

Great War Triptych

For SATB Chorus and String Quartet

Music by John M. Tarrh

**Words by Sara Teasdale, John McCrae,
Moina Michael, and Alan Seeger**

Piano Vocal Score



Meriam Hill Music
www.tarrh.com
(ASCAP)

Instrumentation

SATB Chorus
String Quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello)
Piano (for rehearsal purposes only)

Performance Notes

Performance time: approximately 9 minutes

Program Notes

Great War Triptych (2019), composed for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, is my setting for SATB chorus and string quartet of selected poems written during the war. As is typical of a triptych, there are three related movements, the largest of which is the second. The first movement is a setting of Sara Teasdale's poem *Spring in War-Time*. Each of the four stanzas of the poem begins with ruminations on the beauties and joys of spring but ends with the clashing juxtaposition of the horrors of war and questions of how spring can exist in the context of war. In my setting, the strings interrupt our quiet ruminations forcing us to face the difficult, burning questions. The movement ends with a brief nod towards the ideas and ideals of German Romanticism with its image of death as a ". . . release from life's complexities and a serene return to nature's peaceful domain" and the ". . . characteristic German Romantic image, that of yearning for death." (Stein, Deborah, and Robert Spillman. *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder*. Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 12.)

The second movement is a setting of two poems: *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae and *We Shall Keep the Faith* by Moina Michael. The text of *In Flanders Fields* is written from the perspective of the men who fought and died in Flanders Fields and is set for tenors and basses only. In November 1918 an American, Moina Michael, read *In Flanders Fields* and was so moved that she wrote *We Shall Keep the Faith* and dedicated the rest of her life to raising funds to support US veterans of the war. My setting of *We Shall Keep the Faith* begins with sopranos and altos only, who are then joined by the full chorus.

The third movement is a setting of the well-known poem by Alan Seeger, *I Have a Rendezvous with Death*. This has been one of my favorite poems for many years, in part because of its universality and the various images that are evoked. My setting alternates between energetic agitated passages and more serene sections depending on the mood of the text.

Neither Alan Seeger nor John McCrae survived the war. Seeger was killed in action in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme while McCrae, a physician as well as a poet, author, artist and soldier, died in 1918 of pneumonia and meningitis in the hospital he had established and led since 1915.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the feedback I received from Thomas Colohan, Choral Director for the Creative Musicians Retreat of the Walden School in Dublin, NH in preparation for a June 2019 premiere performance. His deep experience and sensitivity to the needs and opportunities of choral music resulted in thoughtful and musically insightful comments that significantly strengthened the final result.

John M. Tarrh

Piano Vocal Score

Great War Triptych

Sara Teasdale

I. Spring in War-Time

John M. Tarrh

Rev. 5/28/19

Andante (♩ = 88)

7

mp

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

I feel the Spring far off, far
I feel the Spring far off, far

(piano for rehearsal purposes only)

mp

10

mp *mf* **Marcato**

S.
A.
T.
B.

off, I feel the Spring far off, far off, The faint far scent of bud and leaf--
off, I feel the Spring far off, far off, The faint far scent of bud and leaf--
I feel the Spring far off, The faint far scent of bud and leaf--
I feel the Spring far off, The faint far scent of bud and leaf--

mp *mf* *f*

Pno.

