

DT0042.2 | IF I SAY YES | TRUMBORE  
SATB CHORUS, STRING QUARTET, PERCUSSION & PIANO

# IF I SAY YES

SATB Chorus, String Quartet,  
Percussion & Piano

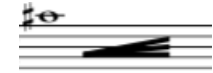
CHORAL REDUCTION

  
c o m p o s e r

## Performance Notes



Slow down the speed of a tremolo from alternating rapidly to approximately the speed of eighth notes (or slower).



Gradually speed up a tremolo from approximately the speed of eighth notes (or slower) to alternating rapidly.

# Text

If I say yes,  
it won't be to some unknown future,  
some fifty years, but a yes  
to what we already have:  
half a house and the two of us,  
small sparrows in an unfamiliar nest.

If I say yes, it will be to words well-worn  
and to ones we can barely speak aloud:  
to house, or child, or forever.

If I say yes, know that I may be rusty  
at choosing you over me, or me over anything.  
I can hardly remember which finger takes a ring.

But I have studied us for years;  
I have watched the way your neck greets your shoulders,  
I have learned the laugh that means  
you've forgotten yourself,  
and I will choose that laughter every time.

And you will say yes to uncertainty  
saved for meals much smaller than this one,  
to the teakettle whistling for minutes,  
to the fruit overripe and the tea over-steeped,  
to endless and to endlessly-wanted touch.

And I will be sure that,  
if I still don't know the answer,  
when we stand together overlooking  
anything vast and borderless,  
those moments are the happiest I've been  
to hover over the railing of uncertainty  
and reach out to you again  
with an unsaid yes.

And if neither of us is certain,  
if we live in a land without rain,  
then there is a yes to something surer here  
even than certainty,  
to something surer still than water,  
and we have known that, here,  
as sure as it does rain twice a year.

And if we are asking each other  
for time—  
time our only matchmaker,  
time the tea-kettle's whistle,  
time the fruit overripe  
and time the tea over-steeped,  
time our only choice, and time  
always out of our hands—

then let's learn to time our asking.  
Let's learn to ask only when the answer  
could be yes—will be yes—  
so there is some small chance of it staying yes  
as long as we both shall live.

When I was small, unable to sleep,  
and imagining, somewhere,  
a love I hadn't met, imagining that love  
awake, imagining that love imagining me too,  
I am certain that person was you.

I wish I knew another word for all of this—  
I do. I do.

—Dale Trumbore

Chorus & Piano

Commissioned by the University of Maryland Chamber Singers  
and Edward Maclary, Conductor, for the 2019 NCCO National Conference  
College Park, Maryland

# If I Say Yes

for SATB chorus & piano

Music & Text by  
Dale Trumbore

Animated; ♩ = ca. 88

SOPRANO *mp* *mf* *p*

ALTO *mp* *mf* *p*

Piano *f* *pp* *mp*

If I say yes, it won't be to some

If I say yes, it won't be to some

5

S. *mf* *p*

A. *mf* *p*

Pno. *mf*

un - known fu - ture, some fif - ty

un - known fu - ture, some fif - ty

If I Say Yes

8

S. *mp* years, but a yes to what we al - read - y have: *mf*

A. *mp* years, but a yes to what we al - read - y have: *mf*

T.

B.

Pno. *p*

12 **A**

S.

A.

T. *p* half a house and the two of us *mf*

B. *p* half a house and the two of us *mf*

Pno. 12 *p*

16

S. *p* *mf*  
small spar-rows in an un - fa - mil - iar nest.

A. *p* *mf*  
small spar-rows in an un - fa - mil - iar nest.

T. *8*

B. *8*

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mf*

21

T. **B** Tenor *mf* *p*  
If I say yes, it

B. Bass *mf* *p*  
If I say yes, it

Pno. *f* *mf* 3

If I Say Yes

25 *mf*  
T. will be to words well worn  
B. will be to words well worn

25 *p* *mf* *pp*  
Pno. *mf* *pp*

29 *mp* *pp* *mp*  
S. and to words we can bare - ly speak a - loud:  
A. and to words we can bare - ly speak a - loud:  
T. and to words we can bare - ly speak a - loud:  
B. and to words we can bare - ly speak a - loud:

