

ORCHESTRA

CHAMBERS VOLERS

GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR

present

BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S

# WAR REQUIEM

With the Northwest Boychoir, Joseph Crnko, Conductor, & soloists Eleanor Stallcop-Horrox, Michael Drumheller & Wesley Rogers

## ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

### VIOLIN

Susan Carpenter\*+  
Lauren Daugherty  
Dean Drescher  
Stacey Dye  
Stephanie Endy  
Jocelyn Hanna  
Sue Herring  
Jason Hershey  
Manchung Ho  
Emmy Hoech  
Fritz Klein\*\*  
Pam Kummert  
Mark Lutz  
Gregor Nitsche\*  
Stephen Provine\*\* +  
Elizabeth Robertson  
Theo Schaad  
Janet Showalter  
Kenna Smith-  
Shangrow  
Peggy Spencer  
Nicole Tsong

### VIOLA

Deborah Daoust  
Elizabeth DeLong  
Audrey Don

Katherine  
McWilliams\*+  
Håkan Olsson\*  
Andrew Schirmer  
Robert Shangrow  
Ella Wallace

### CELLO

La Verne Chen  
Zon Eastes\*+  
Julie Reed  
Annie Roberts  
Valerie Ross  
Katie Sauter  
Messick  
Karen Thomson  
Matthew Wyant\*

### STRING BASS

Jo Hansen\*+  
Ericka Kendall  
Kevin McCarthy  
Steve Messick\*

### FLUTE/PICCOLO

Jenna Calixto  
Virginia Knight  
Shari Müller-Ho\*+  
Melissa Underhill\*

### OBOE

David Barnes\*+  
John Dimond\*  
Alicia Hall  
Taina Karr>

### CLARINET

Charles Crowley  
Alan Lawrence\*+  
Steve Noffsinger^  
Eric Tishkoff\*

### BASSOON

Gary Claunch%  
Jeff Eldridge\*  
Judith Lawrence\*+  
Lesley Petty

### HORN

Barney Blough  
Don Crevie\*+  
Jaime Faucher  
Laurie Heidt  
Jim Hendrickson\*  
Matthew Kruse  
Sue Perry

### TRUMPET

Dan Harrington

Todd Mahaffey  
George Steward  
Janet Young\*

### TROMBONE

Paul Bogataj  
Moc Escobedo\*  
David Holmes

### TUBA

David Brewer

### HARP

Naomi Kato

### PIANO

Robert Kechley

### PERCUSSION/ TIMPANI

Kathie Flood  
Kristofor Mellroth  
Dan Oie\*  
\* *principal*  
\*\* *concertmaster*  
+ *chamber orch.*  
^ *E-flat & bass*  
% *contra-bassoon*  
> *English horn*

## SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

### SOPRANO

Erika Chang  
Crissa Cugini  
Kyla DeRemer  
Cinda Freece  
Lisa Hoffman  
Kiki Hood  
Kaye Kofford  
Jill Kraakmo  
Peggy Kurtz  
Jana Music  
Melissa Thirloway  
Lila Woodruff May  
Pat Vetterlein

### ALTO

Sharon Agnew  
Julia Akoury-Thiel  
Carolyn Avery  
Jane Blackwell  
Ann Erickson  
Deanna Fryhle  
Courtney Fuller  
Ellen Kaisse  
Lorelette Knowles  
Theodora Letz  
Suzi Means  
Laurie Medill  
Annie Thompson

### TENOR

Andrew Kohler  
Doug Kofford  
Alvin Kroon  
Jon Lange  
Timothy Lunde  
Tom Nesbitt  
Vic Royer  
Jerry Sams  
David Zapolsky

### BASS

Stephen Brady  
Andrew Danilchik  
Douglas Durasoff  
Paddy McDonald  
Dennis Moore  
Gary Oules  
Jeff Thirloway  
Richard Wyckoff

## I. Requiem aeternam

### Chorus

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine;  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

### Boys

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion:  
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem;  
exaudi orationem meam,  
ad te omnis caro veniet.

### Chorus

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine;  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

### Tenor

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons  
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, --  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.  
What candles may be held to speed them at all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

### Chorus

Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison

### Chorus

Lord, grant them eternal rest;  
and let the perpetual light shine upon them.

### Boys

Thou shalt have praise in Zion, of God:  
and homage shall be paid to thee in Jerusalem;  
hear my prayer,  
all flesh shall come before Thee.

### Chorus

Lord, grant them eternal rest;  
and let the perpetual light shine upon them.

### Chorus

Lord, have mercy upon them  
Christ, have mercy upon them  
Lord, have mercy upon them

## II. Dies irae

### Chorus

Dies irae, dies illa,  
Solvat saeculum in favilla:  
Teste David cum Sibylla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Judex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus!  
Tuba mirum spargens sonum  
Per sepulchra regionum  
Coget omnes ante thronum.  
Mors stupebit et natura,  
Cum resurget creatura,  
Judicanti responsura.

