

James Cave

Philae's Landing



For Paul Gameson, and Ebor Singers

First performed 21st November 2015 at the National Centre for Early Music

Scoring: SSAATTBB choir, with baritone/tenor and soprano solos

Duration: c. 5 mins 30

On 12 November 2014, after ten years of space travel, the Philae space-probe achieved the first-ever landing on the surface of a comet, and sent the first-ever images from a comet's surface back to Earth. Only three days later, the probe fell silent: its solar-powered batteries had failed, due to lack of sunlight. This summer, Philae briefly reawoke, only to descend once more into silence. Its last reported communication was on 9 July 2015.

David Thorley's poem is a reimagining of the Cecilian Ode, a hymn of praise to music and its role in the celestial order, for the 21st century, told from the perspective of the lonely space-probe.

In this score, vocal slurs indicate phrasing, not melismas.

Philae's landing

A smut on a string, half a year asleep,
I woke under falling hammers and the verve
of trilled vibrations. Down the scale beat
in dozens the sprung mechanical nerve
of accidents and grace notes; somewhere deep
the pedalling of thunder and the churn
of cadences uncoiled, unsoft, unsweet,
a shriek to dampen and a chill to burn,
a catcall from the universe's keep.

But sure I found orbit, true as the tides
and calm I heard music, bright as the skies
True I found orbit, calm as the skies
and bright I sang music, calm as the tides

This place of valves and bellows, each brass ring,
each accent lever and these gears, these wheels,
this instrument of unresolving song
fed through with an unending roll of reels
this yet unwound infinity of string
plays thousands to dozens, gives no relief
no quarter from the caterwauling throng,
and in this waking phase, however brief,
before commitment to the fire, I sing.

So sure I found orbit, true as the tides
and calm I heard music, bright as the skies
True I found orbit, calm as the skies
and bright I sang music, calm as the tides.

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Image: *Year at a Comet*, Sept 2014 (ESA/Rosetta)

Spacious; not too fast $\text{♩} = 56$
(Four solo voices)

SOPRANO *sfppp* True *(Full) sfpp* Bright


SOPRANO *sfppp* as *sfppp* as

ALTO *sfppp* the *sfpp* the


ALTO *sfppp* tides *sfpp* skies

Piano - rehearsal only *ppp* *pp*


4

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 1, treble clef, showing notes and rests.

A smut_

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 2, treble clef, showing notes and rests.

A smut_

A.  Musical staff for Alto 1, treble clef, showing notes and rests.

A smut

string

pppp

A.  Musical staff for Alto 2, treble clef, showing notes and rests.

A smut

string

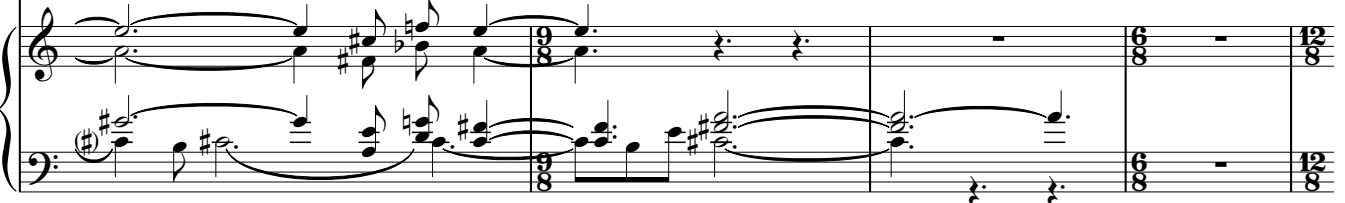
ppp

T.  Musical staff for Tenor or baritone solo, treble clef, showing notes and rests.

Tenor or baritone solo

mf

A smut_ on a string_

Pno.  Musical staff for Piano, grand staff, showing accompaniment.

(Full)
8 *sfpp*

S. *sfpp* Calm a sleep _____ Calm *sfpp*

S. *sfpp* as a sleep _____ as *sfpp*

A. *sfpp* the a sleep *pppp* the *sfpp*

A. *sfpp* skies a sleep *pppp* tides *sfpp*


T. Half a year a sleep


Pno.

