

Tears of May

SATB Choir with English Horn

Based on a poem by Andrew Burton

Sarah McMahill



About the Song

"Tears of May" is a poem by Andrew Burton in response to the destructive wildfires that swept across Canada during the summer of 2023. The English horn lends to the poignancy and grief over the loss of nature. This song also asks the question of how nature perceives us. Perfect for concerts about the environment, climate and our connection to the earth.

Tears of May

Does the May tree weep
When the black knot gnarls its branches
Does the May tree weep
When the air lies heavy with smoke and ash
Darkening the last days of an ancient forest
Does the May tree weep
When melancholy memories of its sapling years
Recall spring rain awakening young roots
To the first blush of a seasons promise
Does the May tree weep
As storm winds creak and groan through fettered branches
No longer fresh in the bloom of youth
Does a longing for the strength of days long past
Hold peace at bay
Does the May tree weep for us

About the Poet

Andrew John Burton was born in Hull England, a port city heavily bombed during World War II, where the wreckage of burned out buildings became playgrounds for children. The family relocated to Canada in search of a better life. Andrew's first published work was in a local newspaper at the age of 12. He has since written poetry, short stories, plays, movie scripts & magazine articles. Andrew is the founder and Artistic Director of the Street Spirits Theatre Company, teaching theatre to young people & creating hundreds of performance designed to support positive change to problems in the world.

5 6 7 8 *p* < *mf* > *p*

S. *p* < *mf* > *p*
Does the May tree weep

A. *p* < *mf* > *p*
Does the May tree weep

T. *p* < *mf* > *p*
Does the May tree weep

B. *p* < *mf* > *p*
Does the May tree weep

Pno. Reh. *p* < *mf* > *p*

E. Hn. *p*

9 *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

S. when the black knot gnarls its branch - es. Does the May tree weep

A. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

when the black knot gnarls its branch - es. Does the May tree weep

T. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

when the black knot gnarls its branch - es. Does the May tree weep

B. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

when the black knot gnarls its branch - es. Does the May tree weep

Pno. Reh. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

E. Hn.

11 *mf* 12 13 14

S. *mf*
when the air— lies heav-y— with smoke and ash.

A. *mf*
when the air— lies heav-y— with smoke and ash.

T. *mf*
when the air— lies heav-y— with smoke and ash.

B. *mf*
when the air— lies heav-y— with smoke and ash.

Pno. Reh. *mf*

E. Hn. *p*

15 16 17 18

S. Dark-en-ing last days of _____ an an-cient for-est__

A. Dark-en-ing last days of _____ an an-cient for-est__

T. Dark-en-ing days _____ an-cient for-est__

B. Dark-en-ing days _____ an-cient for-est__

Pno. Reh.

E. Hn. *pp*

19 *p* *mf* *p* 20 21

S. Does the May tree weep when mel-an-chol-y mem-o-ries_ of its sap-ling

A. Does the May tree weep when mel-an-chol-y mem-o-ries_ of its sap-ling

T. Does the May tree weep when mel-an-chol-y mem-o-ries_ of its sap-ling

B. Does the May tree weep when mel-an-chol-y mem-o-ries_ of its sap-ling

Pno. Reh. *p* *mf* *p*

E. Hrn.

22 23 *mf* 24

S. years re - call_ spring rain a - wa - ke - ning to

A. years re - call_ spring rain a - wa - ke - ning young roots to

T. years re - call_ spring rain_ (nn)

B. years re - call_ spring rain_ (nn)

Pno. Reh.

E. Hrn.

25 26 27 *f* *mp*

S. the first blush of a sea - son's prom-ise— prom-ise—

A. the first blush of a sea - son's prom-ise— prom-ise—

T. *mp* prom-ise—

B. *mp* prom-ise—

Pno. Reh. *f* *mp*

E. Hn. *p*

$\text{♩} = 90$

28 29 30 31 32

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vocal staves for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). Each staff shows a whole rest for measures 29, 30, 31, and 32. A fermata is placed over the whole rest in measure 28. A hairpin crescendo is shown above measures 28 and 29.

Pno. Reh.

Piano and Harp (Pno. Reh.) staves. Both staves show a whole rest for measures 29, 30, 31, and 32. A fermata is placed over the whole rest in measure 28. A hairpin crescendo is shown above measures 28 and 29.

E. Hn.

tr

pp *p* *mf*

3 3 3

English Horn (E. Hn.) staff. Measure 28: whole note G4. Measure 29: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Measure 30: eighth note G4, eighth note A4, eighth note B4, eighth note C5, eighth note B4, eighth note A4, eighth note G4, eighth note F4. Measure 31: eighth note G4, eighth note A4, eighth note B4, eighth note C5, eighth note B4, eighth note A4, eighth note G4, eighth note F4. Measure 32: eighth note G4, eighth note A4, eighth note B4, eighth note C5, eighth note B4, eighth note A4, eighth note G4, eighth note F4. Dynamics: *pp* (start of measure 29), *p* (start of measure 30), *mf* (start of measure 31). Trills (tr) are marked above the first notes of measures 29, 30, and 31. Triplet markings (3) are placed under the eighth notes in measures 30, 31, and 32. A hairpin crescendo is shown above measures 29, 30, and 31.

