How to Go On, © 2017 Choral Arts Initiative. Recorded at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, CA. Recording and editing by Paul Sobosky, Head Engineer. Richard Messenger, Producer; Dale Trumbore and Brandon Elliott, Co-Producers. Cover photograph by Jennifer Garza-Cuen. Graphic Design by Jackie Littman. Choral Arts Initiative would like to acknowledge the following donors for their generous support of this album: Colleen and Chris Belt; Michele and Martin Derus; Brandon Elliott, in honor of Barbara Elliott; Michael and Karen Elliott; Janet and Howard Emery, in memory of Jacque Endresen; Richard Messenger; John Prothero; Dale Trumbore; and Lorraine and Charles Welling in honor of Dixie Shaw and Henrietta “Tibby” Shaw.

The Choral Works of Dale Trumbore

Choral Arts Initiative
Brandon Elliott, Artistic Director
Following the death of a loved one, contemporary poet Barbara Crooker writes, “How can we go on / knowing the end of the story?” The first eight tracks of How to Go On answer this question in composer Dale Trumbore’s eight-movement secular requiem of the same name.

This meditation on mortality was composed for the versatile singers of Choral Arts Initiative, weaving solos in and out of the texture to create an orchestra of voices. The movements range from questioning and doubt (“How”) to introspection (“Relinquishment”) to ultimate acceptance of our own mortality (“When at Last”). Ultimately, How to Go On finds beauty and catharsis in the embrace of everyday life, offering up solace in the words of three living poets—Crooker, Amy Fleury, and Laura Foley—and in music.

The three compositions that follow move from grief to how we cope with life’s everyday challenges. In the Middle (Track 9) for chorus & piano sets another poem by Crooker about our need to connect “in the middle / of a life that’s as complicated as everyone else’s.” Lodestar (Track 10) for soprano soloist & chorus sets a contemporary fable by Diane Thiel. In references to fairy tales (“a trail of crumbs”) and children’s songs (“how you wonder what you are”), the narrator comes to a quiet acceptance of her own strength and limitations. After the Storm Passes (Track 11) features a sinuous journey on the wind and a return to poetry by Crooker. In this piece, solo voices weave throughout the texture again as a storm leaves us “on the rim of summer... washed again in this bright loud light.”

HOW TO GO ON

01 | How
Text by Barbara Crooker
How can we go on, knowing the end of the story?

02 | However Difficult
Text by Laura Foley
However difficult you think it might be, it is yours, this life, even the failures are yours, even the garden, though it be unkempt, is yours.

03 | To See It
Text by Laura Foley
We need to separate to see the life we’ve made. We need to leave our house where someone waits for us, patiently, warm beneath the sheets. We need to don a sweater, a coat, mittens, wrap a scarf around our neck, stride down the road, a cold winter morning, and turn our head back, to see it—perched on the top of the hill, our life lit from inside.
© Laura Foley, from Syringa, 2007.

04 | Relinquishment
Text by Laura Foley
I am looking at pale blue ponds of melted ice on a frozen river and in them perfect clouds passing. Wind sends ripples along the water and trees cut sharp lines into the sky. Soon it will be gone, all of it and I will be sitting in darkness, sitting by a dark window, glad for having seen this earth, her elegant grace, how she turns away from the sun. And I will be learning, again, how to give it all up by simply turning. How to give it up to darkness, all you love. All of it. How to give it up again and again.
05 | Requiescat
Text by Barbara Crooker

Let us go, let go with the few roots you have left clinging to this earth, pull free, like the clean snap of a carrot or radish, let us go, shake off this dirt, let go, let go of your family, their story hasn’t been told, yours is already written, let go of the world, its sweetness and sorrow, let go of your friends, we will cry, yes, but we will not forget you, let go, let go your fierce will and stubbornness, it served you well, now let it go, your courage will remain, let your daughters become women, your husband lie in his bed of pain, your long journey is over, theirs is beginning, let us go, become spirit and light, spring rain, fly away from this prison of bone, let go, wait for us, we’ll talk again later, I am here by the phone, waiting for the call, for this long suffering to be over, let it go, your work is done, soon we will bring you to the river, bring your ashes to the current, let them flow free, earth, fire, cinders, rain, wait for us on the other side of the river, let us go.


06 | Knowing the End
Text by Barbara Crooker

How can we go on, knowing the end of the story?
Soloist: Genie Hossain.

07 | Sometimes Peace Comes
Text by Laura Foley

Sometimes peace is like this: endless and gentle and soft and no compulsion to go anywhere. And even the fire you walked through, even the train of ashes is gone, not even a memory in your heart, and even the sun is still, unmoving and quiet, and you have stepped into a place beyond time, beyond sadness and form. A wide, high plain where in the endless, deep silence you find out what it is, what it is, and your part in it.
© Laura Foley, from Syringa, 2007.
Soloist: Rosaleigh Nicole Taylor.

08 | When at Last
Text by Amy Fleury

When at last I join the democracy of dirt, a tussock earthened over and grass healed, I’ll gladly conspire in my own diminishment.

Let a pink peony bloom from my chest and may it be visited by a charm of bees, who will then carry the talcum of pollen and nectar of clover to the grove where they live. Let the honey they make be broken from its comb, and release from its golden hold, onto some animal tongue, my soul.
Soloists: Rosaleigh Nicole Taylor and Sammy Salvador.

