

My name is Tyrique Sayre, and I am the arranger of this piece entitled Wade in the Water, which is a piece that is written in direct response to the choral distortion of Harriet Tubman's work. I made this score using a thesis statement and wove the fabric of that thesis into the piece. My thesis statement is as follows: **I want outsiders to leave this song alone, because if they understood, they would never want to sing this again.** This may sound like gatekeeping at first, but I want them to understand, I don't want them to be unable to sing this song. I am proclaiming this as a song now devoid of the meaning that was once crucial to The Underground Railroad, but I am not saying it cannot once again hold meaning. I began the piece the way everyone else did, with the tune, this will lull the audience into a false sense of security, they've heard this before, they know it, and then I pivot to what is really important, the next phrase after the tune begins with the Tenor 2s singing about Harriet Tubman, this is where the song shifts from parody to attempted reclamation. The ensemble then gives a historical reflection on the song, sharing the message that was once delivered to the slaves. This part of the song will shock some in the audience but not all, I know very well that an audience can zone out and stop giving a piece the attention it deserves, so what I do next is rather bold but is the turning point of this piece. After measure 30, there is a performance directive entitled the resignation, this is not for show, and I understand it may seem out of place in a choral concert setting, I assure you it is not. The exact details of the scene are attached in the performance notes, but to give a quick rundown of the scene. A member of the ensemble will loudly interrupt the chorus who is sustaining a chord under a fermata, then they will question the conductor as to why they are singing this song, the conductor then goes on an unscripted rant about the underground railroad and black culture, and why this song does not belong to the choral community, they speak as a witness to the historical collapse and not in a dramatized or theatrical manner. They are then rudely interrupted by the same member of the ensemble who demands that they shut up and give the audience the song they want. This is the moment that strips the paint off, this moment demands the attention of the audience back and stuns them when they are brought to realize what has happened in this moment. The song then continues, but is no longer the spiritual, it is once again parody. This is embodied by the lyrical change from wade to wait in the water, this may sound like a typo or a butchered pronunciation by the ensemble, but that is the point. The point is that the conductor has failed and is forced to give in to the parody that their song has become, and the T in the word wait hits like the dagger that drills the point home. This T should be accented and harsh, and is a reminder of what happens when a song is sung by those who do not carry its history. The change in the final system from God's gonna trouble the water to god is watching over the water is also intentional, the plan that once was in motion is now dormant, as is the deity that once troubled the water, In this moment the piece turns from the storyteller to another witness in its own history.

Performance Directive – “The Resignation”

Overview

- This arrangement contains a deliberate rupture called “The Resignation.”
 - It is not theatrical and not for drama.
 - It is a structural wound in the piece, and it is Integral.
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Scene Mechanics

- The ensemble sustains a chord under fermata at m.30.
 - A member of the ensemble interrupts sharply, with anger: “Stop. Stop. Stop.” Then turns to the Conductor and asks: “Why are we doing this?”
 - The Conductor responds with an unscripted rant on Black culture, the Underground Railroad, and those who died to protect what is now sung in vain.
 - While the Conductor is speaking, the Soloist grows increasingly angry and, at an unscripted point, interrupts with a shout: “Shut up and give them their song.”
 - This line must be delivered sternly, genuinely, and with anger.
 - Then: Silence, Let it hang for a while.
 - The ensemble and especially the Conductor should be visibly stunned.
 - The Conductor then says an apology and directs the soloist to continue.
 - The Soloist resumes with song with the new phrase: **“Wait in the water.”**
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Pronunciation Note – “WAIT”

- This word is intentional.
 - The “T” must be clearly articulated and accented, it is like a dagger in the wind.
 - This is a symbol of what happens when a song is passed to voices that do not carry its history.
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Final System

- The final system concludes with a lyric change: “God is watching over the water.”
- This change is an indictment: The deity is no longer active, and instead watches in silence.
- The final chord is left unresolved because the history of this piece has yet to be resolved, let it hang and then fade into silence.

Wade in the Water

for those who died to protect the message

Composed by Harriet Tubman

Arranged by Tyrique Sayre

Tempo: ♩ = 80

Tenor 1: Wade oh mm

Tenor 2: oh in wat - er. wade in the wat - er. wade in the wat - er chil dren.

Baritone: Wade oh mm

Bass: oh In wat - er. mm

Tempo: ♩ = 100

T.: trou - ble wat - er. freed the slaves

T2: wade in the wat - er. God'sgonna trou - ble the wat - er. Har - ri - et Tub - man, freed the slaves

Bar.: trou - ble wat - er freed the slaves

B.: trou - ble wat - er. freed the slaves

Tempo: ♩ = 120

T.: song, came from her, get in the wa - ter,

T2: and This song get in the wa - ter, to a - void,

Bar.: song came from her, get in the wa - ter,

B.: song, it told slaves,

Dynamic markings: *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *pf*, *cresc.*, *f*, *mf*, *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*

Other markings: *accel.*

26 $\text{♩} = 110$

T. the slave-cat-chers dogs who could sniff them out. *Resignation* wait in the wa-ter chil-dren.

T2. wait in the wa-ter chil dren.

Bar. the slave-cat-cher's dog wait in the wa-ter er. wait in the wa-ter chil dren.

B. dog wait in the wa-ter chil dren.

mf Soloist *Tutti*

35 *accel.* $\text{♩} = 140$ *f*

T. Wait, God's wait in the

T2. Wait, in the wa-ter. God's gonna trou-ble the wa-ter. wait in the wa-ter. wait in the

Bar. Wait, God's wait in the

B. Wait, God's wait in the

pf *f*

42 *f rit.* *fp*

T. wa-ter chil-dren. God is wat-ching o-ver the wa-ter....

T2. wa-ter chil-dren.

Bar. wa-ter God's a gon-na trou-ble, God is wat-ching o-ver the wa-ter....

B. God's a gon-na trou-ble God's a gon-na trou-ble God's is wat-ching o-ver the wa-ter....

f *fp*