Keep Watch, Dear Lord
for SATB a cappella choir

Commissioned by Dan and Jana Montgomery in grateful appreciation for the support of family and friends for the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble and its conductor and artistic director, Dr. Timothy A. McMillin.
Text:

Keep watch, dear Lord, keep watch.
Keep watch, dear Lord, keep watch.
Keep watch with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,
Give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend the sick, dear Lord, tend the sick.
Tend the sick, dear Lord, tend the sick.
Give rest to the weary, and bless the dying,
Tend the sick, dear Lord, tend the sick.

Soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted,
shield the joyous; and all for your love’s sake.

Keep watch, dear Lord, keep watch.
Keep watch, dear Lord, keep watch.
Tend the sick. Bless and give rest.
Keep watch, dear Lord, keep watch.

- Book of Common Prayer, Order for Compline Service
- adapted by TCT

From the composer:

When I wrote “Keep Watch, Dear Lord” for the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble, the text had already been chosen from the Book of Common Prayer. I’m reluctant to set this kind of well known public domain text without giving it a new shape for the singers and the audience. So I took some liberties: reshaping the text into stanzas and adding the repetition of some lines, which ended up lending itself to a more traditional song form. I believe this allows the music to give new context to the words, providing those who know the prayer with a new way to hear and absorb it.

The repetition of this text makes it feel almost like a mantra - a calming refrain that serves as reminder. We’ve all been at the side of someone who is sick, or weary, or troubled, or dying, and as compassionate people we want to do whatever we can to help ease the suffering. But at a certain point we realize that nothing we can do will help. We have to give that responsibility over to a higher power. In this text we are asking God to take over and keep watch.

Much of this writing is quiet, but when the dynamics do rise, let yourselves make this a more fervent, direct prayer, full of passion and hope.

- Timothy C. Takach, 2018

Timothy C Takach.com
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Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

**A Depth We Cannot Sound**
SATB, vibraphone, marimba, large tom

**A Worshipper and a Man**
SATB div. a cappella

**And I Saw**
SSATBB div. Sop. solo, SSATB soli, a cappella

**As the Sunflower Turns on Her God**
SSATBB a cappella

**The Darkling Thrush**
SATB, SAT soli, a cappella

**Fragile**
SATB, hand drum

**Listen to the Apples**
SATB div. a cappella

**Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers**
SSATBB a cappella

**Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius**
SATB, piano

**One Boy Told Me**
SATB div. a cappella

**Ragnarók**
SATB div. a cappella

**Sū Rahva Koda (The House of Your Kindred)**
SSAATTBB a cappella

**This Alien Landscape**
SATB, crotales, suspended cymbal, bass drum

**This Amazing Life**
SA(T)B, piano

**And I Saw**
SSAA div. a cappella

**Bahihii Waaliidkay Dhaqay**
2-part, piano

**Cassiopeia**
SSA a cappella

**Queen of the Range**
(Graphtie Publishing)
SA, piano

**The Streets of Laredo (arr. American Folk Song)**
(Graphtie Publishing)
Unison, TTBB, piano

**There is No Rose**
(Lorelei Ensemble)
SSAA, SS soli, a cappella

**Torn Map**
(Graphtie Publishing)
SA, piano

**Twenty Questions**
2-part treble, piano

**All Natures, Even Mine**
TTTBB a cappella

**Empty**
TB (opt. div), piano, opt. djembe

**Goodbye, Then**
TTTBB choir, Bb clarinet, piano

**I Will Howl**
TTTBB choir, piano or cello

**Kin**
TB, piano

**Lucet Eis**
TTTBB a cappella

**Mad**
TB, piano

**Original Harmony**
(Colla Voce)
TTTBB a cappella

**Rough Beast**
TTTBB, percussion

**Salve Regina**
(Graphtie Publishing)
TTTB semi-chorus, TTB a cappella

**Things I Didn’t Know I Loved**
(Graphtie Publishing)
TTTB a cappella

**The Longest Nights (ca. 21’)**
SATB, piano or string quartet

**This is How You Love (ca. 35’)**
SATB div. a cappella

**True North (ca. 16’)**
SATB, chamber orchestra

**We, the Unknown (ca. 40’)**
TTBB, soloists, chamber orchestra

**We Made a Grave For Him, And Her Smoke Rose Up Forever (ca. 10’)**
TTTB a cappella

**Where Beauty Comes From (ca. 16’)**
TTBB, 2-part, SSAA, SATB, piano

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Reviewed as “gorgeous” (Washington Post) and “stunning” (Lawrence Journal-World), the music of Timothy C. Takach has risen fast in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines and rich, intriguing harmonies, Takach has received commissions from the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Olaf Band, Cantus, Pavia Winds, Lorelei Ensemble, VocalEssence, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, The Rose Ensemble, and numerous other organizations. His compositions have been performed on A Prairie Home Companion, The Boston Pops holiday tour, multiple All-State and festival programs and at venues such as the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. He is a co-creator of the theatrical production of All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914, by Peter Rothstein.

Takach studied music composition at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, and has frequent national work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, clinician and lecturer. He is a full-time composer and lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.