29 *mf* *pp* *mp* *p*  
Pno. *mf* *pp* *mp* *p*



33 **C**

S. *mf* to house, *p* or child, or for -

A. *mf* to house, *p* or child, or for -

T. *p* or for -

B. *p* or for -

Pno. *mf* *mp* *pp*

37 *f* *poco rit.*

S. *f* e - ver.

A. *f* e - ver.

T. *f* e - ver.

B. *f* e - ver.

Pno. *f* *mp*

If I Say Yes

6

**D** ♩ = ca. 76

S. *p* ————— *mf*  
If I say yes, know that I may be rust - y at

A. *p* ————— *mf*  
If I say yes, know that I may be rust - y at

T. *p* ————— *mf*  
If I say yes, know that I may be rust - y at

B. *p* ————— *mf*  
If I say yes, know that I may be rust - y at

Pno. *f* ————— *p* ————— *mf*  
41

S. *f* ————— *p*  
choos - ing you o - ver me, or me o - ver a - ny-thing.

A. *f* ————— *p*  
choos - ing you o - ver me, or me o - ver a - ny-thing.

T. *f* —————  
choos - ing you o - ver me,

B. *f* —————  
choos - ing you o - ver me,

Pno. *f* ————— *mp* ————— *pp*  
45

**E** **Soprano 2**

49 *p*  
I can hard-ly re-mem-ber which fin-ger takes a ring.

49 *p*  
I can hard-ly re-mem-ber which fin-ger takes a ring.

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mp*

Pno. *mp* *mf*

**F** **Tutti** *mf*

58 But I have stu-died us \_\_\_ for years;

A. *p*  
ah

T. *mf*  
But I have stu-died us \_\_\_ for years;

B. *mf*  
But I have stu-died us \_\_\_ for years; \_\_\_

58 *p* *mf*

Pno. *mf*

If I Say Yes

8

61

S. *p* ah *mf* ah

A. *p* I have watched the way your neck greets your shoul-ders *mf* ah

T. *p* I have watched the way your neck greets your shoul-ders *mf* I have learned the laugh that means

B. *p* I have watched the way your neck greets your shoul-ders *mf* I have learned the laugh that means

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*

64

S. *f* and I will choose that laugh - ter *mp* ev - 'ry

A. *f* and I will choose that laugh - ter *mp* ev - 'ry

T. *f* you've for-got-ten your-self, and I will choose that laugh - ter *mp* ev - 'ry

B. *f* you've for-got-ten your-self, and I will choose that laugh - ter *mp* ev - 'ry

Pno. *mf* *f*

68 **G**

S. time.

A. time.

T. time.

B. time.

Pno. *pp* *mf* *pp* *f* ord.

68

73

Pno. *mf* *f*

77 **H**

T. *p* *mf*

And you will say yes to un - cer-tain - ty saved for meals much small-er than

B. *p* *mf*

And you will say yes to un - cer-tain - ty saved for meals much small-er than

Pno. *mf* *p*

77

If I Say Yes

81 *p* *mf*

T. this one, to the tea-ket-tle's whist-ling for min-utes to the fruit o-ver

B. this one, to the tea-ket-tle's whist-ling for min-utes to the fruit o-ver

Pno. *pp* *mf*

85 rit. *pp* *mp*  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$

S. to end-less

A. *p* *mf* *mp*  
and the tea o-ver steeped, to end-less

T. *p* *mf* *mp*  
ripe and the tea o-ver steeped, to end-less

B. *p* *mf* *mp*  
ripe and the tea o-ver steeped, to

Pno. *pp* *mf* *p*

Red. \_\_\_\_\_

89 *f* *sub. mp* **I** *mf*

S. and to end-less-ly want-ed touch. And

A. and to end-less-ly want-ed touch.

T. and to end-less-ly want-ed touch.

B. end-less and to end-less-ly want-ed touch.

Pno. *f* *mp* *5* *3*

93 *p* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf*

S. I will be sure that if I still don't know the an-swer

A. I will be sure that if I still don't know the an-swer

T. if I still don't know the an-swer

B.

