

Stephen Leek

Once on a Mountain  
SATB acappella choir

*sample copy*

*www.stephenleek.com*

# Once on a Mountain SATB acappella choir

Music by  
Stephen Leek

Texts adapted from works by  
Douglas Stewart

*Commissioned by and dedicated to  
Graeme Morton  
and The St Peters Chorale  
St Peters Lutheran College,  
Queensland, 1988*

*Winner of the Sounds Australian Critic's Award in 1990 for  
"The Best Choral Work by an Australian Composer"*

*The performance of this work by the St Peters Chorale won the  
Sounds Australia Critics Award in 1991 for  
"the Best Performance of an Australian Choral Work"*

Program note:

The provocative and colourful texts of *Once on a Mountain* are by New Zealand-born, Douglas Stewart, who spent much of his life living in and writing about the Australian outback. Stewart's writing vividly reflects the composers concerns for the natural riches and beauty of the Australian landscape: riches which have existed long before the arrival of any peoples, riches which still exist for all to admire: riches, which like such places around the world are under extreme threat. Australia's heritage, Australia's national treasures lie not in buildings and monuments but in the mountains, the forests, the native flora and fauna, in the vast expanses of water within and surrounding the world's largest island, and, with the indigenous people who have long survived in this harsh land - the oldest place on earth.

The work is in seven sections and it is desirable that the movements are performed in succession, however, each movement can also be sung as individual items. The work takes its form from the smallest drop of water falling on the highest mountain and follows its journey to the roaring seas. Please be transported to a magnificent place - sometimes tranquil, sometimes savagely energetic.

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# Once on a Mountain

## 1. I was alone...

Douglas Stewart\*

Stephen Leek

Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tn-----\*\*eye-----wa-----sa-----low-----nnnn-----

\* All singers enter in a staggered way on the same pitch (D) and move through the vocal sounds as slowly and as continuously legato as possible. Breaths should be taken where required, the texture should grow in density and not necessarily in volume. The mouth shapes should remain round as in the vowel "ooo" and with the changing mouth shapes it is hoped to pick up the subtle variations in the overtones present.

\*\* on this syllable the pitch should rise only fractionally to create a beating effect - it then resumes to unison.

This entire section may be taken by a semi-chorus if necessary to enable a very pure and resonant sound.

**A**

S. *pp* *f* *p accel. and cresc.*

In miles of moon ligh(t) - t and great grey meg - a - lith - ic out-crops of

*pp* *f* *p accel. and cresc.*

In miles of moon ligh(t) - t and great grey meg - a - lith - ic out-crops of

*pp* *f* *p accel. and cresc.*

In miles of moon ligh(t) - t and great grey meg - a - lith - ic out-crops of

*pp* *f* *p accel. and cresc.*

In miles of moon ligh(t) - t and great grey meg - a - lith - ic out-crops of

*a tempo*

Solo soprano *mf*

I see this old land has

*molto* *ff* *p*

gra - nite see Ooo

*molto* *ff* *p*

gra - nite see Ooo

*molto* *ff*

gra - nite see

*molto* *ff*

gra - nite see

10 B

bones un - der its grass.

*repeat ad. lib. as fast as possible dim.*

M M-A

*repeat ad. lib. as fast as possible dim.*

M-A

*p* whisper as fast as possible, *ad. lib.* *dim.*

has bones

*mf*

A\* bo n er-i-\*\*

\* A dense block of sound  
 \*\* move gradually to the next vowel sound

14 *freely:*

*mp*

Once on a moun - tain I was a - lone.

*pp*

M

*pp*

M

*pp*

M

*f*

ts.

attacca 2

## 2. Look, There are Dark Hands

♩ = 116 very sharp and articulate

17 *f*

Loo - k,\* there are dark hands in the bla - ck ro - ck.

Loo - k!\* Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k!\* Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k!\* Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

21

Man's hands, wo - man's hands, a child's hand hid - ding in a ro - ck

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

*fp* **A**

25

cave. Loo - k, there are dark hands in the bla - ck

Loo - k! Loo - k, there are dark hands in the bla - ck

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

\*The hard "k" sound is to be accentuated.  
This will help with the flow and rhythms  
of the work.

