

# THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

for SSAATTBB and soloists

8 min

Melissa Dunphy



# THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

*"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."*

In 2008, just in time to register to vote for the presidential election, I raised my right hand and spoke these words at the USCIS office in Philadelphia after a five-year process of immigration from Australia. Only a minority of Americans ever experience becoming a citizen, and the ordeal brings most immigrants mixed feelings. I love this country so much, I have chosen to make it my home, but I still feel love for the country I left behind. I deeply admire the ideals that led to America's creation, although I don't always agree with the decisions and political direction of the government. I wanted the moment when my status as an American was made official to be joyous and inspiring, but the wording of the Oath of Allegiance reminded me that this country's history has at times been fraught and controversial, and becoming an American citizen was not a decision to be taken lightly or without some reflection on the nature of American patriotism. With this piece, I hope to confront audiences with the range of conflicting emotions I saw reflected on the faces of hundreds of fellow immigrants as we intoned these words in unison that day in 2008, and to encourage natural-born Americans to examine the immigrant experience and what we as a country ask of our newest citizens.

For further reading, I encourage you to see other countries' oaths and pledges of citizenship at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath\\_of\\_citizenship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_of_citizenship)

— Melissa Dunphy

*The Choral Arts Laboratory is an annual commissioning and residency program, begun in 2003, which is designed to give American composers under the age of 35 the opportunity to work with the professional singers of Volti during the compositional process. The composer is invited not only to create a work for the ensemble, but to develop the composition in a workshop setting. The composer is then given more time to work out issues discovered during rehearsal with the singers, as well as during consultations with Artistic Director Robert Geary and Volti's longtime Resident Composer, Mark Winges. This collaboration culminates in the world-premiere performances given by Bob Geary and Volti during the regular concert season.*

# THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Solo group 1: SSAAT  
Solo group 2: AATTB  
Solo group 3: SAATTB

Melissa Dunphy

**Molto rubato, directly, deliberately**

*Solo group 1*

Musical score for Solo group 1, featuring Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4. The Alto part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G3. The Tenor part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G2. The lyrics "I, I, I, I, I," are written below the notes. The dynamics are marked *p*, *f*, and *pp*. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat sign.



*Solo group 2*

Musical score for Solo group 2, featuring Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The Alto part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4. The Tenor part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G3. The Bass part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G2. The lyrics "I, I, I, I, I," are written below the notes. The dynamics are marked *p*, *f*, and *pp*. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat sign.

N.B. All metronome markings are approximate

*Solo group 3*

9

S. *f*

A. *mf*

T. *mp*

B. *p*

1,



11 (solo)

S. *f*

*tutti Sop. 1 & 2*

A. *tutti p f*

T. *tutti p f*

B. *tutti p f*

here - by de -

I here - by, by, by de - clare, de -

I here - by de - clare.

I here - by

15 *tutti Sop. 1*

S. *Sop. 1*  
clare \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

*Sop. 2*  
clare \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

A. *f*  
on \_\_\_\_\_

T. *spoken*  
staggered: "I hereby declare" \_\_\_\_\_ *f*  
on \_\_\_\_\_

B. *spoken*  
staggered: "I hereby declare" \_\_\_\_\_ *f*  
on \_\_\_\_\_



18 *f*

S. *f*  
oath, on oath, \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

A. *f*  
oath, I here - by \_\_\_\_\_ de - clare on oath, *f*

T. *f*  
oath, on oath, \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

B. *f*  
oath, on oath, \_\_\_\_\_ on *f*

**A**

21 **Fluidly** ♩=60

Sop. 1 *p*

S. that I ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, —

*mf* sustained *ppp* niente *p* Alto 1

A. de - clare on oath, that I en - tire - ly, —

*mf* sustained *ppp* niente *p*

T. de - clare on oath, that I —

*ppp* *p*

B. oath, — that I ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, —



25 **poco accel.**

S. that I ab - so lute - ly and en - tire - ly, — en - tire - ly, —

*p* *p poco a poco crescendo*

A. that I en - tire - ly, — en - tire - ly, — that I ab - so - lute - ly

*p poco a poco crescendo*

A. that I ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, —

*p poco a poco crescendo*

T. — that I ab - so lute - ly and en - tire - ly, —

*p poco a poco crescendo*

T. that I ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, —

*Bass 1&2*

B. that I ab - so lute - ly and en - tire - ly, — en - tire - ly, — ab - so -

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28 *poco a poco crescendo*

S. ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly re - nounce en -  
 and en - tire - ly, ab - so - lute - ly re - nounce en -

A. ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, re - nounce ab - so -  
 tire - ly that I ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly,

T. ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, ab - so -  
 ab - so - lute - ly and en - tire - ly, re - nounce en -

B. *poco a poco crescendo*  
 lute - ly and en - tire - ly, en - tire - ly re - nounce, re -

30 *f*

S. tire - ly re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, ab - so - lute - ly, en - tire - ly re - nounce and

A. lute - ly ab - so - lute - ly re - nounce ab - so - lute - ly re - nounce, re - nounce and

T. re - nounce re - nounce re - nounce, ab - so - lute - ly, en - tire - ly re - nounce and

T. lute - ly re - nounce re - nounce re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, and

T. tire - ly, re - nounce re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce re - nounce, and

B. re - nounce, re - nounce, re - nounce, that I ab - so - lute - ly re - nounce re - nounce, and

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7

32  $\text{♩} = 100$  *rit.* *molto*

*fpp*  $\text{ff}$

S. — ab-jure all al-le-giance and fi-del-it-y, all al-le-giance, all fi-del-it-

A. — ab-jure all al-le-giance and fi-del-it-y, all al-le-giance, all fi-del-it-

T. — ab-jure all al-le-giance and fi-del-it-y, all al-le-giance, all fi-del-it-

B. — ab-jure all al-le-giance and fi-del-it-y, all al-le-giance, all fi-del-it-



**B**  $\text{♩} = 60$  *ppp* *p* *mournfully*

S. y to an-y fo-reign prince, po-ten-tate, state, or sove-reign-ty,

*ppp*

y

\* *solo* *p* *simply*

Ab - so-lute-ly and en-tire - ly, ab-so - lute - ly and en-

A. *solo* *p* *simply*

*tutti* *Alto 1 & 2* *ppp* Ab - so-lute-ly and en - tire - ly, ab - so - lute-ly and en-tire -

y

T. *ppp* *p* *mournfully*

y to an-y fo-reign prince, po-ten-tate, state, or sove-reign-ty,

*ppp*

y

B. *solo spoken*

repetitions, quietly and emotionlessly: "renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity"

*tutti* *Bass 1 & 2* *ppp*

y



42 **poco rit.**

S. *of whom — or which I have here-to-fore been a sub - ject or cit - i - zen;*

*hmm*

A. *(solo)* *tire - ly, ab - so - lute ly and en tire - ly, ab - so - lute ly and en - tire - ly.*

A. *(solo)* *- ly, ab - so - lute ly and — en - tire - ly, ab - so - lute ly and en - tire - ly.*

*(tutti)*

*hmm*

T. *8 of whom — or which I have here-to-fore been a sub - ject or cit - i - zen;*

*8* *hmm*

B. *(solo)* *repetitions: "renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity"*

*hmm*

**C** With more movement ♩=92

46

S. *p* that I will sup - port,

A. *(solo)* *p* *tutti* *Alto 1* that I will sup - port, sup - port,

*Alto 2* that I will sup - port, sup - port, sup -

T. *p* that I will sup -

B. *p* that I will sup -

that I will sup -

50

S. *cresc.* that I will sup - port, *p* sup - port, *mf*

*cresc.* that I will sup - port, *p* sup - port, *mf*

*cresc.* that I will sup - port, *p* sup - port, *mf*

*cresc.* port, I will sup - port, *p* sup - port, *mf*

*cresc.* port, I will sup - port, *p* sup - port, *mf*

*cresc.* port, I will sup - port, *p* I will sup - port, *mf* *p* sup - port and de - fend, sup

*cresc.* port, I will sup - port and de - fend, *mf* *p* sup

*cresc.* port, I will sup - port and de - fend, *mf* *p* sup

**D**

56

*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *f* *f* *f*

S. sup - port and de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

and de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion, the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

