

DT0119 | A SEED MARKS TIME | TRUMBORE
SATB CHORUS, STRING QUARTET & PIANO

A SEED MARKS TIME

for SATB Chorus,
String Quartet & Piano

FULL SCORE

daletrumbore
c o m p o s e r

Text

TIME

I wonder how a seed marks time,
tucked into the silent earth.
Does it scratch a tally
on the inside of its husk,
numbering the days until spring,
or does everything fade
into a passing blur without
the dance of bees and the
steady tick of sun across the sky?
And what about the dormant summer grass,
lying golden under the sun?
Is it passive through the drought,
or are unseen roots searching thirstily
for remembered moisture?
I know how the sunflower
turns its bright head,
oriented through the hours.
But what of the birds
who are waiting for its seeds
to ripen, or for whatever it is
that sets them on their migratory way?
Do they have some internal calendar
with days marked in red, or do they move
through a blur of time,
forgetting appointments, neglecting obligations,
or so lost in the work of the day
that dusk goes unnoticed,
and it is suddenly dark?
Are they lost, or are they
simply listening to the earth
as it chants, low and slow:
Now this. Now this. Now this.

—Lynn Ungar, from *These Days: Poetry of the Pandemic Age*. © 2020 Lynn Ungar.

Program Note

Lynn Ungar’s text for *A Seed Marks Time* initially appears to be about nature, contemplating how seeds mark time underground. Near the end of this poem, though, we see ourselves reflected in it. After all, it’s not the birds who “move through a blur of time, / forgetting appointments, neglecting obligations” and getting so lost in their work that they forget to look up—it’s us. These last few lines remind us to reconsider how we mark time: Are we simply counting minutes until it’s time for the next task on our to-do list, or are we consciously noticing the beauty around us? The final line leaves us with a sung meditation that turns into a whisper: “Now this. Now this. Now this.”

A Seed Marks Time is dedicated to Eric Nelson on the occasion of his 25th Anniversary with Atlanta Master Chorale, with gratitude for his contributions to the choral canon and his visionary pursuit of excellence in choral music that touches spirit. This piece is commissioned and premiered by Atlanta Master Chorale (Eric Nelson, Artistic Director) and guest conducted by Jonathan Easter.

Performance Notes

Choir: Notes in parentheses may be omitted (mouthed, but not sung) if out of range.
Slide through the entire marked duration of a glissando.

Strings: When a glissando is marked between two notes, bow them separately unless otherwise indicated.
Slide through the entire marked duration of a glissando.

Piano: Boxes indicate a brief gesture that should be repeated for as long as is indicated by the following arrow. Notes within a box should be played in any order, rippling, ebbing and flowing in tempo like wind chimes.

Duration: ca. 11 minutes.

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A Seed Marks Time

for SATB Chorus, String Quartet & Piano

Text by Lynn Ungar

Music by Dale Trumbore

Inquisitive; ♩ = 100 (♩ = ♪ throughout)

SOPRANO
I won-der how a seed marks time,

ALTO
I won-der how a seed marks time,

TENOR
I won-der how a seed marks time,

BASS
I won-der how a seed marks time,

Violin 1
p *f* *p*

Violin 2
p *f* *p*

Viola
col legno battuto, jeté
mf *f possible*

Violoncello
p *f* *p*

8 **A**

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

I won-der how a seed marks time, tucked in - to the si - lent earth.

mf *p* *mp*

I won-der how a seed marks mm earth.

mf *p* *mp*

I won-der how a seed marks mm earth.

mf *p* *mp*

I won-der how a seed marks mm earth.

mf *f* *p* *f* *pp* *mf* *p*

mf *f* *p* *f* *pp* *mf* *p*

ord.

mf *f* *p* *f* *pp* *mf* *p*

mf *f* *p* *f* *pp* *mf* *p*

8

A Seed Marks Time
Full Score

2

16 **B** *mf*
Does it scratch a tal - ly _____

mf
Does it scratch a tal - ly

16 *pp* *f* *mf* *f*
col legno battuto, jeté *mf* *f possible* ord. *mp* *f*
pp *f*
pp *f*

16

23
Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it

Does it scratch a tal - ly Does it scratch a tal - ly

mf
Does it scratch a tal - ly _____

mf
Does it scratch a tal - ly _____

23 *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*
sul pont., scratchy *mf*

23 *p* *f*

C

30

scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ on the in - side of its husk,

Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it scratch a tal - ly on the in - side of its husk,

Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it scratch a tal - ly on the in - side of its husk,

Does it scratch a tal - ly _____ Does it scratch a tal - ly on the in - side of its husk,

30

ord. *ff*

ff

ff

ff

30

f *ff* *p*

38 rit. Taking time

38 *pp* *mf*

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

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

3 3 3

A Seed Marks Time
Full Score

D
43 poco accel. In time; ♩ = ca. 100 *p* num - ber - ing the days *p* num - ber - ing the days
p num - ber - ing the days *p* num - ber - ing the days
p num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the
p num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the