29

ro - ck. Man's hands, wo - man's hands, a child's hand hid - ding

ro - ck. Man's hands, wo - man's hands, a child's hand hid - ding

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

33

*fp* **B** *p*

in a ro - ck cave. Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows

in a ro - ck cave. Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows

Loo - k! cave. Sha - dows

Loo - k! cave. Sha - dows

36

*f* *f* *f* *f*

Sha - dows Sha - dows they seem to wave. They seem to wave.

Sha - dows Sha - dows they seem to wave. They seem to wave.

Sha - dows Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

Sha - dows Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k! Loo - k!

41 **C** *pp* rit.....

Shadows shadows shadows shadows They seem to wave seem to be - cken.  
 Shadows shadows shadows shadows They seem to wave seem to be - cken.  
*mp* In a language of gesture be - cken.  
*mp* In a language of gesture be - cken.

45 **D** **A tempo**

Look! There are dark hands in the black rock, Man's hands,  
 Look! There are dark hands in the black rock, Man's hands,  
 Look! There are dark hands in the black rock, Man's hands,  
 Look! There are dark hands in the black rock, Man's hands,

50

Women's hands, a child's hand hiding in a rock cave.  
 Women's hands, a child's hand hiding in a rock cave.  
 Women's hands, a child's hand hiding in a rock cave.  
 Women's hands, a child's hand hiding in a rock cave.



**E** *f* \_\_\_\_\_

54 *gliss.* *f* (whispered)

Sha - - - - dows, Sha - dows.

*gliss.* *f* (whispered)

Sha - - - - dows, Sha - dows.

*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *f* \_\_\_\_\_

Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows They seem to wave

*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *f* \_\_\_\_\_

Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows Sha - dows They seem to wave

**F** *f*

58 *f*

Up from the green wa - ter we stru - ggled,

*f*

Up from the green wa - ter we stru - ggled,

*f* < *ff* *f* < *ff* *f* < *ff* *f* < *ff* *f* < *ff* *f* < *ff*

Here\_\_\_\_ Here\_\_\_\_ Here\_\_\_\_ Here\_\_\_\_ Here\_\_\_\_ Here\_\_\_\_

*f* *sim.*

Up from the green wa - ter we stru - ggled,

61 *f*

*gliss.* *gliss.* *sim.*

Here, Here we camped and here we

*f*

Here, Here we camped and here we

*ff* (shouted!)

Here Here we camped and here we

*f*

Here, Here we camped and here we

## Tempo meno mosso

65 **G** *f* please note different articulation

shall be re - mem - bered! Look, There are dark hands in the

shall be re - mem - bered! Look, There are dark hands in the

shall be re - mem - bered! Look, There are dark hands in the

shall be re - mem - bered! Look, There are dark hands in the

69 *sub.p*

black rock Man's hands, Wo - man's hands, a

black rock Man's hands, Wo - man's hands, a

black rock Man's hands, Wo - man's hands, a

black rock Man's hands, Wo - man's hands, a

73 **rall.**

child's hand hi - ding in a hid - den gra(ve).

child's hand hi - ding in a hid - den gra(ve).

child's hand hi - ding in a hid - den gra(ve).

child's hand hi - ding in a hid - den gra(ve).

76 *pppp*

Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tnn

*pppp*

Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tnn

*pppp*

Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tnn

*pppp*

(S)  
Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tnn

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each voice part is written on a five-line staff. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts use a treble clef, while the Bass part uses a bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of a single half-note chord for each voice, with a fermata over it. The lyrics are 'Waa-----n-----so-----n-----a(r)-----m-----ow-----n-----tnn' and are aligned with the notes. The dynamic marking is *pppp* (pianissimo) for all parts. The page number 76 is at the top left of the first staff.

