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## A Conductor's Guide to Dale Trumbore's How To Go On

Stuart Dameron

*Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge*

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**A CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO  
DALE TRUMBORE'S *HOW TO GO ON***

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by  
Stuart Dameron  
B.M. Colorado State University, 2009  
M.M. Colorado State University, 2011  
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For my wife.

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## **Abstract**

*How To Go On* is a thirty-five minute work for *a cappella* choir composed by Dale Trumbore from 2015 to 2017. Since its premiere, *How To Go On* has been performed by notable choral ensembles including The Esoterics, the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, The Singers: Minnesota Choral Artists, and Webster University's Chamber Singers. The work was awarded the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award in 2017.

This dissertation serves as an analysis and conductor's guide for this work through the fulfillment of several purposes: a detailed and thorough investigation into the background and history behind the work including its conception and commission, a comprehensive analysis of the texts chosen for the work developed through textual exegesis and interviews with the three living poets, an investigation into Trumbore's integration of text and music developed through a conductor's analysis of the score including the Julius Hereford method of bar analysis, and the preparation of a conductor's guide for rehearsal and performance, based in part on interviews with conductors who have performed the work.

## **Introduction**

### **Background and Origins**

*How To Go On* was commissioned by Brandon Elliot and the Choral Arts Initiative in 2015. At the time Trumbore was interested in recording an album of her work, and Elliot was interested in recording an album with the Choral Arts Initiative. He requested a large-scale work be included on the album, and Trumbore was interested in writing a secular requiem for choir. For a large portion of the composition of the work, Trumbore engaged in a two-week artist's residency at the Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts in Saratoga, Wyoming. A majority of *How To Go On* was composed there. It was completed at Trumbore's home in Los Angeles. The work was premiered in Anaheim, California on July 16, 2016 and the recorded album was released in January of the following year.<sup>1</sup>

### **Need for the Study**

Despite Trumbore's significant compositional output, there is very little in the way of formal research of her work. Her oeuvre at the time of this writing consists of over seventy compositions for choir, orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo voice, and various combinations. Her output is primarily choral. *How To Go On* is a relatively new work that, while having been recorded commercially by the Choral Arts Initiative and performed by several noteworthy American choral ensembles, has yet to enter the mainstream of American choral performances. Scored for SSAATTBB *a cappella* chorus with soloists, this is Trumbore's first multi-movement masterwork for choir and it is the composition that she is quoted as being most proud of to date.

An in-depth analysis of the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic language, the formal structure, and the texts and their expressive setting to music will provide context for Trumbore's

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<sup>1</sup> Dale Trumbore and Brandon Elliot, interview by author, Los Angeles, December 14, 2019.

compositional style that should offer greater insight into her works and appropriate performance practice. Additionally, it is hoped that the study and analysis of this piece will inspire new performance interest in this masterwork.

### **Delimitations**

The research of this dissertation focuses on the musical, textural and formal elements of the singular work *How To Go On*. While the composer's writing style within the work is addressed, as well as certain general compositional traits that may have influenced the work's creation and development, it is not the intention of this research to provide a summative analysis of the composer's overall compositional style as it may pertain to other works in her oeuvre.

The texts of each movement have been analyzed, including the incorporation of qualitative primary source material in the form of interviews with the three poets, however this analysis does not include an exhaustive review of each poet's writing style nor delineate each poet's literary output.

In interviewing the various choral conductors who have performed *How To Go On*, the primary purpose was to understand each conductor's approach and interpretation of the work, especially with regards to movement order and pedagogical challenges. It is not the intention of this research to provide an exhaustive list of performance considerations made by each conductor, nor is it the intent to provide a comparative analysis of each conductor's interpretation of the work.

*How To Go On* is a multi-movement work in which the conductor may arrange the movements in any order. The conductor's guide portion of this document includes a comparative analysis of three possible movement arrangements, including the benefits and challenges inherent in each. The purpose of this comparative analysis is to inspire and cultivate informed

programming decisions for performance. It is not the intention of this research to advocate for or endorse any specific movement order to be superior over other arrangements. The author recognizes that artistic or formulaic choices made by the conductor in this regard are purely subjective. For the purpose of correspondence with the published score, the discussion and analysis of the movements in this document coincides with the movement order in the published score.

## Sources

*How To Go On* is a relatively new composition by a relatively new and emerging American composer. As previously mentioned, no formal research has as yet been conducted on Trumbore or her works. The texts that she selected to set to music were written by three living poets who, although well-known in the literary community, have had little research conducted about them or their literature. The predominant primary sources therefore are in the form of interviews. These include interviews of the composer as well as all three poets. Interviews were conducted by the author for the expressed purpose of this research. Other sources include previous interviews in various formats including written articles, web blogs, podcasts, and interview transcripts, writings by the composer, articles and reviews of *How To Go On*, and various audio recordings of *How To Go On*.

Part of the analysis of the overall formal structure of the work includes a comparison of various movement orderings and the artistic, narrative, and pedagogical consequences of each. For this purpose, interviews were conducted by the author of several leading choral conductors in the field who have prepared or performed the work.

## **Textual Analysis**

Chapter one is an analysis of the texts chosen for the work. Thorough understanding of text is a critical and primary element for the performance of any choral work. Each text's author, original non-musical intention, the larger work from which it came, poetic and literary devices, and interpretation are used to more thoroughly understand their place in *How To Go On*. The composer's commentary on textual intention is incorporated into all applicable analysis and performance suggestions.

## **Musical Analysis**

Chapter two contains a musical analysis of *How To Go On*, which consists of a thorough investigation into the formal structure, melodic and harmonic content, tonal landscape, orchestration, textural interpretation, expressive elements, motivic ideas, and rhythmic constructs. The analysis of each movement is based on the Julius Herford method of bar analysis.<sup>2</sup>

## **Performance Considerations**

Chapter three contains practical considerations for the choral conductor who intends to rehearse and perform *How To Go On*. It is built upon the textual and musical analyses presented beforehand. The performer's guide includes considerations of rhythmic constructs, tempo and meter markings, and ensemble configuration as well as suggestions for preparation and performance. This chapter concludes with a discussion of three sample movement order arrangements and their inherent qualities, including derived narrative components, transitions between movements, and resulting overall formal structure.

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<sup>2</sup> Harold Decker and Julius Herford, *Choral Conducting Symposium*, 2nd ed., ed. Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson, 1988).

## Chapter 1. Textual Analysis

The texts of *How To Go On* are drawn from seven poems or poem excerpts written by contemporary, living American poets. The poems share a general theme that centers on death, grief, loss, bereavement, and what happens when we die. As a self-proclaimed agnostic, Trumbore has spoken openly about struggling with the idea of her mortality. Her intention was to compose a piece involving texts and music that moved through the various emotions of grief, reflected the emotional and psychological experiences of grief, loss and death, and could also be used as a tool to help other people move through their own journey through these emotions. Additionally, she wanted to create a work that was intellectually open and accessible to the widest possible audience and that did not align to any single religious or spiritual belief system. Trumbore wanted a sense of openness that left room for each listener's background to be brought into the piece.<sup>3</sup> She sought out poetry that was simple, clear and universal in its language, but yet contained multi-layered derivations of meaning. Although Trumbore describes *How To Go On* as a secular requiem, there are no liturgical requiem texts present.

### How/Knowing the End

The texts Trumbore uses for the movements “How” and “Knowing the End” are identical and are excerpted from the same poem, *Some Fine Day* by Barbara Crooker. This poem was originally published in the Summer 2007 issue of *The Pittsburgh Quarterly*. It was written shortly after Crooker experienced the death of a close friend in the springtime due to a terminal disease. Trumbore excerpted only one line of the poem for use in *How To Go On*, indicated in bold below. Although only one line from the poem is excerpted, an exegesis of the poem in full

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<sup>3</sup> Dale Trumbore, interview by author, Los Angeles, December 15, 2019.

will lead to greater understanding of the excerpted line, its context, and the motivation of Trumbore's selection for her work.

Yesterday, all the stars were in their proper places. 1  
The earth was waiting to turn green, the peach  
tree about to blossom, tint the air pink, bring  
in the bees. One phone call, and everything  
shifts, a longtime friend's suddenly terminal,  
his body turning on his heart and lungs. 5  
I don't want to open the door  
to blossoming yard, the cotton candy air,  
songs of newly returned birds.  
I want to roll up the fake backdrop 10  
of the hopeful blue sky, call back  
the days of steady rain, let the coldness  
linger. **How can we go on, knowing the end**  
**of the story?** The lawn greens up anyway,  
tossing out its thin curls of cellophane,  
the lining for a basket of pastel eggs,  
pink and blue and gold, we already know  
are cracked.<sup>4</sup> 15

The poem is freeform and written in both singular and plural first person. It can be compartmented into three sections. Lines one through four describe the "yesterday;" the time before the loss. Visual depictions of springtime, including the spring-related colors of green and pink, illustrate a "proper" world and the potential for life to burst forth, "turn" or "blossom." The persona is prepared to welcome spring and invite it in. Starting in the middle of line four, tragedy strikes. News of the friend with a terminal illness is discovered in a phone call. The beginning of this sentence is placed strategically in the middle of the line to disrupt the flow of the poem. Even the manner in which the news is received—by way of a phone—introduces a man-made object which does not belong in the pastoral scene, making the news feel all the more jarring and launching the subject back to reality and the time-consciousness of modern life. Depression sets in at line seven through twelve and the subject's view of springtime and nature changes, despite

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<sup>4</sup> Barbara Crooker, *Some Fine Day*, email message to the author, September 27, 2019.

the continued “blossoming” and “newly returned birds.” The idyllic scene suddenly appears fake, unwanted and meaningless, like artificial set pieces on a stage, their meaning blurred through the lens of tragedy. The poet calls for the rain and cold to return and for a regression back into winter.

At this moment the line emerges that Trumbore excerpts for her work. Several significant elements make this line profound and most fitting for Trumbore to use. It is the only question asked in the entire poem, and it is suddenly philosophical in nature. Also notable is the last word of the previous sentence, “linger,” which is placed after the line break, followed by a period, and directly preceding this question. This causes the reader to pause and actually “linger” with the eyes before reading the question, thus having a greater impact when it arrives. The question itself marks a transition from the description of exterior, tangible objects viewed outwardly to an inward turning of mind. Another striking shift at this line is from first person singular to first person plural. The subject’s experience up to this point has been personal and solitary, but suddenly expands to “we,” acknowledging the universal, shared experience of grief and struggle with death that is inherent in all humankind.

The final four lines of the poem indifferently snap the reader back to reality. The “green” lawn described in the beginning returns, continuing its process of growth, unaffected by the tragedy. This is the realization by the persona that life will go on. The final scene of cellophane grass, a basket and pastel eggs is a reference to Easter and also to new and renewed life. The colors of the eggs mirror the colors of the sky and peach tree blossoms mentioned in the beginning of the poem. The cracked eggs signify the brokenness and fragility of life, but also the acknowledgement that a cracked shell is required for new birth and for the emergence from a dark, quiet, solitary place to the colorful and communal place outside in the world.

## **However Difficult**

The text for this movement is an excerpt of a larger poem titled “Autumn Musings,” by Vermont-based poet Laura Foley. It was published in 2006 in *Mapping the Fourth Dimension*. This collection of poems meditates on the death of the poet’s husband. In similar fashion as the discussion of *Some Fine Day* above, the bolded text below indicates the portion of the poem excerpted for Trumbore’s work, although a discussion of the poem in full will prove beneficial.

\*

Death happens  
in the middle of an ordinary day.  
Or eyes of a child open  
into life.  
Form into formlessness  
into form again.

1

5  
\*  
Light on the river is passing.  
Try to catch it.  
A moth lands on the branch at your feet.

\*  
It is late November.  
What do you know?  
Not this. Not that.  
Sitting on pine needles, waiting for snow.

10

\*  
The stream runs through you  
is all the certainty of this hour.

15

\*  
Take direction from the pool licked by ice,  
the roots of a maple bathed in a stream.

\*  
From this bridge that you cross and recross,  
watch the past.

It is passing, unraveling from you.

20

\*  
This path of oak leaves, you tred them black upon themselves.

**However difficult you think it might be,  
it is yours, this life,  
even the failures  
are yours,  
even the garden, though it be unkempt,**

25

**is yours.**

\*

In the late autumn sun  
wind showers seeds from a tree  
and light sparkles with dust.<sup>5</sup>

30

Foley describes this as a time of great change and difficulty in her life. Her husband had recently died, she was raising three children and was also beginning studies to become a Buddhist practitioner. At that time, she would take long walks in a park for solitary contemplation. She would take a notebook with her and make short notes or scribbles as she walked and observed the elements of nature around her. This poem was born out of that process.<sup>6</sup>

First and most noticeable in this poem are the asterisks that separate each stanza. This is the only poem in Foley's entire collection *Mapping the Fourth Dimension* in which she employs this visual element. The stanzas between them are fragmented and dreamlike but are tied to a common theme of musings about death as it relates to various scenes and images in nature. Many of the stanzas address the fleeting impermanence of life in the use of analogous images; light, wind, the passing of seasons, and water in a river or stream. The use of second person causes a psychological reaction to view the imagery and topics of the poem head on, facing them directly.

The stanza that Trumbore excerpts for use in *How To Go On* stands out from the others in that it is less visual and more confrontational. Previous stanzas depict various images of nature and grasp for their meaning, but in this stanza we acknowledge that life is not merely something observed as it passes by. It charges the reader to step back and take ownership of life, embracing it instead of rejecting, criticizing or despairing over it, and ultimately moving on from what can be seen to an act of moving forward. Foley ruminates on this very idea in describing this portion of the poem and her own process of recovery through grief:

---

<sup>5</sup> Laura Foley, *Mapping the Fourth Dimension* (Hartford, VT: Harbor Mountain Press, 2007), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Laura Foley, interview by author, December 10, 2019.

‘Even the failures are yours.’ This is what we have. In other words, what I found myself in is what I had. My life is my life. What can I do with it? That’s a very basic Buddhist thought. Don’t fight against what you have; accept what you have. Look around and see what you have and then move on.<sup>7</sup>

### To See It

“To See It” is the most recently written of the four poems by Laura Foley used in *How To Go On*. It is a standalone poem which is not a part of a larger collection but rather published online, the earliest version appearing online in 2014.

We need to separate to see the life we’ve made.	1
We need to leave our house where someone waits for us, patiently, warm beneath the sheets.	5
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	10
on the top of the hill, our life lit from inside. <sup>8</sup>	

In this poem the poet is reflecting on her current life; she has remarried after the loss of her first spouse and still resides in Vermont, in a house located on a hill. She is also reflecting on past experiences and lessons learned. The first-person plural voice suggests that she is addressing both herself and the reader, passing on the wisdom she has gained from her experience of loss with the hope that others will learn from her experience while also acknowledging that the process of death, grief and recovery is a shared experience known across all of humankind.

The poem focuses on two main metaphorical ideas: the analogy of the house as a representation of our day-to-day lives, and the image of “striding down the road” as a metaphor

---

<sup>7</sup> Foley, interview.

<sup>8</sup> Laura Foley, “Too See It,” *A Year of Being Here* (blog), December 20, 2014, <http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2014/12/laura-davies-foley-to-see-it.html>.

for leaving our ordinary daily pursuits in order to come to a greater recognition of our lives.

After the experience of her first spouse's death and having since remarried, Foley sought to be more mindful of the present; to be more conscious of the people in her life while they were still here and to not take them for granted. She acknowledges that when in love with someone, it is often difficult to see; it is hard to miss someone while present with them. It is difficult to observe life and its value while in the midst of it. She affirms that, just as in meditation, it is only after leaving the "house" that one's life, relationships, and possessions can be seen.<sup>9</sup>

Lines six and seven depict dressing in a series of winter clothing. Foley explains this imagery is symbolic of the process of meditation. Meditation requires a pulling away from everyday life and its distractions and coming to a place of mental and emotional stillness. Foley associates this breaking away to the act of going outside when it is cold: there are steps that must be taken in order to get to that place of awareness, to "leave the house."<sup>10</sup>

### **Relinquishment**

The text for Trumbore's fourth movement, also written by Laura Foley, comes from a poetry collection called *Syringa*, published in 2007. *Syringa* is the name given by Foley to a wild goose with a broken wing that she encountered frequently during long walks near the woods around her New England home. Foley anticipated the bird would die quickly, but it survived for years and became a type of wild companion for Foley during her long, otherwise solitary walks.<sup>11</sup> In "Relinquishment," Foley uses the images of a river and the turning of the earth to illustrate the process of grieving over the loss of a loved one and grappling with the purpose of existence.

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<sup>9</sup> Foley, interview.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

I am looking at pale blue ponds of melted ice on a frozen river	1
and in them perfect clouds passing.	
Wind sends ripples along the water	
and trees cut sharp lines into the sky. Soon	5
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,	10
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. <sup>12</sup>	15

The first five lines create the setting by describing a winter scene in nature; the “frozen river”, the “perfect clouds” seen in the reflection of the water, the wind and the trees. These are very plain and direct descriptions of these objects. The minimal use of figurative language creates a very clear and tangible image of the scene for the reader. At the end of line five, and in a striking line break into line six, the crux of the poem is stated abruptly: “Soon it will all be gone, all of it.” In lines seven through eleven, the turning of the earth toward night is used as an analogy for life and death. Foley’s statement that she will soon be “sitting in darkness” represents not just the setting of the sun at the end of day, but also the end of life and the inevitability of death. Despite these dark and morbid musings, Foley expresses gladness and gratitude for the privilege of life. A simple yet powerful personification of the earth and “her elegant grace” establishes a strong human connection to nature and existence.

The final four lines take the metaphor of the turning earth and reveals an even deeper meaning. The act of turning and “giving it all up to darkness” now signifies the daily process of moving through grief and recovery. As a Buddhist chaplain, Foley explains that in meditation,

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<sup>12</sup> Laura Foley, “Relinquishment,” *Syringa: Poems* (Rowe, MA: Star Meadow Press, 2007), 33.

the goal is to see one's self as "not there," similar to the contemplation of death. You imagine losing everything you love and "giving it all up to darkness." Instead of being morbid, it is meant to create a feeling of joy and gratitude for what is kept as well as what has been given up. It is a daily practice, supported by the analogy of the turning of the earth.<sup>13</sup>

The images of the Connecticut river outside Foley's window and the ever-recurring setting of the sun provided an answer for how to keep going after her husband's passing. Both the water in the river and the rising and setting sun remained a daily constant, yet were always moving, always changing. This reconnection to nature provided solace and helped her feel less alone. It aided her in "learning... how to give it all up" every day, "again and again." For Foley, this was the answer to the question, "How do we go on?"<sup>14</sup>

### **Requiescat**

The fifth and longest movement in Trumbore's work also contains the longest text. This poem by Barbara Crooker appears in *The White Poems*, published in 2001. This collection of poems establishes a vague lyric narrative involving a friend and neighbor with breast cancer. The poems take the reader on a journey through the experience from diagnosis, to treatment, to the final days, and after death. "Requiescat" is positioned in the middle of the collection and is the final poem in the narrative before the friend passes away. The title is derived from the Latin *requiescat in pace* (may they rest in peace), a traditional Christian prayer for the repose of the dead. The subsequent poem in the published collection, titled "Requiem," marks her passing. As such, "Requiescat" is not only about transition from life to death but is *the* transition poem of the entire narrative and published collection.

