Pro Patria

(For your country)

Alexandra N Botham
A young woman's perspective on war

This piece of music tells Katie Morter’s story...

The piece is in three movements; Katie’s life before, during and after the First World War. All of the movements hark back to Horace’s ‘old lie’ (as Wilfred Owen called it); ‘Dulce et Decorum est Pro Patria Mori’ which means ‘It is good and proper to die for your country’.

In the first movement, Pro Patria, Katie and her husband, Percy, are newly married. This movement ends as Percy is enrolled to the army, following the emotional blackmail of a recruitment drive.

The second movement, Decorum, is nightmarish as Katie imagines what it must be like for the men at war. At bar 131, there is suddenly no movement and a sense of slow-motion nightmare as the graphic English text is slowly revealed. There follows a ‘Children’s Chorus’ which innocently proclaims ‘It is good and proper to die for your country’, foretelling the dawn of a new war.

The third movement, Dulce, mourns the loss of husbands, fathers and sons who died in battle as Katie learns of Percy’s death.

To hear Katie Morter's interview, please follow the link below.
Katie’s story is used with the kind permission of the family of Katie Morter.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/po1txp4

Portrait of Katie Morter by Emily Hunter Illustration.
Useful Information

Expressive markings
Dynamics and other directions are always written above the line.

Expressive words and phrases at the top of the stave in bold, such as 'Celebratory' in bar 1, are directions for the whole choir. Boxed text, such as 'Foreboding' above the Alto 1 line in bar 106, is directed only at the line that it is written above.

Maintain the dynamic or expression until otherwise directed, for example from bar 1 to bar 48, the music will be sung in a 'Celebratory' way, only changing at bar 49, where it will be sung 'Gently'.

Note the (a)* symbol on the sustained note in the Alto 1 part at bar 6. Where this symbol is written, continue to sing the "a" sound at the end of Britannia, softly without emphasis on entry.

Breathing
For the most part, rests have been included at useful places to help make long phrases easier. Where there are long sustained notes and there are no rests written, such as at bars 131 - 134, it is perfectly acceptable to stagger the breathing amongst the choir, but be sure to sing softly without emphasis on entry.

DVD information
The DVD that comes with this score has three tracks. Each track on the DVD has visuals and sound that relates to one of the movements in this piece. Use these tracks as part of the performance with a projector and loudspeaker. It would be a good idea to have a technician operating this.

There is a little more material in track 1 (Pro Patria) and track 3 (Dulce) to allow timing to be more expressive. The only track with a 'pulse' is track 2 (Decorum) - this pulse (played on the drum) is to be followed because the track has been written so that the thunder and lightning happen at the right points in the score.

The sound effects were made up of both private recordings and sourced from FreeSFX.co.uk

Programme notes
The text on the previous page may be used in programme notes to help to explain the story. If the portrait is used, please remember to credit Emily Hunter Illustration. If using the DVD to accompany the performance, please credit FreeSFX.co.uk
Pro Patria
(For your country)

I. Pro Patria
Celebratory

Children's Chorus

Soloist(s)

Soprano 1

Soprano 2

Soprano 3

Alto 1

Alto 2

* (a) - continue to sing the "a" sound at the end of Britannia, softly without emphasis on entry.
Pro Patr - a-

tan- nia-

(a)*

Bri - tan - nia-

Bri - tan - nia!

Bri - tan - nia!

Pa - tri - a! Pa - tri - a! Ah! Ah!

Ah! Ah! Pa - tri - a! Pa - tri - a!

Ah! Pa - tri - a!

Ah! Pa - tri - a!
*(a) - continue to sing the "a" sound at the end of Britannia, softly without emphasis on entry.

We know you should go, We want you to go, It is
good and proper to die for your country. It is
Almost weeping

Pa - tri - a!

Pa - tri - a!

Pa - tri - a!

Pa - tri - a!
II. Decorum

Foreboding*

*Boxed text gives direction to performers on specific lines.
For our women! For our children!

Lightning flashes*

A huge flash of lightning!

For our country!

A low rumble

De Decorum

A low rumble

De Decorum

De Decorum

A low rumble

De Decorum

A low rumble

De Decorum
For our women!

Lightning flashes

For our women!

Lightning flashes

For our women!

co - rum De - De - co - rum

For our children!

For our country!

co - rum De - De - co - rum De - De -
A huge explosion of white light

Nightmarish

The Earth a round His
Ah
f
Thunderous

ff
mf

For our country! Ah

S.1

chil-dren grew blood cur-dled and screams from Hell

S.2

chil-dren grew blood cur-dled and screams from Hell

S.3

A.1

A.2

For our country! Ah
Ah

For our country! For our women! For our children

lit up the skies!

Ah

For our country! For our women! For our children

lit up the skies!

Ah

For our country! For our women! For our children

Ah

For our country! For our women! For our children
It is good and proper to die for your country.

III. Dulce

$\frac{J}{=} 50$ Expressive, freely

Mourning

Weeping

Comforting

Dulce Dulce

Comforting Dulce Dulce

Mourning Dulce Dulce

Comforting Dulce Dulce