2

12
S.  *p*
und er fal ling ham mers Calm


S.  *p*
un der fall ing ham mers as

A.  *p*
un der fall ing ham mers the

A.  *p*
un der fall ing ham mers skies

alternative 
and the

T. 
I woke un der fa lling ham mers and the

Pno.  *p*

A

15

S. vi bra__ tions

S. vi bra__ tions

A. vi bra__ tions

A. vi bra__ tions

T. verve__ of trilled vi__ bra__ tions Down beat

T. Down beat

B. Down beat

B. Down beat

Pno.

ff

ff

ff

ff

(Full) f p

(Full) f p

(Full) f p

(Full) f p

f p

f p

20

S. *mf*
 Down the scale beat in do zens

A. *mf*
 Down the scale beat in do zens_

T. *mp* *pp*
 Down _____ beat Down _____ in do zens

T. *mp* *pp*
 Down _____ beat Down _____ in do zens

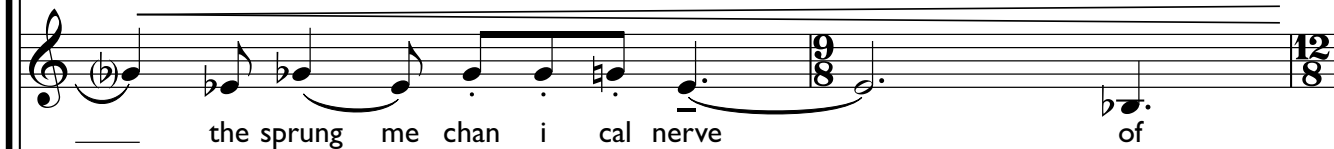
B. *mp* *pp*
 Down _____ beat Down _____ in do zens

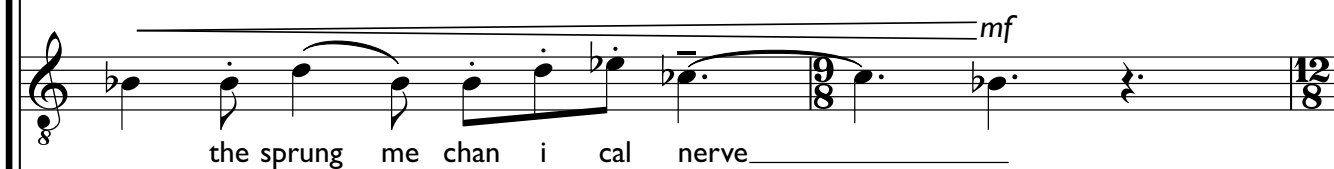
B. *mp* *pp*
 Down _____ beat Down _____ in do zens

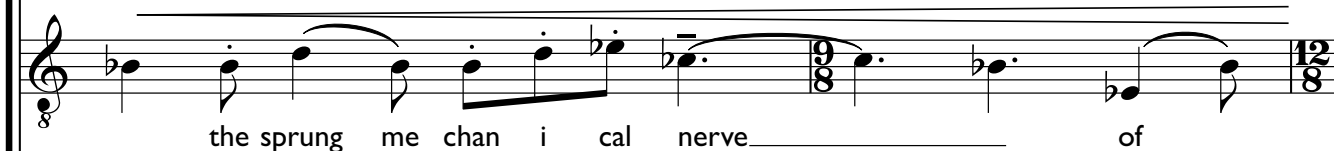
Pno. *mp* *pp* *mf*


24


S.  the sprung me chan i cal nerve of

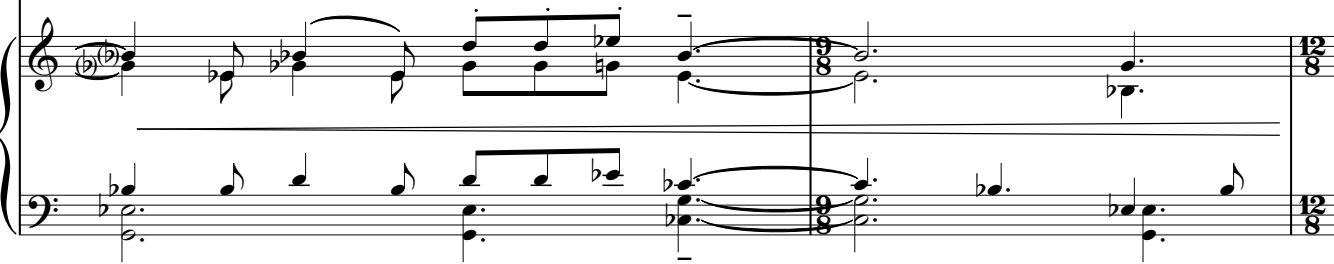
A.  the sprung me chan i cal nerve of

T.  the sprung me chan i cal nerve *mf*

T.  the sprung me chan i cal nerve of

B.  Down the beat of

B.  Down the beat of

Pno. 

