

DT0026.2 | TRUMBORE
IN THE MIDDLE | SOLO VOICE

IN THE MIDDLE

Mezzo-Soprano & Piano
Text by Barbara Crooker

The logo for Dale Trumbore, featuring a stylized musical note above the letter 'd' in the word 'daletrumbore'. Below the word, the letters 'c o m p o s e r' are spaced out horizontally.
c o m p o s e r

IN THE MIDDLE

of a life that's as complicated as everyone else's,
struggling for balance, juggling time.
The mantle clock that was my grandfather's
has stopped at 9:20; we haven't had time
to get it repaired. The brass pendulum is still,
the chimes don't ring. One day I look out the window,
green summer, the next, the leaves have already fallen,
and a grey sky lowers the horizon. Our children almost grown,
our parents gone, it happened so fast. Each day, we must learn
again how to love, between morning's quick coffee
and evening's slow return. Steam from a pot of soup rises,
mixing with the yeasty smell of baking bread. Our bodies
twine, and the big black dog pushes his great head between;
his tail, a metronome, $3/4$ time. We'll never get there,
Time is always ahead of us, running down the beach, urging
us on faster, faster, but sometimes we take off our watches,
sometimes we lie in the hammock, caught between the mesh
of rope and the net of stars, suspended, tangled up
in love, running out of time.

—Barbara Crooker, from *Radiance*.

Barbara Crooker's poem "In the Middle" describes our need to connect in the rush of ordinary life. In this setting, the piano serves as an unreliable time-keeper, ebbing and flowing as our perception of time does. The word "time" itself occurs over and over within the piece, serving as a sort of refrain, a reminder to slow down. It is so easy to forget, in the context of everyday life, that time will ultimately catch up with all of us. There's no antidote, but in the meantime, we should "take off our watches" more often, finding ourselves "tangled up in love" with another or just with this life, and granting time permission, if not to stop, then to slow.

In the Middle was commissioned as a choral piece by the Young New Yorkers' Chorus (Michael Kerschner, director), won the first ACDA Brock Competition for Professional Composers, and was performed at the 2019 ACDA National Conference by The Aeolians of Oakwood University (Jason Max Ferdinand, conductor). This piece is also featured on Choral Arts Initiative's album *How to Go On: The Choral Works of Dale Trumbore*.

The solo vocal arrangement of this piece was premiered by Jennifer Rea, soprano and Diana Umali, piano.

Commissioned (for SATB Chorus) by the Young New Yorkers' Chorus,
Michael Kerschner, director

In the Middle

for Mezzo-Soprano & Piano

Text by Barbara Crooker

Music by Dale Trumbore

Quickly, almost frantic; ♩ = ca. 138

MEZZO-SOPRANO

mf

In the mid-dle of a life that's as com - pli - ca - ted_ as ev - ry one else - 's, _____ strug - gling for

PIANO

mf

Red.

5

p *mf* *poco rit.*

ba - lance, jug - gl - ing time. _____

5

mp *mf*

Red.

11 *A tempo*

mf *poco* *p*

The man - tle clock_ that was my grand - fa - ther's_ has stopped at nine -

11

poco

Red.

In the Middle

16 *p* **poco rit. Slower; ♩ = ca. 80**

twen - ty; we have-n't had time to get it re - paired. The brass

21 *mf* **poco accel. . . Tempo I**

pen - du - lum is still, the chimes don't ring.

25 **molto rit. . . . Freely, slowly** **Tenderly; freely ♩ = ca. 60 or slower**

29 *mp*

One* day, I look out the win - dow, green sum - mer, the

*When two notes are present, either one is preferable; the singer may choose the upper or lower line in any phrase.

In the Middle

33 Slightly faster; ♩ = ca. 80

mf *p* *p* *mp* *p*

next, the leaves have al-read - y fal - len, and a grey sky lo - wers the ho -

Ped.

38 *pp* *mp* rit.

ri - zon. Our child - ren al - most grown, our pa - rents

38 rit.

Ped.

42 Slow accel. Tempo 1 (♩ = ca. 138) molto rit.

pp *mf*

gone. it hap-pened so fast.

Ped.

47 Freely; slowly Gently; ♩ = ca. 80

mp *p* *mp*

Each day, we must learn a - gain_ how to

Ped.

In the Middle

52 *f* *mp* *mf* *p*

love... be - tween morn - ing's quick cof - fee and

56 *poco rit.* *Slower still* *mp*

eve - ning's slow re - turn. Steam from a pot of soup ri - ses,

56 *pp* *mf* *pp* *mp*

60 *rit.* ♩ = ca. 80 *p*

mix - ing with the yeast - y smell of ba - king bread. Our bo - dies twine.

60 *p* *pp*

64 *mf* *accel.* *p*

— and the big black dog push - es his great head be - tween; his

64 *mf* *p* *mp*

In the Middle

Slightly faster

68 *mp* *mf*

tail a met - ro - nome. three - four time.

68 *pp* *cresc.* *f*

rit.

71 *p* *p* = ca. 80

time. We'll ne - ver get there,

71 *mp* *mf* *p* *p*

accel.

76 *mf* *mf*

Time is al - ways a - head of us, run - ning down the beach, ur - ging us on, fast - er,

76 *mf* *mf*

molto rit.

Expansive and rich; ♩ = ca. 60 or slower

79 *f* *f* *mp*

fast - er,* but some - times we take off our

79 *f* *f*

In the Middle

82 *mp* *mp*

watch - es, some - times we lie in the ham - mock, caught be - tween the mesh of

87 *rit.* *Freely, slowly* *ff* *mp*

rope and the net of stars, sus -

90 *mp* *rit.* *f* *(long)* *ff*

pen - ded, tan - gled up in love,