### Chorus

This day, this day of wrath  
Shall consume the world in ashes,  
As foretold by David and Sibyl.  
What trembling there shall be  
When the judge shall come  
To weigh everything strictly.  
The trumpet, scattering its awful sound  
Across the graves of all lands  
Summons all before the throne.  
Death and nature shall be stunned  
When mankind arises  
To render account before the judge.

**Baritone**

Bugles sang, saddening the evening air;  
 And bugles answered, sorrowful to hear.  
 Voices of boys were by the river-side.  
 Sleep mothered them; and left the twilight sad.  
 The shadow of the morrow weighed on men.  
 Voices of old despondency resigned,  
 Bowed by the shadow of the morrow, slept.

**Soprano**

Liber scriptus proferetur,  
 In quo totum continetur,  
 Unde mundus judicetur.  
 Judex ergo cum sedebit  
 Quidquid latet, apparebit:  
 Nil inultum remanebit.

**Chorus**

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?  
 Quem patronem rogaturus,  
 Cum vix justus sit securus?

**Soprano and Chorus**

Rex tremendae majestatis,  
 Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
 Salva me, fons pietatis.

**Tenor and Baritone**

Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death:  
 Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland,-  
 Pardoned his spilling mess-tins in our hand.  
 We've sniffed the green thick odour of his breath,-  
 Our eyes wept, but our courage didn't writhe.  
 He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed  
 Shrapnel. We chorused when he sang aloft;  
 We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe.  
 Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!  
 We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.  
 No soldier's paid to kick against his powers.  
 We laughed, knowing that better men would come,  
 And greater wars; when each proud fighter brags  
 He wars on Death - for Life; not men - for flags.

**Chorus**

Recordare Jesu pie,  
 Quod sum causa tuae viae:  
 Ne me perdas illa die.  
 Quarens me, sedisti lassus:  
 Redemisti crucem passus:  
 Tantis labor non sit cassus:  
 Ingemisco, tamquam reus:  
 Culpa rubet vultus meus:  
 Supplicanti parce Deus.  
 Qui Mariam absolvisti,  
 Et latronem exaudisti,  
 Mihi quoque spem dedisti.  
 Inter oves locum praesta,  
 Et ab haedis me sequestra,  
 Statuens in parte dextra.  
 Confutatis maledictis,

**Soprano**

The written book shall be brought  
 In which all is contained  
 Whereby the world shall be judged.  
 When the judge takes his seat  
 All that is hidden shall appear:  
 Nothing will remain unavenged.

**Chorus**

What shall I, a wretch, say then?  
 To which protector shall I appeal  
 When even the just man is barely safe?

**Soprano and Chorus**

King of awful majesty,  
 Who freely savest those worthy of salvation,  
 Save me, fount of pity.

**Chorus**

Remember, gentle Jesus,  
 That I am the reason for Thy time on earth,  
 Do not cast me out on that day.  
 Seeking me, Thou didst sink down wearily,  
 Thou hast saved me by enduring the cross,  
 Such travail must not be in vain.  
 I groan, like the sinner that I am,  
 Guilt reddens my face,  
 Oh God spare the suppliant.  
 Thou, who pardoned Mary  
 And heeded the thief,  
 Hast given me hope as well.  
 Give me a place among the sheep  
 And separate me from the goats,  
 Let me stand at Thy right hand.  
 When the damned are cast away

Flammis acribus addictis,  
Voca me cum benedictis.  
Oro supplex et acclinis  
Cor contritum quasi cinis  
Gere curam mei finis.

**Baritone**

Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm,  
Great gun towering toward Heaven, about to curse;  
Reach at that arrogance which needs thy harm,  
And beat it down before its sins grow worse;  
But when thy spell be cast complete and whole,  
May God curse thee, and cut thee from our soul!

**Chorus**

Dies irae, dies illa,  
Solvat saeculum in favilla:  
Teste David cum Sibylla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Judex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

**Soprano and Chorus**

Lacrimosa dies illa,  
Qua resurget ex favilla,  
Judicandus homo reus:  
Huic ergo parce Deus.

**Tenor**

Move him into the sun -  
Gently its touch awoke him once,  
At home, whispering of fields unsown.  
Always it woke him, even in France,  
Until this morning and this snow.  
If anything might rouse him now  
The kind old sun will know.

**Soprano and Chorus**

Lacrimosa dies illa...

**Tenor**

Think how it wakes the seeds -  
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.  
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,  
Full-nerved - still warm - too hard to stir?  
Was it for this the clay grew tall?

**Soprano and Chorus**

...Qua resurget ex favilla...

**Tenor**

Was it for this the clay grew tall?

**Soprano and Chorus**

...Judicandus homo reus.

**Tenor**

- O what made fatuous sunbeams toil  
To break earth's sleep at all?

**Chorus**

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.  
Amen.

And consigned to the searing flames,  
Call me to be with the blessed.  
Bowed down in supplication I beg Thee,  
My heart as though ground to ashes:  
Help me in my last hour.