Let us go, let go with the few roots  
you have left clinging to this earth,

1

---

<sup>13</sup> Foley, interview.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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                               5  
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,                               10  
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,                       15  
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,   20  
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.<sup>15</sup>

The poem serves as a list of directions and guidance to the dying friend. It is written primarily in second-person point of view, which suggests both that Crooker wrote the poem for her friend, and that the reader is intended to not only witness the poet's emotions, but also experience it in-person, establishing an intimate, personal relationship with the friend who is passing. Lines one through four introduce the poem and represent the initial charge. The analogy of the roots of a carrot or radish being "pulled free" or dirt being shaken off portrays death as a separation or detachment from this current life while also signifying a deep connection to nature while alive. In lines five through fourteen, a list of various elements of existence that the dying friend should let go of are delineated, accompanied with reasons and reassurances for each. Lines fifteen through seventeen reflect the instructive nature of the first four lines by referencing nature once again in the form of "light" and "spring rain" and also reinforcing the separateness of dying

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<sup>15</sup> Barbara Crooker, "Relinquishment," *The White Poems* (Selma, IN: Barnwood Press, 2001).

with instructions to “fly away from this prison of bone.” Line eighteen is distinctive for shifting suddenly to a first-person singular point of view and offering a glimpse into the intimate, personal experience of the persona.

After the statement in line twenty that “your work is done,” the last four lines shift to descriptions of what will occur after the friend has died. These last four lines were actually the first words Crooker conceived of the poem, composed before the loss of her friend. The twenty lines that precede them were written after her friend’s passing. Dual references to a river represent both the literal scattering of ashes and the boundary between this life and the next and the act of crossing over. These lines allude to a promise she made with the friend’s husband to take her ashes to a specific river.<sup>16</sup> Line twenty-three stands out among the other lines of the poem. Here the established flow of prose is broken, and the reader is subjected to four separate, concrete, elemental images, each carrying multiple layers of meaning and symbolism surrounding death. The poem ends bookended with the same three words that began the poem, “let us go.”

For this poem, Crooker uses a special approach to capitalization and punctuation. The very first word and the only first-person singular pronoun “I” that begins line eighteen are the only two capitalized letters in the entire text. There is only one period, located at the very end. All the remaining punctuation are commas. This creates two notable effects while reading the poem. First, it manifests the poem as one single unit and employs a sense of continuous rhythmic cadence and flow, signifying the idea that life is continuous, always moving forward, always flowing from one experience or instance to the next. It was the intention of the poet to use perpetual commas to create a sense of “syntactical wilderness.”<sup>17</sup> Second, there is symbolism in

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<sup>16</sup> Barbara Crooker, interview by author, December 10, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

the comma that represents death or the afterlife. As a grammatical symbol, it does not mark a finality but is rather a boundary or threshold from one moment of text to the next. For many, including Crooker, death serves a similar purpose; not the end, but a crossing from one existence to the next; an ongoing journey in which we will reconnect to those who have passed on before us. This is evident in the use of other wording throughout Crooker’s poem: suggestions that certain aspects of the subject will “remain,” an assurance that we will “talk again later,” or the appeal to the dying to “wait for us on the other side of the river.”

## Sometimes Peace Comes

The fourth poem by Laura Foley comes also from the *Syringa* collection. It was not originally intended to be included in *How To Go On*; Trumbore discovered it as she was reading through *Syringa* during her artist residency in Wyoming and it inspired her to add a new movement to the work.<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes peace is like this: 1  
endless and gentle and soft  
and no compulsion to go  
anywhere. And even the fire  
you walked through, 5  
even the trail of ashes  
is gone, not even a memory  
in your heart,  
and even the sun is still,  
unmoving and quiet, 10  
and you have stepped into  
a place beyond time,  
beyond sadness and form.  
A wide, high plain  
where in the endless, deep silence 15  
you find out what it is,  
what it is,  
and your part in it.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Trumbore, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Laura Foley, Syringa, 38.

The poem possesses a narrow visual form, with relatively short lines compared to other poems in the same collection. In its original printing, this creates a great deal of white space on the page, which visually emphasizes and reinforces the ideas of endlessness, depth, peace, and quiet stillness. The poem is in second person; the one speaking the poem is speaking directly to the reader. Although the impetus for the poem may come from the poet's personal experiences, it is in the form of a lesson directed at the listener.

The entire poem is comprised of three sentences. The first, lines one through four, introduces the initial concept of peace, "endless and gentle and soft." Line three specifically places the reader within the experience. This is not a concept of peace but the inhabitation of peace within. The second sentence beginning in the middle of line four through line thirteen deepens the description of peace and makes it more significant. References to a past experience of struggle or pain are symbolized by fire. The description of peace is made further poignant in its power to not only remove the adverse experience, but also the memory. "Even the trail of ashes," which can be construed as the "memory" of a fire, is no longer there, as if the fire never occurred in the first place. The sense of peace becomes so powerful that even the memory of past experience is erased. The remainder of this sentence describes the idea of a "place beyond time," where "even the sun is still." Foley has cleverly described the power that peace possesses over the concept of time by encompassing all of time's three perceived forms: past, present and future. Past in the form of the absence of memory, present in the description of sun being still and unmoving, and future in the sense of having "no compulsion to go anywhere." The third and final sentence at line fourteen reveals the purpose of the journey toward peace: the discovery of "what it is." Foley emphasizes these words by repeating them a second time and placing them on a new line, however she does not describe what "it" is, leaving the question unanswered.

Foley's image of a "wide, high plain" in line fourteen is inspired by a memory of a place in Peru that she visited while traveling with her family. In explaining the inspiration for the poem, Foley describes her experience and connection with this memory and her own recovery through the great change and loss she had experienced:

I wanted to bring back that place, the 'wide, high plain.' It was just so unusual and not our back yard. And the air was very thin. It had an otherworldly quality. And then [its] also about memory, always asking, 'What are memories and what is it that they do for us?' How we use our imagination to find 'a place beyond time'. Beyond all this change and loss, can we allow something else in? Some greater wisdom? I think that's what the 'it' is.<sup>20</sup>

Foley also drew inspiration from Rumi and a particular excerpt from his poem, *A Great Wagon*:

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing  
and rightdoing there is a field.  
I'll meet you there.  
When the soul lies down in that grass  
the world is too full to talk about.<sup>21</sup>

Foley's explanations insinuate that the poem is speaking to a living person who has experienced a loss or a journey of grief and is striving to find a sense of peace amidst the emotional anguish. The "fire" and "trail of ashes" represents memories of a time past involving loss or grief., but they are now gone, "not even a memory" remains. According to Foley, the sad memories here have been replaced with an otherworldly memory of a vast and peaceful plain. For her, the "endless, deep silence" in a "place beyond time" connects to Buddhist meditation practice and seeking out a "greater wisdom."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Foley, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Jalal Al-Din Rumi, "A Great Wagon," *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 35.

<sup>22</sup> Foley, interview.

A second and contrasting interpretation for this poem could be the idea that peace represents death itself. The “fire” and “trail of ashes” represents life, full of adversity and suffering, and stepping into a “place beyond time” represents dying and passing into the afterlife. It suggests not only that peace is death but that only after death can the answer to “what it is” be discovered.” Only after departing this life, can its meaning and purpose be fully understood.

### When At Last

The single text by Louisiana-based poet Amy Fleury is used for the final movement in Trumbore’s published order. It was the first poem Trumbore chose for the work and prompted the creation of the entire requiem.<sup>23</sup> The poem comes from a collection titled *Sympathetic Magic*, published in 2013. Trumbore was introduced to a manuscript of the collection, including “When At Last,” a year prior by her aunt Julie Kane, a former poet-laureate of Louisiana.<sup>24</sup>

When at last I join the democracy of dirt,  
    a tussock earthed 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 hive.  
    Let the honey they make be broken  
from its comb, and release from its golden hold,

Onto some animal tongue, my soul.<sup>25</sup>

Trumbore states in the introduction of *How To Go On* that the movement in which this text is set is required to be the final movement of the performance order. This is apropos upon examination of the poem and its themes of the end of life and the soul’s journey after death. The

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<sup>23</sup> Trumbore, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Amy Fleury, interview by author, December 12, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Amy Fleury, “When At Last,” *Sympathetic Magic* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press), 63.

poem is in free form yet derives a great deal of meaning from its stanzaic structure. The poem has four stanzas consisting of three tercets plus one single-line stanza. Fleury explains that the first line came to her first. The idea of returning to the earth and speculating what happens next compelled her to write the rest of the poem, which became a very organic and sequential process.<sup>26</sup> The next two stanzas describe the journey of transformation of the body and its soul from dirt, to flower, to nectar, to beehive and finally to a drop of honey on an animal tongue. Fleury sets alternating indentations for each line which gives the poem a sense of movement, as well as an enhanced symmetry to each tercet. One notable disruption to this pattern occurs at the end of line eight on the word “broken.” Here Fleury actually breaks the line, reflecting the action of the word in the visual form of the page. The final stanza contains only one line, which draws attention to the final line of text, the first mention of the word “soul.” The reader anticipates a continuation of the tercet-based form, however the brevity of the final line instead draws focus on the white space below. Rather than creating a sense of discomfort or incompleteness as if something is missing, a deep resonance is felt in the emptiness on the page; a sense of meditative silence.

According to Fleury, the notion of *Sympathetic Magic*, and the inspiration for many poems in the collection, including “When At Last,” comes from Sir James Frasier’s comparative mythological and religious study *The Golden Bough*. As Fleury describes:

Sympathetic magic assumes that things act on each other at a distance through a sympathy and the impulses transmitted from one to the other. The poems in this collection aren’t necessarily thematic I would say, but they do have this undercurrent of that notion... contemplating mortality. Of course, there are more conventional perceptions of the afterlife, which is a spiritual afterlife. But I was thinking about the afterlife of the body as fused with the spiritual; the thought that the body itself goes on. That whole notion that energy can’t be created or destroyed. I was

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<sup>26</sup> Fleury, interview.

thinking about how we can carry on and continue to be useful. This notion of being a part of things, being a part of nature and returning to the earth and having the earth then nourish other elements of nature, and to carry that forward. That was really interesting to me; to think of being a part of something much bigger than the self and having this notion of being at peace with one's mortality and what carries forward.<sup>27</sup>

The poems set to music in *How To Go On* come from three different poets, yet there is a profound connection and a thematic congruence that all of them possess. There exists a clarity of language and a simplicity of tone, yet they are also marked by complexity and inner layers of meaning that necessitate repeated readings. Secular in tone yet also conceding the presence of the spiritual in life, there is a universality to these poems; a struggle to find peace, resolution and catharsis, whether in nature or internally. These three poets are particularly effective in describing these elements, especially through the lens of loss and grief. It was these qualities that drew Trumbore to these poems and inclusion in her work.

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<sup>27</sup> Fleury, interview.

## Chapter 2. Musical Analysis

### Overall Style

Trumbore initially envisioned *How To Go On* to be set for chorus and a small instrumental chamber ensemble. As the piece began to take shape, Trumbore decided to set it instead for *a cappella* choir. The separate instrument parts were reabsorbed into the choral parts, however attention to texture and orchestration continued to be a major factor in her overall conception of the work. This approach to voicing is apparent in the final version of *How To Go On*. There are many instances where groups of several choral parts are sustaining a single syllable, either on a unison pitch, a chord or pitch collection, or in a melismatic style. This texture is often playing out underneath a solo or group of solos, which in these instances are the only voice parts set to text. In this way, Trumbore treats the accompanying voices much like instruments, and this style of voicing is evidence of the aural vision of this instrumental chamber ensemble conceived in the earliest stages of the creative process.<sup>28</sup>

Trumbore knew that the work would be recorded. As such, she knew that a majority of people would initially experience the work through a recording. She intended the work to benefit from repeated listenings; she wanted her listeners to unpack layers of meaning and get something different each time. With the exception of Requiescat, the longest movement in the work, all of the other movements in *How To Go On* are relatively short, however each movement is densely packed with harmonic, melodic, and interpretive material.<sup>29</sup>

There are certain and specific artistic liberties that Trumbore gives up to the conductor regarding the manner in which the work is to be performed. In the performance notes of the score

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<sup>28</sup> Trumbore, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Trumbore instructs that when performing the full work, other than “When At Last” which must be performed as the final movement, the other seven movements may be performed in whatever sequence the conductor chooses. This is not only a rare and remarkable freedom that she gives the conductor and ensembles performing the work, but it is also meant to represent the reality of our personal and individual journeys through grief and loss. Those dealing with loss do not experience the multitude of emotions associated with grief in the same way as others. *How To Go On* is a reflection of that; it is not meant to be performed or experienced by the listener the same way each time.

There are fifteen separately designated solos that occur throughout *How To Go On*.<sup>30</sup> Unique by nature, these solos make every performance different and are another manner in which Trumbore gives up control of the composition. By implementing these solos Trumbore aimed to reflect on the idea of the individual versus the community. As she grappled with her own ideas of moving through grief and how this process occurs in a society or group, the questions that she found herself asking are folded into the work by this use of contrast. Are there parts of the journey through grief that cause feelings of loneliness? Are there parts that can only be done in solitude? Are there parts where it helps to have communal support?<sup>31</sup> In addition to clearly delineated solos, there are sections, for example in “Sometimes Peace Comes,” in which the conductor is given an option to use either soloists, a small group, or the entire choir for certain parts. There are specific moments in the solo line in this same movement where the soloist is presented with two optional pitches for the same beat and is instructed to choose one or

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<sup>30</sup> This number is derived from the separate solo designations listed in the published score and may differ from the total number of soloists used within a particular ensemble. For example: the baritone solo in *Relinquishment* could be assigned to more than one singer, contingent upon the director’s artistic choice and the ensemble size. This number also includes the solos in *Sometimes Peace Comes*, which Trumbore has designated as optional.

<sup>31</sup> Trumbore, interview.

the other. Trumbore's footnote at the first of these instances stipulates that, "each note is always equally as desirable as the other(s)." <sup>32</sup>

Trumbore's harmonic language in *How To Go On* is grounded in a sense of tonality and there is often aural perception of a tonal center, but it does not follow a traditional harmonic function. As such Trumbore does not make use of key signatures, but rather delineates the tonal shifts with accidentals, often enharmonically respelling pitches for melodic purposes or readability. The work makes prevalent use primarily of Ionian, Aeolian, and Lydian modes. The perceived tonal centers often shift quickly. There are sections where Trumbore modulates back and forth between two tonal centers which often share a common-tone half-step or common-tone mediant relationship. This often occurs as a two- or four-bar oscillating harmonic idea, giving the listener a sense of expectancy, familiarity or inevitability within the harmonic flow and direction of the movement. At cadential resolutions or points of arrival, there are a prominence of pitch collections reflecting major seven-nine chords that can serve as a sense of harmonic grounding.<sup>33</sup> Amidst other musical characteristics such as rhythmically agitated textures and rapidly shifting tonal centers, these cadential major seven-nine chords evoke moments of rest, peace and resolution. Trumbore was highly influenced in her early music career by American Music Theater and the music of the Great American Songbook.<sup>34</sup> Although there is prominent use of this type of chord borrowed from a jazz-influenced style, Trumbore's harmonic language does not fall traditionally into a jazz-centered idiom. The relatively consonant aesthetic aural nature of these chords creates a striking effect in contrast with other, more dissonant harmonies.

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<sup>32</sup> Dale Trumbore, "Sometimes Peace Comes," *How To Go On*, (Big Lake, MN: Graphite Publishing, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> By using the term "pitch collections," the author is referring to the simplest definition of the term: a collection of pitches. The term does not refer to pitch collections as they are defined by twentieth-century musical analysis methods, such as tone rows in serial music, pitch class sets in set theory, nor any other method of harmonic analysis that has coined a pre-prescribed definition to the term.

<sup>34</sup> Trumbore, interview.

*How To Go On* is a melody-dominant work. Trumbore's use of melodic line is a prominent element in every movement and the role of the melodic shape and its relation to the texture and emotional energy of the work is at the core of her compositional approach. Trumbore's melodies can be characterized as lyrical, conjunct, and at times adopt an art-song-like quality. In most cases, the melody is in the uppermost voice in a texture or in a solo line and there is a clear delineation between melody and accompaniment. When placed in the upper voice there is often homorhythmic reinforcement in some or all of the other voice parts. When in the form of a solo line the other voice parts often behave like instruments, sustaining long tones or maintaining a steady, narrow-ranged melismatic idea which serves as contrast and further accentuates and supports the solo line. Often the melodic lines in *How To Go On* are spelled enharmonically and Trumbore does this intentionally for the sake of the readability of the line and the ease of the singer. This same melodic line is often spelled harmonically in the piano reduction.

The use of tempo changes, meter changes, and fermatas in *How To Go On* are widespread throughout the work. Frequent and rapid use of *ritardando* or *a tempo* markings, fermatas at cadential arrivals, moments of silence, and deliberate and rapid meter changes subservient to the declamation of the text are just some of the prominent examples of this compositional approach. These markings are frequent, specific, and intentionally placed. Trumbore concentrated strongly on the manner in which the music flows through time, or at the least how the music is perceived or felt to flow through time. This complex yet subtle sense of shifting temporal motion may be barely perceptible to the listener on a cognitive level but is very apparent from an emotional or psychological approach and is most apparent of all to the ensemble performing the work.

## Musical Analysis of the Movements

### How

The first published movement in *How To Go On* happens to be the first movement that Trumbore began writing; the other movements were started at the residency. It begins softly with a three-part bass texture singing a two-bar repeating ostinato on the word “How.” The three voice parts begin on a unison pitch, after which the outer voices immediately expand in stepwise oblique motion to form a three-note cluster. This simple yet versatile wedge-like texture becomes a formative construct throughout the entire movement.

Example 2.1. Wedge texture in opening measures of "How," mm. 1-5

With ever-increasing emotion;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$

BASS 1:  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{poco}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{sub.}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{sim.}$

BASS 2:  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{poco}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{sub.}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{sim.}$

BASS 3:  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{poco}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{p}$ ,  $\text{sub.}$ ,  $\text{mp}$ ,  $\text{sim.}$

Piano (for rehearsal only):  $\text{poco}$

With ever-increasing emotion;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$

The use of a three-part divisi in the bass voices is striking to begin this movement and evokes a somber opening atmosphere of emotional heaviness. The first example of Trumbore’s half-step harmonic relationships is presented here: The first wedge texture on the word “How” suggests a tonal area of E-flat major, while the following measure repeats the wedge texture one half-step lower. This pattern repeats in the bass parts for the first twenty-five bars of this movement, oscillating between these two tonalities, and evoking a sense of questioning,

instability and doubt. There is a type of false start or hesitation to the opening of this movement in the form of a fermata rest after the first two-bar ostinato pattern, after which the pattern continues uninterrupted. The movement itself seems unsure of how to start, resembling the shock or mental paralysis brought on by great emotional adversity; indeed, the movement itself seems unable to go on. After the first two measures the wedge textures continue, and added crescendos increase the emotional weight.

When the two tenor lines join the basses and layer on top of the wedge texture with two ascending and alternating five-note octatonic scales, the nature of these scales creates increased dissonance and further instability. Even though a vague tonal center has been established through the repeating ostinato, the layered upper parts allude to a feeling of uncertainty. The alto voices layer on next in the sequence, separated in starting pitch by a tritone. They employ a five-note scale that descends in contrast to the tenor's ascending lines, further adding to the harmonic instability and gradually building emotional intensity. The dissolution of a tonal center is most overtly demonstrated by the two treble solos that subsequently layer in with long, grief stricken whole note slides spanning the distance of a tritone per bar. These wide-ranging slides that crescendo from *p* to *f* can be derived as clear representations of wailing. The sopranos are the last voice part to enter. This voice part begins on a unison pitch, then splits and moves obliquely outward on a slide by half-step or whole-step to an interval of a third. This implies a microcosm of the wedge texture first established by the basses at the beginning, while also further contributing to the sense of tonal ambiguity.

Example 2.2. Micro and macro wedge texture variations in "How," mm. 20-24

molto rit. . . . . In time . . . . . poco accel. . . . . *p* . . . . . *mf* . . . . . *f* . . . . . molto rit. . . . .

