



Battle Song

By Martha Tribe

(Age 14-18 Category, Aged 15)

The rhythmic thump of a world full of boots rang through the impenetrable silence that suffocated the room of the nations whilst enclosing them from all around. Over and over the beats trudged past each other with no knowledge of the marathon ahead: guided blind by their conductors who knew only of the sheet music sent by the composers who lay tranquil in their bed. Then the groan of cogs and wheels slowly began to accompany the loyal beat. In contrasting harmony, they urged each other on; man on machinery; machinery on man. Diving towards accelerando before stumbling back in rallentando. They stirred the battle cry, which writhed from inside each note as the metronome of time, ticked on.

The whispering of prayers streaked through each chance of silence. They were the messengers who transported the words of the audience, which trembled apprehensive in dread. As each solo began to crescendo and merge into one unison cry, a single shot rang out but no sound was stifled this time. The pounding of hooves enhanced the devoted boots whose pace had quickened to equal that of the race either side. Whilst the heart of each instrument struck their note from within, they battled on oblivious to the ensemble of pain, which the composers strained to hide. As each note began to quiver and melt into the echoing chorus, another was shipped in only to replace it with its fast extinguishing, non-existent force which feebly yelled in mere piano.

A thousand violins screeched in agony as each wound tore instruments apart but the programme back at home only blared out the deceitful taunt of the trumpets, which masked the true horrors behind the curtain. As the weather began to worsen, the wind section was called in. The penetrating call from the flutes whistled continuously through to the core whilst the bite of the cold only gauged out each wound into a permanent branding of the heart. The cruel melody was slowly grinding to the lull in the storm - neither of the sides could compose the next note and no one dared to be the one to end it all.

Then, through the stirring still, came the voices of many angels. Their lyrics were the letters; the prayers; the thoughts, which showed not all had been forgotten. They waltzed across each sea, field and ditch to the minds of the vulnerable, who were lifted high into the static air and planted back onto a stave; a stave with victory as its destination. The battle had not yet been won but the finale could be seen looming on the horizon.

The melody had grown so much sweeter and purer now that the fight was not one to be fought alone. Cascading scales of love fuelled gruelling arpeggios of desperation whilst complementing solos broadcasted their affection for each other in the hope one day their tunes could unite. Everyone moved as an ensemble now, in one last push for freedom, as the energy from that of belief is far more powerful than an order of any conductor.

You could say that neither orchestra was truly triumphant, as the screams of loss can never be the most victorious of eventual endings. As each note sang its goodbyes, with a white cloth the needle was lifted from its record.