

A Psalm of Life

for SATB Choir (divisi), Trumpet in C, and Piano

Music by
John Muehleisen

Poem by
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807-1882)

*Commissioned by the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association
in honor of Dr. Phyllis Robertson's 25th Anniversary
as conductor of the Quincy Symphony Chorus*

A Psalm of Life

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

What The Heart Of The Young Man Said To The Psalmist.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,— act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Program Notes

A Psalm of Life was commissioned from composer John Muehleisen by the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association in honor of Dr. Phyllis Robertson's 25th-Anniversary season as conductor of the Quincy Symphony Chorus. Following phone and email discussions with Dr. Robertson, Muehleisen sought to find a text that captured her spirit of living life to the fullest, which he found in Longfellow's stirring poem, *A Psalm of Life*. Scored for choir, trumpet, and piano, Muehleisen sets the poem in a dramatic and heroic style, which captures the epic sweep and uplifting spirit of Longfellow's poem.

Score in C

A Psalm of Life

Commissioned by the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association
in honor of Dr. Phyllis Robertson's 25th Anniversary
as conductor of the Quincy Symphony Chorus

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)

John Muehleisen (2014)

Con moto ♩ = 72

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Trumpet in C

Piano

S

A

T

B

C Tpt.

Pno.

mf stagger breathing Tell me not, in mourn-ful num-bers, Life is but an emp - ty dream! For the

mf stagger breathing Tell me not, in mourn-ful num-bers, Life is but an emp - ty dream! For the

mf

mf

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A Psalm of Life

Soul is dead that slum-bers, And things are not what they seem. Life is real! Life is

And things are not what they seem. Life is real! Life is

soul is dead that slum-bers, And things are not what they seem. Life is real! Life is

And things are not what they seem. Life is real! Life is

C Tpt.

Pno.

ear-nest! And the grave is not its goal; not its goal;

ear-nest! And the grave is not its goal; not its goal;

ear-nest! And the grave is not its goal;

ear-nest! And the grave is not its goal;

C Tpt.

Pno.

26 *mf* 28 30

S Dust thou art, Dust thou art, Dust thou art, _____ to dust re-

A Dust thou art, Dust thou art, Ah _____

T Dust thou art, _____ Dust thou art, _____ Dust thou art, _____ to dust re-

B Dust thou art, _____ Dust thou art, _____ Ah _____

C Tpt. _____

Pno. _____

32 *f* 34 *mf* 36

S turn-est, _____ Was not spo-ken of the soul. _____ Not en - joy - ment, _____

A _____ Was not spo-ken of the soul. _____ Not en - joy-ment, and not

T turn-est, _____ Was not spo-ken of the soul. _____ and not

B _____ Was not spo-ken of the soul. _____ and not

C Tpt. _____

Pno. _____

* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *

A Psalm of Life

38 *non dim.* *f* 40 42

S — Is our des-tined end or way; But to act, that each to - mor-row Find us far-ther than to-

A sor-row, Is our des-tined end or way; But to act, that each to - mor-row Find us far-ther than to-

T sor-row, Is our des-tined end or way; act, that each to - mor-row Find us far-ther than to-

B sor-row, Is our des-tined end or way; Find us far-ther than to-

C Tpt. *mf*

Pno. 38 40 42

44 *ff* 46

S day. Art is long, — and Time is fleet-ing, — And our hearts, though stout and brave,

A day. Art is long, — and Time is fleet-ing, — And our hearts, though stout and brave,

T day. Art is long, Time is fleet-ing, — And our hearts, though stout and brave,

B day. Art is long, Time is fleet-ing, — And our hearts, though stout and brave,

C Tpt. *f* *ff* *f*

Pno. 44 46

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo. *

Poco piu mosso ♩ = 76

48 50

S

A

T *mp*
Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

B *mp*
Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

C Tpt.

Pno. *mp* *mp* *simile*

RH LH

Poco piu mosso ♩ = 76

48 50

ped. (keep pedal depressed until m.69, beat 3)

52 54

S

A *mf*
Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Fu - ner - al march - es to the

T *mf*
Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Fu - ner - al march - es to the

B *mf*
Still, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Fu - ner - al march - es to the

C Tpt. *p*

Pno. *mf* *simile*

RH LH

52 54

With determination ♩ = 80

56 58

S

A *f*
grave.