**Chorus**

This day, this day of wrath  
Shall consume the world in ashes,  
As foretold by David and Sibyl.  
What trembling there shall be  
When the judge shall come  
To weigh everything strictly.

**Soprano and Chorus**

Oh this day full of tears  
When from the ashes arises  
Guilty man, to be judges:  
Oh Lord, have mercy upon him.

**Soprano and Chorus**

Oh this day full of tears...

**Soprano and Chorus**

...When from the ashes arises...

**Soprano and Chorus**

...Guilty man, to be judged.

**Chorus**

Gentle Lord Jesus, grant them rest.  
Amen.

### III. Offertorium

#### Boys

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,  
libera animas omnium fidelium  
defunctorum de poenis inferni,  
et de profundo lacu:  
libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas  
tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum.

#### Chorus

Sed signifer sanctus Michael  
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam:  
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti,  
et semini ejus.

#### Tenor and Baritone

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,  
And took the fire with him, and a knife.  
And as they sojourned both of them together,  
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,  
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,  
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?  
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,  
And builded parapets and trenched there,  
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.  
When lo! and angel called him out of heaven,  
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,  
Neither do anything to him. Behold,  
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;  
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.  
But the old man would not so,  
but slew his son, -  
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

#### Boys

Hostias et preced tibi Domine  
laudis offerimus; tu suscipe pro  
animabus illis, quarum hodie  
memoriam facimus: fac eas, Domine,  
de morte transire ad vitam.  
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti  
en semini ejus.

#### Chorus

...Quam olim Abrahae promisisti  
et semini ejus.

#### Boys

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,  
deliver the souls of the faithful  
departed from the pains of hell,  
and the bottomless pit:  
deliver them from the jaw of the lion, lest hell  
engulf them, lest they be plunged into darkness.

#### Chorus

But let the holy standard-bearer Michael  
lead them into the holy light  
as Thou didst promise Abraham  
and his seed.

#### Boys

Lord, in praise we offer to Thee  
sacrifices and prayers, do Thou receive them  
for the souls of those whom we remember  
this day: Lord, make them pass  
from death to life.  
As Thou didst promise Abraham  
and his seed.

#### Chorus

...As Thou didst promise Abraham  
and his seed.

### IV. Sanctus

#### Soprano and Chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

#### Soprano and Chorus

Holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of hosts.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua,  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Sanctus.  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Sanctus.

**Baritone**

After the blast of lightning from the East,  
The flourish of loud clouds, the Chariot Throne;  
After the drums of time have rolled and ceased,  
And by the bronze west long retreat is blown,  
Shall life renew these bodies? Of a truth  
All death will He annul, all tears assuage? -  
Fill the void veins of Life again with youth,  
And wash, with an immortal water, Age?  
When I do ask white Age he saith not so:  
"My head hangs weighed with snow."  
And when I hearken to the Earth, she saith:  
"My fiery heart shrinks, aching. It is death.  
Mine ancient scars shall not be glorified,  
Nor my titanic tears, the sea, be dried."

## V. Agnus Dei

**Tenor**

One ever hangs where shelled roads part.  
In this war He too lost a limb,  
But His disciples hide apart;  
And now the Soldiers bear with Him.

**Chorus**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona eis requiem.

**Tenor**

Near Golgatha strolls many a priest,  
And in their faces there is pride  
That they were flesh-marked by the Beast  
By whom the gentle Christ's denied.

**Chorus**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona eis requiem.

**Tenor**

The scribes on all the people shove  
and bawl allegiance to the state,

**Chorus**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi...

**Tenor**

But they who love the greater love  
Lay down their life; they do not hate.

**Chorus**

...Dona eis requiem.

**Tenor**

Dona nobis pacem.

Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Holy.  
Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Holy.

**Chorus**

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
grant them rest.

**Chorus**

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
grant them rest.

**Chorus**

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world...

**Chorus**

...Grant them rest.

## VI. Libera me

### Chorus

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna,  
in die illa tremenda:  
Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra:  
Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.

### Soprano and Chorus

Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo  
dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.  
Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna.  
Quando coeli movendi sunt i terra.  
Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis  
et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde.  
Libera me, Domine.

### Tenor

It seems that out of battle I escaped  
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped  
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.  
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,  
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.  
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared  
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,  
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.  
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.  
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."

### Baritone

"None", said the other, "save the undone years,  
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,  
Was my life also; I went hunting wild  
After the wildest beauty in the world,  
For by my glee might many men have laughed,  
And of my weeping something had been left,  
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.  
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.  
Or, discontent, boil boldly, and be spilled.  
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,  
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.  
Miss we the march of this retreating world  
Into vain citadels that are not walled.  
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels  
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,  
Even from wells we sunk too deep for war,  
Even from the sweetest wells that ever were.  
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned  
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.  
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.  
Let us sleep now..."

