā ghāta
 ćaraṇa hatabhūtale
 bhṛkuṭī kṛta hūṃkāra
 sapta pātāla bhedini (14)

namaḥ śive śubhe śānte
 śānta nirvāṇa gocare
 svāhā praṇava saṃyukte
 mahā pātaka nāśini (15)

namaḥ pramuditābaddha
 ripu-gātra prabhedini
 daśākṣara pada-nyāse
 vidyā-hūṃkāra-dīpate (16)

namas ture pādaghāta
 hūṃkāṛākāra bījite
 meru mandharva vindhyaśca
 bhuvana trayacālīni (17)

namaḥ sureśarākāra
 hariṇāṅka kara sthite
 tārā dvirukta phaṭkāra
 aśeṣa viṣa nāśini (18)

namaḥ sura gaṇā dhyakṣa
 sura kinnara sevite
 ābaddha muditābhoga
 kari duḥ svapna nāśini (19)

namaś candrārka sampūrṇa
 nayana dyuti bhāsvare
 hara dvirukta tut-tāre
 viṣama jvara nāśini (20)

nama stritat tvavi nyāse
 śiva-śakti samanvite
 graha vetāla yakṣa gaṇa
 nāśini pravare ture (21)

mantra mūlam idaṃ stotraṃ
 namas kāraika viṃśati

English

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<https://www.lotsawahouse.org/words-of-the-buddha/twenty-one-tara-praise>

Invocation:

■ Oṃ. Homage to the noble lady Tārā!

Praise to the mantra:

■ Homage to Tārā, swift and gallant,
Homage to Tuttārā, who banishes fear,
Homage to Turā, who fulfils every need,
With svāhā we offer you honor and praise!

The Praises to the Twenty-One Tārās:

■ Homage to Tārā, swift and gallant,
Whose glance flashes like flares of lightning;
Born on the heart of a blossoming lotus
That rose from the tears of the Triple-World's Lord. (1)

■ Homage to you whose countenance is
A hundred full moons gathered in autumn,
Smiling and glowing with brilliant radiance,
Like a thousand stars clustered, ablaze. (2)

■ Homage, golden lady, your lotus-hand
Is graced with a blue water-born flower.
You embody generosity, diligence, endurance,
Serenity, patience and meditation. (3)

■ Homage to you, whose victories are endless,
Jewel on the great Tathāgata's crown.
You are well served by the heirs of the Victors,
Those who've accomplished all the perfections. (4)

■ Homage to you, who with tuttāra and hūṃ
Fill desire realms unto the ends of space.
You trample underfoot the seven worlds,
And have the strength to summon all. (5)

Homage to you, praised by Indra,
 Agni, Brahmā, Maruts, and Śiva.
 All the hosts of bhūtas, vetālas,
 Gandharvas and yakṣas pay tribute to you. (6)

Homage to you, who with traṭ and phaṭ
 Crush the enemies' yantras to dust.
 With right leg bent in and left leg extended,
 Shining you tread amidst flames wildly blazing. (7)

Homage to Ture, the fearsome lady,
 Destroyer of the most powerful demons.
 With a lotus-face and a deep-furrowed brow,
 You are the slayer of each and every foe. (8)

Homage to you, whose fingers grace
 Your heart and display the Three Jewels mudrā.
 You're graced by wheels adorning every direction,
 With dazzling radiance that overwhelms all. (9)

Homage to you, supremely joyous,
 Your splendid crown spreading garlands of light.
 Smiling and laughing, with tuttāre
 You bring demons and worlds under control. (10)

Homage to you, who can summon
 The hosts of earthly guardians.
 Your frown it quivers, and the syllable hūṃ
 Delivers us all from every misfortune. (11)

Homage to you, so brightly adorned,
 With a sliver of moon as your crown,
 Your locks are graced by Amitābha,
 Whose gleaming rays stream forever forth. (12)

Homage to you, seated in a halo
 Blazing with apocalyptic flames.
 Your right leg stretched out and left bent inward,
 Immersed in joy, you crush legions of foes. (13)

Homage to you, who on the earth's surface
 Strike your palms and stamp your feet;
 Your brow deeply furrowed, with hūṃ you smash
 The seven netherworlds to nothing but dust. (14)

Homage to you, blissful, gracious and tranquil,
Whose domain is the peace of nirvāṇa.
With om̐ and svāhā in perfect union,
You lay to waste every terrible evil. (15)

Homage to you, who, immersed in rapture,
Shatters the bodies of all your foes.
You manifest from the wisdom-syllable hūṃ,
And display each of your mantra's ten syllables. (16)

Homage to Ture, your feet stomping boldly,
Formed from the seed of the syllable hūṃ.
The mountains of Meru, Mandara and Vindhya,
And all the three worlds, you cause them to quake. (17)

Homage to you, who hold in your hand
A deer-marked moon like a divine lake.
With tāra twice and then with phaṭ,
You totally cleanse all of the poisons. (18)

Homage to you, who is served by kings
Of hosts divine, and of gods and kiṃnaras.
Suited in armour of joy and splendour,
You clear away nightmares, soothe away strife. (19)

Homage to you, whose eyes shine with lustre,
Bright with the fullness of sun and moon.
With twice-uttered hara and tuttāre
You pacify the most intractable diseases. (20)

Homage to you, who have the power to free,
You put forth the realities as a set of three.
Supreme Ture, you completely destroy
The hordes of grahas, vetālas, and yakṣas. (21)

This Praise with the twenty-one verses of homage
Is itself the root mantra.