# *Seedlings on a Blackened Hill*

## *For Concert Band*

Robert Denham

SDG

**About the composer:** Robert Denham writes music that borrows from an eclectic array of sources including jazz, medieval chant, and everything in between. In 2018 he won the American Prize (Band/Wind Ensemble) and in 2019 he won again (Chamber Instrumental).

He has worked with large ensembles including Pacific Symphony, the Kansas State, California State Bakersfield, Texas A&M Commerce, and West Texas A&M Wind Ensembles, and the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. In terms of chamber music and soloists, Modern Brass, the West Coast Woodwind Quintet, the Vientos Trio, the Orion Saxophone Quartet, the Los Angeles Flute Quartet, the Galan Trio, flute specialist Gary Woodward, and violinist Timothy Lees have all performed or recorded his works.

Dr. Denham holds degrees in composition from UCLA and the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. He currently serves as chair of the Biola Conservatory of Music, and is a highly sought-after clinician and adjudicator for high school and middle school-level bands and orchestras. Based on his work with the Biola Symphony Orchestra, in 2020 he received an Honorable Mention from the American Prize for Conducting (college/university level).

**Program notes:** California is no stranger to wildfires, and the northern California area has especially been hit hard in the last decade. Recent memory brings to mind the August Complex, Dixie, Carr, and Camp fires, just to name a few. Some of these took place in generally unpopulated areas, while others happened practically in the "center of town."

Regardless of the size of the burn area, the effects of wildfire are devastating. Aside from choking plumes of black smoke, the flames of these fires consumed homes, priceless memories, and in some cases, even the lives of those we loved. At best, they made it difficult to breathe; at worst, they caused terror, panic, and injury.

This work was premiered in January of 2025 while the southern California area was reeling from fires of its own. The fires in the Palisades and Alta Dena are just two of them; as the composer drove north through Santa Barbara (Interstate 5 was closed due to a fire in Santa Clarita) a fire burned on the side of the freeway in Santa Barbara. We truly live in a different time!

This piece is written for those Californians who continue to recover from the effects of wildfire. The piece intentionally does not center on the terrible fury of the flames; that would not bring healing. Rather, it is meant to send a gentle and tender message of encouragement and solidarity. It is to remind us that we as human beings are resilient, and to bring hope to those communities who are courageously planting seeds for a bright future.

**Performance notes:** This is a lyrical piece, and so the director is free to add rubato to the slower sections. It was written for an honor band, and so there are likely more percussion parts than can be covered by most individual school programs. As is usual, the director has full authority to pick and choose which parts will be covered. Suggestions for assigning percussion parts are included on the next page.

**Instrumentation:**

Flutes 1, 2
Oboes
Bassoons
Clarinets in B♭ 1, 2
Bass Clarinets in B♭
Alto Saxophones in E♭
Tenor Saxophones in B♭
Baritone Saxophones in E♭
Trumpets in B♭ 1, 2
Horns in F 1, 2
Trombones 1, 2
Euphoniums
Tubas
Mallet Percussion 1
(Vibraphone and Glockenspiel: *can be played by a single player, but also can be broken up between as many as three. The vibraphone passages alone could be played by two players at a time, with one player playing the stems up notation, and the other the stems down)*

Mallet Percussion 2
(Chimes and Marimba: *manageable by a single player, but easily distributed to two. If a marimba is not available, use xylophone with soft mallets)*

Optional Timpani

Percussion 1
(Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Temple Blocks. Optional Mark Tree and Triangle. *Can be played by single performer if necessary)*

Percussion 2
(Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Snare Drum, Tam Tam, Triangle. *2 players needed)*

Transposed Score

# Seedlings on a Blackened Hill

*Commissioned by the California Music Educators Association, Northern Section.*
*Dedicated to the past, present, and future residents of the Redding and Paradise areas,*
*along with all those residents of the state of California who also have endured*
*the immediate and lasting effects of wildfires.*