17 **18** *f*

S. *f*
Oh how can Spring take heart to come To a world in grief, deep grief?

A. *f*
Oh how can Spring take heart to come To a world in grief, deep grief?

T. *f*
Oh how can Spring take heart to come To a world in grief, deep grief?

B. *f*
Oh how can Spring take heart to come To a world in grief, deep grief?

Pno. *f*

25 **26** *mp* **Legato** *mf* **Marcato**

S. *mp* *mf*
The sun turns north, the days grow long, Lat - er the eve-ning star grows bright--

A. *mp* *mf*
The sun turns north, the days grow long, Lat - er the eve-ning star grows bright--

T. *mp* *mf*
The sun turns north, the days grow long, Lat - er the eve-ning star grows bright--

B. *mp* *mf*
The sun turns north, the days grow long, Lat - er the eve-ning star grows bright--

Pno. *p* *mp* *mf* *f*

33 **34** *f*

S. How can the day-light lin-ger on For men to fight, still fight?

A. How can the day-light lin-ger on For men to fight, still fight?

T. How can the day-light lin-ger on For men to fight, still fight?

B. How can the day-light lin-ger on For men to fight, still fight?

Pno. *ff*

41 **44** *mp* *mf*

S. The grass is wak - ing in the ground, Soon it will rise and blow in

A. The grass is wak - ing in the ground, Soon it will rise and blow in

T. The grass is wak - ing in the ground, Soon it will rise and blow in

B. The grass is wak - ing in the ground, Soon it will rise and blow in

Pno. *ff* *p* *mp* *mf*

Legato

49 **Marcato** 51 *f*

S. waves-- How can it have the heart to sway O-ver the graves, new graves?

A. waves-- How can it have the heart to sway O-ver the graves, new graves?

T. waves-- How can it have the heart to sway O-ver the graves, new graves?

B. waves-- How can it have the heart to sway O-ver the graves, new graves?

Pno. *f* *ff*

57 *rit.* 59 **Adagio, mournfully** (♩ = 76) *p*

S. Un-der the boughs where lov-ers walked The ap-ple-blooms will shed their breath-- But what of

A. Un-der the boughs where lov-ers walked The ap-ple-blooms will shed their breath-- But what of

T. Un-der the boughs where lov-ers walked The ap-ple-blooms will shed their breath-- But what of

B. Un-der the boughs where lov-ers walked The ap-ple-blooms will shed their breath-- But what of

Pno. *p* *pp*

65 *f* *ff* *pp* **72** **Marcato,**
furiously (♩ = 96)

S. all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death, gray Death? Part-ed by Death, gray Death?

A. all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death, gray Death? Part-ed by Death, gray Death?

T. all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death, gray Death? Part-ed by Death, gray Death?

B. all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death, gray Death? Part-ed by Death, gray Death?

(for rehearsal only)

Pno. *f* *ff* *pp* *ff*

73 *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

S. But what of all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death,

A. But what of all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death,

T. But what of all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death,

B. But what of all the lov-ers now Part-ed by Death,

Pno. *ff*

80

S. gray Death?

A. gray Death?

T. gray Death?

B. gray Death?

Pno. *fff* *sfz*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a vocal quartet and piano. It begins at measure 80. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in G major. The lyrics are 'gray' in the first measure and 'Death?' in the second measure. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of triplets in the first measure, followed by a chord in the second measure. The left hand plays a similar triplet pattern. Dynamic markings include *fff* (fortississimo) and *sfz* (sforzando).

John McCrae

IIa. In Flanders Fields

John M. Tarrh

Andante (♩ = 88)

6

S. 


A. 


T.  *mp*
In Flan-ders fields the pop-pies_


B.  *mp*
In Flan-ders fields the pop-pies_


Pno.  *mp* *p*


8

S. 

A. 

T.  *mp*
grow Be-tween the cross-es, row on row That mark our place: and in the sky The larks still brave-ly

B. 
grow Be-tween the cross-es, row on row That mark our place: and in the sky The larks still brave-ly

Pno. 

19

15

S. 

A. 

T. 

sing-ing, fly Scarce heard a - mid the guns be - low. We are the Dead. Short days a - go We

B. 

sing - ing, fly Scarce heard a - mid the guns be - low. We are the Dead. Short days a - go We

Pno. 

21

S. 

A. 

T. 

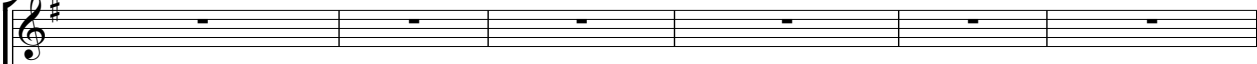
lived, felt dawn, saw sun - set glow, Loved, and were loved, and now we lie In Flan - ders fields.