26

S. *f*
 ac ci dent al grace notes some where

A. *f*
 ac ci dent tal grace notes some where

T. *f*
 Ac ci den_tal grace notes some where

T. *f* *p*
 Ac ci_dent al grace notes some where

B. *f*
 Ac ci__den_tal grace notes__ Ac ci den tal grace notes__ some where

B. *f*
 Ac ci__den_tal grace notes__ Ac ci den tal grace notes__ some where

Pno. *f*

29 *p*

S. *p* *4*
deep the pe da ling of thun der and the

A. *p* *4*
deep the ped al ing of thun der and the

T. *p*
deep thun der

T. *p*
deep thun der

B. *p*
deep deep

B. *p*
deep deep

Pno. *p* *4*

31

S. churn of ca den ces un coiled un soft un sweet a

S. soft un sweet a

A. churn of ca den ces un coiled un soft un sweet a

T. un coiled soft un sweet a

T. un coiled

B. un coiled soft un sweet a

B. un coiled soft un sweet a

Pno.

33 *ff* *mf* *pp*

S. shriek to damp en_ and a chill to burn a cat call

S. shriek to damp en_ and a chill to burn_ to burn

A. shriek to damp en_ and a chill to burn_ to burn

T. shriek to damp_ pen_ and a chill_ to burn_

T. *pp* burn

B. *ff* *mf* *pp* shriek and a chill_ to burn

B. *ff* *mf* shriek and a chill_ to

Pno. *ff* *mf* *pp*

36

S. from the un_ i vers es keep

A. cat call from the un i vers es keep

T. *pppp* cat

T. *pppp* call

B. *pppp*

Pno. *pppp*

Slower; atmospheric

soprano solo - free and expressive

40 **B**

S. *mf*
Sure I found _____ or _____ bit _____

S. (semi-chorus - distant-sounding)
pppp
aah

A. (semi-chorus - 'distant-sounding')
pppp
aah

A. (semi-chorus - 'distant-sounding')
pppp
aah

T. (semi-chorus - distant-sounding)
pppp
aah

B. (semi-chorus - distant-sounding)
pppp
aah

B. (semi-chorus - distant-sounding)
pppp
aah

Pno. *pp*

43

S. True as the tides and calm I heard music bright as the

S.

A.

A.

T.

B.

B.

Pno.

C (Full)

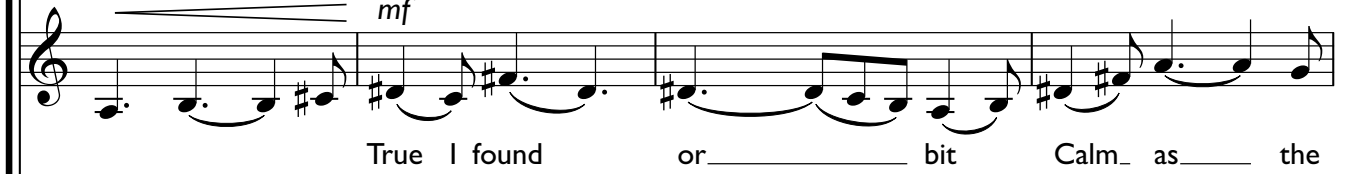
47

mf

S.  *mf*
skies _____ True I found or _____ bit _____ Calm as _____ the

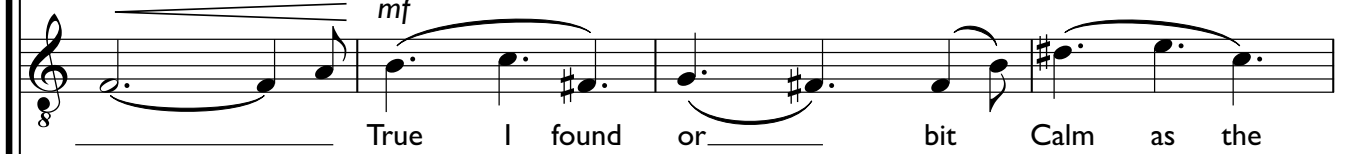
(Full)