A. sup - port, sup - port and de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

sup - port and de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws, and laws

T. port, sup - port and de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

port, sup - port and de - fend, de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

B. port and de - fend, sup - port and de - fend, de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

port and de - fend, sup - port and de - fend, de - fend the Con - sti - tu - tion and laws

60 **E** *f*

S. — of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a ah, ah,

— of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, A - mer - ic - a,

A. — of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, A - mer - ic - a,

— of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, ah, ah,

T. — of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, A -

— of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, ah, ah,

B. — tu-tion and laws of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, ah, ah,

— tu-tion and laws of the U - nit - ed States of A - mer - ic - a, ah,

66 **F**

S. ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, a - gainst

A. A-mer - ic - a, ah, ah, a - gainst all,

A. A - mer-ic - a, ah, ah, a - gainst, ah,

A. ah, ah, ah, ah, a - gainst, ah,

T. - mer - ic - a, a - - - - gainst,

T. ah a - - - - gainst,

B. ah, ah, a - gainst,

B. ah, ah, ah, a -

72

S. all, a - gainst all e - nem - ies, *sub p* 3

A. all e - nem - ies, *sub p* 3

A. all e - nem - ies, *sub p* 3

T. a - - - - gainst all e - nem - ies, all *sub p* 3

T. ah, a - gainst all e - nem - ies, all *sub p* 3

B. a - gainst all *p*

B. - gainst all e - nem - ies, *sub p* 3

75

S.

Musical staff for Soprano (S.). It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4. The lyrics are: e-nem-ies, for - eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

A.

Musical staff for Alto (A.). It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4. The lyrics are: for eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

T.

Musical staff for Tenor (T.). It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for - eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

B.

Musical staff for Bass (B.). It begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for-eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

Musical staff for Bass (B.). It begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

Musical staff for Bass (B.). It begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

Musical staff for Bass (B.). It begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for-eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

Musical staff for Bass (B.). It begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3. The lyrics are: e-nem ies, for-eign and dom - est - ic; that I will

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15

**senza misura**

**rubato**

79 *f* *p* *attacca*

S. bear true faith and al - leg - iance to the same;  
*f* *p* *spoken*  
 bear repetitions: "I will support and defend the Constitution and laws"

A. bear true faith and al - leg - iance to the same;  
*f* *p* *spoken*  
 bear repetitions: "against all enemies, foreign and domestic"

T. bear true faith and al - leg - iance to the same;  
*f* *p* *spoken*  
 bear repetitions: "I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same"

B. bear true faith and al - leg - iance to the same;  
*f* *p* *spoken*  
 bear repetitions: "I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same"