Pno. *p* *3* *5* *3*

If I Say Yes

97 *mp* *mf*

S. when we stand to - geth - er o - ver - look - ing a - ny - thing vast and bor - der - less, —

A. when we stand to - geth - er o - ver - look - ing a - ny - thing vast and bor - der - less, —

T. when we stand to - geth - er o - ver - look - ing a - ny - thing vast —

B. when we stand to - geth - er o - ver - look - ing a - ny - thing vast —

Pno. *p* *mf*

101 *p* *mf*

S. those mo - ments are the hap - pi - est, I've been to ho - ver o - ver the rail - ing of un -

A. those mo - ments are the hap - pi - est, I've been to ho - ver o - ver the rail - ing of un -

T. those mo - ments are the hap - pi - est, the hap - pi - est, I've been to ho - ver,

B. ah —

Pno. *p* *mf*



105 *p* *mf*

S. cer - tain - ty and reach out to you a - gain with an un - said

A. cer - tain - ty and reach out to you a - with an un - said

T. oh and reach out a - gain with an un - said

B. oh and reach out a - gain with an un - said

Pno. *p* *mf* *pp*

108 *f*

S. yes.

A. yes.

T. yes.

B. yes.

Pno. *mp* *f*

110 **J** poco accel. . . . . ♩ = ca. 72

S. 

A. *mp* ————— *mf* 3  
And if nei-ther of us is cer-tain,

T. 

B. *mp* ————— *mf* 3  
And if nei-ther of us is cer-tain,

110 poco accel. . . . . ♩ = ca. 72

Pno. *mf* 3 5 5

113 *mp* ————— *mf*  
S. if we live in a land with-out rain,

A. 

T. *mp* ————— *mf* 3 *p* 3  
if we live in a land with-out rain, then there is a

B. *p* 3  
then there is a

113 *p* *mf* 3 3 5

Pno. 

117

S. *mf*

A. *p* *mf*  
yes sur - er here e - ven than cer - tain - ty

T. *mf*  
yes to some-thing sur - er here e - ven than cer - tain - ty

B. *mf*  
yes to some-thing su - - rer here.

Pno. *pp*

120

S. *mf*  
to some-thing sur - er still than wa - ter, and

A. *mf*  
to some-thing sur - er still than wa - ter, and

T. *mf*  
and

B. *mf*  
and

Pno. *f* *p*

If I Say Yes

16

**K**

124 *f*

S. we have known that here, as sure as it does rain

A. we have known that here, as sure as it does rain

T. we have known that here, as sure as it does rain

B. we have known that here, as sure as it does rain

Pno. *f* *mp* *f*

**L**

127 *mp*

S. — twice a year.

A. — twice a year.

T. — twice a year.

B. — twice a year.

Pno. *p* *mf* *f*

131 M

S. *p* And if we are ask-ing each

A. *p* And if we are ask-ing each

T. 8

B.

Pno. *f* *pp* *mf* *p*

rit.  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$  N *f*

136

S. *f* o - ther for time, time our on - ly match-ma - ker,

A. *f* o - ther for time, time our on - ly match-ma - ker,

T. *f* time

B. *f* time

rit.  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 72$

Pno. *f* *mf*

If I Say Yes

18

140 *mp* *mf* *p*

S. time the tea - ket - tle's whis - tle time and

A. time time and

T. time the tea - ket - tle's whis - tle time the fruit o - ver ripe and

B. time the tea - ket - tle's whis - tle time the fruit o - ver ripe and

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p*

144 *mf* *rit.*

S. time the tea o - ver steeped, time our on - ly choice and

A. time the tea o - ver steeped, time our on - ly choice and

T. time the tea o - ver steeped, time our on - ly choice and

B. time the tea o - ver steeped, time our on - ly choice and

Pno. *mf* *pp*

Slower, freely; ♩ = ca. 54

148 *p* *f*

S. time al-ways out of our hands—

A. time al-ways out of our hands, our hands— *pp*

T. time out of our hands, our hands— *pp*

B. time our hands— *mp* *pp*

Pno. 148 *f* *mp* *f*

153 **O** *p*

S. Let's

A. then let's learn to time our ask - ing. Let's

T. then let's learn to time our ask - ing. Let's

B.

Pno. 153 *p*

If I Say Yes

156 *mf* *f*

S. learn to ask on - ly when the an - swer could be yes -

A. learn to ask on - ly when the an - swer could be yes -

T. learn to ask on - ly when the an - swer could be yes -

B.

Pno. *p* *f* *pp*

rall. . . . . In time; ♩ = ca. 60

**P**

159 *p*

S. will be yes

A. will be yes

T. will be yes

B. will be yes

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



163

S.

A.

T.

B.

Pno.