mf

A.  *mf*
True I found or _____ bit Calm_ as _____ the

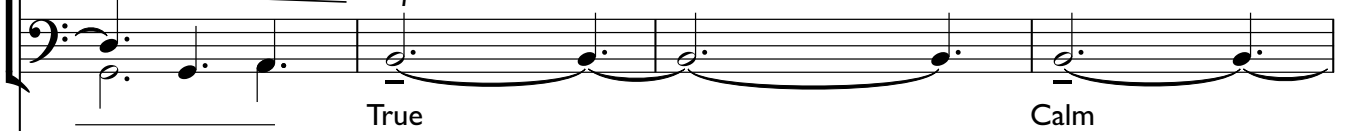
(Full)

mf

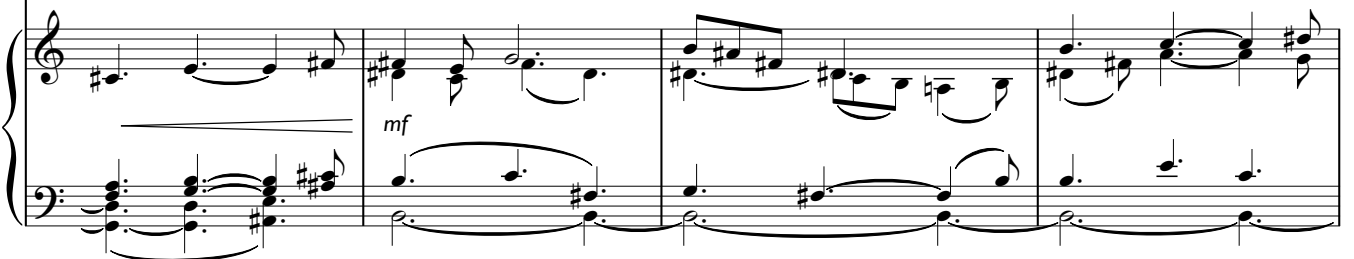
T.  *mf*
True I found or _____ bit Calm as the

(Full)

mf

B.  *mf*
True Calm

Pno.

 *mf*


51

S. 
 skies _____ and bright I _____ sang mu _____ sic calm as the tides

A. 
 skies _____ and bright I _____ sang mus _____ ic calm as the tides

T. 
 skies _____ and bright I _____ sang mus _____ ic _____ calm as the tides

T. 
 skies _____ and bright I _____ sang mus _____ ic _____ calm as the tides

B. 
 _____ and bright _____ mus _____ ic calm as the tides

Pno. 

D

55 *sfpp*

S. True this place each brass ring

sfpp

S. as this place each brass ring

sfpp

A. the this place each brass ring

sfpp

A. tides this place each brass ring

mf

T. This place of valves and bel lows

mf

B. This place of valves and bel lows

D

Pno. *pp* *mf*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. It features five vocal staves (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The music is in 12/8 time and D major. The lyrics are: 'True this place each brass ring as this place each brass ring the this place each brass ring tides this place each brass ring This place of valves and bel lows This place of valves and bel lows'. The piano part includes dynamic markings *pp* and *mf*. A section marker 'D' is present at the beginning and end of the page.

58

S. *sfpp*

Bright

S. *sfpp*
as

A. *sfpp*
the

A. *sfpp*
skies

T. *f*
each brass ring each ac cent le ver

B. *f*
each brass ring each ac cent le ver

Pno. *pp* *f*

61

S. *sfp*
 each ac cent *Calm*

S. *sfp*
 each ac cent *as*

A. *sfp*
 each ac cent *the*

A. *sfp*
 each ac cent *the*

T. *mp*
 and these gears these wheels This in__ stru ment of un re

T. *sfp*
 and these gears these wheels *skies*

B. *sfp*
 and these gears these wheels

Pno. *sfp*

63

S. 
 the skies Calm

S. 
 the skies as

A. 
 the skies the

A. 
 the skies the

T. 
 sol ving song fed through with an un en ding roll of reels plays

T. 
 the skies tides

B. 
 This yet un wound in fin ni ty of string plays

Pno. 

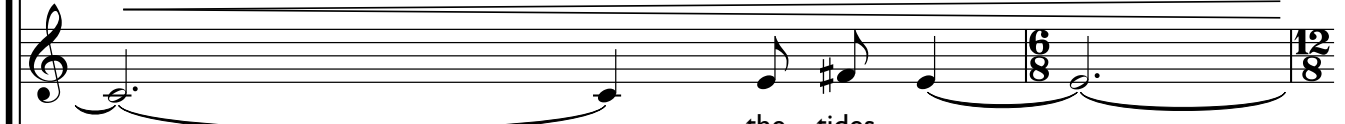
65

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 1, treble clef, with lyrics "the tides".