20

Solo 1: Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ Ah, \_\_\_\_\_

Solo 2: Ah, \_\_\_\_\_ Ah,

S.: How, \_\_\_\_\_ Ah, \_\_\_\_\_

A. 1: on, How can we go on, How can we go on,

A. 2: How can we go on, How can we go on, How

T. 1: on? How can we go on? How can we go on?

T. 2: How can we go on, How can we go on, How

B. 1: How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_

B. 2: How, How, How, How, How

B. 3: How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_ How, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. 20: molto rit. . . . . In time . . . . . poco accel. . . . . *p* . . . . . *mf* . . . . . *f* . . . . . molto rit. . . . .

It is notable here that Trumbore has four tempo modification markings (“*molto rit... In time... poco accel... molto rit.*”) within the span of only five measures. This further destabilizes the opening of this movement as even the sense of time becomes uncertain.

In addition to the wedge texture observed in the three opening bass parts and the soprano parts, there is a large macro-wedge construct that can be observed in the first twenty-four measures of this movement. This is demonstrated by both steady layering of vocal entrances and slow but intensely building dynamics. Trumbore explains that this macro-wedge represents the idea in grieving that “we go from nothing to feeling something extremely intense very quickly.”<sup>35</sup>

Measure twenty-five marks the climax of the great build-up of energy that has taken place over the last twenty-four measures. Marked at a *ff* dynamic, Trumbore presents an unmetered measure of four chords centering on E-flat minor with explicit instructions that every singer sing the first chord of the measure together, then move through the other pitches at his or her own speed, slowly and staggered, holding the final pitch until all singers have independently arrived on their final pitch under a fermata.

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<sup>35</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 2.3. Climax point of "How," mm. 25-28

Freely;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$  or slower  
(Soloist rejoins Sopranos)

In time;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

ff  $\text{♩}$  ppp  $\text{♩}$   
(Soloist rejoins Altos)  $\text{♩}$

ff  $\text{♩}$  ppp  $\text{♩}$

ff  $\text{♩}$  ppp  $\text{♩}$

ff  $\text{♩}$  ppp  $\text{♩}$

ff  $\text{♩}$  ppp  $\text{♩}$

SOLO [Baritone]  $\text{mp}$   $\text{pp}$   $\text{pp}$

25 Freely;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$  or slower In time;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$

There is both a perceived and literal loss of control in this moment. The emotional tension that has been building up to this point is finally released in the form of a breakdown of temporal structure in the score. Additionally, the performers are instructed to abandon their temporal coordination as an ensemble and move through this measure with a total disregard for measured, ontological time. The final section of the movement makes a striking harmonic shift, arriving suddenly at an implied key of A major, a tritone relationship away from E-flat minor. Sudden and distant tonal shifts of this kind occur intermittently throughout *How To Go On* and Trumbore states that this suggests the feeling of being lost while moving through grief:

[It's] thinking you know where you are, then you're not. You think you've been there before, and you know what's going to happen and you don't. You think you're over something and then you have

a moment that pulls you back into it and you're in the same place as you were before, and it feels even worse.<sup>36</sup>

What further amplifies this tonal shift at measure twenty-six is the absence of a third in the chord. The open voicing of the bottom three pitches stacked as root–fifth–octave gives a clear allusion to A as the root of the chord, however the absence of a third scale degree leaves an ambiguity as to whether it is A major or A minor. When the baritone solo enters on C-sharp – appropriately on the word “knowing” – the key of A major is firmly established. The soloist concludes on a B-natural in unison with the sopranos and altos, but in retrospect this B-natural is the pitch that the sopranos and altos begin in the final chord four measures previous. This perceived ninth in the key of A major ends up being the final unison of the entire movement. Trumbore uses this musical analogy to reference the final line of the poem. The upper voices know “the end of the story.”

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<sup>36</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Table 2.1. "How" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-5	6-12	13-18	19-24	25	26-29	30-32
No. of Measures	5 (2+3)	7	6	6	1	4	3
Tonal Area(s)	Alternating E-flat major and D major				E-flat minor	A major	Unison B
Events/ Characteristics	Macro-wedge texture				Climax; breakdown; loss of control; aleatory	Sudden harmonic shift; Choir sustaining "nn"; Baritone solo states final line	Decrescendo/drop out <i>al niente</i>
	Intro; false starts; wedge texture	Tenor ascending ostinato; harmonic destabilization	Alto descending ostinato; Solo 1 & 2 slides; further harmonic destabilization	Soprano 1& 2 slides enter; building to a climax			
Texture	BBB	TTBBB	AATTBBB, Solo 1 & 2	SSAATTBB, Solo 1 & 2	SSAATTBBB		
Text	How	How can we go on?			How can we go	on? Knowing the end of the	story

## **However Difficult**

This short movement begins with a three-part and later four-part divisi of the sopranos and altos. A set of two-measure false start motifs are established. These are sung on the word “how” which is not a word contained in the excerpted stanza of Laura Foley’s poem used for this movement, but rather borrowed from Barbara Crooker’s text from the movement “How”. In addition to creating hesitancy and uncertainty through fermata rests, Trumbore also creates a sense of unpredictability and lack of harmonic direction. The first two-measure false start motif begins and ends in the alluded key of F minor but it is dissonant, with both a minor third and a major seventh above the root of the chord. The second attempt begins similarly but ends on a second-inversion B-flat major chord. The third and fourth false starts stray even further from the initially established tonal center, implying D-flat major and E-flat major tonal centers. Slides written in various places throughout these opening motifs give the impression of wailing and further perpetuate the sense of harmonic ambiguity and doubt. Trumbore envisions these rapidly shifting harmonic centers and frequent starts and stops as a representation of the desire to push through grief hurriedly, the struggle to move forward, and the realization that the grief must be endured.<sup>37</sup> This is signified by the ostinato pattern that subsequently commences in measure nine.

With a return to F minor and the undulating ostinato begins in the upper voices. This heralds in the tenors and basses who sing the first words of the text in a lyric, art-song like soli duet. The text is reflective in nature and Trumbore musically represents this with the use of fermatas, giving pause between individual thoughts from the text. The ostinato also pauses in the upper voices, which creates a feeling of suspension and contemplation between each textual and

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<sup>37</sup> Trumbore, interview.

melodic idea. Trumbore describes these compositional devices as an imitation of thought process, as if the person who is speaking is unsure of what to say next or is considering the next thought before communicating it to the listener.<sup>38</sup> They may also suggest moments of contemplation during which each of the respective ideas mentioned in this portion of the poem (i.e. the “life,” the “failures,” the “garden”) are separately pondered and dwelled upon by the poet. The altos then take all of the triplets and drive forward, leading the tenors and basses in a build of energy through the final statement of the poem. They intensify to *f* on the final word, “yours,” in a definitive arrival in D-flat major. At this moment a motif from the introduction of the movement re-emerges in the sopranos. The final word is re-emphasized a second time in the tenors and basses, now voiced in a lower register and softer, marking a strong pronouncement on the final charge of the poem as well as the ending of the movement.

Table 2.2. "However Difficult" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-8	9-16	17-25
No. of Measures	9 (2+2+2+2)	8 (3+3+2)	9 (6+3)
Tonal Area(s)	F minor		F minor → D-flat minor
Events/ Characteristics	Intro; four false start motifs; harmonic ambiguity	SSAA ostinato; tenor/bass art-song-style duet; Reflective fermatas	Tenor/bass duet continues; alto one triplets; Building energy to climax on "yours"
Texture	SSA→SSAA	SSAA→ SSAATTBB	SSAATTBB
Text	How	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.

<sup>38</sup> Trumbore, interview.

## To See It

Trumbore drew a great deal of influence from Buddhist meditation practice for this movement. The poet is herself a Buddhist practitioner. Although not a Buddhist herself, Trumbore is an advocate for meditation and practices it regularly. Earlier in her life, she describes a “crisis moment” during meditation where she imagined absolute nothingness. She explains that while for most this might have been a moment of beauty or clarity, for her it was terrifying. She found herself dwelling on death and losing the people that she loved. Despite this past experience, she continued to meditate while composing *How To Go On*. She also read several books about meditation and moving through grief and loss.<sup>39</sup> The location of the residency, in the middle of the vast open plains of Wyoming, made the idea of separation in Foley’s poem all the more personal and tangible for Trumbore as she composed the movement.<sup>40</sup>

The movement begins with a song-like melody in the basses, who sing the opening line of the poem. It is notable that in this melody is contained the largest melodic interval in the entire work: an ascending major seventh on “too see,” alluding to the idea of separation in the text. A drone cluster pair enters from the tenors on the word “life,” but only momentarily. The tenors then join the basses on text for the second line of the poem and the altos initiate their own drone on a B-flat. From this point onward the B-flat is sustained constantly by various voice parts until the conclusion of the movement. There is a sense of harmonic unpredictability in the beginning measures. The tenors and basses allude to multiple tonal centers such as A-flat major, G-flat major, and D-flat major. This ambiguity and thin texture are broken through at measure twelve with the B-flat major seven-nine chord on the word “warm.” The drone remains constant in the altos, immune to the dynamic contrast in the other voices.

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<sup>39</sup> *The Places That Scare You and Living Beautifully*, by the Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön.

<sup>40</sup> Trumbore, interview.

The next stanza of the poem is given to the sopranos and altos, who shift into the key of C major, despite the B-flat drone that remains. This text, which lists various winter clothing being put on, is reinforced musically in a clever way. The line begins on a unison, then splits into two parts, then three, then four, and eventually a five-part chord at the conclusion of the line in measure twenty-three. This can be seen as a form of text painting, where the addition of divisi parts represents the addition of winter clothing. Trumbore employs another form of text painting on “wrap a scarf around our neck” by writing a melodic line that moves above and below C-natural, as if the melody is “wrapping” itself around the C, like a scarf.<sup>41</sup>

Example 2.4. Juxtaposition of C major with B-flat drone, "To See It," mm. 17-25

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves represent vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The bottom staff represents the Piano (Pno.). The score is set in common time, with measures numbered 17 and 25. The vocal parts sing a unison line until measure 17, then split into two parts (Soprano and Alto) for the lyrics "We need to don a sweater," followed by "a coat," "mittens," and finally "wrap a". The piano part provides a continuous B-flat drone throughout. The vocal parts return to a unison for the final section starting at measure 25. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and a crescendo/decrescendo bracket. Measure 17 starts with a tempo of  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$ .

(ex. cont'd.)

<sup>41</sup> Trumbore, interview.

At measure twenty-three, the C major tonicization emphasized by the sopranos and altos wins over against the B-flat, resulting in the addition of a C drone in the tenors. This is the first of a series of additive pitches that are sequentially joined to the existing drones throughout the movement. An E-flat is added by the second tenors in measure twenty-eight, and an A-flat joins in the second bass part in measure thirty-three. Each time a pitch is added to the drone collection, that pitch sustains until the end of the movement. At the conclusion of the movement, these four pitches, sustained by the second division of each voice part, and which form an A-flat major nine chord, form the final sustained chord of the piece. The first divisions of each voice part, singing the final line of the poem, also arrive at this chord that the drones have established. Trumbore explains this moment as a reflection of meditation practice and the meaning expressed in the text. The drones have come to represent “the life we’ve made,” which has always been present, right in front of us.

We’re separating to see what’s already there. You’re living your life and you’re unhappy in some way, and sometimes you need to

remove yourself from it so you can look back and see that you already have everything you need there. You don't even necessarily need to change anything. You just need this moment of appreciation. That's what meditation does: It's not necessarily changing anything, but its noticing. Just noticing does change something.<sup>42</sup>

The drones were originally conceived as a separate drone choir that would sustain the pitches throughout the movement while the main choir sang the text. Trumbore, acknowledging the uneventful and unengaging nature of sustained singing on a single pitch, decided to intermix the drones throughout the voice parts for the sake of the singers' attention and engagement while singing the piece.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Trumbore, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Table 2.3. "To See It" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-6	7-11	12-16
No. of Measures	6 (3+3)	5	5
Tonal Area(s)	A-flat major	D-flat major	B-flat major
Events/ Characteristics	Bass soli; drone false start in tenor	Tenor/bass continue art-song style; first drone pitch introduced in alto; harmonic ambiguity	Harmonic shift; <i>f</i> major seven nine chord on "warm"; soprano joins texture
Texture*	(TT)B	(A)TB	SSATTBB
Text	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.

\*Voice parts in parenthesis indicate a drone

17-23	24-28	29-34	35-39
7	5	6 (3+2+1)	5
C major	?	D-flat major	A-flat major
Harmonic shift; soprano/alto on text; second drone pitch added	SAB on text; third drone pitch added	Climactic build to <i>ff</i> major seven nine chord on "life"; fourth drone pitch added	Final drone collection in 2nd parts; Final text line in 1st parts; drones sustain to end
SSSAA(TT)	SSAA(TT)BB	SSSSAA(AA)TT(T)B(B)B	S(S)A(A)T(T)B(B)
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.

## **Relinquishment**

The harmonic roadmap of “Relinquishment” oscillates back and forth primarily between two pitch collections: the D-sharp minor scale and the D Lydian scale. Trumbore uses these two pitch collections in a regularly shifting manner throughout the movement, however she also uses these collections to hint at or give allusions to other key areas including E major, A major, D major, and G major.

“Relinquishment” is written in first person singular and is comparatively more introspective and individually focused than other texts in the work. As such, solo lines are featured more prominently in this movement. There are four separate soloists required for this movement, three treble and one baritone.

The movement begins with the three treble soloists in a highly syncopated rhythm that persists throughout the movement. Another false start motif presents itself in the first four bars. Two utterances of the first line, “I am looking,” are each followed by one measure of rest, evoking the same feeling of uncertainty and doubt as was found in previously discussed movements. The third occurrence finally allows the voices to continue. The trio is the predominant texture for the first five lines of the poem and the choir interjects in only two places. At measure twenty-four the solo trio rejoins the choir and the baritone solo emerges on the text, “Soon it will all be gone, all of it.” This melody is similar to the opening motif and is also characterized by uncertain and hopelessness-evoking pauses. When the choir responds in the next section, “And I will be sitting in darkness,” Trumbore employs a dissonant use of the D-sharp minor pitch collection with homophonic triplets and a sustained drone in the tenor line. In contrast, this tonally ambiguous moment gives way to lush major and major seven-nine and

major six-nine chords and a drastically calmed tempo for the next line, “glad for having seen this earth, her elegant grace.”

There is a subtle yet striking device Trumbore employs to emphasize the next line of the text in which “turning” is mentioned for the first time. After the cutoff from *ff* and a measure of silence, the sopranos and altos enter at *ppp*, marked “Slowly, deliberately.” A G-natural is heard in the sopranos for a brief moment in the final eighth-note of the measure. This is the first pitch that occurs that does not belong in either the D-sharp minor or D lydian scales. This G-natural is then re-emphasized as the root of the chord when the full choir enters on “sun” in measure thirty-eight, introducing a new pitch collection: G Lydian. It is noteworthy that this harmonic “turn” occurs at precisely the golden mean of the movement (measure thirty-seven).

Example 2.5. Harmonic "turn" leading to G lydian at the golden mean of the movement.  
 "Relinquishment," mm. 32-40

**Lush;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$  or slower**

S. hav - ing seen this earth, her e - le - gant grace, ***ff***

A. hav - ing seen this earth, her e - le - gant grace, ***ff***

T. hav - ing seen this earth, her e - le - gant grace, ***ff***

B. hav - ing seen this earth her e - le - gant grace,

**Slowly, deliberately;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$**

How she turns a - ***ppp***

Pno.

**32 Lush;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$  or slower**

**Slowly, deliberately;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$**

**accel.  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 66$**

**SOLO [Baritone]**

rit. ***mf*** ***mp***

Solo 3 How she turns a - way from the sun, And

S. way from the sun\* (nn)...

A. way from the sun\* (nn)...

T. sun\* (nn)...

B. sun\* (nn)...

**37 Pno.**

**accel.  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 66$**

**rit.**

\*Close slowly to "(nn)" over the course of four beats.

Measure forty-one is another striking moment. The baritone solo sings alone, “and I will be learning again.” Trumbore describes this as a turning point in the persona’s journey through grief, where the realization occurs that “all of this will repeat. [Giving it all up] is not something you learn once and then you’re good at it and it’s done, but rather you’ll be learning it again and again throughout your life.”<sup>44</sup>

The movement ends with the full choir singing the final line, “How to give it up to darkness, all you love; All of it.” Trumbore explains that in the first draft of “Relinquishment,” the movement ended at this moment, but she was subsequently inspired to extend the ending while on a hike during her residency.<sup>45</sup> Trumbore’s music in this addition again parallels the nature of the grieving process: Just as the poem states that all must be given up again and again, there is a repetition to grief in life. However, every person’s personal experience with grief is not the same each time; it is ever changing, expanding and moving forward. The ending of this movement reflects that sentiment by repeating the final line of the poem, but now with expanded repetition and staggered entrances.

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<sup>44</sup> Trumbore, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Table 2.4. "Relinquishment" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-4	5-10	11-15	16-23	24-27	28-31
No. of Measures	4 (2+2)	6 (2+3+1)	5 (2+3)	8 (3+5)	4	4
Tonal Area(s)	D-sharp minor	Alternating D-sharp minor and D lydian			D-sharp minor	
Events/ Characteristics	Solo trio intro; false starts	First full trio statement	Second trio statement; full choir layers in on "clouds passing"	Third trio statement; SATB choir layers in on second half; rapid build to <i>ff</i> major seven chord on "sky"	Baritone solo; sustained drones in choir	Homophonic quarter- note triplet dominates texture; contrasting drone-based tenor line
Texture	Treble solo trio		SATBB, Treble Trio	SSATBB, Treble Trio	SAT, Baritone solo	SATB
Text	I am looking	I am looking at pale blue ponds of melted ice on a frozen river	and in them perfect clouds passing.	Wind sends ripples across the water and trees cut sharp lines into the sky.	Soon it will all be gone, all of it, and	I will be sitting in darkness, sitting by a dark window, glad for

32-35	36-40	41-47	48-51	52-61
4 (3+1)	5 (2+3)	7 (2+5)	4 (2+1+1)	10 (2+2+2+4)
D lydian	D lydian/G lydian	D lydian	D-sharp minor→D lydian	D-sharp minor → D lydian (x2)
Full homophony; build to climax on <i>ff</i> major six nine chord on "grace"	SSAA enter <i>ppp</i> ; harmonic turn to G lydian; golden ratio	Baritone solo <i>a cappella</i> , then full choir layers on	Full choir takes over treble trio motif; first "All of it" cadence	Repetition/expansion of final melodic/harmonic idea; wailing emerges; final, enhanced recurrence of "All of it" cadence
SSATTBB	SSAA → SSAATBB, Baritone solo	Bari solo, SAATB	SSAATBB	SSAATTBB
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. All you love. All of it.

## **Requiescat**

*Requiescat* was begun by Trumbore at the residency and finished at her home in Los Angeles. It is the longest movement in *How To Go On*; more than twice as long, and in some cases three times longer, than any other movement in the work. Trumbore's setting of the first three words of the poem sets up a compositional element that is pervasive throughout the rest of the movement. Following the first two fermatas that establish B major, the choir sings "go," and shifts suddenly to C lydian. An expanding variation of a wedge texture begins and blossoms through the next three measures to a B major seven chord. This is characterized by a crescendo, expanding ranges, conjunct outward stepwise motion, and a swirling triple-over-duple rhythmic motif, which remains prominent throughout the movement. Trumbore describes her intention in this movement was to make the music sound like it is coming out of time and has an otherworldly aspect.<sup>46</sup> A second, further-expanded wedge texture follows the first, and continues the B major/C Lydian harmonic shifting until finally settling on a B major nine chord in measure thirteen.

In the following section, on the text "pull free," Trumbore shifts abruptly to D Lydian, pulling free from the previous tonal centers. At this point the tenors and basses carry the text forward with the exception of the drone in the bass two part, while the upper voices shift to an accompanying role. This constantly shifting orchestration and change in voice-combination continues throughout the movement and is an effective compositional approach to keep not only the listeners engaged, but also the singers. A singer herself, Trumbore always writes with the vocalists' experience in mind as they sing her works, and this long and technically demanding movement is a quintessential example of this mindfulness.

