A QUAKER TRILOGY

(2023)

three pieces for SATB choir (with divisi) The second

David McGregor Joe Bates Frederick Vine

commissioned by The Micklegate Singers

> edited by Frederick Viner

University of York Music Press ISMN M 57080 074 2

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INTRODUCTION

Some years ago I had the idea that setting to music words by William Penn, often read at Quaker memorial meetings, might provide inspiration (and a financial boost) to young composers at the beginning of their careers. Nicholas Carter, Director of the Micklegate Singers, warmed immediately to the prospect. So the composers were sought out from music students at the University of York, and the work on A Quaker Trilogy began.

The brief was simple — the composers could choose whichever of the words they felt they wanted to work with. Thus, with more flexibility than composers commissioned to write a Mass or a canticle setting would have, the three students set to work, selecting and shaping as they saw fit.

Here are the fruits of their labours. The pieces have proved a challenge for the Micklegate Singers — they are by no means easy — but the end results, originally sung over a number of concerts, have been remarkable. Each has been loved by the choir and audiences for the distinctive musical world that it creates. Each is haunting in its own way.

They are pieces that give voice to grief without the maudlin and sometimes false emotions that might come from a mass or the hymn singing at a funeral in a secular age, where overtly Christian words don't quite seem to fit with the complex emotions felt inside. The pieces also provide comfort and consolation through their beauty and their reminder to us that the departed live within us still. They remind us too, perhaps, that religious belief and spirituality are not necessarily the same thing.

Julian Pattison
July 2023

TEXT

This is the Comfort of the Good, that the Grave cannot hold them, and that they live as soon as they die.

For Death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity.

Death, then, being the way and condition of Life, we cannot love to live, if we cannot bear to die.

They that love beyond the World, cannot be separated by it.

Death cannot kill what never dies.

Nor can Spirits ever be divided

that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the Root and Record of their Friendship.

If Absence be not Death, neither is theirs.

Death is but Crossing the World, as Friends do the Seas;
they live in one another still.
For they must needs be present,
that love and live in that which is Omnipresent.
In this Divine Glass, they see Face to Face;
and their Converse is Free, as well as Pure.

William Penn

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David McGregor

THEY THAT LOVE BEYOND THE WORLD (2020)

for SATB divisi

Programme note:

In setting William Penn's elegiac text, I attempted to use the choir as a collective voice for the

powerful expression of love which reaches beyond the boundaries of our mortal existence. This

idea of reaching is reflected musically, embodied by dovetailing iterations of an ascending motif

antagonised by the overall descending contour of the music. This is a musical representation of a

love which attempts to reach above the confines of the world.

The latter half of the piece sees a shift in the musical landscape. Having previously been dense and

polyphonic, the texture is reduced to a single note and the introduction of a solo alto voice singing

'Death cannot kill, what never dies'. The proceeding disquieting, otherworldly passage relents with

the word 'Eternity', resolving to a chord which (similar to the ending of Durufle's Requiem) alludes

to something beyond our earthly lives.

Although the work closes with a sparse recapitulation of the opening material, the message I

intended to convey through the music's subdued final ascent was a positive one, reflecting the

spiritually enriching value of Penn's words and their depiction of the triumph of love over death.

David McGregor

Details of performance:

They That Love Beyond the World was premiered by the Micklegate Singers under the direction of

Nicholas Carter on 2 April 2022 at the National Centre for Early Music in York.