B. 


lived, felt dawn, saw sun - set glow, Loved, and were loved, and now we lie In Flan - ders fields.


Pno. 

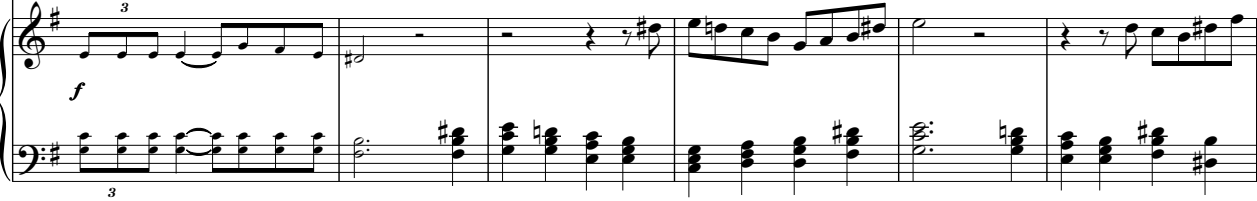
28

S. 

A. 


T. 
Take up our quar - rel with the foe: To you from fail - ing hands we throw the Torch: be yours to hold on


B. 
Take up our quar - rel with the foe: To you from fail - ing hands we throw the Torch: be yours to hold on

Pno. 

34 Attacca

S. 

A. 

T. 
high! If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though pop - pies grow in Flan - ders fields.

B. 
high! If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though pop - pies grow in Flan - ders fields.

Pno. 

Moina Michael

Iib. We Shall Keep the Faith

John M. Tarrh

Andante, legato (♩ = 88)

6

S. *f* Oh! you who sleep in Flan-ders Fields, Sleep sweet- to rise a - new! We caught the torch you threw And hold-ing

A. *f* Oh! you who sleep in Flan-ders Fields, Sleep sweet- to rise a - new! We caught the torch you threw And hold-ing

T. *mf* (tenors may support altos in this opening section)
Oh! you who sleep in Flan-ders Fields, Sleep sweet- to rise a - new! the torch you threw And hold-ing

B. - - - - -

(piano for rehearsal purposes only)

Pno. *f*

13

S. *mf* high, we keep the Faith with All who died. We cher-ish, too, the pop-py

A. *mf* high, we keep the Faith with All who died. We cher-ish, too, the pop-py

T. *mf* high, we keep the Faith with All who died. We cher-ish, too, the pop-py

B. *mf* We cher-ish, too, the pop-py

(cue notes for rehearsal only)

Pno. *p* *mf*

14 19

S. red That grows on fields_where val-or led; It seems to sig - nal to the skies That blood of he-roes nev-er dies,

A. red That grows on fields_where val-or led; It seems to sig - nal to the skies That blood of he-roes nev-er dies,

T. red That grows on fields_where val-or led; It seems to sig - nal to the skies That blood of he-roes nev-er dies,

B. red That grows on fields_where val-or led; It seems to sig - nal to the skies That blood of he-roes nev-er dies,

Pno.

21

S. But lends a lus-tre to the red Of the flower that blooms a-bove the dead In Flan-ders Fields. _____ *pp*

A. But lends a lus-tre to the red Of the flower that blooms a-bove the dead In Flan-ders Fields. _____ *pp*

T. But lends a lus-tre to the red Of the flower that blooms a-bove the dead In Flan-ders Fields. _____ *pp*

B. But lends a lus-tre to the red Of the flower that blooms a-bove the dead In Flan-ders Fields. _____ *pp*

Pno. *pp*

28 33

S. *f* And now the Torch_____ and Pop-py Red We wear in hon-or of our dead. Fear not that ye have died for

A. *f* And now the Torch_____ and Pop-py Red We wear in hon-or of our dead. Fear not that ye have died for

T. *f* And now the Torch_____ and Pop-py Red We wear in hon-or of our dead. Fear not that ye have died for

B. *f* And now the Torch_____ and Pop-py Red We wear in hon-or of our dead. Fear not that ye have died for

Pno. *f*

35 rit. a tempo

S. naught; We'll teach the les - son that ye wrought_____ In *mp*

A. naught; We'll teach the les - son that ye wrought_____ In *mp*

T. naught; We'll teach the les - son that ye wrought_____ In *mp*

B. naught; We'll teach the les - son that ye wrought_____ In *mp*

Pno. *mp*

39 rit.