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<sup>46</sup> Trumbore, interview.

The third occurrence of a wedge texture is presented at measure twenty-six, expanding even further than the previous two, and returning to the familiar B major/C Lydian harmonic center. The basses drop out and the next line of text is stated by soprano one, alto one and two, and tenor one and two, with the triplets re-emerging in the second soprano. Trumbore creates strong delineation between this line and the following line, “yours is already written.” The sopranos sustain two separate drones that encircle above and below B-flat, while the tenors and basses sing the text in a middle-lower register in strong contrast to the previous measures. Trumbore views these lower ranges as a representation of stability.<sup>47</sup>

For the text “we will cry, yes,” every voice in the choir rejoins the texture in homophony, singing at *ppp*, the softest dynamic Trumbore writes for the entirety of *How To Go On*. Shifting to a reflection of D-sharp minor, the sharp accidentals return and the dissonant clusters are separated by grief-stricken pauses. This dissonance is resolved into the relative warmth of a B major nine chord at the end of the text, “but we will not forget you.”

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<sup>47</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 2.6. "Requiescat," mm. 46-49

Musical score for "Requiescat," mm. 46-49. The score includes parts for Soprano 1 (S. 1), Soprano 2 (S. 2), Alto 1 (A. 1), Alto 2 (A. 2), Tenor 1 (T. 1), Tenor 2 (T. 2), Bass 1 (B. 1), Bass 2 (B. 2), and Piano (Pno.). The vocal parts sing in unison, while the piano provides harmonic support.

**Measure 46:**

- S. 1:** Dynamics **p** **mf**. Lyric: go, \_\_\_\_\_
- S. 2:** Dynamics **p** **mf**. Lyric: go, \_\_\_\_\_
- A. 1:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row. let go of your friends,
- A. 2:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row. let go of your friends,
- T. 1:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row. let go of your friends,
- T. 2:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row. let go, \_\_\_\_\_
- B. 1:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row.
- B. 2:** Dynamics **p**. Lyric: sweet-ness and sor - row.
- Pno.:** Playing eighth-note chords.

**Measure 47 (beginning):**

- S. 1:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- S. 2:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- A. 1:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- A. 2:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- T. 1:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- T. 2:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- B. 1:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- B. 2:** Dynamics **ppp**. Lyric: we will cry, yes, but
- Pno.:** Playing eighth-note chords.

(ex. cont'd.)

48      accel. (poco) rit.      48      accel. = ca. 84      rit.

S. 1      *p*      we will not for - get you,      go,

S. 2      *p*      we will not for - get you,      go,

A. 1      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go,

A. 2      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go,

T. 1      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go,

T. 2      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go,

B. 1      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go your fierce will and stub-born-ness,

B. 2      *p*      we will not for - get you,      let go your fierce will and stub-born-ness,

Pno.      48      accel. rit.      48      accel. = ca. 84      rit.

The treatment of this text is striking in its soft dynamic marking, its homophonic texture, and its brevity. One might expect the composer to emphasize the word “cry” in a manner that evokes the sound or the feeling of weeping, but Trumbore actually sought to avoid this:

There's so much wailing and sighing in this piece. It could've been something melodramatic almost, and I wanted to take that out of it. It's more powerful if you're saying it very quietly and you're forcing everyone to listen in to what you're saying. Very often if there's a moment like that where I don't know how I'm going to set it I try and do it in the simplest way possible to let the text speak for itself. I'm almost removing myself from the equation. All the emotion comes from the words.<sup>48</sup>

Trumbore describes her conception of this moment not as the image or feeling of crying, but rather the feeling afterwards. She describes a stillness after we cry that in many situations, especially through grief, is the reason for crying; to arrive at that moment of stillness afterwards where the pain has subsided and what is left are memories.

The next iteration of “let go” in measure fifty shifts to the tonal area of E minor. The text is taken over by the basses that leads to a chromatic shift to E-flat Lydian on the word “go”. The second sopranos and first altos take over the melody on the text, “let your daughters become women.” The other voice parts join to conclude the next line of the poem, arriving on a very powerful *pianissimo* tone cluster grounded in E-flat lydian on the word “pain.” All of the voice parts are in their lower ranges, which creates a very dark and somber tone. Trumbore enhances this somberness by invoking a wail motif as a divisi in the low second bass part, beginning on an E-flat below the bass staff and rising steadily upward stepwise.

A B-natural sustains in the second tenor that leads into the next wedge texture at measure seventy-six. B major shifts to C Lydian, as in the beginning of the movement, however the continuation of the text, “become spirit and light,” arrives earlier than expected. The peak of the

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<sup>48</sup> Trumbore, interview.

crescendo now arrives on the word “light” at a pitch collection comprised of nearly every pitch in the C lydian scale. This immediately resolves the following beat to a pure B major chord. Given the propensity for color tones in Trumbore’s cadential arrivals, the presence of a pure triadic B major chord is very striking and evokes a harmonic sense of clarity and blinding intensity, which profoundly enhances the imagery of the text. This intensity is continued with the text “spring rain,” and leads to one of the most powerful moments in the entire movement. All six upper voices enter on a unison F-sharp, crescendo to *ff*, and resolve to another pure triad on “rain,” firmly establishing E minor. This opens a floodgate of cascading, wail motifs pouring out like tears in nearly every part. This cathartic moment is followed by a full measure of silence, one of only three measures in the entire movement consisting of rests.

The section that follows returns to an evocation of C Lydian. When the sopranos and altos sing the text “wait for us, we’ll talk again later,” Trumbore sets this to a similar motif that occurs at the ending of Relinquishment. The following section marks a sudden shift in poetic persona and meaning which Trumbore reflects by a change in texture and orchestration. The text “I am here by the phone, waiting for the call,” is the first occurrence of first-person singular in the poem. It also marks a shift from hypothetical ideas to something very real. This line is sung by the only occurrence of a soloist in the entire movement. This enhances the shift to singular first-person perspective. The tenors and basses are omitted, leaving only the upper voices in soft sustaining chords that softly embrace the soloist. After the diminuendo and release, the single A-natural drone sustained in the second soprano becomes the anchor point for the tenors and basses’ unison entrance in the following “let it go” wedge texture. Contrary to expectation, the swirling triplets within the wedge texture are now missing. It resolves into a fermata on an E-flat Lydian pitch collection on the words, “your work is done.” It is here that Trumbore finally brings

the triplets back in, but they serve a different purpose than before, acting as a calming agent, rather than a representation of struggle; a moment of peaceful, almost angelic-like stasis before the final drive to the end of the movement.

A turning point occurs at measure 109. The E-flat and B-flat held over from the previous measure become D-sharp and A-sharp respectively and the tonal center shifts to D-sharp minor, replacing a predominately flat key with a myriad of sharp accidentals. An oscillating harmonic shift begins between D-sharp minor and D Lydian which continues nearly consistently every two measures until measure 126. A modified version of the syncopated motif from *Relinquishment* begins in measure 109 in the tenors and basses. The swirling triple-duple motifs continue and are passed around the upper voices, adding to the rhythmic complexity. A crescendo and steadily increasing ranges build with the text “flow free” to a climax. Here in the poem, four disconnected words are stated: “earth, fire, cinders, rain.” Trumbore moves through these words very quickly, utilizing sharp dissonances and disjunct, stuttering rhythms, evoking great struggle. The final word, “rain,” is expanded and repeated multiple times as the music is propelled through harmonic oscillations and swirling triple-duple rhythmic patterns. All voices shift away from D-sharp minor for the final time but not to D Lydian as expected, instead arriving at a fermata on a second-inversion pure D minor chord. This chord, which Trumbore describes as acting “like a laser,”<sup>49</sup> is voiced in a comfortable middle range for all voice types. It is marked by a crescendo to the cutoff and followed by a poignant measure of silence.

After Trumbore’s marking “Calmed,” all voice parts except the basses re-enter at *pp*, continuing in the tonal area of D minor. The altos sing the final entreaty of the poem, “wait for us on the other side of the river,” as the sopranos and tenors softly sustain in the background with

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<sup>49</sup> Trumbore, interview.

slides evoking the sounds of wailing. The final statement of “let us go” is sung by only the sopranos and altos. The tonal center shifts gently, yet unexpectedly to F-sharp minor, which has not been used in this movement thus far. The movement ends in this key area. The four-part “peace” motif that opens “Sometimes Peace Comes” returns here and creates three statements of the final word, “go.” A measure of silence occurs, like one final silent breath, after which the last word “go” is sung and slowly fades, each voice falling away, until only a lone F-sharp in the second alto remains, like the final vestige of a soul, holding on as long as possible until finally letting go.

Table 2.5. "Requiescat" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-14	15-24	25-35
No. of Measures	14 (1+3+4+9+1)	10 (6+4)	11 (1+4+6)
Tonal Area(s)	Alternating B major and C lydian	D lydian	Alternating B major and C lydian
Events/ Characteristics	First and second "let us go" wedge textures	Harmonic shift; text continues in tenors/basses; treble voices accompany with long-sustaining chords	Third "let us go" wedge texture; basses drop out; text continues in SAATT
Texture	SSAATTBB		
Text	Let us go, let go with the few roots you have clinging to this earth, pull	free, like the clean snap of a carrot or radish, let it go, shake off this dirt,	let us go, let go of your family, their story hasn't been told,

36-45	46-50	51-59	60-74
10 (3+5+2)	5	9 (2+2+5)	15 (7+8)
E-flat major	D-sharp minor	E minor → E-flat lydian	E-flat lydian
Shift to flat accidentals; varying voice combinations on each line of text; sopranos sing two drones encircling B-flat	Sharp accidentals return; Full homophony; <i>ppp</i>	Basses take over melody/text; harmonic shift on "go" returns flat accidentals	Layered entrances on text leading to "pain" chord
SSAATTBB			
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 your fierce will and stubborness, 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,

(table cont'd.)

75-85	86-93	94-98
11 (4+6+1)	8 (2+3+3)	5
Alternating B major and C lydian		C lydian → E-flat lydian
Fourth "let us go" wedge texture; building energy toward "light"; climax on "spring rain," briefly tonicized in E minor; descrescendo to measure of silence	Sopranos continue text with melody; layered repetitions of "let go" lead to TTBB sustained chord; sopranos and altos sing modified melodic motif from Relinquishment	Shift to first-person singular; treble voices only with alto solo
SSAATTBB		SSA, Alto solo
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,

99-108	109-117	118-127	128-131	132-138
10 (1+5+4)	9 (2+2+5)	9 (2+3+4+1)	4	7 (2+2+1+2)
C major → Eb lydian	Alternating D-sharp minor and D lydian	Alternating D-sharp minor and D lydian → D minor	B-flat lydian	F-sharp minor
Tenors/basses modified "let it go" wedge texture; triple/duple rhythms follow in sopranos	Triple/duple rhythms continue in sopranos/altos; tenors/basses continue text on modified Relinquishment motif; accelerando, crescendo, and range expansion builds energy	Second climax section; <i>ff</i> ; disjunct melodic rhythms; triple/duple rhythms more prevasive; repetition of "rain" until crescendo cutoff on pure D minor chord, followed by measure of full silence	Calmed; Basses drop out; altos continue text	Treble voices only; sudden harmonic shift; melodic motif from Sometimes Peace Comes emerges; final chord fades one note at a time
SSAATTBB			SSAATT	SSAA
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

## **Knowing the End**

“Knowing the End” and “How” are the only two movements in *How To Go On* that use the same text. The opening of “Knowing the End” is similar to its textual companion movement in that it begins with a two-measure false start motif. This movement opens with soprano and alto divisi rather than tenor and bass. The uncertainty and confounded agitation embedded in the question being asked is evident in the harmonic obscurity Trumbore utilizes in the beginning of the movement. An initial allusion to G major immediately shifts to a distant and dissonant D-flat major seven chord. This same idea is begun again one half-step lower and resolves similarly a tritone distance. The third attempt, now in the realm of E-flat lydian, sees further progress through the text, but chromatic shifting causes continued harmonic obscurity. This disorienting opening is further amplified by constant shifts in tempo, with markings of *ritard* and *In time* occurring over nearly every measure on the first page.

Once the tenors and basses join the texture, the full question “How can we go on?” is repeated for three additional two-measure statements, in a harmonic oscillation between the pitch collections of A lydian and G-sharp major. The rhythmic complexity increases here, and each voice part is given a distinct rhythm. Trumbore’s goal was to create the idea of intentionally composed aleatoric music. The use of syncopated dotted eighth rhythms over eighth-note triples and duples in measure eleven creates a feeling she describes as “extreme disjunct stuttering.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 2.7. Rhythmic aleatory in "Knowing the End," m. 11

**In time, slightly slower;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$**

S. 1  
 — can we go on? \_\_\_\_\_

S. 2  
*p*  
 How, \_\_\_\_\_

A.  
*p*  
 How can we go on? \_\_\_\_\_

T.  
 $\frac{8}{8}$   
 How can we go on? \_\_\_\_\_

B.  
*p*  
 How can we go on? \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.  
 9 In time, slightly slower;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$

(percussive)  
*f*  
 How, \_\_\_\_\_

(percussive)  
*f*  
 How can we go  
*mf*  
 How can we go

This aleatory is not meant to blend together in an insipid manner, but rather produce a striking moment of anguish or inner conflict. At the peak of a crescendo to *f*, Trumbore inserts the marking, “percussive” over this specific measure. She describes these haphazard rhythmic ideas as representative of a community trying to ask this question but being unable to at this moment.<sup>51</sup>

In measure fifteen, a two-bar ostinato in the alto tenor and bass voices begins on the text “knowing the end,” continuing for the next fourteen measures. A shifting harmonic dance

<sup>51</sup> Trumbore, interview.

between A major and A-flat major remains present throughout. The three soloists, entering in slow succession, contrast the broken, plodding nature of the ostinato in the choir with long, slow, melismatic lines that sustain several measures at a time. These solo lines are written to appear rhythmically obscure and feature long sustained lines, dramatic dynamic shifts and extreme ranges. This implies a dramatic sense of intense emotion in stark contrast to the plodding, almost emotionless ostinato of the rest of the choir.

It should be noted here that beginning at measure twenty-one, Trumbore modifies the rhythms slightly in several places throughout the ostinato section. She intended these rhythm changes to be barely perceptible by the listener and primarily designed as a way to keep the singers engaged.

A five-four time signature in measure twenty-eight marks the end of the ostinato section. This is a clever subtlety that marks the threshold into the next section without the use of a fermata. This next section closes the movement by bringing back the same motif that opened it, only this time in the tenors and basses and in the implied key of A major. Like the beginning, three statements of “How” are made, and in similar fashion the first statement resolves to a distant key and the second repeats this down one half-step. The third continues this pattern and lands on an implied F Lydian key, but here Trumbore cuts out the lower bass parts, leaving only A-natural and B-natural drones sustained in the tenor lines. A single alto soloist brings back the closing melodic motif of “How,” also in the same key, and in a similar conclusion, the solo line ends on a B-natural, joined by the drones and upper voices, which gradually fades and falls away.

Table 2.6. "Knowing the End" Herford Bar Analysis

<b>Measures</b>	1-8	9-14	15-28	29-34	35-41
<b>No. of Measures</b>	8 (2+2+4)	6 (2+2+2)	14 (8+6)	6 (2+2+2)	7 (1+2+4)
<b>Tonal Area(s)</b>	G major, G-flat major, E-flat major, D-flat major	Alternating A lydian and G-sharp major		A major, A-flat major, F lydian	A major → unison B
<b>Events/ Characteristics</b>	Intro; two false start motifs; harmonic shifting/ambiguity	Full choir enters; rhythmic aleatory	Three contrapuntal solos dominate over ostinato in lower voices	Transposed "false start" motif returns in lower voices	Sustained drones in tenors later handed off to sopranos/altos; treble solo sings final iteration of last line
<b>Texture</b>	SSAA	SSATTB B	(S)*ATB, 2 treble solos, 1 bass solo	TTBB	SATT, Treble solo
<b>Text</b>	How can we go on?		knowing the end/ How	How	knowing the end of the story?

\* Sopranos join ATB lines

## Sometimes Peace Comes

Sometimes Peace Comes was written and completed at the Wyoming residency, although it was not originally conceived as a movement in *How To Go On*. Trumbore encountered the poem while at the residency and, with the poet's permission and approval from the director of the commissioning ensemble, decided to add it to the work. She describes drawing a great deal of influence from being "in the middle of nowhere," the removal from her normal life, and the peace that she encountered spending time in that vast open area.

The movement begins with a two-measure false start motif. Two short, contrapuntal melodic lines in the upper voices slowly weave and dance around each other and end on a fermata, followed by a fermata rest, before beginning again. Trumbore described the imagery of these upper voices like clouds passing overhead, as they might be viewed while lying on one's back.<sup>52</sup> There are subtle temporal discrepancies each time the motif occurs, but the two-measure motif repeats more or less similarly throughout the opening section.

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<sup>52</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 2.8. The “peace” motif. “Sometimes Peace Comes,” mm. 1-3.

Flowing freely, with a fluid sense of time;  
 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. 56 or slightly faster}$       *poco rit.* . . . . .      *A tempo* . . . . .      *poco rit.* . . . . .

S.      *OPTIONAL SOLO(S)\**

*OPTIONAL SOLO(S)\**

A.      *Oo,* . . . . .      *Oo,* . . . . .

Pno.      *Flowing freely, with a fluid sense of time;*  
 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. 56 or slightly faster}$       *poco rit.* . . . . .      *A tempo* . . . . .      *poco rit.* . . . . .

Trumbore stipulates in the score that these two lines may be sung by the entire section as written, by a small subsection, or by alternating individual soloists. Although the presence of a false start motif in several of the other movements discussed thus far have represented an uncertainty or angst, in this movement it has an altogether different feel; one of calm and comfort. The two lyrically crafted melodic lines flow and weave around each other in a tonally ambiguous, but harmonically consonant way. There is a stillness and a notion of peace, even in the fermata pauses, as if this movement embraces the need to be still amidst such a fast-moving emotional experience as grief.

The alto solo sings the first lines of the poem as the next three iterations of the “peace” motif continues underneath. The melodic range in this solo is relatively low and stands in contrast to the upper ranges of the ostinato parts. This solo line is unique within *How To Go On*, in that the soloist may choose what pitch to sing at certain moments. At nearly every cadential arrival point, the soloist is presented with two or sometimes three notes in brackets and is directed to pick one of them, with the instruction that “each note is always equally as desirable as

the other(s).”<sup>53</sup> This is another example of Trumbore’s representation of giving up control, in the same spirit as the elective movement order.

At the conclusion of the solo, a sustained crescendo on a unison D-flat leads into the next section. This unison pitch is written enharmonically as C-sharp and sets up an abrupt shift from the all-flat key area of D-flat major to the all-sharp key area of A Lydian, a tritone distance apart. As the full chorus enters on the next line of text, the tempo nearly doubles, and rapidly changing meters occupy nearly every bar, including the asymmetrical 7/8. Trumbore’s use of this type of asymmetrical meter was born out of the natural declamation of the text that she perceived while writing the work.<sup>54</sup> The “urgent” direction marked in the score gives implication to the change in mood and pacing. Sopranos and altos maintain sustained single notes while the altos and tenors move rapidly through the next several lines of the poem, until arrival at “and even the sun is still.” A slowing of the tempo culminates in a fermata on the word “still” on a pure A major triad, which halts all sense of forward motion and returns to a freer sense of time. The soloist’s major seventh G-sharp in measure twenty-four becomes A-flat, the fifth of D-flat major, marking the return to the previous key area heading into measure twenty-five, evidenced by the return of all flat accidentals. The “peace” motif returns for one iteration, while the soloist sings “you have stepped into a place beyond time.”