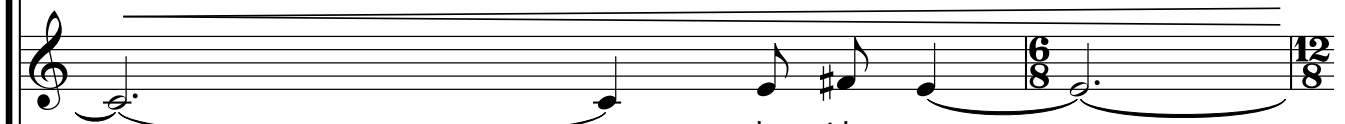
the tides

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 2, treble clef, with lyrics "the tides".

the tides

A.  Musical staff for Alto 1, treble clef, with lyrics "the tides".

the tides

A.  Musical staff for Alto 2, treble clef, with lyrics "the tides".

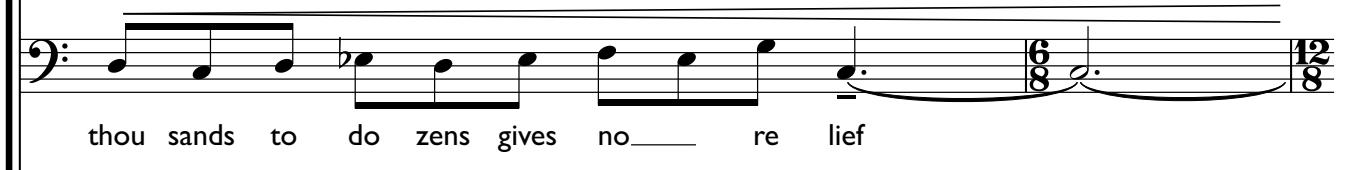
the tides

T.  Musical staff for Tenor 1, treble clef, with lyrics "thou sands to do zens gives no re lief".

thou sands to do zens gives no re lief

T.  Musical staff for Tenor 2, treble clef, with lyrics "no re lief".

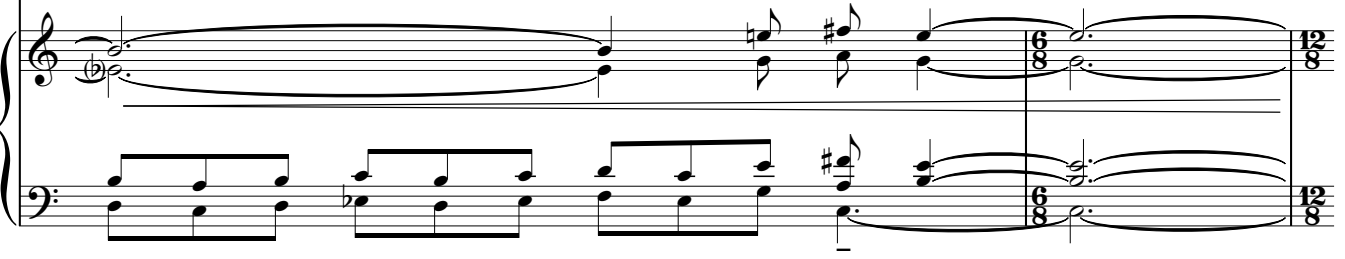
no re lief

B.  Musical staff for Bass 1, bass clef, with lyrics "thou sands to do zens gives no re lief".

thou sands to do zens gives no re lief

B.  Musical staff for Bass 2, bass clef, with lyrics "thou sands to do zens gives no re lief".

thou sands to do zens gives no re lief

Pno.  Piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef).

67

S. *ff* no quar ter from the cat er waul ing throng no quar ter

A. *ff* no quar_ ter from the ca ter waul ing throng no quar ter

T. *ff* no quar ter no quar ter from the cat er waul ing

B. *ff* No quar ter no quart er from the cat er waul ing

B. *ff* No quar ter no quar ter from the ca ter waul ing

Pno. *ff*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for page 24, starting at measure 67. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The music is marked *ff* (fortissimo). The vocal parts have lyrics: S. "no quar ter from the cat er waul ing throng no quar ter"; A. "no quar_ ter from the ca ter waul ing throng no quar ter"; T. "no quar ter no quar ter from the cat er waul ing"; B. "No quar ter no quart er from the cat er waul ing"; B. "No quar ter no quar ter from the ca ter waul ing". The piano accompaniment features a four-measure melodic motif in the right hand and a corresponding bass line in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

