
MICHAEL SCHACHTER

AS I WENT IN A
MERY MORNYNG

for SATB Chorus

(2019)

DURG MUSIC, INC.

PERUSAL SCORE

Copyright 2019 by Michael Schachter. All rights reserved. Reproduction or distribution of any kind is expressly forbidden without written permission of the copyright holder.

Published by
DURG MUSIC, INC.

Note from the Composer

As I Went in a Mery Mornyng was commissioned by Edward Elwyn Jones, Gund University Organist and Choirmaster, and Carson P. Cooman, Composer-in-Residence, for the 110th Annual Christmas Carol Services at the Memorial Church at Harvard University. It received its premiere on December 9, 2019, by the Harvard University Choir, Edward Jones conducting.

The text of *As I Went in a Mery Mornyng* comes from a 15th-century carol of unknown authorship, for which the music does not survive. It is a fascinating example of the curious late-medieval fad of *timor mortis* (“fear of death”) poetry and songwriting. These works, written in vernacular old English, dip into Latin for invoking the fear of death, which as this text shows, was an omnipresent concern in everyday European life and by no means a barrier to carrying about one’s business (or, as in this text, appreciating the merriness of a morning) with blithe acceptance. I can’t help but ponder how much more anxiously we live now, despite the relative prosperity, security and comforts afforded by contemporary society. What is there really to fear in the end, other than the inevitable? And what might life be, in the absence of its shadow?

As a nod to the earliest musical notations of medieval carols, the score is notated with measures of irregular length, which mark phrasing more so than any implied meter. Rhythms are notated with regular pulse, and implied compound groupings (equaling three eighth-notes) are indicated with brackets above the staff. Unless there is clear connective tissue from one “bar” to the next (a tied or slurred figure, e.g.), singers should take a generous breath at the end of each “bar,” corresponding with the punctuation at the end of each line of text. (The pulse can and should stretch with each breath.)

Text

“As I Went in a Mery Mornyng” (Anonymous, 15th century)

In what estate soever I be,
Timor mortis conturbat me.

As I went in a mery mornyng,
I hard a byrd bothe wep and syng;
Thys was the tenowr of her talkyng,
Timor mortis conturbat me.

I asked that byrd what sche ment.
“I am a musket bothe fayer and gent,
For dred of deth I am al schent;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

“Whan I schal dey I know no day,
What countre or place I can not sey;
Wherfor thys song syng I may,
Timor mortis conturbat me.

“Iesu Cryst, whane he schuld dey,
To hys Fader he gan sey,
‘Fader,’ he seyde, ‘in Trinyte,
Timor mortis conturbat me.”

Al Crysten pepull, behold and se,
This world is but a vanyte,
And replet with necessaryte;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

Wak I or sclep, ete or drynke,
Whan I on my last end do thynk,
For grete fer my sowle do shrynke;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

God graunte us grace hym for to serue,
And be at owr end whan we sterue,
And frome the fynd he us preserue;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

(Source: *Medieval Lyric*, ed. by John C. Hirsch, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 28–29)

Performance Duration: 4 minutes

for the Memorial Church at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts,
the 110th Annual Christmas Carol Services, and the Harvard University Choir,
Edward Elwyn Jones, Gund University Organist and Choirmaster

As I Went in a Mery Mornyng

Anonymous (15th century, England)

Michael Schachter (b. 1987)

SOPRANO *mf* In what es-tate so - e - uer I be, *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

ALTO *mf* In what es-tate so - e - uer I be, *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

TENOR *mf* In what es-tate so - e - uer I be, *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

BASS *mf* In what es-tate so - e - uer I be, *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

1

S.

A.