In the following five measures the full choir, in homorhythmic texture, builds to the climax of the movement. The cadential chord on the word “plain” expands suddenly into a wide-ranging G-flat major seven-nine chord in all voice parts, with the word “long” marked over the fermata. This powerful moment is followed by a fermata rest. The soloist sings the final lines of the poem *a cappella* until the “peace” motif returns in the soprano and alto voices. At the final

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<sup>53</sup> Trumbore, “Sometimes Peace Comes,” *How To Go On*, m. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Trumbore, interview.

iteration, the A-flat and G-flat are sustained as drones and are followed by a series of additive pitches, each entering in slow succession and out of time.

Example 2.9. Concluding measure of "Sometimes Peace Comes," m. 43

**Freely, without meter; like stars emerging at night**  
 Each entrance should be cued separately, not necessarily equally-timed, entering on "Oo."  
*(Sopranos divide in 3 parts;  
 a third of the remaining  
 Sopranos join here on Ab)*

43      **pp**

S. (Oo).  
*(half of the remaining  
 Altos join on Gb)*

A. (Oo).

T. **p**

B. **p**

Pno.

Trumbore gives instructions that “each entrance should be cued separately, not necessarily equally-timed.” The slowly stacking pitches invoke a key area of D-flat Lydian, but the second to last entrance in the second bass part and moving pitches in the upper soprano parts in the final chord reveals a G-flat major seven nine chord, a slight re-voicing of the “plain” chord Trumbore uses earlier in the movement.

Table 2.7. "Sometimes Peace Comes" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-7	8-15	16-24
No. of Measures	7 (2+2+3)	8 (2+2+4)	9 (2+2+2+3)
Tonal Area(s)	D-flat major		A lydian
Events/ Characteristics	Intro; "peace" motif introduced by soprano/alto, sung three times	Solo enters on text; peace motif continues underneath	Full choir takes over the text; harmonic shift to sharp accidentals; sense of urgency; rapidly-moving/assymetrical meters; solo re-enters, leads choir to sustained arrival on "still"
Texture*	SA*	SA*, Treble solo	SATTBB, Treble solo
Text	Ooo	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 trail of ashes is gone, not even a memory in your heart, and even the sun is still, unmoving and quiet, and

\*Optional solos

25-26	27-31	32-42	43
2	5	11 (4+4+3)	1
D-flat major			D-flat major/G-flat major
Return to home key; Soloist on text; "peace" motif returns in soprano/alto	Fully homophonic; crescendo to <i>ff</i> major seven nine chord on "plain"	Solo sings final lines of text, first <i>a cappella</i> , then with a return of "peace" motif	Stars chord; unmetered, staggered fermata entrances; crescendo to <i>ff</i>
SA*, Treble solo	SSATBB	SA*, Treble solo	SSSAATTBB
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.	Ooo

## **When At Last**

The final movement of *How To Go On* was begun at the Wyoming residency and then finished at Trumbore's Los Angeles home. The movement features two soloists—one soprano and one tenor—who are present throughout the movement. The soprano solo begins the movement singing the first line of the poem alone, the tenor solo joining in a homorhythmic, yet conjunct countermelodic line for the second and third lines of text. The tonal center alludes to B major, but frequent flat sixths and sevenths make this tonal center obscure and give the opening of this movement an aethereal, otherworldly feel. The B major tonality is reinforced however in measure eight as the two solo lines converge in a reverse wedge of sorts to a unison B natural from a half-step above and below respectively on the word "diminishment."

The two solo lines continue singing in unison, on "Let a pink peony bloom..." as the choir assumes an accompanying role on a neutral syllable. Trumbore cleverly uses strictly upper voices, a major tonality, and a high-range first soprano "bloom" motif to positively affect the overall mood of this pastoral moment. There is a sense of lightness and calm. Even the rhythm of the soloists as they sing of the "charm of bees" is playful in nature, alluding to the flitting path a bee might take from flower to flower. Gradually the tenors join, followed by the basses on the neutral syllable "oo," filling out the range of the chords, as the harmonic center shifts from E Lydian to D-sharp Lydian and back again.

Beginning in measure fifteen, a harmonic shift begins to occur every measure, creating a more rapid sense of harmonic motion. This sense of faster forward motion is apropos to the text as the soul journeys from bee, to flower, to hive, to comb, and finally to the animal tongue. It is notable here that the accompanying voice parts shift from "oo" to "oh" for their neutral syllable. Trumbore cleverly does this in response to the poetry text, which here employs a sequence of

assonance on the words: “clover”, “grove”, “broken”, “comb”, “golden”, “hold”, and “soul.” Beginning in measure twenty-one, the sopranos drop out and the other choral voices continue in the lower part of their ranges. Trumbore uses this variety of texture intentionally to facilitate a building of energy when the sopranos come back in five measures later to setup the climax at the end of the soul’s journey. All voice parts crescendo rapidly together to a dissonant F-sharp add eleven chord before dropping out suddenly. Everything stops in suspended space and the words “my soul” is sung in the form of an ascending perfect fifth by the lone treble soloist, bursting through like a single pin prick of light. After a full sustained measure, the D-sharp enharmonically becomes E-flat as the sopranos and altos gently respond with a modified “peace” motif in A-flat major. The peace motif is repeated again after a fermata rest measure, this time folding in the tenors and basses and resolving unexpectedly to an enharmonically spelled A major seven nine chord. Trumbore intended this new chord to be a surprise. It is not meant to represent a breakdown or to be jarring, but rather a representation that the ending is not what we think it will be.<sup>55</sup> The soloist sings the final two words, “my soul” one last time, one octave lower than the previous E-flat, which is now the sharp fourth scale degree within the newly implied A major chord, but the underlying chord quickly drops out and the lone E-flat sustains in solitude.

Trumbore ends this movement—and indeed the entire work—with a remarkable and very powerful aural representation of meditative breathing. The tenors and basses sustain a four-note cluster in the tonal area of A-flat major on a hum. This is followed by the sopranos and altos who sustain their own four-note cluster within the pitch collection for G-flat lydian for four beats

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<sup>55</sup> Trumbore, interview.

while the tenors and basses rest. The tenor and bass cluster returns, then the soprano and alto cluster, and so on.

Example 2.10. Aural meditative breathing. "When At Last," mm. 39-44

**Lulling, meditative;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$**

39 [inhaler for full 4 counts] [exhale for full 4 counts] [repeat]

**S.**  $p$   
 (mm) (mm) (mm)

[inhaler for full 4 counts] [exhale for full 4 counts] [repeat]

**A.**  $p$   
 (mm) (mm) (mm)

[exhale for full 4 counts] [inhaler for full 4 counts] [repeat]

**T.**  $p$   
 (mm) (mm) (mm)

[exhale for full 4 counts] [inhaler for full 4 counts] [repeat]

**B.**  $p$   
 (mm) (mm) (mm)

39 **Lulling, meditative;  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$**

**Pno.** (mm) (mm) (mm)

Above each part's first whole note is written the instruction, "exhale for 4 counts," and above the following measure of rest is written, "inhale for 4 counts." As a result, the entire choir is made to engage in a controlled exercise in meditative breathing. This pattern of alternating exhalation (on hummed pitches) and inhalation continues for six measures, which then repeat.

The pitch collections of the lower and upper voices fall within two separate but closely-related key areas. The tenor and bass pitches are in A-flat major while the soprano and alto pitches fall within G-flat lydian. The lower divisions in each voice part are given the first and fifth scale degrees of their respective key area, which remains constant throughout this section. The upper divisions' pitches contain color tones and cause harmonic obscurity. The clusters being sung by each voice grouping contain subtle pitch changes in each iteration. Trumbore

explains that there is both a practical and metaphorical motivation behind this choice. The practical reason is to keep the singers' ears and minds engaged. Trumbore acknowledges that repeating alternating whole notes on the same pitches for twelve measures runs the risk of disengaging the singers and losing the energy and intensity of the moment being created. It is likely that average listeners would not notice these subtle pitch changes, nor would we expect them to. This section is meant rather to lull the audience into matching their breathing with the choir and participate in the meditative breathing exercise. The singers in the choir on the other hand certainly would notice these subtle pitch changes and would have no choice but to continue engaging with their ears as they sing, whether or not their part contains any changing pitches. The metaphorical reason for these subtle pitch changes, Trumbore explains, is contained within two ideas. The first and more basic idea is that one does not breathe the same air every time one breathes in. The second is that the wholistic experience of meditation itself is different every time.<sup>56</sup>

Following the aural breathing section, each four-note cluster is sung once more in sequence, only this time the tenors and basses sustain for eight full counts, joining together with the sopranos and altos. After a full four counts of inhalation by the entire choir, they re-enter on the same pitches on the word "my," and crescendo to the final chord of the work on "soul." This final chord is comprised of scale degrees one through five of an A-flat major scale. The sopranos D-flat and E-flat pitches drop out, leaving an A-flat major nine chord to sustain for two more bars as all voices decrescendo *a niente*. The final four measures of the work return to unison meditative breathing without pitches. The singers are instructed to inhale and exhale until the conclusion of the movement.

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<sup>56</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 2.11. Repeated meditative breathing. "When At Last," mm. 53-56

(Conductor slowly lowers hands)  
(again & again.)

53

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

The repeat signs encompassing the final two measures of the movement appear at first to be superfluous. Trumbore reveals that these are not only intentional, but also carry great significance. The final two measures are, in theory, repeated indefinitely. The only true reason that the breathing would end is actual death. Anyone who performs this final movement of *How To Go On* would therefore perform the last two measures (in other words, meditatively breathing) for the remainder of their lives.<sup>57</sup> This most profound compositional representation of "Just keep breathing," is arguably the most meaningful and remedial lesson that Trumbore imparts through this work.

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<sup>57</sup> Trumbore, interview

Table 2.8. "When at Last" Herford Bar Analysis

Measures	1-8	9-20	21-29
No. of Measures	8 (5+3)	12 (4+2+3+3)	9 (6+3)
Tonal Area(s)	B major/minor	E lydian, D-sharp lydian, E-flat major, C major, F lydian, E lydian	E lydian
Events/ Characteristics	Alto solo begins <i>a cappella</i> ; tenor solo joins	Solo lines continue in unison on text; choir accompanies on neutral syllables; triple-duple rhythmic motifs return; rapid harmonic motion	Solos/choral accompaniment continues; harmonic center settles; sopranos drop out but re-enter to build to a climax on a major add-eleven chord on "tongue"
Texture	Alto/tenor solos	SSAAATTBB, alto/tenor solos	SAATTBB, Alto/tenor solos
Text	When at last I join the democracy of dirt, a tussock earthed 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 hive. Let the	honey they make be broken from its comb, and release from its golden hold, onto some animal tongue, my

30-38	39-47	48-56
9 (1+3+1+3+1)	10 (6+2+1)	9 (1+4+2+2)
A-flat major, A lydian	Alternating A-flat major and G-flat lydian	A-flat major
Full choir drops out; alto solo sings "my soul" <i>a cappella</i> ; peace motif returns; sudden shift to flat accidentals; second iteration of peace motif resolves unexpectedly; final two words sung by soloist	Meditative breathing tone clusters	Final, homophonic statement of "my soul" by full choir; meditative breathing
S*A*TTB, Alto/tenor solos  soul./Ooo/my soul.	SSAATTBB	SSAATB
	mmm	my soul.

\* Optional solo mm. 31-33

## **Chapter 3. Performance Guide for the Conductor**

The following chapter is intended as a practical guide and list of considerations for the preparation, rehearsal and performance of *How To Go On*. While it is the author's intention to provide informed advice and guidelines toward the production of an effective performance, it is not the author's intention to provide a set of rules or formulas for creating the ideal performance. The author acknowledges the subjectivity and creative individualism inherent in the preparation of any work of music. Consequently, the considerations and suggestions delineated below are the product of score study and individual thought and represent the opinions of the author, as well as the opinions and experiences of various conductors interviewed for this project.

### **Considerations of Rhythm**

The rhythms Trumbore incorporates in *How To Go On* are exceedingly diverse, deliberately constructed, and often serve as a part of a larger texture. In any multi-voiced texture in this work, there can commonly be found a predominance of rhythmically independent lines. These rhythmic constructs are often intended to blend and mold together to create a sense of aleatory or metric obscurity for the listener. Very few rhythmic ideas in this work are intended to be accented, separated, or sound "rhythmic" in an overt way. Rather, these rhythms should be executed with a smooth linear approach in order to contribute toward the particular mood, atmosphere or character being evoked. These textures are often in support of a solo or grouping of voices singing on text and must therefore be subservient to those parts. When there are no solos or dominant melodic material present, it is important that no single rhythmic idea be heard predominately over the others.

The declamation and intelligibility of the text is the most vital above all else. A majority of the homorhythmic solo or soli lines in *How To Go On* are accompanied by rhythmically

complex textures. The soloists must be sure to accentuate rhythms and employ clear declamation of the text in order to be heard over other voices. Long sustained syllables containing a diphthong must be rehearsed carefully to ensure properly timed and consistent closure of the vowel. Trumbore explains that a unified closing of the vowel on the word “How” is a challenge for many ensembles and is something that must be addressed early on.<sup>58</sup> This is particularly challenging at slower tempos, such as in measure twenty-four of “To See It.”

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<sup>58</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Example 3.1. Text containing diphthongs at a slow tempo. "To See It," mm. 22-30

*rit.*       $\downarrow = \text{ca. 40 or even slower}$

S.      *mf*      *p*      *mf*      *pp*  
 scarf a - round our neck, stride down the road, a  
*mf*      *p*      *mf*      *pp*  
 scarf a - round our neck, stride down the road, a  
 T.      *p*      *(Div.)*  
 B.      *p*      *mf*      *pp*  
 stride down the road, a

Pno.      *p*      *mf*      *pp*

*rit.*       $\downarrow = \text{ca. 40 or even slower}$

S.      *mp*      *p*      *mf*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, and turn our head back, to see it -  
 A.      *mp*      *pp*      *(Div.)*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, (nn)      *mf*  
 T. 1      *nn*      turn our head back,  
 T.      *nn*  
 T. 2      *nn*.  
 B.      *mp*      *p*      *mf*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, and turn our head back,  
 Pno.      *p*      *mf*

*rit.*       $\downarrow = \text{In time, slightly faster than before; } \downarrow = \text{ca. 48}$

S.      *mp*      *p*      *mf*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, and turn our head back, to see it -  
 A.      *mp*      *pp*      *(Div.)*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, (nn)      *mf*  
 T. 1      *nn*      turn our head back,  
 T.      *nn*  
 T. 2      *nn*.  
 B.      *mp*      *p*      *mf*  
 cold win - ter morn - ing, and turn our head back,  
 Pno.      *p*      *mf*

*rit.*       $\downarrow = \text{In time, slightly faster than before; } \downarrow = \text{ca. 48}$

The sopranos, altos, and tenors are given a homorhythmic quarter-note pattern at quarter note equals forty beats per minute. Multiple consecutive words in this phrase contain diphthongs. The *p* dynamic across the ensemble causes inconsistencies to be particularly exposed. Whenever a diphthong or multi-syllabic word occurs on a single note, the author advises breaking the word into its component vowel sounds and assigning each to a further division of the note under which it occurs. For example, the word “stride” under a quarter note in measure twenty-four could be subdivided into four sixteenth notes, where the first vowel [a] is sustained for the duration of three sixteenth notes and the second vowel [I] is placed on the fourth and final sixteenth note.

One of the rhythmic constructs that occurs most frequently is the simultaneous use of triple and duple eighth notes within a rhythmic texture. This occurs both within a single voice line and within multiple lines together. When this texture occurs, the rhythmic lines are not singularly distinct to the listener, but rather evoke a sense of metric obscurity; a feeling that the music is occurring out of time. These rhythms must be executed with extreme metrical precision. Quarter-note triplets also appear intermittently in the work and should be managed and rehearsed with the same degree of intention and exactness.

Trumbore employs aleatoric rhythms to evoke a sense of uncertainty, doubt, or instability. She creates this effect with both obscure and exacting compositional techniques. In measure eleven of “How,” the rhythm is removed completely, and each voice part is allotted four unmetered pitches and a very slow tempo marked, “freely.”<sup>59</sup> Instructions are included as to how the ensemble is to move through this measure. By nature, each performance will vary greatly, and care should be taken to rehearse this moment so that the ensemble is comfortable navigating through the aleatory. A more controlled approach occurs in “Knowing the End,” measure

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<sup>59</sup> See Example 2.3

eleven.<sup>60</sup> Here, the rhythms are clearly delineated, yet the execution results in perceived aleatory by the listener. To be successful, not only must the voice parts execute their respective rhythmic line with precision, but the ensemble must maintain a collective sense of the metronomic pulse in order to maintain tempo and move on to the next measure accordantly.

Pitch slides are an aurally distinguishable and powerful tool used in *How To Go On* to evoke crying, wailing, anguish and a sense of instability. They occur most frequently in the soprano and alto parts, but they appear at one point or another in every voice part. The slides vary in length, dynamic, and textual underlay. Care must be taken in rehearsal to negotiate the pacing and vowel quality of each slide in order to ensure pitch congruence and integrity of intonation. The presence of slides also presents an aural challenge for other vocal parts that sing fixed pitches, as the steady shifting pitches are difficult to tune. Singers must be aware of the presence of slides in other parts, their origin and destination pitch, and their length, so as to accurately maintain intonation, blend and balance across the ensemble.

### **Considerations of Tempo**

*How To Go On* contains multiple and frequently-occurring tempo and meter changes which require considerable score preparation and metronomic precision from the conductor. There are 233 separately marked tempo changes or fermatas that occur throughout the work. With a total of 435 measures in the entire work, a tempo-related marking is encountered a little more than once every two measures on average. Although these recurrent markings are intentionally calculated, Trumbore does allow some leeway regarding individual conductor's artistic interpretation. Most of the numerical tempo markings are designated "circa," and many are without a metronome designation at all. Less exacting markings, such as "slightly slower" or

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<sup>60</sup> See Example 2.7

“freely” allow for subjective interpretation. A substantial amount of time must be allocated to cautious score study and effective ensemble preparation. The conductor must become familiar and comfortable with the roadmap of the work and have the means to guide an ensemble in their passage through the various tempo markings and transitions.

The fermatas in *How To Go On* are placed very deliberately. They should not all be treated the same, but all of them contribute to the emotion or narrative of the work. The underlying text and musical surroundings will determine the treatment. Fermatas which occur over rests should not be underestimated or trivialized. An example of this is in the opening measures of “How.”<sup>61</sup> The quarter rest in measure two is not meant to be treated the same as the quarter rest in measure five and vice versa. Inversely, caution should be taken to avoid inserting additional time over rests that do not have a fermata unless it is an intentional artistic choice by the conductor.

### Considerations of Ensemble

The size of the performing ensemble is an important factor to examine when considering a performance of *How To Go On*. The work regularly calls for large divisis, the largest of which consists of fourteen voices.<sup>62</sup> The author recommends a choir of at least thirty-two singers for a performance of this work. This will ensure that the larger divisis will have at least two voices on each part, which will in turn assist balance and intonation. It should be noted that The Choral Arts Initiative, the original commissioning and recording ensemble, was comprised of twenty-two singers. While their premiere and subsequent recording is proof that a successful performance of *How To Go On* is feasible with lesser forces, a high level of musicianship and

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<sup>61</sup> See Example 2.1.

<sup>62</sup> “Too See It,” m. 34. See also the Herford bar analysis for this movement, Table 2.3.

modifications to balance and scoring were required in order to achieve balance across the ensemble.<sup>63</sup>

*How To Go On* is characterized by constantly shifting orchestration and voice combinations. Trumbore understands the necessity of varying orchestration and voice combinations in order to keep audiences engaged over a long work. Performers must possess an awareness of the role that their part plays in the larger texture and how their part correlates to other parts. Often multiple roles are implemented at once and the roles change and shift constantly. The three most prevailing roles encountered are (1) the melody sung on text, (2) rhythmically oriented accompaniment, or (3) a sustained drone.