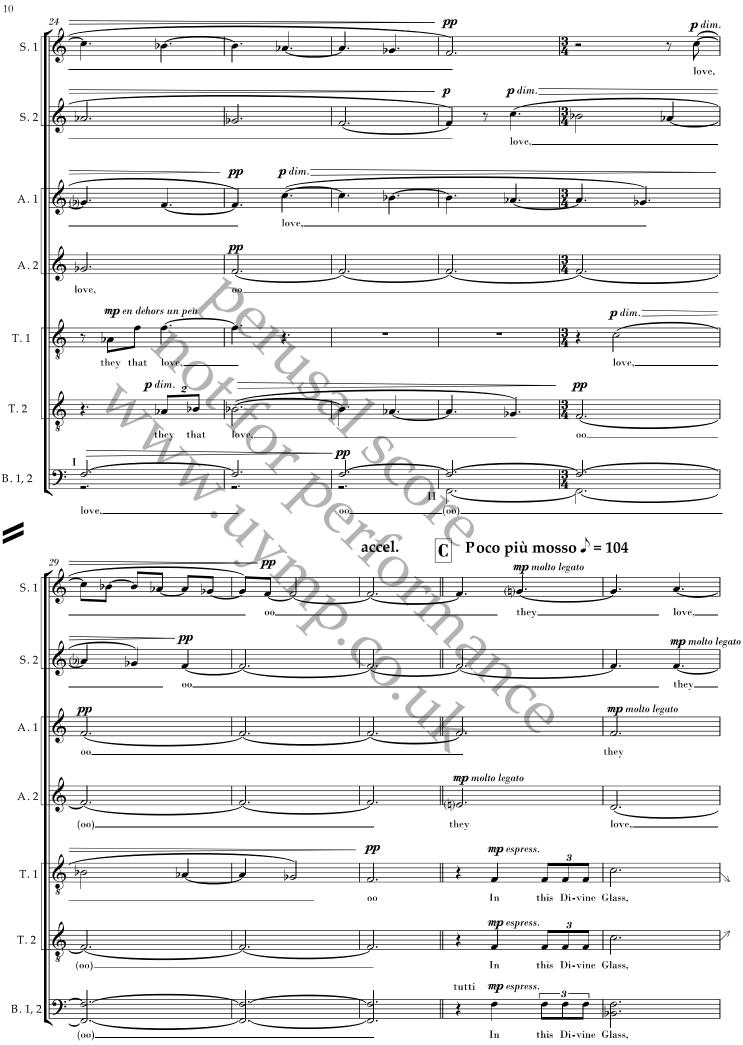
Duration: 5'45"