**Boys, then Chorus, then Soprano**  
In paradisum deducant te Angeli;

### Chorus

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death  
in that awful day  
when the heavens and earth shall be shaken  
when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

### Soprano and Chorus

I am seized with fear and trembling,  
until the trial shall be at hand and the wrath to come.  
Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death.  
When the heavens and earth shall be shaken.  
That day, that day of wrath, of calamity  
and misery, a great day and exceeding bitter.  
Deliver me, O Lord.

**Boys, then Chorus, then Soprano**  
Into Paradise may the Angels lead thee:



in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres,  
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam  
Jerusalem. Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat,  
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere aeternam  
habeas requiem.

**Boys**

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine:  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

**Chorus**

In paradisum deducant *etc.*

**Soprano**

Chorus Angeloru, te suscipiat *etc.*

**Tenor and Baritone**

Let us sleep now.

**Chorus**

Requiescant in pace. Amen.

at thy coming may the Martyrs receive thee,  
and bring thee into the holy city  
Jerusalem. May the Choir of Angels receive thee  
and with Lazarus, once poor,  
may thou have eternal rest.

**Boys**

Lord, grant them eternal rest,  
and let the perpetual light shine upon them.

**Chorus**

Into Paradise, *etc.*

**Soprano**

May the Choir of Angels, *etc.*

**Chorus**

Let them rest in peace. Amen.

## The Northwest Boychoir

**Northwest Boychoir**

Joseph Crnko,  
Music Director  
Jacob Winkler,  
Accompanist

Steven Chen  
George Chrisafis  
Alex DeNova  
Adam Dopierala  
Christopher Fertakis  
Ben Flohr

Christian Kunz  
Jonathan Lee  
Jacob Martin  
Douglas McCulloch  
Joshua Morales  
Michael Norman  
Alexander Patton  
Peter Perkins  
Andrew Petersdorf  
Bryce Pingul  
Logan Potts

Noah Santiago  
Keith Schendel  
Craig Simpson  
Jordan Smith  
Logan Stillings  
Nathan Stoltzfus  
Jeremy Swingle  
Edward Wang

**Northwest Boychoir**

**Members**

Ryan Anderson  
Alden Blatter  
Nicholas Borkowski

Carson Fulmer  
Benjamin Goldstein  
Caleb Grapes  
Alexander Jones  
Samuel Kelly

The Northwest Boychoir's musical sophistication, rich tonal quality, and dedication to exacting perfection have established its reputation as one of the nation's premier boychoirs. Its 150 members, ages 6-13, come from all corners of the Puget Sound representing 115 diverse public and private schools. In its 36 years, the Northwest Choirs has trained thousands of young singers and more significantly, shaped the lives of our region's youth by teaching important lessons in personal commitment, and the value of teamwork and diligence.

Joseph Crnko, now in his 24th year as music director, leads the Choir's staff of professional musicians and educators who are engaged in teaching a rigorous curriculum of music theory, voice production, sight-singing, and performance skills. This program produces singers who possess a passion for the musical arts, and the unique ability to perform great choral literature and contemporary works at the highest professional level.

In addition to serving as the "Singing Ambassadors" of Washington State, the Northwest Boychoir maintains a long list of performance credits including singing for the nation's Presidents, First Ladies, Senators, Mayors and international opera stars, including the late Luciano Pavarotti.

2007 brought to a close a highly successful performance season that saw the Northwest Boychoir on stage with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra in June in performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* and again in July for Orff's *Carmina Burana*. The Boychoir stepped off the stage of Benaroya Hall in July and headed off to California for a two-week concert tour with performances in San Francisco, Fresno and Los Angeles expanding its audience base and sharing its unique music throughout the West Coast. Other 2007 season highlights included our well known *A Festival of Lessons & Carols* concert season and appearances with the Seattle Philharmonic and the Seattle Chamber Players.

In January, the Northwest Boychoir appeared with the Seattle Symphony in *PLAY!, A Video Game Symphony*. Upcoming performances include a May concert tour of eastern Washington and the United States premier of Viktor Ullmann's *Choral Arrangements of Yiddish Songs* with Seattle's Music of Remembrance.

A complete concert schedule and information about the Northwest Choirs are found at [www.nwchoirs.org](http://www.nwchoirs.org).

# Ancient Scars: Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, Opus 66

Andrew S. Kohler

"My subject is War, and the pity of War.  
The Poetry is in the pity...  
All a poet can do today is warn.

—Wilfred Owen, Preface to his poetry,  
used by Britten as the epigraph for his *War Requiem*

In 1940, a German bombing campaign (appallingly nicknamed Operation Moonlight Sonata) hit England's Coventry Cathedral, leaving the walls of the structure roofless and empty of their stained glass. Two years later, at the height of the War, Benjamin Britten and his life partner, Peter Pears, returned to England from a sojourn in America and applied for conscientious objector status.