The text must always be intelligible, therefore the melodic role must be the most prominent. The melodic lines in *How To Go On* appear in a variety of forms, including a single soloist, a soli section, or a multi-part combination of voices. The accompanying roles must be subservient to those with text, however they are no less important in setting the mood, driving the energy forward, or creating an emotional evocation. These are supportive roles. They should not stand out excessively, nor should they be thought of as a passive role.

The scoring and delineation of divisi in *How To Go On* is very clear and straightforward. In sections where a large divisi of more than eight voices occurs, each divisi is allotted a staff and is easily readable. Most divisi are self-explanatory, however one example warrants clarification. In “Knowing the End,” measure fifteen, the altos, tenors and basses begin an ostinato with the instructions that the sopranos and altos divide evenly among the alto, tenor and bass lines.

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<sup>63</sup> Elliot, interview.

Example 3.2. Soprano/Alto divisi, "Knowing the End," m. 15

The musical score for Example 3.2 shows a vocal arrangement for three soloists (A, T, B) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are labeled A, T, and B, each with its own staff. The piano part is labeled Pno. The score is in common time, with measures 15 and 16 shown. Measure 15 starts with a piano introduction followed by a vocal entry. The vocal parts sing a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 16 continues with the vocal parts and piano. The vocal parts are divided among the three soloists (A, T, B). The piano part provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.

There are multiple ways to apportion this divisi and several factors to take into consideration. First, this ostinato accompanies three soloists whose lines are comprised of dramatic dynamic contrasts and extreme ranges that cannot be overpowered. The second consideration is the alto line, which is the most rhythmically active part in the three-part ostinato. Caution is advised against dividing the sopranos and altos evenly across the three lines. This would cause the tenors and basses to be too strong. Matt Culloton, artistic director of The Singers: Minnesota Choral Artists, suggests the following divisi:<sup>64</sup>

Table 3.1. Matt Culloton divisi assignment, "Knowing the End," mm. 15-28

Voice Part	Divisi Assignment
Alto	Sopranos
Tenor	Alto one and tenors
Bass	Alto two and basses

<sup>64</sup> Matt Culloton, interview by the author, December 9, 2019.

This divisi places all of the sopranos on the alto voice part and the altos divide evenly between the tenor and bass parts. In this configuration, there are twice as many upper voices on the alto voice part as on the tenor or bass parts, which allows for greater discernment of the alto part by the listener. As an alternative, Dr. Andrew Clark, Director of Choral Activities at Harvard University, utilized the following divisi:<sup>65</sup>

Table 3.2. Andrew Clark divisi assignment, "Knowing the End," mm. 15-28

Voice Part	Divisi Assignment
Alto	Soprano one and alto one
Tenor	Soprano two, alto two and tenors
Bass	Soprano two, alto two and basses

In this option, the first sopranos and first altos are assigned to the alto voice part and the second sopranos and second altos are each divided evenly between the tenor and bass voice parts. This divisi is similar in that there are also twice as many voices on the alto voice part as on the tenor and bass parts. In contrast, the soprano and alto singers are more evenly distributed across all three voice parts. Note that in this distribution, second sopranos are required to sing A-flat below middle C.

There are seventeen separately designated solos in *How To Go On*. These solos vary greatly in length and voice type and call for a variety of different ranges, colors and characters. The underlying text speaks to those needs. Table 3.3 below serves as a delineation of the attributes of every solo in the work, including location, voice type, range, and general characteristics. While information regarding location, staff name and range are pulled directly from the score, the general comments reflect the opinion of the author. Additionally, the voice

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<sup>65</sup> Andrew Clark, interview by the author, December 17, 2019.

types for some solos have been modified by the author from what is printed in the score, based on the pitch range of the solo line.

Table 3.3. Breakdown of solos in *How To Go On*

Movement	Measures	Staff Name	Voice Type	Range	Comments
How	17-24	Solo 1	Soprano	C4-B5	Wailing slides on "Ah." Requires very high range. Tone should be smooth and clear with little to no vibrato.
	15-24	Solo 2	Soprano/Alto	C4-E5	Wailing slides on "Ah." Tone should be smooth and clear with little to no vibrato.
	27-31	Bass	Baritone	A2-D3	Brief solo at the end of the movement, stating the second half of the text. Tone should be soft but resonant with vibrato.
Relinquishment	1-21	Solo 1	Soprano/Alto	D-sharp 4-E5	These three solos behave as a trio. Voices should be chosen based on clarity, blend and balance. Tone should not be too small, nor too dramatic. Some vibrato is desirable but not at the expense of blend and intonation.
	1-21	Solo 2	Soprano/Alto	C-sharp 4-D5	
	1-21	Solo 3	Soprano/Alto	C-sharp 4-D5	
	24-27, 38-42	Solo 3	Baritone	C-sharp 3-D4	Wide dynamic range. Exposed at moments. Tone should be full and resonant with vibrato. Could be divided amongst two separate singers. Not to be confused with the "Solo 3" treble solo in the same movement.
Requiescat	94-98	Alto 1	Soprano/Alto	C4-B4	Brief but striking solo. Tone should be full and resonant with vibrato.
Knowing the End	20-28	Solo 1	Soprano	C5-B5	Upper voice in a contrapuntal trio. Requires very high range. Tone should be smooth and clear but colorful with controlled vibrato.
	16-28	Solo 2	Soprano/Alto	G-sharp 4-F-sharp 5	Middle voice in a contrapuntal trio. Tone should be smooth and clear but colorful with controlled vibrato
	20-28	Solo 3	Bass	F-sharp 2-E3	Lower voice in a contrapuntal trio. Requires F#2 sung at <i>forte</i> or close to <i>forte</i> . Tone should be clear and resonant with controlled vibrato.
	35-38	Solo 1	Alto	A3-D4	Brief solo at the end of the movement, similar to the ending of "How." Tone should be soft but resonant with vibrato. Not to be confused with the "Solo 1" soprano solo in the same movement.

(Table cont'd)

Movement	Measures	Staff Name	Voice Type	Range	Comments
Sometimes Peace Comes	1-15, 25-26, 36-43	Soprano	Soprano/Alto	E-flat 4-D-flat 5	These two solos behave as a duet. They present the "Peace" motif, sung on "Oo." Tone should be smooth and clear with little to no vibrato. As noted by the composer, these solos are optional: They may be performed as solos, as a small subsection, or by the entire section.
	1-15, 25-26, 36-43	Alto	Alto	B-flat 3-A-flat 4	
	8-42	Solo 1	Alto	G-flat 3-C-sharp 5	Featured soloist for this movement. Requires stable low range, clear delivery and expressive character. Soloist should be positioned in front of the ensemble for greatest effect. Tone should be resonant, soft and warm with free vibrato. Some pitches are optional, i.e. the soloist is given a choice of which pitch to sing.
When At Last	1-38	Solo 1	Alto	A-sharp 3-E5	These two solos are featured as a duet for the duration of this movement. The melodic lines are disjunct at times with wide intervallic leaps. Requires tonal accuracy, clear delivery and expressive character.
	1-38	Solo 2	Tenor	D-sharp 3-F-sharp 4	The duet should be positioned in front of the ensemble for greatest effect. Tone should be resonant and warm with controlled vibrato.

### Suggestions for Preparation

*How To Go On* is a challenging work for both the conductor and the performing ensemble, however with adequate preparation and musicianship, the work is accessible to a number of different choral ensembles. It requires a conductor with a holistic familiarity with the score, mathematical metric awareness, excellent aural diagnostic skills, perpetual awareness of changing meters, and precise execution of gesture.

The order in which the music is rehearsed with an ensemble is largely at the discretion of the director and may be dependent of factors such as rehearsal length, rehearsal frequency and individual singer preparation. The individual movements vary considerably in length and somewhat in difficulty level. Despite certain movements perhaps appearing more accessible due

to their relatively short length, the conductor should not overlook nor diminish the practice time required for each movement to secure mastery with an ensemble. It is the opinion of this author, as well as the consensus amongst the majority of conductors interviewed for this project, that “Requiescat” is the most challenging movement in the work. It is strongly advised that this movement be introduced early on in the rehearsal process and that a comparatively larger portion of rehearsal time be devoted to its comprehension and proficiency.

A successful performance of *How To Go On* requires an ensemble with fine musicianship, power and control in the extreme vocal registers, and exceptional aural skills. They must be able to proficiently execute each movement while attending to balance, intonation, and an overall choral tone. There is not a great deal of agility or virtuosity required to perform this work. Furthermore, there is no requirement to balance with an instrumental ensemble; the singers need only be concerned with balancing and blending with each other. The greatest challenges are maintaining good ensemble tone, balance and intonation. For these reasons, the author recommends this work as suitable for performance by an upper-level collegiate choir, upper-level community choir, or semi-professional vocal ensemble. This author does not recommend a full performance of this work by a high-school-level choir, unless the ensemble is of an appropriate size and contains singers with mature voices and exceptional aural musicianship skills. It would be appropriate, however, for a high-school-level ensemble to excerpt a single movement or a selection of movements from this work for performance.

It is strongly recommended that the conductor and ensemble undertake a closer examination of the text as a part of the rehearsal process. It is easy to become immersed with the complexity of the music and its interpretation, but the text to which the music was set can often be overlooked as a distinct element of the work. It must not be forgotten that the process of

music composition is a generative art form. An early and thorough examination, absorption, and exegesis of the texts of *How To Go On* will illuminate Trumbore's compositional process and the way in which the texts inspired her. This will lead to a greater understanding of the generative process behind the work, resulting in a more enriched interpretation and a more purposeful execution by the performing ensemble.

*How To Go On* is an emotionally powerful work. It addresses serious and difficult topics surrounding loss, grief, bereavement, the afterlife, and death. The poems that Trumbore chose are simple in their delivery and contemporary in tone. The emotions expressed are universal and experienced by every human being in various degrees. An effective performance of the work requires that singers in the ensemble connect with the text and underlying emotions in order to most effectively convey the meaning and message to an audience. Consequently, the conductor should be aware of the emotional effect it may have on singers during preparation, particularly college students. Recent psychology research has revealed that between thirty-five and forty-eight percent of college students have lost a family member or close friend within the last two years and between twenty-two and thirty percent of college students have lost a family member or close friend within the last year.<sup>66</sup> Choral music that addresses these serious topics is important, and can be therapeutic, cathartic, unifying, and empowering to singer and audience member alike; however, rehearsing and performing a work of this nature can be emotionally taxing for those who have never allowed such emotions to inhabit them so profoundly or tangibly. A certain degree of director-lead emotional processing must take place within the ensemble prior to performing this work. It is suggested that conductors engage in healthy and constructive dialogue with their ensembles to discuss the overall psychology of the work, the

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<sup>66</sup> D.E. Balk, A.C. Walker, and A. Baker, "Prevalence and severity of college student bereavement examined in a randomly selected sample," *Death Studies* 34, no. 5, (May-June 2010): 459-68.

vision and intention of the performance, and the various emotional connections to personal experiences that will inevitably take place.<sup>67</sup>

Lastly, the conductor is strongly encouraged to contact the composer and invite her to collaborate or give feedback to the ensemble on the preparation or performance of the work. There is a great advantage to performing the works of a living composer. Having a direct connection to the primary source or author of a composition is a privilege and a luxury not often afforded to the performing artist. Trumbore is a composer who takes great joy in collaboration and is eager to work with groups that are performing her works.<sup>68</sup>

### Suggestions for Performance

*How To Go On* does not require any particular ensemble positioning or configuration on stage other than what will work best for a particular ensemble in a given space. A majority of solos in *How To Go On* may be performed from within the ensemble. In these cases, careful attention must be paid to ensure that soloists are placed such that they do not become overbalanced by the other singers, e.g. in a frontward row. The alto solo in “Sometimes Peace Comes,” and the alto and tenor duet in “When At Last,” should be positioned in front of the ensemble, as these solos are substantially longer and more prominent within their respective movements.

There are a number of choral works that would be appropriate to perform in the same program as *How To Go On*. Because the composer has described this work as a secular requiem, it would be fitting to program another setting of a requiem mass. Duruflé’s *Requiem*, Op. 9, or

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<sup>67</sup> While the act of intimate emotional engagement and discussion with singers in preparation for a rehearsal or performance of this work is encouraged, the conductor should not attempt to fill the role of a psychiatrist or counselor for their singers in this respect. If a student of choir member is experiencing psychological or emotional difficulties, they should be referred to a professional mental health practitioner.

<sup>68</sup> Trumbore, interview.

Pizzetti's *Messa di Requiem* are just two suggestions. Another appropriate work would be Monteverdi's sestina, *Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata*, SV111. Regarding other living composers, Eric Barnum's six-minute *Requiescat* that sets a poem by Oscar Wilde would fit well. Additionally, the choral song cycle *To Touch the Sky* by Kevin Puts contains a movement, "A Castle Rock," which is a setting of a depressing and emotionally powerful poem by Emily Bronte.

### **Considerations of Movement Order**

As mentioned in chapter two, *How To Go On* is a work that Trumbore informs may be performed in any movement order, with the exception of the final movement. This is an extraordinary, freedom-granting element of the work. This level of creativity and interpretation in a musical composition is rare and an opportunity not typically granted to choral conductors, therefore it should not be passed over or taken lightly. The order in which the movements are performed has a significant influence on how the audience—and indeed the singers—experience the work. In a sense, the conductor has the opportunity to “co-compose” with Trumbore and assist in the creation of his or her own variant of the work.

Several considerations must be made when determining what movement order to employ in a full performance. Although the poems are not connected by any manner of plot or characters in a dramatic sense, there is nonetheless a narrative that can be derived from the similar and recurring ideas presented in each poem. A change in the order that each poem is presented in turn changes the perceived narrative. The overall theme of the work centers on the concept of grief, loss and death, however the ideas, imagery and sentiment of each poem varies. Each movement possesses its own unique viewpoint and projects a particular emotion or group of emotions which can represent a different “location” on the path through grief. For example, in “*Requiescat*,”

there is an overarching image of “letting go” and the transition from this life to the next. In “Sometimes Peace Comes,” the imagery focuses on various descriptions of peace, comfort and enlightenment. If this movement were performed immediately preceding “Requiescat,” the derived narrative could insinuate that it is only when one has come to a place of stillness and acceptance in life that the reality and inevitability of death can be accepted wholeheartedly. Contrarily, if “Requiescat” were performed directly preceding “Sometimes Peace Comes,” this would derive a contrasting narrative in which the act of “letting go” is not undertaken in life, but after life; true peace is only found through death itself.

The most conspicuous example of textual connection between movements is between “How” and “Knowing the End.” Both of these movements are settings of the same poem excerpt, and both movements contain similar compositional devices and musical constructs. Other elements of their treatment are altogether different.<sup>69</sup> One notable difference is the part of the poetic line that each movement emphasizes. “How” places greater emphasis on the first half, while “Knowing the End” places greater emphasis on the second half. As it happens, both emphasize their respective texts through the use of a repeating ostinato. This affects the underlying idea or image that each respective movement is highlighting.

As a result of the thematic connection between poems, various recurring keywords emerge that can be used as a connection point or point of symmetry when devising a movement order. “However Difficult” and “When At Last” both make references to a garden; “Relinquishment” and “Sometimes Peace Comes” each reference the sun; “Too See It” and “Relinquishment” allude either directly or indirectly to winter. These are just some of the examples that can be located in the texts. The identification and discernment of these keywords

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<sup>69</sup> See the Herford Bar Analysis for both movements; Table 2.1 and Table 2.6.

and themes can assist the conductor in the construction of a unifying and theme-centered movement order.

In addition to textual connections, there are a number of compositional devices and musical constructs which recur from movement to movement. These constructs are discussed throughout chapter two and include elements such as the “peace” motif (“Sometimes Peace Comes,” “When At Last”), the syncopation motif (“Relinquishment,” “Requiescat”), the triple-duple motif (“However Difficult,” “Requiescat,” “When At Last”), repeating ostinatos, (“How,” “However Difficult”), sustained drones (“To See It”), and half-step harmonic relations (“How,” “Requiescat,” “Knowing the End,” “Relinquishment”). These constructs should be considered when devising a movement order for performance. They are sometimes subtle but often recognizable and can serve in a thematic or narrative role in different ways contingent on the movement order selected.

The various movements of *How To Go On* begin and conclude in various ways, both in key area and in texture. The difficulty involved in transitioning between movements can also vary greatly depending on the ensemble skill level, ensemble size, and movement order. Some movement transitions are potentially easy, such as the unison B-natural in the sopranos at the conclusion of “How” into the unison B-natural in the sopranos to begin “Knowing the End.” Others are more difficult, such as when transitioning from an all-flat key area to an all-sharp key area and vice versa. Conductors must take great care to analyze and assess each transition carefully to ensure that their ensemble is capable of executing them competently. They must also ensure that sufficient rehearsal time is allotted to prepare the more challenging transitions for performance.

It is advised that the conductor carefully consider the placement of “Requiescat.” This is one of the most challenging movements in the entire work due to its comparatively long length, complex and densely compacted musical elements, and overall difficulty. This movement also contains a majority of the musical constructs encountered throughout *How To Go On*, including the syncopation motif, triple-duple motif, the peace motif, and half-step harmonic relations. As such, it is a substantial and aggregate segment of the overall work and can be considered a centerpiece or be compared to the development section of a sonata-allegro form orchestral movement. Central placement of this movement will allow for better flow and symmetry to the overall movement order.

In the grouping of certain movements, the conductor may wish to opt for a more seamless *attacca* transition from one movement into the next. This is a prudent strategy that would move the energy and textual narrative forward without additional pause in a work that is generally slow-paced and sustained. This requires rapid audiation ability from the singers. Depending on the opening and concluding key areas and pitches, some movement transitions are more suitable for this approach than others. If a choir encounters a transition that is particularly challenging or unstable, the use of a pitch pipe in performance may be necessary. If the transition can afford to include a moment or pause prior to continuing on, it is the author’s opinion that using a pitch pipe to establish a new key will not be an impedance to performance flow, but ensure greater security and confidence in the singers, resulting in a more successful execution of the work as a whole.

## **A Comparison of Three Movement Orders**

The following is a comparison of three possible movement orders of *How To Go On*, each conceived by a different conductor. In presenting these options, the author does not advocate for any particular movement order over other arrangements. This decision is entirely up to the conductor and should be approached with a subjective and unbiased state of mind. The purpose of this comparison is to objectively present three contrasting arrangements of the work to inspire and cultivate performance ideas for future conductors and ensembles.

### **Movement Order Option #1**

The first movement order to be discussed was conceived by Brandon Elliott, Artistic Director of the Choral Arts Initiative, the organization who commissioned the work. This was the movement order employed for the premiere of the work and consequently became the movement order of the published score. Table 3.4 below delineates and outlines the movement order that Elliot selected, including characteristic elements of each movement. These include opening and concluding key areas or pitches, opening and concluding textures, recurring keywords, and common musical constructs.

Table 3.4. Brandon Elliot Movement Order

Movement	Opening Texture	Opening Key/Pitch	Concluding Texture	Concluding Key/Pitch	Recurring Keywords	Musical Constructs
How	BBB	Unison F	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half-step harmonic relations
However Difficult	SSA	F minor	Tutti	D-flat lydian	How, Garden	Ostinato Eighth-note triplets
To See It	Basses	Unison A-flat / A-flat major	Tutti	A-flat major	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, Hill	Additive drones
Relinquishment	3 treble soloists	D-sharp minor	Tutti	D lydian	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, River, Earth, Sun, Darkness	"Syncopation" motif Half-step harmonic relations
Requiescat	Tutti	Unison D-sharp	SSAA	F-sharp minor	Earth, Fire, Ashes, River, Dirt	"Syncopation" motif Eighth-note triplets Half-step harmonic relations "Peace" motif
Knowing the End	SSAA	Unison B / G major	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half-step harmonic relations
Sometimes Peace Comes	SA	F and C / D-flat major	Tutti	G-flat major	Fire, Ashes, Sun, High Plain	"Peace" motif
When At Last	Treble soloist	D-sharp / B major	Breathing	A-flat major	Dirt, Earth, Garden	"Peace" motif Eighth-note triplets

Elliot's movement order appears to be derived primarily from a text and narrative-based approach. There are numerous instances where consecutive movements share certain keywords or ideas within the text which allow the listener a sense of textual continuity throughout the work. "Requiescat" is placed in the middle, with four movements before and three movements after. This gives a sense of symmetry to the arrangement. A macro arch can be observed across all eight movements, with relatively lower-energy movements like "However Difficult" and "To See It" positioned early, building energy through "Relinquishment," peaking with "Requiescat", and then resolving through "Knowing the End" and "Sometimes Peace Comes."

