

Lucia Birzer
Afterwards

Soprano solo, Alto solo, Baritono solo
Coro (SSAATTBB)

award-winning at *females featured* competition



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Vorwort

Sara Teasdale wurde 1884 in St. Louis geboren und gehörte in der Zeit nach dem ersten Weltkrieg bis zu ihrem Freitod 1933 in New York City zu den bekanntesten US-Dichter*innen. 1918 gewann sie den Columbia Poetry Prize (Vorläufer des Pulitzer Preises). Ihre Gedichte haben eine hohe Emotionalität und erzeugen eine hypnotisierende Sogwirkung. Beide für die Komposition verwendeten Gedichte beschreiben eine Zeit „danach“. Während *Afterwards* eine sehr persönliche, individuelle Geschichte erzählt, thematisiert das bekanntere Gedicht *There will come soft rains* den Gedanken an eine Zeit nach der Menschheit. Obwohl Teasdale hier ursprünglich Erfahrungen aus dem ersten Weltkrieg beschreibt – die Zeit, in der die Menschheit zum ersten Mal drohte, sich selbst auszulöschen – ist der Inhalt heute aktuell. Statt eines dramatischen, apokalyptischen Szenarios zeichnet Sara Teasdale idyllische Ruhe und Friedlichkeit der Natur, in der nur übrig gebliebener Stacheldrahtzaun an unser Dasein erinnert. So wie das Leben weitergeht, wenn eine Liebe geht, so würde auch die Erde sich nach dem Verschwinden der Gattung Mensch irgendwann wieder erholen.

Mit der Komposition ist ein Vorschlag für die Choraufstellung und -bewegung verbunden. Das erste Bild ist eine weit gefächerte Position des Chores in gemischter Stimmaufstellung mit den drei Solist*innen in der Mitte. In Takt 5–10 weichen die Solist*innen zurück; der Chor bewegt sich nach vorne und kommt – für den Großteil des Stückes – in eine normale, kompakte Choraufstellung. Die gemischte Stimmaufstellung kann optional beibehalten werden. Ab Takt 68 löst sich diese Ordnung auf und alle Sänger*innen bewegen sich rückwärts nach außen und entfernen sich. Abhängig von den örtlichen Gegebenheiten kann der Chor während des Singens auch ganz abtreten, so dass die Bühne leer zurückbleibt.

Im Februar 2024

Lucia Birzer

Foreword

Sara Teasdale was born in St. Louis in 1884 and was, until her suicide in New York City in 1933, one of the best-known US poets during the period after the First World War. She won the Columbia Poetry Prize (forerunner of the Pulitzer Prize) in 1918. Her poems are highly emotional and exert a mesmerizing allure. Both of the poems set in the composition describe a time “after.” Whereas *Afterwards* tells a very personal, individual story, the better-known poem *There will come soft rains* deals with the idea of a time after the existence of mankind. Even though Teasdale originally described experiences from the First World War – the time when mankind, for the first time, was in danger of annihilating itself – the content is relevant today. Instead of a dramatic, apocalyptic scenario, Sara Teasdale depicts the idyllic tranquility and peacefulness of nature, in which only a barbed wire fence remains as a reminder of our existence. Just as life continues when love comes to an end, the earth would eventually recover after the disappearance of the human species.

A suggestion for the choir's positioning and movement accompanies the composition. The first image presents a widely-spread positioning of the choir with the voices mixed and the three soloists in the center. In measures 5–10, the soloists move backwards; the choir moves forward into a normal, compact choir position for the largest part of the piece. Retaining the mixed voice arrangement is optional. From measure 68 onwards, this order is dissolved and all singers move backwards, outwards and away. Depending on the actual concert situation, the choir may also walk offstage completely while singing, leaving the stage empty.

February 2024

Lucia Birzer

Translation: Gudrun and David Kosviner

Afterwards

Lucia Birzer (*1995) 2022
Text: Sara Teasdale (1884 –1933)

reciting flexibly ♩ = ca. 84 (very free)

Soprano Solo *mp*
As the rain's fra-grance clings when the rain goes to the wet un-der leaves of the ver-be-na,

Alto Solo *mp*
As the rain's fra-grance clings when the rain goes to the wet un-der leaves of the ver-be-na,

Baritono Solo

celestial, misty

Soprano *mf > pp* *pp*
hmm There will come ...

Alto *mf > pp*
hmm There will ...

Tenore *mf > pp*
hmm ... come ...

Basso *pp*
There will come ...

2

mf
the clear to the cob-webs, leav-ing them light-ly thread-ed with stars.

the clear ... cling to the cob-webs, leav-ing them light-ly thread-ed with stars.

pp
there will come ...

mf > pp *mf > pp*
hmm hmm there will come ...

mf > pp
hmm there will come ...

mf > pp *mf > pp*
hmm there will come ...

Aufführungsdauer / Duration: ca. 6 min.

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3

f

... nor do you love me, love like a splen-did storm swept us and passed.

f

I do not love you now, nor do you love me, love like a splen-did storm swept us and passed.

f

I do not love you now, nor do you love me, love like a splen-did storm swept us and passed.

pp ————— *mp*

There will come ————— soft rains,

pp ————— *mp*

There will come ————— soft rains,

pp ————— *mp*

There will come ————— soft rains,

pp ————— *mp*

There will come ————— soft rains,

4

mf

Yet while in the dis-tance and days drift be-tween us, lit-tle things lin-ger to make me re-

mf

Yet while in the dis-tance and days drift be-tween us, lit-tle things lin-ger to make me re-

f

in the dis-tance and days drift be-tween us, lit-tle things lin-ger to make me re-

p

— will come soft, ————— soft ————— rains.

p

— will come soft, ————— soft ————— rains.

p

— will come soft, ————— soft ————— rains.

p

— will come soft, ————— soft ————— rains.

mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re -

mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re -

mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re -

cresc. There will _____ come, will come,

cresc. There will _____ come, will come,

cresc. There will _____ come, will come,

cresc. There will _____ come, will come,

8 mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber ...

mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber ...

mem - ber, re - mem - ber, re - mem - ber ...