168 **Q**

S. *p* *mp* *pp* *p* *pp*  
so there is some small chance of it stay-ing yes, so there is some small chance, so there is

A. *pp* *mp*  
so there is some small chance,

T. *p*  
so there is

B.

Pno.

173 *p* *pp* *p*

S. some small chance, so there is

A. *p* *mp*  
so there is some small chance,

T. *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
some small chance of it stay-ing yes, so there is some small chance, so there is

B. *pp* *mp*  
so there is some small chance,

Pno. 173 *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

177 *mp* *p* *mf* *molto rit.* *mf*

S. some small chance of it stay-ing yes, so there is some small chance, so there is

A. *p* *mp* *p* *mf*  
so there is some small chance, So there is some small chance, so there is

T. *mp* *p* *mf*  
some small chance of it stay-ing yes, so there is some small chance, so there is

B. *pp* *p* *mf*  
ah ah so there is

Pno. 177 *molto rit.* *p*

**R**  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$   
sub. *pp* *mp* *molto rit.*  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$  *ff*

S. some small chance of it stay-ing yes as long as we

A. some small chance of it stay-ing yes as long as we

T. some small chance of it stay-ing yes as long as we

B. some small chance of it stay-ing yes as long as we

Pno.  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$  *rit.*  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 48$  *f*

184 *rit.*

S. both shall live.

A. both shall live.

T. both shall live.

B. both shall live.

Pno. *ff*

188 **S** Like a lullaby; ♩ = 60

Pno. *p* *mf*

192 **T**

S. *pp* *mp* *p*  
 When I was small, un - a - ble to sleep and im - ag - in - ing

A. *pp* *mp* *p*  
 When I was small un - a - ble to sleep and im - ag - in - ing

T. *pp* *mp* *p*  
 When I was small un - a - ble to sleep and im - ag - in - ing

B. *pp* *mp* *p*  
 ah un - a - ble to sleep, ah

Pno. *pp*

197

S. *mf* *p*  
 some - where a love I had - n't met, im - ag - in - ing that love a -

A. *mf* *p*  
 some - where a love I had - n't met. ah

T. *mf* *p*  
 some - where a love I had - n't met, im - ag - in - ing

B. *mf*  
 some - where a love

202

S. *mf*  
wake, im - ag - in - ing that love im - ag - in - ing me too, I am

A. *mp* *mf*  
that love a - wake, ah, that love im - ag - in - ing me too, I am

T. *mp* *mf*  
that love a - wake that love, oo I am

B. *p* *mf*  
ah that love, oo I am

208 *ff* *f*  
S. cer - tain that per - son was you, I am cer - tain that per - son was

A. *ff* *mf*  
cer - tain that per - son was you, oo

T. *ff* *f*  
cer - tain that per - son was you I am cer - tain that per - son was

B. *ff* *mf*  
cer - tain that per - son was you, oo

208  
Pno. *ff*  
3 3

If I Say Yes

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

S. you. I am cer - tain that per - son was you.

A. I am cer - tain that per - son was you.

T. you. oo *p* *mf*

B. oo *p* *mf*

Pno. 214 *mf* 5 rit. . . . .

220 **U** Slightly faster; ♩ = ca. 63 **molto rit.** . . ♩ = ca. 48

S. - - - - -

A. - - - - -

T. - - - - -

B. - - - - -

Pno. Slightly faster; ♩ = ca. 63 **molto rit.** . . ♩ = ca. 48

*pp* *ff*<sup>3</sup> 3 3

V

226

S. *pp*  
I

A. *pp*  
I

T. *pp*  
I

B. *pp*  
I

Pno. *mf* *p*

230

S. *mf*  
wish I knew\_ a - noth - er word for all of this:

A. *mf*  
wish I knew\_ a - noth - er word for all of this:

T. *mf*  
wish I knew\_ a - noth - er word for all of this:

B. *mf*  
wish I knew\_ a - noth - er word for all of this:

Pno. *pp* *mp*

If I Say Yes

234 *pp* < *mp* *f* *poco rit.* . . . . *Slightly faster;* ♩ = ca. 52 *p*

S. I do I

A. I do I

T. I do I

B. I do I

Pno. *poco rit.* *Slightly faster;* ♩ = ca. 52

238 **W** *molto rit.* . . . . ♩ = ca. 40

S. do.

A. do.

T. do.

B. do.

Pno. *p* *mf* *p* *pp*