"How" is positioned first. The soft initial ostinato, half step harmonic relations, and wailing pitch slides throughout this movement give a sense of heaviness and begin the work from a place of uncertainty and instability. The question being asked makes this movement a fitting introduction to the work, setting up the subsequent movements and the emotional journey therein as if they are attempting to answer this question. Dr. Stuart Hill describes this opening movement like a Greek chorus, setting the scene and creating a space to invite the listener in.<sup>70</sup>

"However Difficult" follows and is a fitting pairing with the previous movement due to the similar ostinato construct on the word "how," this time in the upper voices. This shift to a higher register from the full and relatively dark first movement acts as a pin prick of light. The confrontational nature of this text suggests the idea that before death can be addressed, life must first be acknowledged. A charge is made to take ownership of life and accept what is present rather than focusing on what could be lost. The continuing narrative of "To See It" implies that once life has been acknowledged, it must now be seen. This movement evokes an awakening or heightened awareness of the life journey that is being confronted. "Relinquishment" continues

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<sup>70</sup> Stuart Hill, interview by the author, December 10, 2019.

this idea of seeing in the opening words, “I am looking...” There is a successive connection to the idea of winter in the references to the “frozen river.” This movement also directly continues the image of turning. Whereas the “turn” in the previous movement signified a heightened awareness of life and what is possessed, the meaning shifts in “Relinquishment” to signify the act of giving “it all up by simply turning.” This keyword has now taken on new meaning and signifies maturity or growth through the experience of grief as the reality that “soon it will all be gone” slowly sinks in.

The “all of it” that must be given up is expanded in “Requiescat,” where the act of giving it up, or in this context, letting go of a loved one, is finally committed. The triplets that signified difficulty in “However Difficult” return, only now they are juxtaposed with duple rhythms, intensifying the struggle of letting go. The “Syncopation” motif appears in several places, connecting to the previous movement, and at the very end the “peace” motif is foreshadowed during the final iteration of “let us go.” “Knowing the End” returns to the question asked in the first movement, but with gained wisdom; there is greater enlightenment about “the end of the story.” A second connection to the first movement is the repeating ostinato, perhaps signifying a memory of the pain of letting go or a return of questioning, doubt, and despair.

“Sometimes Peace Comes” heralds in an unexpected stillness and comfort. The “Peace” motif first introduced at the end of “Requiescat” is now firmly established. This motif association connects the act of letting go of a loved one with a sense of peace, enlightenment and memory. The placement of this movement at the end, just before “When At Last,” insinuates a resolution and acceptance of everything that has been experienced throughout the journey of the work. All that remains is to look ahead to the remainder of life, including death, with anticipation, intention and purpose.

The transitions between movements in Elliot's arrangement are of mixed difficulty.

Several of the transitions are moderately easy, however others are more challenging and require more attention. Most notable is the transition from "Relinquishment" to "Requiescat." The ending D lydian mode shifts to a unison D-sharp in the initial implied key of B major. This shifts immediately into C lydian one measure later, accompanied by triple/duple motifs and wailing slides. Another potentially challenging transition is from "To See It" into "Relinquishment." The key area here shifts from the all flat key of A-flat major to the all sharp key of D-sharp minor. The soloists who open "Relinquishment" are exposed and will require competent aural acuity.

### **Movement Order Option #2**

The second movement order configuration was conceived by Dr. Jenny Wong, Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, who performed this arrangement of *How To Go On* in Los Angeles on March 17, 2017. Table 3.5 below outlines Wong's movement order.

Table 3.5. Jenny Wong Movement Order

Movement	Opening Texture	Opening Key/Pitch	Concluding Texture	Concluding Key/Pitch	Recurring Keywords	Musical Constructs
How	BBB	Unison F	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half step harmonic relations
To See It	Basses	Unison A-flat / A-flat major	Tutti	A-flat major	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, Hill	Additive drones
However Difficult	SSA	F minor	Tutti	D-flat lydian	How, Garden	Ostinato Eighth-note triplets
Sometimes Peace Comes	SA	F and C / D-flat major	Tutti	G-flat major	Fire, Ashes, Sun, High Plain	"Peace" motif
Requiescat	Tutti	Unison D-sharp	SSAA	F-sharp minor	Earth, Fire, Ashes, River, Dirt	"Syncopation" motif Eighth-note triplets Half step harmonic relations "Peace" motif
Knowing the End	SSAA	Unison B / G major	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half step harmonic relations
Relinquishment	3 treble soloists	D-sharp minor	Tutti	D lydian	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, River, Earth, Sun, Darkness	"Syncopation" motif Half step harmonic relations
When At Last	Treble soloist	D-sharp / B major	Breathing	A-flat major	Dirt, Earth, Garden	"Peace" motif Eighth-note triplets

Wong's movement order was initially constructed based on key relations. Wong sought to create a movement order that would allow for the most natural and least jarring progression through each movement. In this way she strove to honor the experience that Trumbore wanted to create for the audience. As the arrangement came into fruition, other connections between movements became apparent to her.<sup>71</sup>

Wong divides her arrangement of *How To Go On* into three macro groupings or arches. Much like Elliot's version, "How" serves as the introduction to the work and contains the first arch-like form within itself. The next three movements serve as the next arch. In "To See It," the main idea of seeing is present, but Wong stipulates that the seeing has not occurred yet; the text here is addressing what is to come ("We need to separate to see").<sup>72</sup> "However Difficult" increases the energy with ostinatos and the first introduction of the triple-duple motif. The first arch concludes with "Sometimes Peace Comes" and serves as a peaceful conclusion to the first grouping.

The second arch is occupied solely by "Requiescat." For Wong, this movement signifies a sense of action and forward motion. She postulates that while the first four movements represent a passive, perhaps sedentary image of enduring loss, the opening measures of "Requiescat," which she notes is the first time the entire choir sings in unison, represents the first sense of the persona actively going on in the narrative.<sup>73</sup>

The third arch leads to the end of the work. It was fitting for Wong that "Knowing the End" began this final movement group. The recognizable musical and textural material from "How" alludes to a recall or recapitulation of the first movement grouping. In "Relinquishment,"

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<sup>71</sup> Jenny Wong, interview by the author, January 13, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

the idea of “looking” corresponds with the idea of “seeing” mentioned in “To See It,” only this time it is in present tense. Wong explains that the “seeing” here has evolved from mere awareness to inner experience and enlightenment. The homophonic solo trio is a texture unique only to this movement and in Wong’s view, gives it a sense of clarity. “When At Last” connects to the previous movement uniquely in that both movements begin on a D-sharp and both have similar, although not identical, opening melodic pitches, giving the audience a strong sense of finality.<sup>74</sup>

Because Wong initially derived her movement order on key relationships, one of the ways in which she sought to group movements was based on the predominant accidentals. In her experience, the type of accidentals being sung affects the tone and timbre of a choir.<sup>75</sup> She wanted to use this experience to inform how she ordered her movements. She also wanted to avoid any transitions from flat keys to sharp keys and vice versa. After “How,” which serves as an introductory movement, the three movements of the first arch (“Too See It,” “However Difficult,” and “Sometimes Peace Comes”) are all written in predominately flat keys. The three movements of the final arch (“Knowing the End,” “Relinquishment,” and “When At Last”) are all written in predominately sharp keys. This results in a majority of movement transitions in which both the concluding key area of the previous movement and the initial key area of the subsequent movement are both either flat keys or sharp keys. As a result, transitions between most movements are generally of a lower difficulty level. One notable exception is the transition from “Sometimes Peace Comes” into “Requiescat,” which moves from G-flat major into B major. These keys are not closely related, and this transition is the only instance in Wong’s arrangement that moves from a flat key to a sharp key. Because Wong envisioned “Sometimes

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<sup>74</sup> Wong, interview.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

Peace Comes” as the conclusion to the first movement group, she employed a long pause at the conclusion of this movement, which presumably aided in establishing the new key area for “Requiescat.”

### **Movement Order Option #3**

The third movement order option was conceived by the author and, similar to Elliot’s approach, was developed with a focus on narrative and textural relationships. This arrangement tracks a journey through grief from despair to hope, questions to answers, and darkness to enlightenment. See Table Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6. Stuart Dameron Movement Order

Movement	Opening Texture	Opening Key/Pitch	Concluding Texture	Concluding Key/Pitch	Recurring Keywords	Musical Constructs
How	BBB	Unison F	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half step harmonic relations
Knowing the End	SSAA	Unison B / G major	Sopranos	Unison B	How	Ostinato Half step harmonic relations
To See It	Basses	Unison A-flat / A-flat major	Tutti	A-flat major	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, Hill	Additive drones
However Difficult	SSA	F minor	Tutti	D-flat lydian	How, Garden	Ostinato Eighth-note triplets
Requiescat	Tutti	Unison D-sharp	SSAA	F-sharp minor	Earth, Fire, Ashes, River, Dirt	"Syncopation" motif Eighth-note triplets Half step harmonic relations "Peace" motif
Sometimes Peace Comes	SA	F and C / D-flat major	Tutti	G-flat major	Fire, Ashes, Sun, High Plain	"Peace" motif
Relinquishment	3 treble soloists	D-sharp minor	Tutti	D lydian	Winter, Turning, Seeing/Looking, River, Earth, Sun, Darkness	"Syncopation" motif Half step harmonic relations
When At Last	Treble soloist	D-sharp / B major	Breathing	A-flat major	Dirt, Earth, Garden	"Peace" motif Eighth-note triplets

Similar to both Elliot's and Wong's movement arrangements, this author elected to open the work with "How." The use of this movement as an introduction is very fitting, as it asks the fundamental question and sets the scene. It begins the work in a state of despair, hopelessness and paralysis. For this arrangement, the author elected to perform "Knowing the End" next. This places both movements containing the same text back to back. It continues the same emotion and the same introductory atmosphere as "How," but now focuses forward with more emphasis on the "end." The initial question in this poem excerpt has two distinct parts, therefore it could be fitting that it is asked in two movements, performed consecutively. The introduction of this movement, comprised of upper voices, strikingly contrasts the three-part bass opening of "How," which is refreshing enough to the listener to avoid sounding repetitive. Additionally, the final melodic statement on the text "knowing the end of the story" will be easily recalled by the audience from the previous movement. The transition from the end of "How" into "Knowing the End" is smooth. The unison B-natural in the sopranos becomes the starting pitch of the next movement. As a result, this transition could be initiated *attacca*, further connecting these two movements together.

The unison B-natural at the end of "Knowing the End" transitions easily to the basses' unison A-flat in "To See It," which is the distance of an augmented second, or enharmonic minor third. From a narrative standpoint, "To See It" serves as the awakening moment; the first awareness of life from a place divorced from grief. It is a call to action and a break from the immobilizing place of despair and hopelessness that began the work. Once the awakening and heightened sense of awareness has occurred, the next movement, "However Difficult," brings forth the accountability and liability for life. As a result, the persona can take ownership of life, including "the failures," as well as the truth of the inevitability of life's end. The transition into

this movement involves a shift from A-flat major to the relative key area of F minor, another relatively easy transition.

The transition into “Requiescat” is more difficult. The key area of D-flat lydian that concludes “However Difficult” is followed by unison D-sharps in the key of B major. Although there are some enharmonic common tones, such as the soprano one E-flat in “However Difficult” which becomes D-sharp in “Requiescat,” this transition is still moderately challenging. This movement marks a shift in the narrative. Now that accountability and ownership of life have taken place, and a steady footing in the journey of grief has been established, the focus of energy makes a transition from an inner personal focus to an outward, external focus as the dying loved one is given direction and reassurance. This is a point of compelling drive and forward direction, but with the acknowledgment that the journey is still not free of struggle and resistance.

The author chose to follow “Requiescat” with “Sometimes Peace Comes.” The “peace” motif that is introduced at the end of the former is continued as a meaningful centerpiece in the latter. The motif is transposed down one half-step from the lingering F-sharp and C-sharp at the end of “Requiescat” to the initial F-natural and C-natural that begins “Sometimes Peace Comes.” This has potential to be a difficult transition for the performers, depending on whether soloists, or the full sections are used. A dual meaning can be gleaned from this text. The persona could still be speaking to the dying loved one, or, if the ending of “Requiescat” signifies the loved one’s passing, the text could mark a return inward, speaking directly to the persona in reassurance and newfound wisdom.

The beginning of “Relinquishment” is marked by a moderately easy transition from a powerful G-flat major seven nine chord into the trio solo entrance in the enharmonic relative of D-sharp minor. Now the persona has found peace and not only accepts taking part in the act of

letting go and accepting the inevitability of death, but embraces and is resigned to the fact that this act of letting go must occur daily, “again and again.” The lesson is retained that life is about giving up, every day, just as the day gives up to the night by the earth’s turning. The transition into “When At Last” from D lydian into B major may or may not be difficult depending on the musicianship skill of the treble soloist. In this final movement, the persona emerges from the journey of experience with a renewed purpose and intention toward life and a courageous anticipation of death.

## Conclusion

*How To Go On* is a challenging but accessible small masterwork appropriate for a number of different choral ensembles. Its texts are simple and clear yet possess powerful imagery and are rooted in the universal experience of grief and dying. Trumbore's musical setting elevates these texts to a higher mental and emotional domain that invests in an immersive and cathartic experience for listener and performer alike. The eight movements of this work are representative of her skill in writing for *a cappella* choral ensembles and serve as a fitting example of her expressive intuition, artistic vulnerability and diversity of craft.

The choice of movement order gives a rare creative freedom to the conductor, granting the ability to build a unique narrative or description of the emotional process of grief into the performance of this work. As Trumbore explains, this work seeks much more than to merely be “heard” or to simply display an image or an impression.

For me the piece is a tool to work through feelings of grief or of fear or death or mortality. As a composer there's always a selfish desire... It benefits me to have lots of people hear my music. That's great, but with this piece more than anything else I've written, I think it's a helpful piece. I think other people can wield it as a tool to move through their own grief and loss journey. That was the ultimate reason to write this piece in the first place.<sup>76</sup>

The sharing of emotions and experiences, both good and bad, are at the core of the human experience, and is the calling of all art. There is a healing and redeeming truth to experiencing grief communally. Although this work asks heavy questions and may not overtly profess to have the answers, it nonetheless acts as a haven and guides the listener on a path toward awakening, enlightenment, acceptance, and ultimately, peace. The care and healing offered through this work

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<sup>76</sup> Trumbore, interview.

is both intimately personal and outwardly communal. It allows for the cultivation of comfort from within, and the extension of that comfort to others.

Lastly, it is the author's belief that this monograph will not only encourage more frequent programming and performance of this work, but also inspire further research and investigation into the choral music of Dale Trumbore. Her compositional voice is creative, inspiring and worthy of further study and performance.

## Appendix A. Interview with Dale Trumbore and Brandon Elliot

*The following joint interview took place at Dale Trumbore's home in Los Angeles, CA on December 14, 2019. The interviewer (Stuart Dameron) and Interviewee #1 (Dale Trumbore) corresponded in person, while Interviewee #2 (Brandon Elliott) corresponded via video conference link from his home in Moonpark, CA.*

SD: What were the circumstances that brought about the initial commission of How To Go On?

BE: Dale, I feel like you tell this story better than I do.

DT: Oh, well I feel like I talk about the coffee meeting that we had.

BE: Right.

DT: We got coffee to talk about... was it to talk about "I Am Music?"

BE: I believe so, yeah.

DT: We met halfway between our houses [laughs] because you lived far away at the time. And we were talking about a different commission, and then ended up on the cycle through various topics ended up saying, sort of at the same time... I was saying that I wanted to write a big piece... work on a big project. And you mentioned that CAI had been wanting to do an album and I expressed interest in that. And you said something like, "The album would have to have a large-scale choral work." And I said "Oh, well I've been wanting to write this secular requiem," and it was a perfect timing of everything, really, that I already had this in mind.

BE: It was basically... we were both sharing some sort of medium-term, long-term goals and they both just happened to perfectly coincide with one another sort of like, this is just meant to be. Done! Here we go.

DT: And I wanted to make an album too. It was just perfect timing.

BE: Yeah, it was really great. I think we both knew it was gonna happen.

SD: So, you had been thinking about a long-term work for some time, or at least creating one?

DT: Yeah, I had two goals that both happened to be what CAI's goals were as well, which was making an album of just my choral works, sort of a portfolio album. And also writing a secular requiem. And I had already started collecting a few texts. Amy Fleury's, the "When At Last" poem... That had been on my radar for a long time, since 2014 I think I found that poem. So we were talking about long-term projects and we both happened to have the exact same exact long-term projects in mind, and it was really good timing.

SD: Once you decided to go ahead with this project, Brandon, were there any specifics that you wanted Dale to adhere to regarding what this major work had in it or what it was going to look like?

BE: No, in our commissioning work with other composers, I'm not one to stipulate... It was very neat, that first commission with Dale. I had a text in mind, which for any other composers I don't think I've ever done. It's just like, "Write what you want." But for this larger work, I really didn't have any concept. She was already talking about something along the lines of a secular requiem, so that sounded fantastic. And for me there really weren't specifics immediately after, because then it was, "Okay, now we've gotta get our board to get on board with this and we have to develop the funds. So there's a lot more non-musical, non-practical conversations, and it was more about, "Let me work to actually get the capital ready so we can fund this project."

DT: I'll say too, I think our original plan was like a twenty-minute piece.

BE: Yeah, and it was a quartet, or chamber-

DT: -Yeah, it was gonna have a small instrumental component, and then the instruments got reabsorbed into the voices in the final version. And then I think I added two texts. Like I kept emailing you and the poets to be like, "Can we just add one more movement?" [laughs]

SD: The orchestration of the score is apparent... It almost seemed to me as if you originally had instruments in mind, because often times some of the voices are behaving like instruments in that way.

DT: Yeah, I didn't actually start writing anything for like a flute or a clarinet or anything, but I definitely had that original conversation in mind I think. Like thinking of the texture of the piece.

SD: Did the Choral Arts Initiative and that particular ensemble and their unique abilities play any kind of a factor in the conception of the work?

BE: I feel like Dale, because we'd already worked together, probably had a strong sense of what we could do, and maybe some limitations. I remember it was at ACDA in Pasadena, where you had that first final draft. That first draft; I shouldn't say final draft. And I think I had like one note change where I was like, "Oh, our basses cannot do that." Or there was one note where it was just like, I know we won't be able to do that. But other than that, I don't recall giving Dale any specifics of what to do or not to do, but I think it helped that she had already worked with us.

DT: Yeah, I think it was either a D or an E-flat for the basses.

BE: Yeah, something where it was like, "that note won't be [heard] in this chord," but aside from that, I think that was literally the only note-specific... and specific to our ensemble... change that I requested. Like many choirs, I don't actually have a bass section. I have a baritone section [laughs].

DT: [Laughs]

SD: I think that's true in many places! [laughs]

DT: When was that Valentine's Day art song concert? Was that before *How To Go On*?

BE: Yes.

DT: Either at that or just in concert, I had heard a lot of solo voices too.

BE: That's right! Yeah, yeah.

DT: And so I knew there were strong enough individual voices that if I wrote a lot of solos, people would rise up to the challenge

SD: That's great! Was there anything else you wanted to comment – either of you – about the commissioning of the work, or that process?