*attacca 3*

### 3. then he broke through the wall

77 *p* *fp* *pp*

Then he broke through the wall Like grass, A hun - dred war - a -

Then he broke through the wall Like grass, A hun - dred war - a -

Then he broke through the wall Like grass, A hun - dred war - a -

Then he broke through the wall Like grass, A hun - dred war - a -

81 *tempo* *pp solo freely ad. lib. sotto voce*

tahs, watched them tress - pass. It was no place to come at will

tahs, watched them tress - pass. It was no place to come at will

tahs, watched them tress - pass. It was no place to come at will

tahs, watched them tress - pass.

84 **A** *tutti pp* *repeat "l" as fast as possible*

The wild bush lived there pri - vate and still-l-l-l-

The wild bus(sh) - sh pri - vate and still-l-l-l-

**B**

88 *flowing*

ppp *sim.*

M M M

ppp *sim.*

M M M

**C**

92 *chilling!*

*mp* *mf* *f*

And the tall slim

*mp* *mf* *f*

And the tall slim

M M M M

M M M M

96 *mp* *f* *ff*

war -a -tahs so ma ny and so ma - - - ny

*mp* *f* *ff*

war -a -tahs so ma ny and so ma - - - ny

M O O

100

*ff* *gliss.* *mf*

glim -mered proud.

*ff* *mf*

glim -mered proud.

*molto* *ff*

O O proud.

*molto* *fp* *f*

O O proud.

104

*altos, tenors and basses select any phrase, repeat it in any octave, al.lib. ppp, tempo remains constant*

la na la o m k k la la la la

too m n tm eye m do m do m-ar- k k k k k k k

m na na na m soo soo so soo so soo so

o m a m a m a who m - ar

...meanwhile

105 ♩ = ca. 96 *mp*

It was no place to come at will. The wild bush lived

109

*mf*  
*div.*

pri vate and still, but they were so still and tall they looked just

but they were so still and tall they looked

*gradually increase tempo, dynamic and intensity*

*abrupt cut off*

111

like peo - - ple

just like peo - - ple

*becomes chaotic, frenetic, pitch may wander cresc.molto*

*perhaps take a brief pause, you might like to check the pitch before continuing*

# 4. and straight away like a bell bird

*imagine the cool succulent mist  
of a hidden Australian rainforest*

♩ = ca. 94 - 100

*simple and timeless, "like a bell bird"*

Soprano  
solo

*ppp*

*mfpp* *sim.*

An\* stray tway

*mfpp* *sim.*

An\* stray tway

*mfpp* *sim.*

An\* stray tway

*mfpp* *sim.*

An\* stray tway

*to be sung on any simple open vowel sound,  
it should shift and change throughout the course of the movement.*

115

lie ka ar

lie ka ar

lie ka ar

lie ka ar

*\*note: each bar should have an individual overall dim. throughout  
although each note has quite a sharp attack*



118

*mf* *mp*

bell bir kaym

bell bir kaym

bell bir kaym

bell bir kaym

121

the low clear

the low clear

the low clear

the low clear

124 *mf*

sa dmur dear

sa dmur dear

sa dmur dear

sa dmur mer of dear

*weighty without volume!*

127

ston twar war

ston twar war

ston twar war

ston twar war

130

*mf* *mp*

war war ter

war war ter

war war ter

war war ter

133

*p float* *p*

war war ter

war war ter

war war ter

war war ter

attaca 5

# 5. across the pool

① *sopranos enter and repeat sequence ad. lib.*

136 *pp* *< mf* *pp* *ppp*

A cross the poo poo poo poo poo poo - l

*pp* *fp*

a - mi ri ad o(f) f stars mi ri ad of stars are laid

② *altos enter and repeat sequence ad. lib.*

137 *pp* *< fp* *ppp*

like stone by sil - ver sil - very stone

③

138 *p molto sostenuto*

A la - dy walks a - cross the night. She see the mir - ror

*p molto sostenuto*

A la - dy walks a - cross the night. She see the mir - ror

there

there

*one breaths duration dim. al. niente*

*one breaths duration din. al. niente*

④

gradually change to new box

144 *mf* *mp*

st - ar s a cro- s s s s

a shin-mer shin-mer shin-mer pool pool pool poo 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1

145

⑤

*mf* *poco accel.....rit...* *tempo*

Is it for her - self a -lone that the moon lets

*mf* *poco accel.....rit...* *tempo*

Is it for her - self a -lone that the moon lets

149

⑥

*freely* *one breaths duration ad. lib.*

down its shi - mmer -ing hair?