THEY THAT LOVE BEYOND THE WORLD



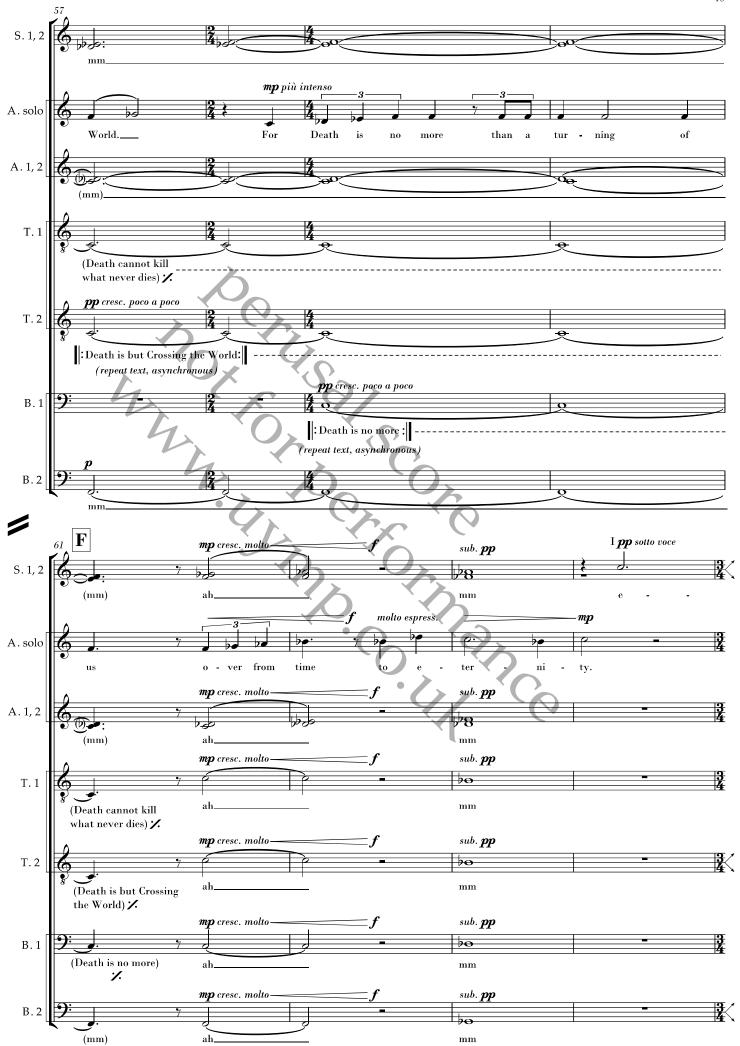


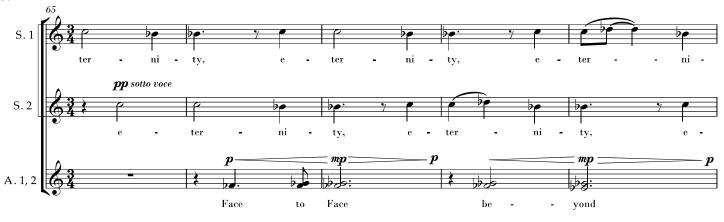




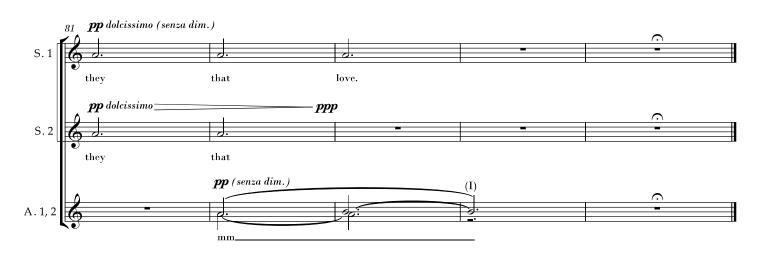












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Joe Bates

ABSENCE (2022)

for SATB divisi

Programme note:

In this beautiful Quaker reflection by William Penn, I saw a glimmer of a philosophical idea that

has captivated me since my schooldays. Derek Parfait's Reasons and Persons breaks down

conventional ideas of selfhood, prompting us to view it as a chain of experiences rather than a

thing of itself. This suggests a rethinking of death that emphasises the continuity of our experience

in others: friends 'live in one another still'.

This piece's musical language is inspired by Georgian polyphony, which is oriented around stacked

fifths and fourths. These move in unfamiliar ways, contracting and expanding in parallel

movements that feel counterintuitive to me yet profoundly satisfying and resonant. The power of

these parallel fifths and the weight with which they converge in moments of unison felt appropriate

for this work: I hoped to write in a register both serious and surprising, open to movement and

joy.

Joe Bates

Details of performance:

Absence was premiered by the Micklegate Singers under the direction of Nicholas Carter on 3

December 2022 at the Unitarian Chapel in York, as part of the York Late Music concert series.

Duration: 7'10"

ABSENCE

WILLIAM PENN, 1693

for SATB divisi

Joe Bates (August 2022)





























Frederick Viner

THE TRUEST END (2022)

for SATB divisi

Programme note:

As the third and final composer tasked with setting William Penn's poignant text for the Micklegate

Singers, I had the benefit of being able to take inspiration from my fellow commissionees. The

downside to coming last, however, is that the other two had already laid claim to the most potent

words and phrases, each meditating on only a handful of lines. So, not wanting to encroach on

compositional territory, I decided I had better employ a different approach and use every one of

Penn's words.

Consequently, The Truest End was very much moulded by the structure of the text – its three main

sections corresponding to the three stanzas. The slow, syllabic introduction conjures a funereal

atmosphere, with the choir singing sotto voce and senza vibrato as if not yet able to muster an emotion.

But after coming to rest on 'die' (punctuated by a Mahlerian fate motif), the music seems to enter

a new world. Ushered in by soaring solo alto, the second section is bathed in opulent,

impressionistic harmonies and filled with the expressive outpourings that were previously in such

short supply. This material then repeats for the third section, which is capped off by a yet more

expressive climax.