S. Flan - ders Fields.

A. Flan - ders Fields.

T. Flan - ders Fields.

B. Flan - ders Fields.

Pno. *pp* *pp*

Alan Seeger

III. I Have a Rendezvous with Death

John M. Tarrh

Moderato, marcato (♩ = 108)

6

S. *f* I have a ren-dez-vous with Death

A. *f* I have a ren-dez-vous with Death

T. *f* I have a ren-dez-vous with Death

B. *f* I have a ren-dez-vous with Death

(piano for rehearsal purposes only)

f

15 Legato *p*

S. *f* At some dis-pu-ted bar-ri-cade, _____ When *p*

A. *f* At some dis-pu-ted bar-ri-cade, _____ When *p*

T. *f* At some dis-pu-ted bar-ri-cade, _____ When *p*

B. *f* At some dis-put-ted bar-ri-cade, _____ When *p*

p

16 24

S. Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I

A. Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I

T. Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I

B. Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I

Pno.

25

S. have a ren-dez-vous with Death When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

A. have a ren-dez-vous with Death When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

T. have a ren-dez-vous with Death When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

B. have a ren-dez-vous with Death When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

Pno.

35 41

S. *p* It may be he shall

A. *p* It may be he shall

T.

B.

Pno. *ff* *mp* *p*

44 50

S. *f* take my hand And lead me in - to his dark land And close my eyes and quench my

A. *f* take my hand And lead me in - to his dark land And close my eyes and quench my

T.

B.

Pno. *f*

53 60 **Marcato**

S. breath-- It may be I shall pass him still.

A. breath-- It may be I shall pass him still.

T. *f* I have a ren-dez-

B. *f* I have a ren-dez-

Pno. *p* *f*

62

S.

A.

T. *f* vous with Death On some scarred slope of bat-tered hill, When Spring comes round a - gain this

B. *f* vous with Death On some scarred slope of bat-tered hill, When Spring comes round a - gain this

Pno. *f*

68 $(\text{♩} = \text{♩})$ **rit.**

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

Andante, legato $(\text{♩} = 100)$

75

S. ***p***

A. ***p***

T. ***p***

B. ***p***

Pno.

83 84

S. down, Where love throbs out in bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to

A. down, Where love throbs out in bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to

T. down, Where love throbs out in bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to

B. down, Where love throbs out in bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to

Pno.

91 97 *ff*

S. breath, Where hushed a - wak-en-ings are dear. But *ff*

A. breath, Where hushed a - wak-en-ings are dear. But *ff*

T. breath, Where hushed a - wak-en-ings are dear.

B. breath, Where hushed a - wak-en-ings are dear.

Pno. *ppp* *ff*

98 **Moderato, marcato** (♩ = 112)

S. I've a ren-dez - vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death ___ At mid-night in some flam-ing town, -

A. I've a ren-dez - vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death ___ At mid-night in some flam-ing town, -

T. *ff* But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez - vous At mid-night in some flam-ing town, -

B. *ff* But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez - vous At mid-night in some flam-ing town, -

Pno.

105 **106**

S. ___ When Spring trips north a - gain this year, ___ And I to my pledged word am true, ___ I

A. ___ When Spring trips north a - gain this year, ___ And I to my pledged word am true, ___ I

T. ___ When Spring trips north a - gain this year, ___ And I to my pledged word I

B. ___ When Spring trips north a - gain this year, ___ And I to my pledged word I

Pno.

112

S. *fff*
shall not fail that ren - dez -

A. *fff*
shall not fail that ren - dez -

T. *fff*
shall not fail that ren - dez -

B. *fff*
shall not fail that ren - dez -

Pno. *fff*

118

S. vous.

A. vous.

T. vous.

B. vous.

Pno.