Britten's pacifism was one of his most strongly held convictions and a recurrent theme in his works. In 1936 he provided the musical score for Paul Rotha's brief anti-war film, *The Peace of Britain*. Britten told the *New York Sun* in 1940 that he was making his *Sinfonia da Requiem*, Opus 20, "just as anti-war as possible." Though not without some difficulty, both Britten and Pears were able to obtain conscientious objector status, which their society viewed with opprobrium. The resulting sense of isolation is reflected in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Opus 33, an opera written during the War about a man at odds with his town.



Coventry Cathedral in ruins, 1940 (Photo: BBC)

Thirteen years after World War II ended, leaving fifty million slaughtered in its wake, Britten was asked to write a large-scale choral work for the reopening of the new Coventry Cathedral. To this day the new structure, designed by Basil Spence, stands alongside the ruins of the old. Over the next three years, Britten composed his *War Requiem*, Opus 66.

For text, Britten combines the Latin *Missa pro defunctis* (Mass for the Dead) with war poetry of Wilfred Owen, an English soldier killed in the trenches of World War I one week before Armistice. Like Britten, Owen had pacifist convictions, but his were not unwavering. Owen enthusiastically enlisted and scorned "shirkers" (as conscientious objectors were then called), but eventually came to call himself "a conscientious objector with a very seared conscience." To signify that the English poetry and Latin liturgy are of two different worlds, Britten assigns the Owen texts to tenor and baritone soloists with chamber orchestra and the Latin text to a chorus and soprano soloist with full orchestra. In addition to these forces, an angelic chorus of boys (singing the Latin) is placed in the distance with a chamber organ. This

use of physical space is a trademark of Gustav Mahler, a composer dear to Britten, as is the vast scale of the composition. Another major influence on Britten was Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*, which shares the operatic elements of Britten's work.

Britten dedicated his *War Requiem* to four deceased friends who fought in World War II, three of whom were killed in combat while the other survived only later to commit suicide. For the premiere on May 30, 1962, Britten enlisted soloists from different countries involved in the war. From England he chose Peter Pears, and from Germany he recruited Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who had been drafted into the Reich Army and spent two years as a prisoner of war, singing *Lieder* to console his fellow prisoners. The Soviet government would not allow Galina Vishnevskaya, wife of Britten's friend Mstislav Rostropovich, to sing the soprano solo, and so Heather Harper filled in at short notice. The work instantly captured the public imagination, garnering lavish praise even before its premiere. So emotionally charged was the first performance that at its conclusion Fischer-Dieskau found himself in tears, in his own words "completely undone."

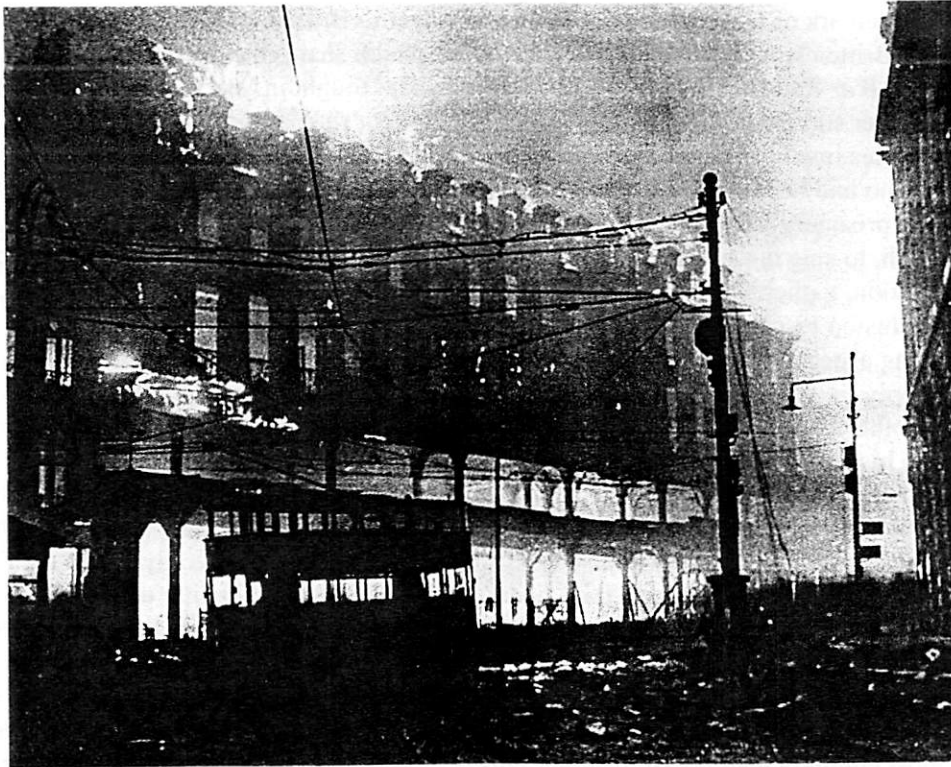
The most compelling aspect of the *War Requiem* is the interplay between the Owen and liturgical texts. Owen himself was raised by a deeply religious mother but over his military career grew increasingly disaffected with religion and patriotism. Even before the War Owen expressed disillusionment with organized religion in his poem "Unto What Pinnacles" and in a letter to his sister, although he still professed an adherence to Christian principles. Poems such as "Maundy Thursday," "Soldier's Dream," and "A Tear Song" reflect these sentiments. Owen suggested that nonviolence, the overriding principle of Jesus Christ's teachings, "never will filter into the dogma of any national church... I think the pulpit professionals are ignoring it very skillfully and successfully indeed... Christ is literally in 'no man's land.' There men often hear His voice..." Britten's testimony to the London Tribunal expressed similar admiration for the teachings of Christ although, like Owen, he was disaffected with religious doctrine: "I do not believe in the Divinity of Christ, but I think his teaching is sound and his example should be followed."