*freely* *one breaths duration ad. lib.*

down its shi - mmer -ing hair?

⑦

2 soprano soloists, independantly free

151 *mf*

A - cross the stars, I wait a - lone I walk a - cross the night.\*

A la - dy walks through the night and sees re - flec - tions.

together:

152

in the glass - - y sheen.

in the glass - - y sheen.

attacca 6

# 6. in the hush

153 ① *p* surprise! ② ③

*whisper as fast as possible and repeat*

In the hush of wa - ters was the

*ppp*  
In the hush, in the hush

shout! *ffp*  
HUSH

shout! *ffp*  
HUSH

HUSH

157 *cresc.* ④ *f*

sound of pebb - les

*P as fast as possible*  
l - b - l - b - l - b

*sung falsetto:*  
*p*  
Drop! Drop! Drop! Drop!

*pp* roll index finger across lips as fast as possible

Zhu

159 *mp* *fp*

For e - ver roll - ing with a holl - ow sound

*mp* *fp*

For e - ver roll - ing with a holl - ow sound

164

Strong ♩ = 60

For e - ver roll -

For e - ver roll -

For e - ver roll -

For e - ver roll -

169

-ing home, And for one

-ing home, As if to prove and for

-ing home, Breathe he stood

-ing home, Gran - ite could

172

mo-ment as if to prove granite could breath and move He stood by the river

one moment granite could breath He stood by the river and move

by the river and for one moment as if to prove granite could and move

breathe and move as if to prove He stood by the river and for one moment

\*words to be sung on pitch and only rise and fall fractionally in the direction of the arrow.  
 Each singer maintains an independant tempo which should be fairly fast



*very abrupt cut off*

173 ***ff*** *molto cresc. repeat individually ad. lib.*

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 15/8 time signature. The staff contains a series of notes with upward and downward arrows indicating dynamics. The staff ends with a double bar line and the numbers 15 and 8 stacked vertically.

and warmed the mountain (NNNN)

***ff*** *molto cresc. repeat individually ad. lib.*

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 15/8 time signature. The staff contains a series of notes with upward and downward arrows indicating dynamics. The staff ends with a double bar line and the numbers 15 and 8 stacked vertically.

and warmed the mountain (NNNN)

***ff*** *molto cresc. repeat individually ad. lib.*

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 15/8 time signature. The staff contains a series of notes with upward and downward arrows indicating dynamics. The staff ends with a double bar line and the numbers 15 and 8 stacked vertically.

and warmed the mountain (NNNN)

***ff*** *molto cresc. repeat individually ad. lib.*

A musical staff with a bass clef and a 15/8 time signature. The staff contains a series of notes with upward and downward arrows indicating dynamics. The staff ends with a double bar line and the numbers 15 and 8 stacked vertically.

and warmed the mountain (NNNN)

# 7. it twinkled to him

♩ = 112 marked and articulate

174 *mf*

It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the sand, To him in the

*mf*

It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the It twin-kled to him, To him in the

*mf*

It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the It twin kled to him, To him in the

*mf*

It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the sand, To him in the

179

sand, It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the sand, It twin kled to him,

It twin kled to him, It twin kled to him, To him in the It twin kled to him,

It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the It twin kled to him,

sand, It twin-kled to him, It twin-kled to him, To him in the sand, It twin kled to him,

184 **A**

To him in the sand, As though God had winked at him, As though God had

To him in the It twin-kled to him, As though God had winked at him, As though God had

To him in the It twin-kled to him, As though God had winked at him, As though God had

To him in the sand, As though God had winked at him, As though God had

189

winked at him, He smiled He smiled

winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him,

winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him,

winked at him, He smiled He smiled

194

As though God had winked at him, As though God had winked at him, He smiled

As though God had winked at him, As though God had winked at him, He smiled as if God had

As though God had winked at him, As though God had winked at him, He smiled as if God had