Robert Denham

**Tender, warm** ♩ = 72

Flutes 1, 2 — *a2* — *mp* — *cresc.*

Oboe — *mp* — *cresc.*

Bassoon — *mp* — *cresc.*

Clarinet in B♭ 1 — *mp* — *cresc.*

Clarinet in B♭ 2 — *mp* — *cresc.*

Bass Clarinet — *mp* — *cresc.*

Alto Sax — *mp* — *cresc.*

Tenor Sax — *mp* — *cresc.*

Baritone Sax — *mp* — *cresc.*

Trumpet in B♭ 1

Trumpet in B♭ 2

Horn in F 1, 2

Trombone 1, 2

Euphonium

Tuba

**Vibraphone**
*(motor off; may be performed by 1 or 2 players)*

Mallet Percussion 1 (1 or 2 players) — *Ped.* — *mp* — *cresc.*

Mallet Percussion 2 (1 or 2 players)

(E, F, C, E♭)

Optional Timpani

Percussion 1 (optional 2nd player)

**Triangle**

Percussion 2 (2 players) — *mp* — *cresc.*

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7
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
(mp)
cresc.
7
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
7
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
(mp)
cresc.
mp
cresc.

13
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
13
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
13
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Suspended Cymbal
Tam tam

A
Broad, majestic (same tempo)
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Tuba
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
20
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
20
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Chimes
(Vibraphone)
Mark tree (optional)
sim. (bell tones)
(breathe if necessary)
a2
sim.

28
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Tuba
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
28
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
28
(8va)
8va
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2

B
a2
rit.
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
mf
cresc.
36
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
(8va) loco
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Bass Drum
Snare drum
(snares always on)
p

**C** **Excited, with anticipation** ♩ = 144

Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.

42 *straight mute*

B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2 *straight mute*
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba

42 **Glockenspiel**

Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba **Chimes**
Timp. *dampen*
Perc. 1
Perc. 2 *dampen*

**Snare drum** *(snares always off)*

48
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Temple Blocks (5)
Mark tree (optional)
(T.B.)
f
mp
sfz
1.

**D** **Joyful, like bells (same tempo; in 2)**

a2

Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.

53

B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba

53

(Glock)

Vibes/Glock.

Marimba

Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2

59
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
sfz
f
mf
59
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
sfzp
59
(Glock)
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2

65
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
65
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
open
65
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
(if second player not available, switch to sus. cymbal and leave out remaining TB notes)

71
2.
a2
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
(Sus. Cymbal)
f
fp
mp
sfz
p

78
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
legato
decresc.
Mark tree (optional)
Tam tam

E
Shimmering like a Quaking Aspen (same tempo)
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
85
cup mute
B♭ Tpt. 1
cup mute
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibraphone
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Snare drum
(slap with wire brushes)
Perc. 1
Snare drum
(slap with wire brushes)
Perc. 2
(scrape)

91
a2
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
f
mf
mp
legato
Marimba

poco a poco rit.
molto rit.
97
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
cresc.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
mf
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
fp
(Sus. Cymbal)
Perc. 1
p
Bass Drum
Perc. 2

F
Warm and rich, as a chorale ♩= 84
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
102
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
102
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
(if second player not available, switch to SD)
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
lyrical
open
f

G
Grand, triumphant (a tempo)
rit.
108
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
mp
f
sim.
Glockenspiel
Chimes
Snare drum
(wooden sticks for SD)
Crash cymbals
(B.D.)
sfz

114
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
sim.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
114
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
114
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
sfz
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
sfz

118
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
mf
118
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
118
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Bass Drum

H *a tempo*

Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.

123

B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba

123

Vibraphone

Vibes/Glock.
Chimes
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Triangle (optional)
Mark tree (optional)
Perc. 1
Crash cymbals
Perc. 2

I Warm, hopeful
solo
poco rit.
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
129
B♭ Tpt. 1
B♭ Tpt. 2
Hn. 1, 2
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
129
Vibes/Glock.
Marimba
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Triangle
Perc. 2
mf
mp
p

136
a tempo
rit.
all players
a tempo
Fl. 1, 2
Ob.
Bsn.
B♭ Cl. 1
solo
(all other players)
B♭ Cl. 2
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
mp
p
136
cues: play if no oboe (cup mute)
B♭ Tpt. 1
cup mute
B♭ Tpt. 2
cup mute
Hn. 1, 2
muted
Tbn. 1, 2
Euph.
Tuba
136
Glockenspiel
(or vibes 8va)
solo
Vibes/Glock.
Chimes/Mba
Timp.
(Sus. Cymbal)
(scrape)
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
mp