DT: Well, we did that one reading that was what, January 2016?

BE: Yeah, I remember already preparing for a separate concert. Dale had a first draft, so we kind of just did a cold read. Singers got the score right there. And the reading happened and it gave us a really good sense of where things were. Did you make any changes, or did it just confirm: "Ok, we're good."? I don't think there were any changes that we...

DT: I think I made very minor changes. That's why I wish I had that somewhere in my house. I think I have that score. But it was... like, something was syncopated and I ironed it out to quarter notes or something. I think it was just mostly fussing with tempo and...

BE: Yeah, it was mostly tempo adjustments... a couple of fermata changes. No structural or harmonic changes. Just little tiny things.

DT: We might have re-voiced something.

BE: Yeah.

[...]

SD: Brandon, I wanted to ask you what musical or pedagogical challenges you encountered while preparing this work, either privately as a conductor, or with your ensemble in rehearsal?

BE: [...] When I think back to where we were in 2015, '16, '17, to now, it's like, "Oh my God! I don't know how we did this." Like, honestly I really don't! So pedagogically, some of the main challenges were we were a twenty-two-voice ensemble. And some of the most extensive are twenty-two parts. So there were some times where it was, how do we tune a chord where I've got a bass on a low E-flat and a high soprano on a high A-flat, and tune that and balance that with just one person on a part? And then of course some of the challenges were if one person was out

sick, or whatever it might be, all of a sudden we can't tune or balance that chord. So there was a lot of give and take that I normally used to working with when you're just doing four-part to six-part to eight-part divisi. There would literally be times when I'm like, well we can't work on this movement if I had two people absent, right?

SD: Right.

BE: So my rehearsal plans would change often because sometimes a singer is sick and it's out of their control. So that was one of the main things. For me, personally the biggest... and it's not a challenge; it's just I had to spend more time on it than normal... was getting a good concept of the texture that Dale was creating. To get a better understanding of what needs to come out, what is foreground, what is background. And then also how will that inform my rehearsals with singers. So those were the two main things. And then also, for me, tempo is my biggest area of weakness. I have to spend a lot of time grasping tempo [laughs]. So for me, when we were making the adjustments it would take me time to really feel it inside to make sure that we captured it. So that was another challenge for me on a personal level.

SD: That's great!... What advice or guidance would you have for a conductor who is preparing the work for the first time?

BE: Start with "Requiescat" first. [Laughs]

DT: [Laughs]

SD: [Laughs]

BE: No matter how you think you've planned your rehearsal, start with "Requiescat". From there, some other things... yeah, the advantage of bringing a living composer's piece to life... reach out to Dale. Talk to Dale. Some other advice I think is just standard advice for a conductor: If you were going to conduct Bach's St. John Passion, most conductors would know I need to also understand the St. Matthew Passion, or I need to understand his Christmas Oratorio. So understanding the other repertory that surrounds that composer. I feel like I had walked into this feeling quite self-efficacious, because I had already done probably ten pieces of Dale's before this, so I would pick up... like she always has these little hidden [easter eggs] in her scores. You can pick up on those right away. You just kind of get to know Dale's language a little better, and there's a little bit more intuition, as opposed to sometimes in new music there's a lot of rigidity and sticking to what's on the score. I feel like with Dale's music I was comfortable enough with her and with her music to also infuse a little bit of my own spin.

SD: Fantastic. [...] Thank you Brandon. Was there anything else you'd like to say about the piece?

BE: Honestly, it's a piece that resonates with me all the time. I'll tell Dale this from time to time. I'll hear random excerpts or movements or vignettes... it really is just a stunning piece. And it was bizarre to hear it done by other ensembles like the LA Master Chorale... It's a really great

piece. I'm glad you're bringing it to light in a dissertation setting. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

SD: The pleasure was all mine, Brandon. Thank you so much for agreeing to this.

[...]

*Brandon Elliot leaves at this point. The remainder of the interview is between Stuart Dameron and Dale Trumbore.*

SD: What is your vision for this work beyond the original commission? Now that it's been commissioned and it's been premiered and performed numerous times, do you have a vision of where you think it goes in the future?

DT: I think part of choosing the texts is wanting to bring not only the music but the texts to as wide of an audience as possible, in that I do think that the texts themselves are healing in a way. I think there is a lot of power in these specific words. [...] For me the piece is a tool to work through feelings of grief or of fear of death or mortality. As a composer there's always a selfish desire... It benefits me to have lots of people hear my music. That's great, but with this piece more than anything else I've written maybe, I think it's a helpful piece. I think other people can sort of wield it as a tool to move through their own grief and loss journey. That was the ultimate reason to write this piece in the first place and certainly the goal for recording it, for having it take on a life after the premiere.

SD: I think it's already done that to some extent, based on the interviews I've had with the conductor's I've interviewed thus far. They have all commented on the emotionality of it. That you at some point have to tackle... in the rehearsal with the ensemble... especially those who have rehearsed this with college-aged students. You have to address that at some point, because the texts are so personal. Living poets for one, but it's very complex emotions but that are written in such a simple language. There is specific imagery, like nature, but you're not looking at a character experiencing the emotions. There's a lot of first person or second person, where it's being spoken directly to you and you have no choice but to absorb it and find a way to connect personally.

DT: Right. And if you're the singer then you're in charge of delivering that message to the audience, and that's a different level of... You have to process it first yourself so that you can be an actor in a sense to convey that forward.

SD: Yes. That's certainly a theme I've encountered which is a wonderful element of the work. That leads us right into the next questions, which are talking about the text. The use of contemporary secular texts... Was that intentional from the beginning or did that come about later in the conception?

DT: That was very intentional. I know as a freshman in college in 2009 I think we sang the Verdi Requiem. I was aware of requiems as a concept, but I hadn't actually sung an entire requiem before and I remember thinking that I wanted to write my own. But also, even though I was

raised religious—I was raised Episcopalian—I've had sort of my own faith and loss of faith journey, as everyone does. I think we all question things. And I really wanted, like I was saying before, a piece that moves through grief... can be used as a tool, but that's open to anyone, that's not specific to a Christian background, that's not specific to one belief about what happens after you die. I wanted a piece that leaves room for... whatever your background is, you can bring that into the piece. And hopefully it can coexist... It's not an atheist requiem; it's a secular requiem, but if you want to bring your own religious experiences into it you can, or if you want to come to it with an agnostic background you can. I wanted that sense of openness, and that was always a goal for this particular piece.

SD: And I think as a side result of that, the piece not only does not address any sort of religious agenda or priority, but at the same time acknowledges that one commonality amongst all religions or absence of religions, which is that human element.

DT: Yeah absolutely.

SD: So I know you've worked with Barbara, Amy and Laura before and you've set their poetry to music. For example, I know you discovered Laura's work I think through Barbara.

DT: Yeah.

SD: And you also discovered Amy through I think your aunt.

DT: Though my aunt Julie, who lives in Louisiana.

[...]

S: So as you started conceiving this work, what led you to return to these poets and what drew you to these poems specifically?

DT: When I'm looking for texts to set, I'm usually looking for a mix of clarity, where at first read you can get a grasp of what's happening in the poem, what the poem's describing. I think very dense, very complex language and syntax is sometimes harder to set to music, and I tend to prefer poems where there might be layers and layers to unpack in the poem itself and in the form and how it's constructed, but where you can at the very least on a first read get the essence of the poem and the text. And then all of these poems had the secular but spiritual, in that it's describing some sort of communal experience or universal... either communing with nature or finding some sort of peace and catharsis and resolution, either in nature or just internally. All of the texts do that here, but also these three poets are particularly good at describing that, especially through the lens of loss and grief. For some reason they just... I feel like they all get it. They all do that extremely well.

SD: They all have mentioned, either with interviews with me or with other people, that all three of them feel that poetry writing is a spiritual experience for them.

DT: Yeah, and I think you can see it in their work for sure.

SD: Was choosing poetry from three living American poets intentional, or were these simply the texts that were the most appropriate, or that spoke to you?

DT: I think it was a happy circumstance of... these were the poets that I was encountering at that time of my life and I've worked with Barbara before. Amy had come highly recommended by Julie Kane who's my aunt, who's the former poet laureate of Louisiana. And then Laura had seen that I had set Barbara's work before, and so she had just sent me her poetry fairly recently and there's a book of her's called *Syringa*.

SD: Yes.

DT: At first read through the book I was like, I want to set all of this... this is all perfect for composers, for me. This is exactly the sort of text I'm looking for. I didn't have to look very far to find exactly the sort of texts that I'm looking for, which is not always the case in composing. Sometimes you have to really dig... cast your net much wider. But I knew when I was reading each of these three poets that they had what I was looking for for this particular project.

SD: I think it's wonderful how that came about: a piece that's not only female composer, female poets, [which] we may agree in this industry can feel a little off-sided, but that also is centered around a work that speaks universally to everyone.

DT: Yes.

SD: I remember a lot of my colleagues at LSU, including my mentor, very pleased that I had found... they thought it was very intentional that I had found this composition that was a female composer and three female poets. [They] thought that was very unique, or a central theme. Even if that wasn't where you started as a goal, it's lovely that that's how it turned out, and you can promote the work of those poets.

DT: Yeah. It's funny because when I'm composing I both do and don't think about that. Like when I'm looking for texts I've set, words by women and men, it's not that I set out necessarily intentionally to only use the works of women in this particular piece, but at the same time I am thinking when I write music about the broader context of music history as a whole. There's a lot of choral works setting the writing of dead white.../

SD: /Dead white guys. [Laughs]

DT: Yeah, dead white guys [Laughs], mostly. So, on some level there is sort of a balancing that, or writing that. Yeah, tipping the scales.

SD: So this composition is, as of this interview, your largest or longest work/ by quite a large margin compared to the average length of many of your others.

DT: /Yes.

SD: You've written collections, or a cycle if you will, but in terms of a single unified work that's intended... Although you say you can perform single movements separately... but it's been this cohesive whole. Did that affect your approach to its conception and creation? Other than the sheer length of it, what was different about the creative process compared to other works that are comparatively shorter?

DT: It was really interesting to ask myself that question [laughs] in the process of writing it. I think when I started it, I was thinking of... Just to get it done I had to think of it as one movement at a time. And then I didn't write them necessarily that way; I would jump between movement to movement as I was composing it. But I had to start approaching it the same way I would any three-to-five-minute, or three-to-six-minute choral piece because I had never written a piece of that length before for chorus. And then I noticed as the piece went on, as all of those movements progressed in their composition, then I was finally able to see the threads connecting each of those movements together. And I had already noticed certain similarities, like motifs that come back, the idea of water... There are a lot of natural... like rivers and water and crossing the river and ashes and dust. So seeing those commonalities between the different poems, there hit a point in the music where I was ready to embrace the fact that this was a larger work and not just a series of little individual pieces. And then it was really the second half of composing that it started to feel like this piece was really unified; these movements sort of talked to each other.

[...]

SD: What did you enjoy most about writing How To Go On?

DT: Well, I was really thrilled that I knew the chorus that I was writing for and that it was my second piece that I've written for them. I think often as a composer you'll get a commission and you write that commission and maybe that chorus will continue programming your existing works, but it's kind of rare to have a chorus keep coming back to you to commission new works specifically for them. And when that does happen, I think it's a different kind of composing in that you might be imagining specific people singing certain solos, like I was talking about before. Or you have this sound... You really know the conductor and you know the sound of the ensemble so well that that's sort of in your mind the whole time. You can think about, what did they excel at and what other pieces does this conductor like, or what did they do exceptionally well and you can really write to their strengths. You have that in mind the entire time. Knowing the group that I was writing for was really fun. With Brandon and CAI too, there was a big permission slip to expand it another ten minutes if I wanted [laughs], to take chances, to do twenty-two part divisi, all of these things that I kind of try to reign in if I'm writing for the different kind of ensemble. Brandon was really just [like], "You can try anything. We'll be a laboratory for that. You can experiment." So I think I took creative risks in this piece that I'm still... like textures and all sorts of things. The drones... the droning voices in "To See It." I've never tried anything like that before.

SD: Really? Oh, it's one of my favorite parts.

DT: That was a moment too... I think originally that was just like eight people the whole time. It didn't switch off the way it did, and that was a big... like working with Brandon in that one

movement... just to write the drones into the choral parts instead of having like a little drone chorus separately.

SD: Oh, interesting! Ok. ...And to say the inverse, what about this project did you find the most difficult?

DT: So the thing I was just saying about having a sandbox to play in where anything is possible: that also can be really intimidating, because sometimes as a composer, restrictions are good in that you know... It's nice to know exactly what the borders are that you can bump up against. When anything is possible... I think it's kind of like that idea of thinking of the project as a whole. It's good to have a little narrow focus, for me at least. I know there were moments before I started the piece where it was intimidating, like this is gonna be this huge piece and what if I screw it up and I take all these chances and then they don't play out right. But ultimately there's trusting that I have that working relationship with Brandon and the singers that will... We work it out together and make sure that the piece is working.

[...]

SD: Is there anything else important to you that you wish to convey to those who will perform this work in the future?

DT: That's a good question. One thing that I've said before and that I end up saying now to every choir that I work with is that I almost feel like... Not to compare myself to Bach musically, because I would never... Bach is Bach and I'm just me, but I know as a singer I always feel even more joy performing Bach than I do sitting in the audience listening to it. And I feel this piece, from what I've seen... It's great to listen to it, but I think there's even more joy that comes from being immersed in it and living with the music and living with the words and seeing how that changes your life or doesn't. I think it's... Again, what I've heard from singers and conductors, it's even more rewarding to experience this piece I think on the other side; being the one who's helping make it come alive than just listening to it. Oh, something else too: I knew that when I was writing the piece that it would be recorded; I knew I was writing it for an album, and then that was how probably a bunch of people would experience it was listening to it recorded, not live, at least at first. And so I wanted it to benefit from repeated listenings. So I think it is a densely-constructed piece. Some of the movements are short and it's a lot... It packs a lot into those little movements. But coming back to that idea where the more you live with the music, if you listen multiple times, my goal was that you would unpack those layers; you'd get something different from every listening.

SD: I certainly find new layers every time I listen to it. [...] Thank you so much for this. It's just been an absolute pleasure.

DT: Oh yeah, of course. I'm so glad that you're doing this.

SD: It's an honor.

## Appendix B. IRB Exemption

### ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



**TO:** Stuart Dameron  
Music

**FROM:** Dennis Landin  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

**DATE:** November 21, 2019

**RE:** IRB# E11993

Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair  
130 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.5983  
[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu)  
[lsu.edu/research](http://lsu.edu/research)

**TITLE:** A Conductor's Guide to Dale Trumbore's How To Go On

**New Protocol/Modification/Continuation:** New Protocol

**Review Date:** 11/20/2019

**Approved** X      **Disapproved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval Date:** 11/20/2019      **Approval Expiration Date:** 11/19/2022

**Exemption Category/Paragraph:** 2b.c

**Signed Consent Waived?:** No

**Re-review frequency:** Three years

**LSU Proposal Number** (if applicable):

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –**

**Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects\*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE:** When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.

\* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

## Appendix C. Requests and Permissions



Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

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### Musical Examples for Dissertation

2 messages

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**Stuart Dameron** <stuardameron@gmail.com>  
To: Dale Trumbore <dale.trumbore@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:02 PM

Hello Dale,

For my dissertation on your work, I would like to include several musical score examples from *How To Go On*. Since you are the copyright owner of the material, I'd appreciate your permission in writing before I finalize the document. If you approve, please let me know via email.

Thank you so much!

Stuart Dameron  
Graduate Teaching Assistant | LSU Choral Department  
Doctor of Musical Arts | Choral Conducting  
Louisiana State University  
Class of 2020  
[music.lsu.edu](http://music.lsu.edu)  
Pronouns: he/him/his

---

**Dale Trumbore** <dale.trumbore@gmail.com>  
To: Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:25 PM

Hi Stuart,

This is fine with me; you have my permission to excerpt and reprint the score of *How to Go On* within your dissertation.

Hope you're doing okay with everything going on!

Best wishes,  
Dale  
[Quoted text hidden]  
--  
[daletrumbore.com](http://daletrumbore.com)  
Author, *Staying Composed*  
Composer, *How to Go On*



Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

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## Poem inclusion for dissertation

2 messages

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**Stuart Dameron** <stuardameron@gmail.com>  
To: Amy Fleury <fleury.amy@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:14 PM

Hello Amy,

For my dissertation on Dale Trumbore's *How To Go On*, I would like to include your poem, "When At Last" in the document in its entirety. Since you are the copyright owner of the material, I'd appreciate your written permission before I finalize the document. If you approve, please let me know via email.

Thank you so much!

Stuart Dameron  
Graduate Teaching Assistant | LSU Choral Department  
Doctor of Musical Arts | Choral Conducting  
Louisiana State University  
Class of 2020  
[music.lsu.edu](http://music.lsu.edu)  
Pronouns: he/him/his

---

**Amy Fleury** <fleury.amy@gmail.com>  
To: Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:37 PM

I approve!  
[Quoted text hidden]



Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

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## Poem inclusion in dissertation

2 messages

Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>  
To: Laura Foley <lauradaviesfoley@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:21 PM

Hello Laura,

For my dissertation on Dale Trumbore's *How To Go On*, I would like to include your poems, "Autumn Musings," "To See It," "Relinquishment," and "Sometimes Peace Comes" in their entirety. Since you are the copyright owner of the material, I'd appreciate your written permission before I finalize the document. If you approve, please let me know via email.

Thank you so much!

Stuart Dameron  
Graduate Teaching Assistant | LSU Choral Department  
Doctor of Musical Arts | Choral Conducting  
Louisiana State University  
Class of 2020  
[music.lsu.edu](http://music.lsu.edu)  
Pronouns: he/him/his

---

Laura Foley <lauradaviesfoley@gmail.com>  
To: Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 19, 2020 at 4:24 PM

Hi Stuart,  
Yes, I'd be happy for you to include the poems "Autumn Musings," "To See It," "Relinquishment," and "Sometimes Peace Comes" in your dissertation.

Hope all is going well for you, during these odd and challenging times.

take care,  
Laura Foley  
[www.lauradaviesfoley.com](http://www.lauradaviesfoley.com)



<https://tinyurl.com/y2zj35z4>

Why I Never Finished My Dissertation chosen among Best Indie Poetry of 2019 by Kirkus Reviews  
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/lists/best-indie-poetry-2019/why-i-never-finished-my-dissertation/#feature>

[Quoted text hidden]



Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

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## Poem inclusion in dissertation

2 messages

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**Stuart Dameron** <stuardameron@gmail.com>  
To: Barbara Crooker <bcrooker@ptd.net>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 12:18 PM

Hello Barbara,

For my dissertation on Dale Trumbore's *How To Go On*, I would like to include your poems, "Some Fine Day" and "Requiescat" in the document in their entirety. Since you are the copyright owner of the material, I'd appreciate your written permission before I finalize the document. If you approve, please let me know via email.

Thank you so much!

Stuart Dameron  
Graduate Teaching Assistant | LSU Choral Department  
Doctor of Musical Arts | Choral Conducting  
Louisiana State University  
Class of 2020  
[music.lsu.edu](http://music.lsu.edu)  
Pronouns: he/him/his

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**Barbara Crooker** <bcrooker@ptd.net>  
To: Stuart Dameron <stuardameron@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 17, 2020 at 1:58 PM

Dear Stuart,  
You have my permission to include the texts of "Some Fine Day" and "Requiescat" in your dissertation.  
yours sincerely,  
Barbara Crooker  
[Quoted text hidden]

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## **Vita**

Stuart Dameron, born in 1986 in Denver, Colorado, has recently completed coursework for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at Louisiana State University. He serves as the Director of Music Ministry at University Presbyterian Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He has previously served as Adjunct Faculty Instructor at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, and as the Associate Director of Choirs at Fort Collins High School. Stuart holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from Colorado State University.