As though God had winked at him, As though God had winked at him, He smiled

199

**B**

He smiled Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up,

winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him, Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up,

winked at him, He smiled as if God had winked at him, Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up,

He smiled Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up,

204 *mf*

sift through his fin - gers, sift through his fin - gers,  
 sift through his fin - gers, Scoop ing it up sift through his fin - gers, Scoop ing it up  
 sift through his fin - gers, sift through his fin - gers,  
 sift through his fin - gers, Scoop ing it up sift through his fin - gers, Scoop ing it up

208 *mf*

Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up to sift through his fin - gers,  
 Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up to sift through his fin - gers, fin - gers, fin - gers.  
 Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up to sift through his fin - gers,  
 Scoop-ing it up, Scoop-ing it up to sift through his fin - gers, fin - gers, fin - gers.

**C** 212 *mf*

Some-times when the green seas roll hea -ving ving ving ving hea -ving ving ving It rose up on him  
 Some-times when the green seas roll hea -ving ving ving ving hea -ving ving ving It rose up on him  
 Some-times when the green seas roll hea -ving ving ving ving hea -ving ving ving It rose up on him  
 Some-times when the green seas roll hea -ving ving ving ving hea -ving ving ving It rose up on him

216 *cresc.* *molto*

hea -ving ving ving ving It rose up on him vast and wilds\_\_\_\_\_ vast and

hea -ving ving ving ving It rose up on him vast, It rose up on him vast and

hea -ving ving ving ving It rose up on him vast and wilds\_\_\_\_\_ vast and

hea -ving ving ving ving It rose up on him vast, It rose up on him vast and

**D** 221 *mf*

He he he he he stood stood He he he he he stood stood a -

He he he he he stood stood He he he he he stood stood He

He he he he he stood stood He he he he he stood stood

He he he he he stood stood He he he he he stood stood a

**E** 225 *f*

ppalled to think that man might

stood a-ppalled to to to to to think that man man man man might might might

stood a-ppalled to to to to to think think think that that that that man man man man might might might

ppalled to think think think that that that that man man man man might might might

228

swim those waves, and have time to count the

swim swim those waves, and have time to count the

swim swim those waves, and have time to count the

swim swim those waves, and have time to count the

232

**F**

sand. 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

sand. 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

sand. 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

time to count e - v'ry sin - gle grain of sand. 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

236

some-times he counts all day sub. p Some-times he counts all day\_

some-times he counts all day 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 some-times he counts all day

some-times he counts all day 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 some-times he counts all day

some-times he counts all day Some-times he counts all day\_

240

*mf* Far on in - to the night

*sub p* Far on in - to the night

*mf* Far on in - to the night

*sub p* Far on in - to the night

*mf* Far on in - to the night

*sub p* Far on in - to the night

*mf* Far on in - to the night

**G**

244

*mf cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like And still be - fore his eyes like

*mf cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like And still be - fore his eyes like

*mf cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like And still be - fore his eyes like

*mf cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like And still be - fore his eyes like

247

*f cresc.* swans in flight, He got up to mil - lions and tril - lions be - fore the

*f cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like He got up to mil - lions and tril - lions be - fore the

*f cresc.* swans in flight, He got up to mil - lions and tril - lions be - fore the

*f cresc.* And still be - fore his eyes like He got up to mil - lions and tril - lions be - fore the

repeat individually ad.lib.  
(Some singers may proceed whilst  
others repeat at will)  
The effect should be of gradual  
disintegration of the cluster

**H**

250 *fff*

num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way

*fff*

num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way

*fff*

num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way

*fff*

num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way num-bers streamed a - way

254 *mf* freely

On a moun - tain, ah

*mf* freely

gliss.

repeat in rhythm ad.lib., dim. and drop out one at a time (no rit.)

streamed a - way

repeat in rhythm ad.lib., dim. and drop out one at a time (no rit.)

num-bers a - way

repeat in rhythm ad.lib., dim. and drop out one at a time (no rit.)

num-bers streamed

repeat in rhythm ad.lib., dim. and drop out one at a time (no rit.)

num-bers num-bers