

DT0120.1 | A SEED MARKS TIME | TRUMBORE  
SSAA CHORUS & PIANO

# A SEED MARKS TIME

for SSAA Chorus,  
String Quartet & Piano

CHORUS & PIANO  
REDUCTION

daletrumbore  
c o m p o s e r

## 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*.

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## 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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CHORUS &  
PIANO REDUCTION

*Dedicated to Eric Nelson on the occasion of his 25<sup>th</sup> 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 a spirit.*

# A Seed Marks Time

for SSAA Chorus, String Quartet & Piano

Text by Lynn Ungar

Music by Dale Trumbore

**Inquisitive; ♩ = 100 (♩ = ♩ throughout)**

SOPRANO *f*  
I wonder how a seed marks time,

ALTO *f*  
I wonder how a seed marks time,

Piano Reduction *p*

*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

2

4

*mf* *p*

3 3

8 **A**

*mf* *f* *mp*

I won - der how a seed marks time, tucked in - to the

*mf* *p*

I won - der how a seed marks mm

8

*f* sub. *p* *mf*

13

*p* *mp*

si - lent earth.

*mp*

earth.

13

*p* *mf* *p*

3 3

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

19 **B** *mf*  
Does it scratch a tal - ly \_\_\_\_\_

19 *mf*  
Does it scratch a tal - ly

19 *pp* *f*

23  
Does it scratch a tal - ly \_\_\_\_\_ Does it

23  
Does it scratch a tal - ly

23 *mf*

27  
scratch a tal - ly \_\_\_\_\_ Does it

27  
Does it scratch a tal - ly

27 *sub. p* *mf*

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

30

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

*mf*

Does it scratch a tal - ly Does it scratch a

Does it scratch a tal - ly Does it scratch a

30

34

**C**

on the in - side of its husk,

*f*

tal - ly on the in - side of its husk,

*f*

tal - ly on the in - side of its husk,

*f*

34

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

38 *rit.* **Taking time**

*p* *mp* *mf*

3 3

43 **poco accel.** **D** **In time; ♩ = ca. 100**

*p* *p* *p* *p*

num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the days

num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the

num - ber - ing the days num - ber - ing the

43 *mp*

48 *mp* *mp* *mp*

num - ber - ing the days un - til

days num - ber - ing the days un - til

days num - ber - ing the days un - til

48 3 3

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A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

poco rit.

**F** Slightly slower; ♩ = ca. 84

Musical score for measures 68-71. The score is in 4/4 time and features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "or does eve - ry - thing fade in - to a pass - ing". The piano part includes triplets and dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. A large blue watermark "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid on the score.

72

poco accel.

♩ = ca. 100

Musical score for measures 72-75. The score is in 4/4 time and features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "blur with-out the dance of bees and the". The piano part includes triplets and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *mf*, and *mf*. A large blue watermark "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid on the score.

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

76

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

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

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

76

**G**

*rit.* Slightly slower; ♩ = ca. 72

80 *f*

what a - bout the dor - mant sum - mer grass,

what a - bout the dor - mant sum - mer grass,

what a - bout the dor - mant sum - mer grass, ly - ing gold - en un - der the

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

Ped.

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

85 *mf*  
sun?

85 *ff* *p* *f*

91 *p* *f* *mf* *f*

97 *mp* **H** *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Is it pas - sive through the drought, or are  
or are



*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

109 *poco accel.*

114 **I** Inquisitive; ♩ = 100

119 *molto rit.* **J** ♩ = ca. 72

*f* I know how the sun-flo-wer turns its bright head,

*f* I know how the sun-flo-wer turns its bright head,

119

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A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

♩ = ca. 84

**K**

135 *f* way? oo Do they have some in - ter - nal *mf* *mp*

135 *f* way? oo Do they have some in - ter - nal *mf* *mp*

135 *f* way? oo Do they have some in - ter - nal *mf* *mp*

135 *f* *p*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 135-140. It features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) and a piano reduction. The vocal parts begin at measure 135 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "way? oo Do they have some in - ter - nal". The dynamics for the vocal parts transition to mezzo-forte (*mf*) and then mezzo-piano (*mp*). The piano reduction starts at measure 135 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The piano part concludes at measure 140 with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes a rehearsal mark 'K' in a box at the top right.