**H**

**Presto, alarmed** ♩=152

85 Sop. 1 & 2 *ff*

S. that I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

A. *Alto 1 & 2 ff*  
 that I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

T. *Tenor 1 & 2 ff*  
 that I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

B. *Bass 1 & 2 ff*  
 that I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms



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90

S. when re quired\_ by the law, arms, arms, arms that I will per-form non - com-bat-ant ser-vice in the

A. when re quired\_ by the law, arms, arms, arms that I will per-form non - com-bat-ant ser-vice in the

T. when re quired\_ by the law, arms, arms, arms, that I will per-form non - com-bat-ant ser-vice in the

B. when re quired\_ by the law, arms, arms, arms that I will per-form non - com-bat-ant ser-vice in the

94

S. armed, armed, armed ser-vice of the U-nit-ed States, when re - quired\_ by the law,

A. armed, armed, armed ser-vice of the U-nit-ed States, when re - quired\_ by the law,

T. armed, armed, armed, ser-vice of the U-nit-ed States, when re - quired\_ by the law,

B. armed, armed, armed ser-vice of the U-nit-ed States, when re - quired\_ by the law,

**I**

98 *Sop 1 & 2*

S. I will bear arms on be - half of the\_ U nit-ed States, I will bear arms on be - half of the\_ U nit-ed States,

A. I will bear arms on be - half of the\_ U nit-ed States, I will bear arms on be - half of the\_ U nit-ed States,

T. I - will\_ bear arms,\_ arms,\_ arms, I - will\_ bear arms,\_ arms,\_ arms,

B. I\_\_ will\_ bear arms, arms,\_ arms, I\_\_ will\_ bear arms, arms, arms,

102

S. I will per - form non - com - bat - ive ser - vice in the armed for - ces,

A. I will per - form non - com - bat - ive ser - vice in the armed for - ces,

T. ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah,

B. ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah,

104 *mp cresc.*

S. I will per - form non - com - bat - ive ser - vice in the armed for - ces arms, arms,

A. *mp cresc.*  
I will per - form non - com - bat - ive ser - vice in the armed for - ces arms, arms,

T. *mp cresc.*  
ah, ah, ah, that I will bear, that I will bear arms, arms, arms,

B. *mp cresc.*  
ah, ah, ah, that I will bear that I will bear arms, arms, arms

**J**

107 *ff*

S. *ff*  
arms, that I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

A. *ff*  
arms, that I will bear arms, on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms,

T. *ff*  
— I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

B. *ff*  
I will bear arms, arms, arms on be half of the U - nit-ed States, arms, arms, arms

112

S. when re quired by the law, arms, arms, arms that I will per-form non -

A. when re quired by the law, arms, that I will per-form non -

T. when re quired by the law, arms, arms, arms, that I will per-form non -

B. when re quired by the law, arms, arms, arms that I will per-form non -

115

S. - com - bat - ant ser - vice in the armed, armed, armed ser - vice

A. - com - bat - ant ser - vice in the armed, armed, armed ser - vice

T. - com - bat - ant ser - vice in the armed, armed, armed, ser - vice

B. - com - bat - ant ser - vice in the armed, armed, armed ser - vice

118

S. of the U - nit - ed States, when re - quired by the law, by the law, by the law,

A. of the U - nit - ed States, when re - quired by the law, by the law, by the law,

T. of the U - nit - ed States, when re - quired by the law, by the law, by the law,

B. of the U - nit - ed States, when re - quired by the law, by the law, by the law,



128

S. *f*  
 il - ian di - rec - tion when re - quired by the law; and that

A. *f*  
 il - ian di - rec - tion when re - quired by the law; and that

A. *f*  
 rec - tion when re - quired by the law; and that

T. *f*  
 na - tion - al im - port - ance when re - quired by the law;

T. *f*  
 I will per - form when re - quired by the law;

B. *f*  
 il - ian di - rec - tion when re - quired by the law;

131

Sop. 1 & 2 *fp* *f*  
 I, I, that I

A. *solo spoken* *f* *mf*  
 "without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion" I, I

A. *tutti Alto 1 & 2* *fp* *f* *mf*  
 I, I, I, I

T. *solo spoken* *mf*  
 "without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion" I

T. *tutti Ten. 1 & 2* *f* *fp* *f* *mf*  
 that I, I, I

B. *fp* *solo spoken* *mf*  
 I, "without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion" I

B. *fp* *tutti Bass 1 & 2* *f* *mf*  
 I, that I, I

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135

*ff*

S. take this ob - lig - a - tion free - ly,

A. take this ob - lig - a - tion free - ly free -

T. take this ob - li - ga - tion free - ly,

B. take this ob - li - ga - tion, this ob - li - ga - tion free - ly,

138

*rit. p*

S. free - ly, free - ly, free - ly;

A. - ly, free - ly, free - ly;

T. free - ly, free - ly, free - ly;

B. free - ly, free - ly, free - ly;

**L**

141 **Rubato**  
*p* (*senza cresc.*) *p*

S. so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God,

A. *p* (*senza cresc.*) *p*  
so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God,

T. *p* (*senza cresc.*) *p*  
so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God,

B. *p* (*senza cresc.*) *p*  
so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God,



145 *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

S. so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, \_\_\_\_\_

A. *pp*  
so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, \_\_\_\_\_

T. *pp*  
so help me \_\_\_\_\_ God, \_\_\_\_\_

B. *pp*  
so help me, \_\_\_\_\_ so help me God.