S. *fff* *sfpp*
 — no quar ter — no quar ter True

A. *fff* *sfpp*
 — no quar ter — no quar ter as

T. *fff* *sfpp* (solo) *mf*
 throng no quar ter — no quar ter the And in this wak ing

T. *sfpp*
 the

B. *fff* *sfpp*
 throng no quar ter — no quar ter tides

B. *fff*
 throng no quar ter — no quar ter

Pno. *fff* *pp* *mf*

73

S. *sfpp*
Bright

Musical staff for Soprano (S.) in treble clef. It features a whole note chord in 6/8 time, followed by a 12-measure rest, and then a melodic line in 9/8 time starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The dynamic is *sfpp* and the instruction "Bright" is written below.

A. *sfpp*
as

Musical staff for Alto (A.) in treble clef. It features a whole note chord in 6/8 time, followed by a 12-measure rest, and then a melodic line in 9/8 time starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The dynamic is *sfpp* and the instruction "as" is written below.

T. (solo) *p* (full) *sfpp* *mp*
phase_ how ev er brief Be fore com

Musical staff for Tenor 1 (T.) in treble clef. It begins with a (solo) instruction and a melodic line in 6/8 time. This is followed by a 12-measure rest, then a melodic line in 9/8 time. Dynamics include *p*, (full) *sfpp*, and *mp*. The lyrics "phase_ how ev er brief Be fore com" are written below.

T. *sfpp*
the

Musical staff for Tenor 2 (T.) in treble clef. It features a whole note chord in 6/8 time, followed by a 12-measure rest, and then a melodic line in 9/8 time starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The dynamic is *sfpp* and the instruction "the" is written below.

B. *sfpp*
skies

Musical staff for Bass (B.) in bass clef. It features a whole note chord in 6/8 time, followed by a 12-measure rest, and then a melodic line in 9/8 time starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The dynamic is *sfpp* and the instruction "skies" is written below.

Pno. *pp* *mp*

Musical staff for Piano (Pno.) in grand staff. It features a whole note chord in 6/8 time, followed by a 12-measure rest, and then a melodic line in 9/8 time. Dynamics include *pp* and *mp*.

77

S. *sfpp*
Calm

Musical staff for Soprano (S.) in treble clef, 12/8 time signature. It features a whole note chord on a G note with a fermata, marked *sfpp*. The word "Calm" is written below the staff.

A. *sfpp*
as

Musical staff for Alto (A.) in treble clef, 12/8 time signature. It features a whole note chord on a G note with a fermata, marked *sfpp*. The word "as" is written below the staff.

T. *mf* *pp* (full) *sfpp*
mit ment_ to the fire I sing the

Musical staff for Tenor 1 (T.) in treble clef, 12/8 time signature. It contains a melodic line with lyrics: "mit ment_ to the fire I sing the". Dynamics include *mf*, *pp*, and (full) *sfpp*.

T. *sfpp*
the

Musical staff for Tenor 2 (T.) in treble clef, 12/8 time signature. It features a whole note chord on a G note with a fermata, marked *sfpp*. The word "the" is written below the staff.

B. *sfpp*
skies

Musical staff for Bass (B.) in bass clef, 12/8 time signature. It features a whole note chord on a G note with a fermata, marked *sfpp*. The word "skies" is written below the staff.

Pno. *pp*

Musical staff for Piano (Pno.) in grand staff, 12/8 time signature. It features a piano accompaniment with a *pp* dynamic marking.

80

S. *ppp* Calm *pppp* Calm

A. *ppp* as *pppp* as

T. *ppp* the *pppp* the

T. *ppp* the

B. *ppp* tides *pppp* tides

Pno. *ppp* *pppp*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. The page is numbered 28 at the top left. The score is divided into six staves. The first five staves are for vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor 1 (T.), Tenor 2 (T.), and Bass (B.). The sixth staff is for the Piano (Pno.). The music is in 8/8 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is marked with a piano (*ppp*) dynamic. The second measure is marked with a pianissimo (*pppp*) dynamic. The lyrics are: 'Calm' (S.), 'as' (A.), 'the' (T.), 'the' (T.), 'tides' (B.). The piano accompaniment consists of chords and melodic lines in both hands, with dynamics of *ppp* and *pppp*.