43 *pp* *mf* col legno battuto, jeté 3 *mf* col legno battuto, jeté
pp *mf* col legno battuto, jeté 3 *mf* col legno battuto, jeté
pp *mf* col legno battuto, jeté 3 *mf* col legno battuto, jeté
pp *mf* col legno battuto, jeté 3 *mf* col legno battuto, jeté
43 *mp* *mp*

E
49 *mp* num - ber - ing the days *ff* un - til spring,
mp num - ber - ing the days *ff* un - til spring,
mp days un - til spring, *ff*
mp days un - til spring, *ff*

49 *f* *f* ord. *mf* *ff*
f *f* ord. *mf* *ff*
f *f* ord. *mf* *ff*
f *f* ord. *mf* *ff*
49 *f* *f* ord. *mf* *ff*

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A Seed Marks Time
Full Score

F Slightly slower; ♩ = ca. 84

69 *pp* *mf* *p* *poco accel.* ♩ = ca. 100 *mp*

or does eve-ry-thing fade in - to a pass - ing blur with - out the dance of bees

fade in - to a pass - ing blur with - out the dance of bees

8 or does eve-ry-thing fade in - to a pass - ing blur the dance of

fade in - to a pass - ing blur the dance of

69

69

69

G

75 *mf* *f*

and the stead - y tick of sun a - cross the sky? And what a - bout the

and the stead - y tick of sun a - cross the sky? And what a - bout the

8 bees and the stead - y tick of sun a - cross the sky? And what a - bout the

bees and the stead - y tick of sun a - cross the sky? And what a - bout the

75 *mf* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *ff*

mf *f* *pizz.* *arco* *ff*

mf *f* *pizz.* *arco* *ff*

mf *f* *pizz.* *arco* *ff*

75 *mf* *f* *ff*

75

75

75

Slightly slower;
♩ = ca. 72

81 rit.

dor - mant sum-mer grass,
dor - mant sum-mer grass, ly-ing gold - en un-der the sun?
dor - mant sum-mer grass, ly-ing gold - en un-der the sun?
dor - mant sum-mer grass,

pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *ff* *p*

The score for measures 81-88 features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in 4/4 time, with a tempo of approximately 72 beats per minute. The lyrics are: "dor - mant sum-mer grass, ly-ing gold - en un-der the sun?". The piano accompaniment includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). Performance instructions include "rit." (ritardando) and "Slightly slower; ♩ = ca. 72".

89

89 *f* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

The score for measures 89-96 continues the piano accompaniment. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The music is in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs and ties.

H

Musical score for measures 97-104. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in treble and bass clefs, with lyrics: "Is it pas-sive through the drought, or are un - seen_ roots search-ing thirst-i-ly_ for re-mem-bered mois - ture?". The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *pp*, and *p*. Time signatures are 6/8, 2/4, and 4/4. A watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

Musical score for measures 105-112. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in treble and bass clefs, with lyrics: "nn nn". The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. Dynamics include *ppp*, *mf*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, and *ff*. Time signatures are 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 2/4, and 3/4. A watermark "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is visible across the score.

I

113- Inquisitive; ♩ = 100

molto rit.

Musical score for section I, measures 113-116. It features five staves: four for strings and one for piano. The tempo is marked "Inquisitive; ♩ = 100" and "molto rit.". The key signature has one flat. The score includes dynamic markings (p, f, mf, f possible) and performance instructions like "col legno battuto, jeté" and "3" (triplets).

J

♩ = ca. 72

Musical score for section J, measures 121-124. It features five staves: two for vocalists with lyrics, one for strings, one for piano, and one for a double bass. The tempo is marked "♩ = ca. 72". The lyrics are "I know how the sun - flo - wer turns its bright head, o - ri - ent - ed through the hours. But". The score includes dynamic markings (f, ff, p) and performance instructions like "ord." and "3" (triplets).

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141

cal - en - dar with days marked in red, or do they

141

141

147

poco accel. **L** ♩. = ca. 60

move through a blur of time, for - get - ting ap - point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions,

147

147

147

155 $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 84$

M

p *mp* *pp* *mf*

or so lost or so lost in the work of the

or so lost or so lost

or so lost in the work of the

or so lost in the work of the

155 *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

155 *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

155 *p* *mf*

162 *p* *pp* *f*

day that dusk goes un-noticed, and it is sud-den-ly dark?

in the work of the day that dusk goes un-noticed, and it is sud-den-ly dark?

day that dusk goes un-noticed, and it is sud-den-ly dark?

day that dusk goes un-noticed, and it is sud-den-ly dark?

162 *f* *f* *f* *f*

162 *p*

rippling freely in any order, slowly, out of time, like wind chimes

ped.

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A Seed Marks Time
Full Score

187 *mp* as it chants, low and slow, *p* low and slow: *pp* Now

chants as it chants, low and slow, low and slow: Now

as it chants, low and slow: Now

as it chants, low and slow: Now

187

187

194 **O** *mp* this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now

this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now

this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now

this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now

194 *pp* *pp* *pp* ord. *pp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

194 *pp* *p* *mp*

A Seed Marks Time
Full Score

200 *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Half the choir whispers; half continues singing

this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now

205 *Whispering* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now this.