The opening movement of the *War Requiem* is nominally in D minor, but that key is never truly established. The movement is built over a never-resolved dominant pedal (on the pitch A), ominously punctuated by the lowest note of the piano and tam-tam (the most common member of the gong family). The seated chorus sings its somber prayer for the dead with two notes, F-sharp and C, reinforced by tolling bells. These pitches form a tritone, traditionally considered the "devil in music," and this same interval underlies and haunts the entire *War Requiem*. By clinging to the three pitches of A, F-sharp, and C, Britten creates a sense of stasis: even though beneath the chorus the orchestra plays troubled figures constructed from uneven and disquieting quintuplets, it cannot escape these three notes.

From this brooding emerges the pure sound of the boys' choir, whose physical separation demonstrates how innocence lies out of reach. As a reminder that not even their heavenly sound is without blemish, Britten constructs their melody around the tritone, which is sustained by the violins of the orchestra. After a shortened recapitulation of the chorus's tenebrous chants, the tenor soloist makes his first appearance with Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth." In contrast to the formality of the *Missa pro defunctis*, on the battlefield there are no "passing bells for these who die as cattle." The choir on stage is replaced by the "shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells" (represented by woodwinds), mocking the solemnity of funeral obsequies. The boys' music returns in the chamber orchestra when Owen suggests the fittingly innocent idea that only human kindness can be true consolation. The chorus ends the movement a capella, beginning with the sinister tritone, but the darkly dissonant music unexpectedly resolves to an ambiguous and tentatively hopeful F major chord.

The *Dies irae*, the largest movement of the *War Requiem*, opens with quiet solos from the brass section—triadic fanfares and a descending scale—that are to become important motifs of the battlefield. The 7/4 time signature creates an atmosphere of unsteadiness and anxiety. The terrors of the battlefield are linked to the sounds of the Apocalypse with timpani, tenor drum, and bass drum. In the clarion setting of *Tuba mirum spargens sonum* ("The wondrous trumpet, spreading its sound...") the Last Trump of the Apocalypse becomes a military bugle. The baritone soloist offers a lonelier view of the battlefield with part of Owen's fragmentary "But I was Looking at the Permanent Stars." In contrast to the previous dread and awe, bugles are now "saddening the evening air" and "sorrowful to hear." The subdued chamber orchestra reiterates the brass's battlefield themes, and the baritone's melody is largely constructed from the same thematic material.

The soprano soloist makes her first appearance with a declamatory description of the Last Judgment, off-set by the entrance of the chorus, now reduced in size, with *Quid sum miser*. The heavy chromaticism (movement by half-steps) of the semi-chorus's bemoaning lines illustrates "human wretchedness." From this abjection emerges a setting of Owen's "The Next War," a grotesquely sarcastic poem that bears a fitting epigraph (not set by Britten) from Owen's close friend Siegfried Sassoon: "War's a joke for me and you / While we know such dreams are true." In an acrid criticism of how expendable human life becomes in wartime, both soloists sing that "Death was never enemy of ours." Britten emphasizes the twisted and bitter humor through chromatic shrieks and cackles from high woodwinds and violins.



Images of fire and destruction, such as this photograph from the London Blitz, were still fresh in the Britten's mind as he composed the *War Requiem*.

After the quietly nasty close of "The Next War," the women of the chorus sing the *Recordare*, asking Jesus to remember that the cause of his journey to earth was to redeem human sins. After a series of overlapping entrances, the four parts join together in pleading to be counted among the sheep at Judgment Day. The elegance of this melancholy stands in contrast to the previous groveling of *Quid sum miser*. This respite abruptly gives way to a demonic setting of the *Confutatis*, in uneven quintuple meter. Harmonic clashes abound as the basses abrasively invoke the image of hellfire and angrily ask to be spared that fate. The tenors respond with "weeping" phrases set against dizzy woodwinds, cogently illustrating the pathetic supplication expressed in the text.