T *f*
grave. —

B *mf*
grave. like muf - fled drums, —

C Tpt. *f* *mf* *mf*

Pno. *mf* RH LH *mf* *mf* *mf* simile

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, —

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, —

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

60 62

S *f*
In the world's broad field of bat - tle, — In the

A *mf*
Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

T *mf*
Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

B *mf*
Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

C Tpt. *mf*

Pno. RH LH *mf* *mf* *mf* simile

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

Hearts, like muf - fled drums, — are beat - ing

64 66

S biv - ou - ac of Life, Be not like dumb, driv - en cat - tle! Be a

A Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing

T Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing

B Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing Hearts, like muf - fled drums, are beat - ing

C Tpt.

Pno. RH LH simile

68 70 72 **Stringendo** ♩ = 90

S he - ro in the strife! Trust no Fu - ture, how - e'er pleas - ant! Let the dead Past

A Hearts, like muf - fled drums, Trust no Fu - ture, how - e'er pleas - ant! Let the dead Past

T Hearts, like muf - fled drums, Trust no Fu - ture, how - e'er pleas - ant! Let the dead Past

B Hearts, like muf - fled drums, Trust no Fu - ture, how - e'er pleas - ant! Let the dead Past

C Tpt.

Pno. RH LH **Stringendo** ♩ = 90

74 *f* 76 *f*

S bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! —

A bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! —

T bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! —

B bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! —

C Tpt. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f*

molto rit. **Grandioso** ♩ = 72

78 *ff* 80 *ff* 82

S Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Act, — act in the liv - ing Pres - ent!

A Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Act, — act in the liv - ing Pres - ent!

T Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! — Act, — Act! act in the liv - ing Pres - ent!

B Let the dead Past bur - y its dead! Act, — Act! act in the liv - ing Pres - ent!

C Tpt. *ff* *ff*

Pno. *ff* *ff*

A Psalm of Life

mp subito *p* 84 *f* 86 *molto rit.* **Con moto** ♩ = 72

S
Heart with - in, and God o'er - head!

A
Heart with - in, and God o'er - head!

T
Heart with - in, and God o'er - head!

B
Heart with - in, and God o'er - head!

C Tpt.
G.P. *mf*

Pno.
p 84 *f* 86 *molto rit.* **Con moto** ♩ = 72
G.P. 88 *mf*

C Tpt.
90 92

Pno.
8va 90 92 *8va*
Leg. *Leg.* *Leg.* *Leg.*

94 *mf* 96 98

S Lives of great men all re - mind us We can make our lives sub-lime,

A *mf* Lives of great men all re - mind us We can make our lives sub-lime,

T *mf* stagger breathing *mp*
Ah

B *mf* stagger breathing *mp*
Ah

C Tpt. *p*

Pno. *(mf)* *mp*

100 102

S — And, de - part-ing, leave be - hind us Foot-prints on the sands of time;

A — And, de - part-ing, leave be - hind us Foot-prints on the sands of time;

T *f* *mf*
Ah Foot-prints on the sands of time;

B *f* *mf*
Ah Foot-prints on the sands of time;

C Tpt. *mf*

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Leo. Leo. Leo. * Leo. *

104 *p subito* 106 *mf* 108

S Foot-prints, that per - haps an-oth-er, Sail-ing o'er life's sol-emn main, A for-lorn and ship-wrecked

A Foot-prints, that per - haps an-oth-er, Sail-ing o'er life's sol-emn main, A for-lorn and ship-wrecked

T Foot-prints, that per - haps an - oth - er, Sail-ing o'er life's sol-emn main, A for-lorn and ship-wrecked

B Foot-prints, that per - haps an - oth - er, Sail-ing o'er life's sol-emn main, A for-lorn and ship-wrecked

C Tpt. *p subito* *mf*

Pno. 104 106 108

Rec. * Rec. * Rec. *

110 *f* 112

S broth-er, See-ing, shall take heart a - gain. Let us, then, be up and do-ing, With a

A broth-er, See-ing, shall take heart a - gain. Let us, then, be up and do-ing, With a

T broth-er, See-ing, shall take heart a - gain. Let us, then, be up and do-ing, With a

B broth-er, See-ing, shall take heart a - gain. Let us, then, be up and do-ing, With a

C Tpt. *f*

Pno. 110 112

Rec. *

114

S heart for an - y fate; — Still a - chiev - ing, still pur - su - ing, Learn to

A heart for an - y fate; — Still a - chiev - ing, still pur - su - ing, Learn to

T heart for an - y fate; — Still a - chiev - ing, still pur - su - ing, Learn to

B heart for an - y fate; — Still a - chiev - ing, still pur - su - ing, Learn to

C Tpt. *f*

Pno.

116

118

S la - bor and to wait. *ff*

A la - bor and to wait. *ff*

T la - bor and to wait. *ff* and wait.

B la - bor and to wait. *ff* wait.

C Tpt. *ff*

Pno.

120 *ff*

122

124