

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 10 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. 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 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. 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 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.

While there are life-affirming moments in *Spring in War-Time* and much of *We Shall Keep the Faith* is life-affirming, in the end death always wins. Neither Alan Seeger nor John McCrae survived the war. Seeger was killed in action in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme while McCrae died in 1918 of pneumonia and meningitis.

I have dedicated this work to Christina Gamota, who has been a tireless supporter of many worthy local causes over the years. The inspiration to set *In Flanders Fields* resulted from Christina's fund raiser for veterans, and she introduced me to the companion poem *We Shall Keep the Faith*.

John M. Tarrh

Composed for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I
Dedicated to Christina Gamota

Piano Vocal Score

Great War Triptych

I. Spring in War-Time

Sara Teasdale

John M. Tarrh

Rev. 12/31/19

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)

Piano

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--

Pno.

17 **18** **Martellato** **Legato**

f

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

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

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

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

Pno.

25 **26** **Marcato**

mp *mf*

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

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

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

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

Pno.

p *mp* *mf* *f*

34 Martellato

33

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*

Legato

44

41

mp *mf*

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

mp *mf*

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

mp *mf*

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

mp *mf*

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

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

Great War Triptych

Marcato

51 Martellato

49

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*

Legato rit.

59 Adagio, mournfully (♩ = 76)

57

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

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

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

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

Pno. *p* *pp*

72 **Marcato,**
furiously (♩ = 96)

65 *f* *ff* *pp*

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?

Pno. (for rehearsal only)

73 **Martellato** **Marcato**

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. (for rehearsal only)

Great War Triptych

80

S. gray Death?

A. gray Death?

T. gray Death?

B. gray Death?

Pno. *fff* *sfz*

The musical score is for page 6 of 'Great War Triptych'. It consists of five systems of staves. The first four systems are for vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). Each vocal staff begins with the word 'gray' and ends with 'Death?'. The vocal lines are mostly rests, with a melodic phrase in the second measure of the second system. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) is in the fifth system, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth-note triplets in both hands. The piano part includes dynamic markings: *fff* (fortissimo) and *sfz* (sforzando). The score is in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

John McCrae

IIa. In Flanders Fields

John M. Tarrh

Andante (♩ = 88)

6

S.

A.

T. *mp*

B. *mp*

Pno. (piano for rehearsal purposes only) (cue notes for rehearsal only)

8

S.

A.

T. *mp*

B. *mp*

Pno.

15

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

Pno. 

8 *ff* 3 *mp*

8 *ff* 3 *mp*

f *mp*

3

3

21

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

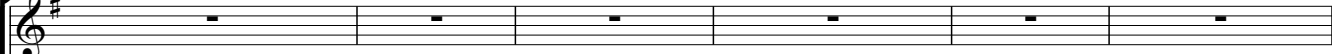
Pno. 

8


8

p


28

S. 

A. 

T. 

8 *f* $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$ Take up our quar - rel with the foe: To you from fail - ing hands we throw the Torch: be yours to hold on

B. 

f $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$ Take up our quar - rel with the foe: To you from fail - ing hands we throw the Torch: be yours to hold on


Pno. 


f $\overset{3}{\text{trill}}$

34

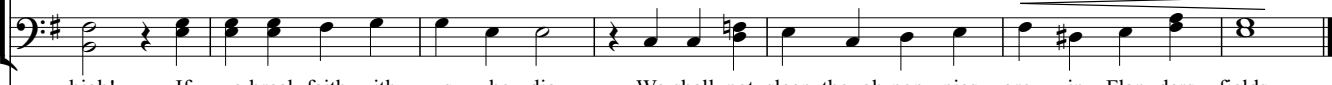
Attaca

S. 