T. *mf* As I went in a me - ry mor - nyng, I hard a byrd bothe wep_ and syng, *espress.*

B. *mf* As I went in a me - ry mor - nyng, I hard a byrd bothe wep_ and syng, *espress.*

S. *p* mm

A. *p* mm

T. *p* Thys was the ten - ovr of her talk - yng: *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

B. *p* — This was the ten - ovr of her talk - yng: *p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

2

S. *mf* "I am a mus - ket bothe fayer and gent,

A. *mf* "I am a mus - ket bothe fayer and gent,

T. *mf* I asked that byrd what sche ment, *p* oo

B. *mf* I asked that byrd what sche ment, *p* oo

S. *sub. p* For dred of deth I am al schent, *sub. p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

A. *sub. p* For dred of deth I am al schent, *sub. p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

T. *p* oo schent, *sub. p* Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

B. *p* oo schent, *sub. p* Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me.

3

S. *mf* "Whan I schal dey, I know no day, *mf* What coun-tre or place I can-not sey,

A. *mf* "Whan I schal dey, I know no day, *mf* What coun-tre or place I can-not sey,

T. *mf* "Whan I schal dey, I know no day, *mf* What coun-tre or place,

B. *p* oo *p* oo sey,

ten., espress.

f
S. Wher - for this song _____ syng _____ I may,
A. Wher - for this song _____ syng _____ I may,
T. Wher - for this song _____ syng _____ I may,
B. Wher - for this song _____ syng _____ I may,

mf *dim.* *p*
S. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me.
mf *dim.* *p*
A. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me.
mf *dim.* *p*
T. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me.
mf *dim.* *p*
B. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me.

4 *mp*

S. "Ie - su Cryst, whane he schuld dey, To hys Fa - der he gan sey,
A. oo oo
T. *mp* "Ie - su Cryst, whane he schuld dey, To hys Fa - der he gan sey,
B. *p* oo oo

p *mf*

S. oo Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me,

p *mf*

A. oo Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me, —

mf *mf*

T. 'Fa - der,' 'in Trin-y - te, Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me,

p *mf*

B. he seydl, 'in Trin-y - te, Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me, —

dim. *p*

S. Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me, Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur-bat me." *ten.*

dim. *p*

A. Ti-mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me, — Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me." *ten.*

dim. *p*

T. Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me, — Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me." *ten.*

dim. *p*

B. Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me, — Ti - mor mor - tis con-tur - bat me." *ten.*

5 *mp*

S. Al Crys - ten pe - pull, be - hold and se, —

mp

A. Al pe - pull be - hold and se,

mp

T. Al pe - pull be - hold and se,

mp

B. Al pe - pull be - hold and se, This

mf *espress.*

S. This world is but a van - y - te,

mf *espress.*

A. This world is but a van - y - te,

mf

T. This world van - y - te,

mf

B. world van - y - te,

mp *p* *cresc.*

S. And re - plet with ne - ces - sit - ye, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

mp *p* *cresc.*

A. And re - plet, And re - plet, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

mp *p* *cresc.*

T. And re - plet re - plet, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

mp *p* *cresc.*

B. And re - plet, re - plet, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

6 *mf*

S. Wak I or sclep, ete or drynke,

mf

A. Wak I or sclep, ete or drynke,

mf

T. Wak I or sclep, ete or drynke,

mf

B. Wak I ete or drynke,

S. *f* Whan I on my last end do thynk, For grete fer my sowle do shrynke, *dim.*

A. *f* Whan I on my last end do thynk, For grete fer my sowle do shrynke, *dim.*

T. *f* Whan I on my last end, For grete fer my sowle shrynke, *dim.*

B. *f* Whan I on my last end do thynk, For grete fer my sowle shrynke, *dim.*

S. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

A. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

T. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

B. Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me,

S. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, *p*

A. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, *p*

T. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, *p*

B. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat me, *p*

S. *mp* God graunte us grace hym_ for to serue, *mp* And be at owr end when we sterue,

A. *mp* God graunte us grace hym_ for to serue, *mp* And be at owr end when we sterue,

T. *p* oo *p* oo

B. *p* oo *p* oo

S. *ff* And frome the fynd he vs pre - serue, *dim.*

A. *ff* And frome the fynd he vs pre - serue, *dim.*

T. *ff* And frome the fynd he vs pre - serue, *dim.*

B. *ff* And frome the fynd he vs pre - serue, *dim.*

S. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat *mf* *p* me.

A. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat *mf* *p* me.

T. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat *mf* *p* me. me.

B. *mp* Ti - mor mor - tis con - tur - bat *mf* *p* me.