The basses' hellfire theme is taken up by the timpani as the baritone soloist sings six lines of Owen's "Sonnet on Seeing a Piece of Our Heavy Artillery Brought into Action," punctuated by two trumpets from the large orchestra blaring out the battlefield themes. Owen's Sonnet asks for the "Great Gun" to inflict maximum damage upon the enemy, a disturbing mockery of prayer and an indictment against the Church's support for the war. To illustrate the hypocrisy of pro-war sentiments, Owen ends the poem by asking that when the artillery's violent end is achieved, it may be cursed and "cut...from our soul!" Britten scorns this craven and futile wish for absolution by following the baritone's final malediction with a climactic recap of the opening *Dies irae*. By linking warfare to the Day of Judgment, Britten suggests that the evil of war is itself not only a sin but also its own punishment for humanity's destructive nature.

A sickly variation of the battlefield fanfare ushers in the *Lacrimosa*. Still in limping 7/4, this text describes the dead rising "out of the ashes" and "standing accused" for the Last Judgment. Over the muffled and plaintive chorus, the soprano soloist mournfully sings an expressive line that hints at the famous violin figuration beginning the corresponding section of Mozart's *Requiem* Mass. The chorus gives way to the most emotionally-charged of the Owen settings. In "Futility," a soldier beholds a comrade who has died overnight from exposure. Over the hushed trembling of the chamber orchestra, the tenor wonders if moving his friend into the sun will cause its kind rays to wake him as they always did "until this morning, and this snow." Through constant repetition of words, Britten creates a heartbreaking effect of suppressed hysteria, infused with both tenderness and anguish. The chorus and soprano sadly punctuate the tenor's statements with phrases from the *Lacrimosa* before he concludes in quiet desperation: "O what made fatuous sunbeams toil / To break earth's sleep at all?" The last two notes of this phrase are F-sharp and C, and the bells of the first movement return. The chorus once more ends the movement a cappella, and now the odd resolution to F major seems to long for a peace that it is inaccessible.

At the opening of the *Offertorium* all the forces on stage are silent as the ethereal voices of the boys drift down from the heavenly realm, interpolating exuberant appeals to God with meditative chanting. The chorus jumps in with an off-kilter dissonance that segues to a fugue on the text *Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius* ("What you once

off-kilter dissonance that segues to a fugue on the text *Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius* ("What you once promised to Abraham and seed"). The G minor of the second movement has now given way to a G major bordering on stridency, though tinged with unease and disturbed by off-beat accents.

The fugue subject is thrown to the chamber orchestra as the tenor and baritone soloists begin Owen's "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young," a retelling of the binding of Isaac. As Owen infuses the Biblical story with war imagery (Isaac is bound with "belts and straps" and "Abram" builds "trenches and parapets"), the orchestra quotes the wailings from "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and the battlefield themes of the *Dies irae* over disconcerting percussion, but this is cut off by angelic intervention. The heavenly instruction to offer the Ram of Pride in place of Isaac is set to static C major (destabilized by the absence of the fifth of the chord) with quiet tam-tam. Owen, however, perverts the redemptive ending, depicting how arrogant ruling powers sacrifice young lives before their pride: "But the old man would not so, but slew his son, / And half the seed of Europe, one by one." Britten's setting is jarringly lively, a mordant mockery of the previous *Quam olim Abrahae* fugue. The distant boys intone the second section of the offertory text: *Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus...* ("Sacrifices and prayers we offer to you, Lord, with praise..."), depicting a slaughter of innocents in which the victims are forced to celebrate their own slaying. In making his recording of the *War Requiem*, Britten advised the boys: "Feel as if you're going...to be sacrificed and you *don't* like it. You're going to have your throats cut." Hannah Arendt's description of the "banality of evil" is present in this listless music, which is sporadically interrupted by schizoid fragments of Owen's final line. The choir restates the *Quam olim Abrahae* fugue, but now that the "seed of Abraham" has been slain the theme is turned upside-down, the G major turned into its relative E minor, the dynamics suppressed, and the confident triangle and tenor drum replaced by quiet tambourine.

In 1956 Britten and Pears visited Bali, during which time Britten became enthralled by its gamelan tradition. The opening of the *Sanctus* emulates this sound as the piano and bells are combined with three instruments used nowhere else in the piece—vibraphone without fans, glockenspiel, and crotales (antique cymbals). As this also invokes the Anglican church service, in which bells are rung at the *Sanctus*, Britten combines the austere tradition of the Mass with the exotic. Eastern imagery effectively sets this movement apart from the rest of the work, like an inner meditation. Cooke notes that in Britten's music there is a "constant association...between gamelan sonorities and unattainable goals." As a reminder that to be in the eye of the storm is not to be in safety, Britten has the gamelan instruments play only two notes, the recurrent F-sharp and C, under the soprano soloist's florid line.

After the chorus's aleatory chanting, in which the staggered entrances build into a brilliant flurry of sound, the full orchestra plays a grand D major processional to the text *Hosanna in excelsis* ("Hosanna in the highest"), replete with trumpet fanfares and tam-tam (here with a distinctly Eastern connotation). The processional feel continues through the reentrance of the soprano soloist in the *Benedictus*, its mood now dreamy and subdued. Britten yet again adds Eastern flavor through writing this entire section in parallel fifths, the antithesis of Western contrapuntal writing. This placid music gives way to a shortened restatement of the majestic *Hosanna*, which builds to its climax in a euphoric shout from the choir.