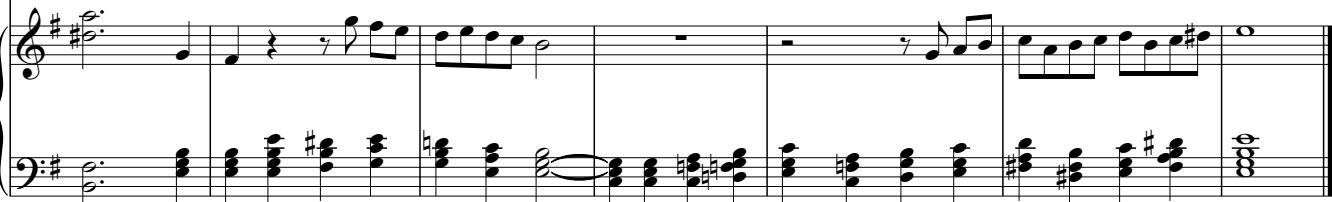
A. 

T. 

8 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*

8

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*

13

19

14

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)

Pno. *f*

9

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*

15 Legato

Pno. *p*

16 24

S. *f*
Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I have a ren-dez-

A. *f*
Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I have a ren-dez-

T. *f*
Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I have a ren-dez-

B. *f*
Spring comes back with rus - tling shade And ap - ple blos - soms fill the air-- I have a ren-dez-

Pno. *f*

26

S. *mf*
vous with Death_____ When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

A. *mf*
vous with Death_____ When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

T. *mf*
vous with Death_____ When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

B. *mf*
vous with Death_____ When Spring brings back blue days and fair._____

Pno. *ff* *mf*

35

S. *p* It may be he shall take my hand And

A. *p* It may be he shall take my hand And

T.

B.

Pno. *ff* *fp* *p*

43

S. *f* 47 lead me in - to his dark land And close my eyes and quench my breath-- It

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

T.

B.

Pno. *f*

57 **Marcato**

52

S. may be I shall pass him still.

A. may be I shall pass him still.

T. I have a ren-dez-vous with Death On

B. I have a ren-dez-vous with Death On

Pno.

61

S.

A.

T. some scarred slope of bat-tered hill, When Spring comes round a - gain this year And the first mead-ow flowers ap -

B. some scarred slope of bat-tered hill, When Spring comes round a - gain this year And the first mead-ow flowers ap -

Pno.

69 $(\text{♩} = \text{♩})$ rit. **73** *Andante, legato* $(\text{♩} = 100)$

S. *p* God knows 'twere bet - ter

A. *p* God knows 'twere bet - ter

T. pear. *p* God knows 'twere bet - ter

B. pear. *p* God knows 'twere bet - ter

Pno. *ff* *pp* *p*

76 **82**

S. to be deep Pil - lowed in silk and scent - ed down, Where love throbs out in

A. to be deep Pil - lowed in silk and scent - ed down, Where love throbs out in

T. to be deep Pil - lowed in silk and scent - ed down, Where love throbs out in

B. to be deep Pil - lowed in silk and scent - ed down, Where love throbs out in

Pno.

84

S. bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to breath, Where hushed a -

A. bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to breath, Where hushed a -

T. bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to breath, Where hushed a -

B. bliss - ful sleep, Pulse nigh to pusle, and breath to breath, Where hushed a -

Pno.

91

95 **Moderato, marcato** (♩ = 112)

S. wak-en-ings are dear. But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death But

A. wak-en-ings are dear. But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death But

T. wak-en-ings are dear. But I've a ren - dez-

B. wak-en-ings are dear. But I've a ren - dez-

Pno. *ppp* *ff*

98

S. I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death _____ At

A. I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death _____ At

T. vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death

B. vous with Death But I've a ren - dez - vous But I've a ren - dez - vous with Death But I've a ren-dez-vous with Death

Pno.

105

111

S. mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ At mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ When Spring trips north a -

A. mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ At mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ When Spring trips north a -

T. At mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ At mid - night in some town, _____ When Spring trips

B. At mid-night in some flam - ing town, _____ At mid - night in some town, _____ When Spring trips

Pno.

119

113

S. gain this year, And I to my pledged word am true, I shall not fail that ren-dez-vous

A. gain this year, And I to my pledged word am true, I shall not fail that ren-dez-vous

T. north a - gain this year, And I to my pledged word am true, I shall not fail that ren-dez-vous

B. north a - gain this year, And I to my pledged word am true, I shall not fail that ren-dez-vous

Pno.

121

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

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

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

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

Pno. *fff*

128

S. dez - vous.

A. dez - vous.

T. dez - vous.

B. dez - vous.

Pno.

132

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.