How to Go On was commissioned by Choral Arts Initiative.

09 | IN THE MIDDLE
Text by Barbara Crooker

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, 2005.
Pianist: Dale Trumbore.

10 LODESTAR Text by Diane Thiel

Nursery Shellgame
Maps and mazes are my weaknesses. So many blue prints in the sand overlapping—I leave a trail of crumbs behind me that are sometimes gobbled up by morning, sometimes washed away, sometimes stolen.

It is hard to find the way back without the lodestone, the lodestar—how you wonder what you are.

A handful of blue marbles might do if we were twelve. But we are so much more than twelve and so much less—our lives so full of so much emptiness.

So many years spent following the tracks of other things that would chew off limbs to free themselves, knowing they would never grow back—not like those many pointed star fish arrowed in every direction or the winter crab—trading one shell for another, out of necessity.

Necessity sent me out to sea somewhat suddenly—she said to me Make sure you take a ship with you. Make sure you do. Even a swimmer as strong as you needs a ship sometimes—even you.

Soloist: Lorraine Joy Welling.

11 AFTER THE STORM PASSES Text by Barbara Crooker

After the Storm passes, the wind rinses the sky to aquamarine. In this clean new light, the corn is polished, carved of jade, leaves of beryl, viridian; the gold of the wheatfields, stripes of beaten ore.

Under this great glass eye we stand, on the rim of summer, the bones of winter under our feet, washed again in this bright loud light.

© Barbara Crooker, from Barbara Crooker: Selected Poems, 2015.
Soloists: Lorraine Joy Welling, Rosaleigh Nicole Taylor, and Marcus Carline.

All compositions by Dale Trumbore.

In the Middle, After the Storm Passes, and How to Go On are available through MusicSpoke. Lodestar is published by G. Schirmer and distributed by Hal Leonard. This album features the world premiere recordings of How to Go On, In the Middle, and Lodestar.
Choral Arts Initiative is a non-profit 501(c)(3) choral organization made up of some of the most talented and passionate musicians in the Southern California region. Founded in 2013 by Brandon Elliott, Choral Arts Initiative has been hailed as one of Orange County’s “Best Choirs” (CBS News, Los Angeles), received the American Prize in Choral Performance, and was recognized by the Wells Fargo Foundation for its commitment to education and community outreach.

Choral Arts Initiative’s mission is to work in partnership with composers and the community to illuminate emerging choral music through vocal collaboration and performance and to inspire musical creativity through unique outreach and education programs. Embarking on their fifth season, Choral Arts Initiative has commissioned ten new choral works, performed twelve world premieres, and given over forty regional premieres.

[team names and photos]

choralartsinitiative.org

ABOUT CHORAL ARTS INITIATIVE

Sopranos
Kelsey Downey
Anna Kietzman
Emily Lower
Hannah McMeans
Lorraine Joy Welling

Altos
Shirley R. Chikukwa
Genie Hossain
Michelle Risling
Rosaleigh Nicole
Taylor

Tenors
Jeffrey M. Derus
Alan Garcia
Johnny Gabriel
Gonzales
Christopher Roney
Sammy Salvador
Yngwie Slassh
Zamarippa

Basses
De'John Brown Jr.
Marcus Carline
Ashton Tyler Hackwith
Joshua Himes
Yasumichi Ichikawa
David Lubliner
Marcos Jonathan
Torres
Brandon Elliott is a conductor, vocalist, music educator, and arts entrepreneur based in southern California. He is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Choral Arts Initiative, which has quickly garnered regional and national attention. Elliott has a strong passion for 20th and particularly 21st-century music literature. He has conducted and premiered dozens of choral compositions by emerging composers throughout the globe.

In his pursuit to promote the works of living composers, Elliott maintains a choral series with MusicSpoke. Elliott is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Moorpark College, where he conducts the choirs and teaches courses in Musicianship, Applied Voice/Vocal Techniques, Music Business and Entrepreneurship, and Music Appreciation. He serves as a clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor for festivals and honor choirs throughout Southern California. Elliott holds a B.A. in Music Education from California State University – Fullerton School of Music, a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a certificate in Music Business Leadership through the Berklee College of Music.

brandon-elliott.com

Hailed by the New York Times for her “soaring melodies and beguiling harmonies,” Dale Trumbore has been commissioned and awarded by organizations including ACDA, ACME, Boston New Music Initiative, Inscape Chamber Orchestra, The Los Angeles Master Chorale, The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, Northwest Symphony Orchestra, The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists, and VocalEssence. She has served as Composer in Residence for Nova Vocal Ensemble and Artist in Residence at Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Copland House, the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation of New Mexico, and Willapa Bay AiR.

Trumbore’s interest in the convergence of music and language leads her to collaborate frequently with contemporary poets. Her works for voice have been recorded by Choral Arts Northwest, The Esoterics, New York Virtuoso Singers, Six Degree Singers, and soprano Gillian Hollis. Trumbore’s compositions are available from Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, and MusicSpoke. Trumbore holds a dual degree in Music Composition (B.M.) and English (B.A.) from the University of Maryland and a master’s degree in Composition from the University of Southern California.

daletrumbore.com