$\text{♩} = 80$

33 34 35 36 37 $p < mf > p$ 38

S. *DoestheMaytree weep—*

A. *DoestheMaytree weep—*

T. *DoestheMaytree weep—*

B. *DoestheMaytree weep—*

Pno. Reh.

E. Hn.

3 p

39
S. as storm wind creaks and groans
40
41 *mf* *mp*
42 *mf* *ff*

A. as storm wind creaks and groans
mf *mp* *f*

T. as storm wind creaks and groans
mf *mp* *f*

B. as storm wind creaks and groans
mf *mp* *mf* *ff*

Pno. Reh. *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff*

E. Hn.

43 *mp* 44 45 46

S. through fet-tered branch-es no long - er__ fresh in the bloom of__ youth

A. through fet-tered branch-es no long - er__ fresh in the bloom of__ youth

T. through fet-tered branch-es no long - er__ fresh in the bloom of__ youth

B. through fet-tered branch-es no long - er__ fresh in the bloom of__ youth

mp

Pno. Reh.

E. Hn.

47 *mp* 48 *pp* 49 *mf* 50

S. Long - ing _____ for the strength of _____ days _____ lo - ng

A. *mf* *p* *pp* *mf*
does a long-ing _____ lon - ging for the strength of _____ days _____ lo - ng

T. *mf* *pp* *mf*
Does a long-ing _____ for the strength of _____ days _____ lo - ng

B. *mf* *pp* *mf*
does a long-ing _____ for the strength of _____ days _____ lo - ng

Pno. Reh. *mf* *pp* *mf*

E. Hn.

51 *p* 52 *mf* 53 *mf* 54 *p* 55 *mf* 56 *mf* 57 *p*

S. *p* past. Hold peace at bay Hold peace Hold, Hold

A. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* past. Hold peace at bay Hold peace Hold, Hold

T. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* past. Hold peace at bay Hold peace Hold, Hold

B. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* past. Hold peace at bay Hold peace Hold, Hold

Pno. Reh. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

E. Hn.

64 *p* < *mf* > *p* 65 66 , *p* < *mf* > *p* 67 , *p* < *mf* > *p*

S. Does the May tree weep Does the May tree weep

A. Does the May tree weep

T. Does the May tree weep

B. Does the May tree weep Does the May tree weep

Pno. Reh. *p* < *mf* > *p* < *mf* > *p* < *mf* > *p*

E. Hn. *ppp*

68 69

S.
for us?

A.
for us?

T.
for us?

B.
for us?

Pno. Reh.

E. Hrn.

The musical score is for the piece 'Tears of May' by SJ McMahon, page 17. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), Piano/Reharp (Pno. Reh.), and Euphonium (E. Hrn.). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score shows measures 68 and 69. The vocal parts (S., A., T., B.) all sing the lyrics 'for us?'. The piano part consists of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The euphonium part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 68 and 69. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'REHEARSAL' is overlaid across the entire score.

About the Composer

Sarah McMahill comes from a musical family and is a life-long musician & poet. They started in the 1980s with piano and clarinet lessons. They blossomed while studying music education at Doane College (Crete, NE) with clarinet and vocal scholarships in 1997. They had a few experiences during their two years at Doane that influenced their decision to transfer to Southwest MN State University (SMSU) where they got their BA in theatre (directing and vocal techniques for the actor), English (creative writing), and multi-media art. They then attended Saint Paul College for their certificate in massage therapy. They are a nationally board certified massage therapist and enjoy working with people in the performing arts (singers, instrumentalists, conductors, & actors) to reduce repetitive stress on the body & to facilitate body awareness. They do both one-on-one sessions and group workshops. They received multiple certificates in enneagram teaching and is an Accredited Enneagram Professional through the International Enneagram Association.

Sarah's multi-faceted passions are woven together in their Minnesota-based private practice, Wellness Weaving, which blends myofascial massage therapy services, creative offerings (music, writings, multi-media art), and enneagram coaching & workshops.

They started Kintsugi Studios & Publications in 2021 to share art, record music and self-publish sheet music, poetry, short stories, & non-fiction. Their compositions and creativities are inspired by health & wellness, social justice, history, the enneagram, literature and poetry, science fiction/fantasy, nature, and spirituality. They have performed with the St. Anthony Civic Orchestra, St. Anthony Community Theatre (cast and pit orchestra), Calliope Women's Chorus, and One Voice Mixed Chorus. They have compositions for clarinet, piano, voice, choir, and other instrumental ensembles. They have on-going collaborations with CBC award-winning poet Andrew Burton, Canadian author and founder of The Awakened Company Catherine Bell, and Turkish neuroscientist and poet Özgü Işık Hafızoğlu.

Sarah has been taking composition lessons with Dr. Raphael Fusco and loves learning!

Outside of the United States, their music has also been performed in Germany and Canada.

Sarah records as themselves and Ceramic Personali-Tease.

They are a member of ASCAP, ACDA, and IAWM.

More information can be found at www.sarahmc.net.