WE SHALL NOT SLEEP

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A Thesis
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MASTER OF MUSIC

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Committee:
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ABSTRACT

Marilyn Shrude, Advisor

_We Shall Not Sleep_ is a seventeen-minute piece for choir, seven vocal soloists, brass quintet, and percussion. The title is taken from the poem, “In Flanders Fields”, by John McCrae\(^1\). This poem is the central text of the work, flanked on either side by information found in Canadian attestation papers and soldiers’ death records from World War I. My goal is to create a musical memorial using the poem as a centerpiece to two perspectives: that of the soldiers’ and their families’.

The attestation papers give information on men enlisted in the 43\(^{st}\) Battalion of Winnipeg, Manitoba who were killed on October 26, 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele. I chose this particular battalion and battle because my great-grandfather served in the 43\(^{st}\) and was injured on that day.

Three soloists portraying soldiers present this unusual choice of text “answering” to quasi-mechanical ground bass “questions” sung by another male soloist. While these pseudo-recitatives come to a close, the choir emerges with the poem. By design, these texts overlap. I have manipulated the words in such a way to suggest double meanings both sincere and cynical in nature.

After the poem reaches its climax, the fate of the soldiers is realized through dialogue similar to the text of the attestation papers, only here the words are drawn from the soldiers’ death records. Three female soloists, responding to a new, more ethereal quasi-ground bass, present details of the soldiers’ deaths.

Since most of the battalion was either Scottish or of Scottish descent, I have incorporated elements of Scottish folk music. I have also used the two marches associated with this particular battalion to generate melodic and motivic ideas.

Given the character of the texts, including instrumentation such as brass and percussion is appropriate. However, this supporting instrumentation has been applied sparsely as to not overpower the other elements. The brass quintet is the primary accompaniment, while the percussion only appears at appropriate moments in the text.

\(^1\) McCrae, John. _In Flanders Fields and Other Poems, by Lieut.-Col. John McCrae, M.D., with an essay in character, by Sir Andrew Macphail_. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Marilyn Shrude and Dr. Elainie Lillios, for their guidance, patience, and wisdom.

In memory of:

Pvt. Robert Edwin Mitchell
(1897–1917)

Pvt. Richard Malcolm McCall
(1890–1917)

Pvt. Percival Charles Richard Day
(1888–1917)

and my great-grandfather,
CQMS A/CSM David Graham Reid
(1894–1944)
Oath to be Taken by Man on Attestation

I ____________, do make an Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to his Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Information at Death

Regimental Number, Name, Rank, Regiment, Battalion, Enlisted or Conscripted, Date of death, Age at death, Cause of death, Burial, Plot, Married, Next of kin.

The Soldiers:

Died during the Battle of Passchendaele, Third Battle of Ypres

Pvt. Robert Edwin Mitchell
September 20, 1897–October 26, 1917

Pvt. Richard Malcolm McCall
April 17, 1890–October 26, 1917

Pvt. Percival Charles Richard Day
November 2, 1888–October 26, 1917

In Flanders Fields

Lieutenant Colonel John A. McCrae (1872-1918)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Instrumentation

2 Trumpets in C  
Horn in F  
Trombone  
Tuba  

Percussion: (2 players)  
Bass drum  
Snare drum  
Marimba  
Vibraphone  

7 Soloists:  
2 Sopranos (Mrs. Margaret Mitchell, mother; Mrs. Ellen McCall, wife)  
Alto (Mrs. Elizabeth Day, wife)  
2 Tenors (Lt. Col. & R.E. Mitchell)  
Baritone (R.M. McCall)  
Bass (P.C.R. Day)  

SSAATTBB Choir

Performance notes

Using harmon mutes:

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\[ \begin{align*}
\text{gradually insert mute} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{gradually remove mute} \\
\text{rapidly insert mute} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{rapidly remove mute}
\end{align*} \]
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Choir: (mm. 372-382):

The conductor maintains a tempo of \( \text{q}=88 \), from which he or she cues the singers. While the entrances and exits are specified, the individual tempi are not, as each singer is to choose his or her own tempo between \( \text{q}=50-100 \).

Score is untransposed
We Shall Not Sleep

Christopher Holt

1st Trumpet in C

2nd Trumpet in C

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

Bass Drum

Snare Drum

Marimba

Vibraphone

Mrs. Mitchell

Mrs. McCall

Mrs. Day

Lt. Col.

R.E. Mitchell

R.M. McCall

P.C.R. Day

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass
Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?

Are you willing to be attended to serve in
What is the name of your next,

Mitchell

One nine two

Aukney Street, Winnipeg.

Sep-

1st C Tpt.

2nd C Tpt.

B.D.

S.D.

Lt. Col.

Mitchell
21

1st C Tpt.

2nd C Tpt.

B.D.

S.D.

Lt. Col.

Mitchell

McCall

Day

="

279

1st C Tpt.

2nd C Tpt.

B.D.

S.D.

Lt. Col.

Mitchell

McCall

Day
**McCall**

**Mitchell McCall**

**Tbn.**

**Tbn.**

**B.D.**

**S.D.**

**Mac.**

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**Lt. Col.**

1. What is the date of your birth?

2. Richard McCall.

3. Two years.

---

**Mitchell McCall**

**McCall**

**Day**

---

1. What is your trade or calling?

2. Twentieth, eighteen ninety-seven.


4. Imperial.
Confidently, but nervous

Confidently, but nervous

Confidently, but nervous

Critical, but nervous
do make an oath, that I will be faithful

and bear true allegiance to His Majesty, King George the Fifth, His

Heirs and Successors, And that I will and am duty bound, faithfully and

Hn.

Thb.

Thb.

Mitchell

McCall

Day

Tbn.

Tba.
The pop - pies blow.
And \( mf \) will observe and o -

And \( mf \) will observe and o -

And \( mf \) will observe and o -
In the sky, brave larks singing
And the larks, still singing
poco rit.

So help me, God.

We are the dead.

So help me, God.

We are the dead.

So help me, God.

We are the dead.
Lov'd, now we lie, in Flanders Fields.
1st C Tpt.  
2nd C Tpt.  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.  
B.D.  
Mrs. Mitchell  
Lt. Col.  
S.  
A.  
T.  
B.  

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Mrs. Mitchell
Lt. Col.

Private Infantry, the Forty-third.

Bat-ta- lion, En-listed or conscript.

To you, from

To you, from

To you, from

To you, from
If ye break

Husband of Ellen McCall

of Elizabeth Frances Day
We shall not...
We shall not sleep.

We shall not sleep.

We shall not sleep.

Though pop - pies blow.
shall not sleep.