141

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

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

141 *mf*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 141-146. It features two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and a piano reduction. The vocal parts begin at measure 141 with the lyrics: "cal-en - dar with days marked in red, or do they". The piano reduction starts at measure 141 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score concludes at measure 146 with a double bar line and repeat dots.

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

poco accel. **L** ♩. = ca. 60

147

move through a blur of time, for - get - ting ap-  
move through a blur of time, for - get - ting ap-  
move through a blur of time, for - get - ting ap-

147

point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions, or so  
point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions, or so  
point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions,

♩. = ca. 84

152

point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions, or so  
point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions, or so  
point - ments, ne - glect - ing ob - li - ga - tions,

152

*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

156 *mp* **M** *pp* *mf*

lost \_\_\_\_\_ or so lost \_\_\_\_\_ in the work of the

lost \_\_\_\_\_ or so lost \_\_\_\_\_

or so lost \_\_\_\_\_ in the work of the

156 *pp* *mf*

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of the musical score, measures 156-161. It features three vocal staves and a piano reduction. The vocal parts are in a B-flat major key with a common time signature. The first vocal part starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a measure rest. The second and third vocal parts also start with *mp*. A dynamic change to piano (*pp*) occurs at measure 158, and then to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 160. A 'M' in a box is placed above the piano part at measure 158. The piano reduction starts at measure 156 with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and changes to mezzo-forte (*mf*) at measure 158. A large blue watermark 'FOR PERUSAHAAN' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

162 *p*

day \_\_\_\_\_ that dusk goes un - no - ticed,

day \_\_\_\_\_ that dusk goes un - no - ticed,

in the work of the day \_\_\_\_\_ that dusk goes un - no - ticed,

162

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, measures 162-165. It features three vocal staves and a piano reduction. The vocal parts continue from the previous system. The piano part is mostly silent, with some rests and a few notes. The dynamics are piano (*p*). The time signature changes from common time to 3/4 at measure 163 and back to 4/4 at measure 164. A large blue watermark 'FOR PERUSAHAAN' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

A Seed Marks Time  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

♩ = 76 or slightly slower

166 *pp* *f* *p* *poco rit.*

and it is sud - den - ly dark?  
and it is sud - den - ly dark?  
and it is sud - den - ly dark?

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

*p*  
Ped.

172 *pp* *mp* *pp*

nn  
nn  
nn

172

*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

179 *p* *mf* **N** *p* *mf*

Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ or are they

Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ or are they

Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ or are they

179 *mf* *p*

This system contains the first two systems of music. The top three staves are vocal parts. The first two staves are for two voices, and the third is for a third voice. The piano accompaniment is on the bottom staff. The music starts at measure 179. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'Are they lost, \_\_\_\_\_ or are they'. The piano part has dynamics *mf* and *p*. There is a box with the letter 'N' above the first vocal staff.

185 *f* *mp*

lis - - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants, \_\_\_\_\_

sim - ply lis - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants as it

sim - ply lis - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants \_\_\_\_\_ it

185

This system contains the second system of music. The top three staves are vocal parts. The piano accompaniment is on the bottom staff. The music starts at measure 185. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'lis - - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants, \_\_\_\_\_' and 'sim - ply lis - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants as it' and 'sim - ply lis - ten - ing \_\_\_\_\_ to the earth as it chants \_\_\_\_\_ it'. The piano part has dynamics *f* and *mp*. There is a large blue watermark 'FOR PERUSAL ONLY' across the page.

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*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

198

*this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now*

*this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now*

*this. Now this. Now this. Now this. Now*

198

*p*

202

*Half the choir whispers; half continues singing*

*this. Now this. Now this. Now*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

202

*pp*

*A Seed Marks Time*  
Chorus & Piano Reduction

205 *Whispering*

Three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and a piano reduction. The vocal parts have lyrics: *this. Now this. Now this. Now*. The piano part includes a *ppp* dynamic marking.

208 *ppp*

Three vocal staves and a piano reduction. The vocal parts have lyrics: *this. Now this. Now this. Now this.* The piano part includes a *ppp* dynamic marking.