

LIBBY LARSEN

TOUCH THE AIR SOFTLY

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*for SSAA a cappella Chorus*

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*on the poetry of William Jay Smith*

KENWOOD EDITIONS

Libby Larsen

# TOUCH THE AIR SOFTLY

*for SSAA a cappella Chorus*

Premiered February 14, 2001 at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque  
by Las Cantantes, Bradley Ellingboe, Conductor

Duration: 3:15 minutes

PERUSSAL

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For more information about this piece and other music by Libby Larsen visit [www.libbylarsen.com](http://www.libbylarsen.com).

Libby Larsen

# TOUCH THE AIR SOFTLY

*for SSAA a cappella Chorus*

Now touch the air softly, step gently  
I'll love you 'til roses are robin's egg blue,  
I'll love you 'til gravel is eaten for bread,  
And lemons are oranges and lavender's red.

Now touch the air softly, swing gently the broom,  
I'll love you 'til windows are all of a room  
And the table is laid and the table is bare,  
And the ceiling reposes on bottomless air.

Now touch the air softly, touch the air softly,  
I'll love you 'till Heaven rips the stars from his coat,  
And the moon rows away in a glass-bottomed boat,  
And Orion steps down like a diver below,  
And the earth is ablaze and the ocean aglow.

So touch the air softly, and swing the broom high,  
We will dust the grey mountains and sweep the blue sky,  
And I'll love you as long as forever as ever, and ever is now.  
Touch the air softly.

William Jay Smith

PERUSAL

# TOUCH THE AIR SOFTLY

William Jay Smith

Libby Larsen

Pavanne (♩=52)

Soprano 1  
Now touch the air soft - ly, step gent - ly oo— I'll love you 'til ros - es are

Soprano 2  
Now touch the air soft - ly, step gent - ly oo I'll love you 'til ros - es are

Alto 1  
Now touch the air soft - ly, step gent - ly oo I'll love you 'til ros - es are

Alto 2  
Now touch the air soft - ly, step gent - ly oo I'll love you 'til ros - es are

*for rehearsal only*  
Pavanne (♩=52)

4

S1  
rob - in's egg blue, Ah and

S2  
rob - in's egg blue, Ah and

A1  
rob - in's egg blue Ah and lem - ons are o - range and

A2  
rob - in's egg blue, I'll love you 'til grav - el is eat - en for bread, — And lem - ons are o - range and

Pno.

8

S1  
lav - en - der's red. Now touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly,

S2  
lav - en - der's red. — Now touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly Ah

A1  
lav - en - der's red. touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly touch the air soft - ly, swing

A2  
lav - en - der's red. touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly, soft ly,

Pno.

12

S1  
soft - - - - ly, soft - - - - ly,

S2  
soft - - - - ly, soft - - - - ly — and the

A1  
gent - ly the broom, I'll love you 'til win - dows are all — of a room —

A2  
soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly

Pno.

16 *mf*

S1 soft - - - - ly and the ceil - ing re - pos - es on bot - tom - less

S2 *mf* *p*  
ta - ble is laid soft - - - ly Ah

A1 *p*  
soft - ly, soft - - - ly Ah soft - - - ly,

A2 *mf* *p*  
and the ta - ble is bare, soft - - - ly soft - - -

Pno.

20 *mf*

S1 air. Now touch the air soft - ly (hum)

S2 *mf*  
- touch the air soft - ly, touch the air soft - ly (hum)

A1 *mf*  
soft - ly touch the air soft - ly (hum) touch the air soft - ly,

A2 *mf*  
- - - ly touch the air soft - ly (hum) touch the air

Pno.

24

S1 I'll love you 'til Heav - en rips the stars from his coat,

S2 love you 'til Heav - en rips the stars from his coat,

A1 soft - ly love you 'til Heav - en rips the stars from his coat, —

A2 soft - ly, — love you 'til Heav - en rips the stars from his coat, And the

Pno.

27

S1 And the moon rows a - way in a glass boat, And O -

S2 And the moon rows a - way in a glass boat, And O -

A1 And the moon rows a - way in a glass boat, And O -

A2 moon rows a - way in a glass - bot - tomed boat, And O -

Pno.



30

S1  
ri - on steps down like a div - er be - low,

S2  
ri - on steps down like a div - er be - low, And the

A1  
ri - on steps down like a di - ver be - low, And the earth

A2  
ri - on steps down like a di - ver be - low, And the earth

Pno.

33

S1  
And the earth is a - blaze and the o - cean a - glow.

S2  
earth is a - blaze and the o - cean a - glow. Touch the air soft - ly, *mf*

A1  
is a - blaze and the o - cean a - glow. So *mf*

A2  
is a - blaze and the o - cean a - glow.

Pno.

37

S1 *p* Ah ————— We will

S2 *p* - soft - ly Ah ————— We will

A1 *p* touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly Ah ————— We will

A2 *mf* So touch the air soft - ly and swing the broom high — We will

Pno.

40

S1 dust the grey moun-tains and sweep the blue sky, And I'll love you as long as for -

S2 dust the grey moun-tains and sweep the blue sky, And I'll love you as long as for -

A1 dust the moun-tains and sweep the sky, And I'll love you as long as for -

A2 dust the moun-tains and sweep the sky, And I'll love you as long As for -

Pno.

43 *rit.* *a tempo*

S1  
ev - er as ev - er, and ev - er is now. So touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly

S2  
ev - er, ev - er, ev - er now. — touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly

A1  
ev - er — now. touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly

A2  
ev - er, ev - er, ev - er is now. touch the air soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly

Pno. *rit.* *a tempo*

47 *rit.*

S1  
Ah — soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly.

S2  
Ah — soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly.

A1  
Ah — soft - ly, soft - ly, touch the air soft - ly.

A2  
Ah — soft - ly, soft - ly, soft - ly.

Pno. *rit.*

PERUSAL

PERUSAL

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## LIBBY LARSEN

### Biography

*“Music exists in an infinity of sound. I think of all music as existing in the substance of the air itself. It is the composer’s task to order and make sense of sound, in time and space, to communicate something about being alive through music.”*

– Libby Larsen

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America’s most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal, choral, and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over fourteen operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, including over fifty CD’s of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer’s Forum, which has become an invaluable aid for composers in a transitional time for American arts. A former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen is the recipient of the 2003 Eugene McDermott Award from MIT and the 2010 George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contribution to American Music.

**For more information on this piece and other works by  
Libby Larsen visit [www.libbylarsen.com](http://www.libbylarsen.com)**

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