I find Penn's epigram deeply moving and richly uplifting. To put it simply, this work is my attempt

at channelling those feelings.

Frederick Viner

Details of performance:

The Truest End was premiered by the Micklegate Singers under the direction of Nicholas Carter

on 1 April 2023 at St Lawrence Church, York.

Duration: 6'15"

THE TRUEST END

WILLIAM PENN, 1693

for SATB divisi

Frederick Viner (October 2022)

Largo misterioso e legato (= 42)



















UYMP publishes the following choral works, which can be purchased from www.musicroom.com

Simon Bainbridge:

Psalm 23, for SATB soli, SATB chorus and marimba, 9'

David Blake:

Searching the Skies, for unison children's voices and piano (or strings), 11'

Anne Boyd:

A Lullaby of the Nativity, for SATB, 4'

A Vision: Jesus Reassures His Mother, for SSATBB soli, 14'

Cum Rex gloriae, a motet in 12 voices (SATB) for Easter Saturday morning, 10'

Dreams for the Earth, a Youth Cantata for solo voices (SSTBar), boys' choir (SSA), girls' choir (SSA), chamber

choir (SATB), chorus (SATB), solo piano, 3 solo violins (amplified), handbell choir, organ, 12 balcony trumpets and orchestra, 90'

Jesus Reassures His Mother, for double SATB chorus (with SATB soloists), 22'

Lament of the Pious Women of Jerusalem, for SSAA and 3 solo sopranos, 4'

Light of Love, for SATB and piano, 4'

Revelations of Divine Love, for SSATBB, 17

Jeremy Dale Roberts:

Motet: Nunc Dimittis, for SATB (with divisi)

Anthony Gilbert:

Handles to the Invisible, for SATB, 16-18'

Jonty Harrison:

Rosaces 4, for four amplified voices (SATB) and tape,

Sadie Harrison:

As-salāmu 'alaykum Bethlehem, for SSAATTBB, 3

Ring the Bells of St Leonards (A festive processional), for children's voices and ensemble, 10'

Ed Hughes:

Bring Us, O Lord God, for SSAATTBB, 3'30"

Cradle Song, for SSATBariB

Sun, New Moon and Women Shouting, for SSATBarB, 11'

Three poems of John Donne, for SSAATTBB

Jo Kondo:

Motet Under the Rose, for 12 voices (SATB), 8'30"

Snow's Falling, for mixed choir and piano, 14'

Soupir, for SSSAAATTTBB, 5'

, y dy Three Sappho Fragments, for mixed choir, flute and tom-tom, 15

Two Pieces, for SATB chorus, 5'

Repetitive Songs, for mixed chorus, 27'

David Lancaster:

Apocalypse, for SATB with high soprano soloist, 25'

Fallen, for SATB Chorus and two soprano soloists, 5'

Feathers, for unaccompanied choir SSATB (with soprano soloist), 5'

Magnificat, for unaccompanied choir SSATB, 6'

Of Trumpets and Angels, for SATB chorus, soprano solo, piano (also alternative version with orchestra), 15'

Fell (from Three Scenes from Ovid), for SATB chorus and natural-horn in F, 9'

At the Edge of the World, for SSAATTBB and soprano soloist, 40'

David Lumsdaine:

Five Travelling Songs, for SATB, 7'20"

Where the Lilies Grow, for eight-part chamber choir, 12'

Elisabeth Lutyens:

Counting Your Steps, for mixed chorus, 4 flutes and 3 percussionists, 16'

It is the Hour, for SSTB, 6'

Of the Snow, for SSA soli, 7'

Roads, for SSC-tTBarB, 14'

The Hymn of Man, for mixed chorus, 10'

The Roots of the World, for mixed chorus and cello, 12'

The Sloth, for C-tTTBarBarB, 14'

The Tyme Doth Flete, for mixed chorus, 10'

Voice of Quiet Waters, for chorus and orchestra, 16'

Paul Mealor:

...And Profoundest Midnight Shroud the Serene Lights of Heaven..., for SSSSAAAATTTTBBBB, 8' The Lord's Prayer, for SATB (with divisi), 2'

George Nicholson:

A World of Imagination, for SATB choir, 3'

Dormi, Jesu!, for SATB choir and piano, 5'30"

Behold O God for SATB choir and organ, 5'

Nigel Osborne:

7 Words, 7 Icons, 7 Cities, for choir and string orchestra, 23'

A Prayer and Two Blessings, for SATB choir, 8'

Afro-Scottish, for children's choir, SATB choir and jazz orchestra, 45'

Angel-Nebulae, for four voices (TTTB), 15'

Naturtöne/Abschied, for SATTBarB choir, 8'

Pulsus, for C-tTTB soli and monochord, 9'

Hilda Paredes:

Fragmentos de Altazor, for SSATBarB soli, 14

Matthew Roddie:

Missa Brevis, for choir and organ, 15'

Laurence Roman:

Agnus Dei from Columba Canticles, for SATB choir with soprano and alto soli, Uilleann pipes and three pianos, 4'

Columba Canticles, for SATB choir, narrator, harp, Uilleann pipes and string orchestra, 41'

Columba Canticles, reduction for SATB choir, narrator and piano, 41'

Psalm 117, for three female voices, one male voice and piano (4 hands),

The Dreamland Tree, for SATB

The Three Orphans (Három Árva), for SSA soli, 8'

Three Hungarian Peasant Songs (Három Magyar Parasztdal), for SSATB, 6'

To the Children (Struwwelpeter), SSA soli

Evis Sammoutis:

Sculpting Air, for five voices (SMTBarB), 13'

Isthmus, for choir, four soloists (2 sopranos, 2 altos) and fixed media, 7'

Robert Saxton:

A Babe is Born, for unison voices and organ, 3'40"

Cantate Domino and Deus Misereatur, for SSATB, 8'

Five Motets, for SSAATTBBB, 15'

Locus Iste, for SSATB and organ, 3'

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, for TrTrATB

O Living Love, for SATB and organ, 5'

Our Father, Whose Creative Will, for treble, alto, tenor and bass voices, 2'

The Dialogue of Zion and God, for 8 solo voices, 5'

Vexilla Regis, for SSAATTBB choir, 5' Was it Winter?, for SATB choir, 2'30"

Thomas Simaku:

Albanian Wedding Song "Qenke veshur me të bardha" (Dressed in White), for female choir (SSA), 3' La Leggiadra Luna, for mixed choir, a cappella

Silver, for children's choir and piano, 6'

The Rose of the World, for solo soprano, SATB choir and chamber ensemble, 12'

Three Albanian Folk Songs, version for female choir (SSA), 9'

Three Albanian Folk Songs, version for three soli female voices (SSA), 9'

Luís Tinoco:

Descubro a Voz, for mixed choir (SATB), 3'50" Ink Dance, for mixed choir (SATB), 3'20"

Frederick Viner:

A Tyneside Postcard, for SATB divisi, 5' Prayer from Afar, for a cappella SSATB, 4' Justorum Animae, for SATB divisi, 3'45"

James Weeks:

A tear, for mixed voice choir and organ, 9'

Ave maris stella, for choir, violin and organ, 8'

Glossa, for ATB choir, 3'

Libro di fiammelle e ombre, for SMezCtTBarB soli, 24'

Mala punica, eight canonic motets from the Song of Songs, for SSAATTBB soli, 35'

mural, for one or more SATB quartets, c. 20-30'

Old English Apple Cultivars, for four upper or lower voices, 5

Orlando Tenebrae, for SATB choir, 25'

Radical Road, for 30 or more singers with stones, c. 30'

The Freedom of the Earth, for chorus and ensemble, 29'

Trevor Wishart:

Machine 2, for choir and machine sounds, 7

Collections:

z Frederick Viner A Quaker Trilogy (David McGregor, Joe Bates & Frederick Viner), for SATB divisi