— will come, will _____ come

— will come, will _____ come ...

— will come, will _____ come ...

— will come, will _____ come ...

very soft and cloudy ♩ = ca. 60

11 *mp* and the smell, and
 soft, there will come soft, and the smell of, and
mp soft rains, there will come soft rains, and the smell of the ... and
p < > *mp* there will come
 rains, there will, rains, and the smell of the ground and
p < > *mp* rains, there, rains, and the, d
p < > rains, rains, ground
p < > rains, ground

15 swal-lows cir-cling shim...
 swal-lows cir-cling with the shim - mer... there will come soft rains, and the
 cir-cling with the shim - mer - ing
 al-lows cir-cling with shim - mer - ing sound; there will come rains, and the
mf *boca chiusa *p* and the
 swal-lows cir-cling shim* sound; there will come rains, and the,
 *boca chiusa *mf* *p*
 swal-lows cir - cling shim* sound; there will, rains, and
 *boca chiusa *mf* *p*
 cir - cling shim* sound; there, rains,
 *boca chiusa *mf* *boca chiusa *p*
 cir - cling with shim* sound; rains,

accel.

19

smell of, _____ and swal-lows cir - cling and swal-lows cir - cling and
 smell of the ground and swal-lows cir - cling, swal-lows cir - cling,
 smell _____ the _____ swal-lows cir - cling, swal-lows cir - cling,
 _____ swal-lows cir - cling, swal-lows cir - cling,
 ground, swal - lows swal - lows cir - cling,
 ground, swal - lows, cir - cling,

p cresc. *p cresc.* *p cresc.* *p cresc.* *p cresc.* *pp cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.* *p cresc.* *pp cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.*

22

swal-lows cir - cling with their shim - mer - ing sound.
 _____ with _____ shim - mer - ing sound.
 swal-lows cir - cling shim - mer - ing sound.
 swal-lows cir - cling shim - mer - ing sound.
 swal-lows cir - cling shim - mer - ing sound. And
 swal-lows cir - cling shim - mer - ing sound. And

f *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *f* *p* *f* *p*

iridescent, but dense ♩ = ca. 60 (flexible)

25

p
frogs in the pools sing-ing at night and wild plum trees in tre-mu-lous white, ro-bins will wear their

p
frogs in the pools sing-ing at night and wild plum trees in tre-mu-lous white, ro-bins will wear their

p
frogs in the pools sing-ing at night and wild plum trees in tre-mu-lous white, ro-bins will wear their

p
frogs in the pools sing-ing at night and wild plum trees in tre-mu-lous white, ro-bins will wear their

Carus

more and more pulsating

30

mp
and not one will know of the

mp
and not one will know of the

mp
whis-tling their whims on a low fence wire; and not one will know of the

mp
feath-er - y fire, whis-tling their whims on a low fence wire; and not one will know of the

mp
feath-er - y fire whis-tling their whims on a low fence wire; and not one will know of the

mp
feath-er - y fire whis-tling their whims on a low fence wire; and not one will know of the

accel.

34

war not one will care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if

war, not one will care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if

war, not one will care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if

war, not one will care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if

war, not one will care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if

$\text{♩} = 48$

39

man - kind perished ut - ter - ly; aah

man - kind perished ut - ter - ly; aah

man - kind ut - ter - ly; not one

man - kind pe - rished ut - ter - ly; not one will know of the war, not one will

man - kind pe - rished ut - ter - ly; not one will know,

molto rit.

43

aah man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

aah man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

will know, aah man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

will know, aah man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

care at last when it is done, not one would mind, nei-ther bird nor tree if man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

not one know, man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

one care not one will know, man-kind pe-rished ut-ter-ly; *ff*

49

f Spring her-self when she woke at dawn would scarce-ly know that we were gone, —

f and Spring her-self when she woke at dawn would scarce-ly know that we were gone, —

f and Spring her-self when she woke at dawn would scarce-ly know that we were gone, —

f and Spring her-self when she woke at dawn would scarce-ly know that we were gone, —

54

we were gone. *f*

we were gone. *f* And Spring her-self, when she woke at dawn would *mf*

gone, were gone. *f* uuh *p*

gone, were gone. *f* uuh *p*

59

scarce-ly know that we were gone

We were gone, *p*

We were gone, *mf*

We were gone, *p*

We were gone, *mf*

65

We were gone, *p* *mf* *pp* *mp*

We were gone, *mf* *pp* *mp*

We were gone, *p* *mf* *pp* *mp*

We were gone, *p* *mf* *pp* *mp*

ards

There will come soft rains
(War Time)

I know not what the world has seen,
 Nor where the storm that raged on June
 Love like a storm
 Swept us and passed.

 Yet while the distance
 And days drift between us,
 Little things kinder
 To make me remember,

 As the rain's fragrance
 Clings when the rain goes
 To the wet under leaves
 Of the verberna,

 As the clear rain-drops
 Cling to the cobwebs,
 Leaving them lightly
 Threaded with stars.

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
 And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

 And frogs in the pools singing at night,
 And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

 Robins will wear their feathery fire
 Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

 And not one will know of the war, not one
 Will care at last when it is done.

 Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
 If mankind perished utterly;

 And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
 Would scarcely know that we were gone.

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)

