**Remember**

**for baritone solo, children’s choir and orchestra**

This work was commissioned by Robert Pepper and the English Schools’ Orchestra (ESO), with funds generously provided by PRS for Music, to commemorate the centenary of the First World War, as well as the centenary of the Performing Right Society and the twentieth anniversary of the ESO.

*Remember*sets stanzas from the Laurence Binyon poem, *For the Fallen*, which was written in 1914, just after the outbreak of the First World War. The poet said that the fourth stanza (“They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old’) came to him first, and it is of course these words that have become so familiar through their use at annual Remembrance services. However, the poem has seven stanzas in all, and I have used three of these.

For the setting of this memorable text, I decided to use a baritone solo voice, both for its lyrical and ‘darker’ qualities. I have tried to utilize the full range of the voice (over two octaves), sometimes dramatically, at other times reflectively. The orchestra alone is heard at the beginning, announcing the main ideas, with percussion providing a powerful backdrop; there are several other intervening orchestral interludes during the course of the work, which act as a dramatic counterpoint to the text. The work has an arch-like structure, with a violent orchestral scherzo providing the peak of the arch after the baritone cries of ‘They fell with their faces to the foe’.

Towards the close of the work, after the enduring words ‘We will remember them’, children’s voices enter with a setting of the Benedictus from the Latin Mass, thus counteracting the horror and suffering of war with a message of peace and reassurance. This could also be seen as a musical metaphor for the souls of the dead being carried to Heaven by the angels of God (through the ‘innocence’ of children). The work ends with the pealing of bells, another eternal symbol of both remembrance and rejoicing.

I have dedicated the work ‘to all the victims of war’, thus embracing a more universal message about the inherent tragedy of all wars, where so many innocent lives are lost.

Text used from three stanzas of the poem *For the Fallen*by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)

*Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal*

*Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.*

*There is music in the midst of desolation*

*And a glory that shines upon our tears.*

*They went with songs to the battle, they were young,*

*Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.*

*They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,*

*They fell with their faces to the foe.*

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*

*We will remember them.*

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