Britten quietly undermines this jubilation by following it with one of Owen's most despairing poems, "The End." Over a stark pedal-note the baritone soloist darkens D major into D minor. A quiet evocation of the Apocalypse gives way to agitation with the lines "Shall Life renew these bodies? Of a truth, / All death will he annul, all tears assuage?" The urgency of these questions is contrasted with the world-weary answers from "white Age" and the Earth: the horror of the world's end (already evoked in the second movement) will not be followed by any renewal. The movement comes to a bleak and tonally ambiguous conclusion following the answer from the Earth: "My fiery heart shrinks, aching. It is death. / My ancient scars shall not be glorified, / Nor my titanic tears, the seas, be dried."

The heart of the hauntingly brief *Agnus Dei* is Owen's "At a Calvary Near the Ancre," which uses the image of a roadside crucifix mutilated by warfare as a symbol of the desecration of Christ's teachings. Britten's pairing of this text with *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi* ("Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world") calls attention to Owen's implication that the soldier is himself a sacrificial lamb. Owen scathingly criticizes church officials who choose patriotism over Christian principles: rather than adhering to Christ's nonviolence, these "disciples hide apart." The priests who "stroll" blithely past "Golgotha" are the chaplains who take pride in the minor wounds that they have sustained visiting soldiers in the trenches, which Owen links to bearing the mark of the Beast (Satan). Robert Graves noted that many soldiers despised the Anglican chaplains, whose Church did not allow them to endanger their lives.

The movement is built on an ostinato of cyclically repeated scalar figures alternating between descending B minor (the home key) and ascending C major (the darkly haunting sound of the major chord a half step above). This ostinato emphasizes the omnipresent tritone, as the downbeats alternate between F-sharp and C. The tenor sings one of the most gentle and lyrical settings in the entire composition while the chorus, again seated, sings the liturgical text to the ostinato scales. Once again Britten presents the contrast between the soldier's experience and the emptiness of tradition and liturgy. Owen's concluding lines are the heart of his and Britten's pacifism: "But they who love the greater love / Lay

down their life; they do not hate." At Pears's suggestion, Britten concludes the movement with the text from the corresponding section of the Common Mass: *Dona nobis pacem* ("Bestow on us peace").



"Christ is literally in 'no man's land'..."

Britten forgoes the comforting text of the *Communio*, the closing section of the *Missa pro defunctis*, and with the Mass now over turns to the Absolution (*Libera me*). This piteous plea for salvation at the Last Judgment is traditionally recited after the Mass and is frequently included in *Requiem* settings.

After an ominous duet between bass drum and tenor drum, the limping quintuplets of the first movement and string figures from "Anthem for Doomed Youth" return under abject chromatic whimpers of *Libera me, Domine* ("Free me, Lord"). This moribund miasma seems to evoke the opening of Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est":

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
...Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue...

The underlying march builds and accelerates throughout, eventually cramming two and then four measures of the orchestra into each measure of the chorus. Britten expands the percussion section to include the unsettling sounds of two snare drums, whip-cracks, temple block, and castanets. The initial plea of *Libera me, Domine* recurs after each section, a prayer tenacious in the face of its own futility, in turn bitter, fearful, and desperate.

After the soprano soloist's nervous entrance, the music is propelled into a disarmingly bright C major, like an involuntary laugh in the face of disaster. The brass heralds the Apocalypse with the battlefield calls of the second movement and, after an intense build up of these fanfares, the G minor of the *Dies irae* returns. The chorus's descending wails are punctuated by the explosion of crash cymbals as the soprano soars above like the town crier. Underlying this calamity is the primary melody of the *Dies irae*, blared out by the entire brass section and piano. A hideous perversion of a dominant chord ushers in the culminating devastation, a tremendous G minor chord of obliteration. The overwhelming percussion forces include a death-blow of the tam-tam and the urgent alarm-bell of the triangle, which quickly dissipates like a failed cry for help as the march rises up to engulf the staggered and irregular cries of the chorus. The final line of Owen's "A Tear Song"—"God hath no ears"—applies just as well to this horror and misery.

The G minor is held into the beginning of the final Owen setting, "Strange Meeting" (with Britten's alterations). "It seemed that out of battle I escaped / Down some profound dull tunnel..." the tenor soloist sings over static and "cold" accompaniment, elucidating what we have just heard. The quintuplet battlefield march reappears in the double bass as a reminder of what is still going on above ground. The tenor is confronted by a fellow tormented soul, whom he greets as

“strange friend” with the C-F sharp tritone. The baritone soloist sings quietly and without bitterness about how the two of them shared the same hopes and dreams, and the battlefield fanfares are echoed as the baritone sings about “the pity war distilled.” Motifs from “The Next War” return, now grim rather than ironic, to Owen’s description of the inexorable and futile activities of war.

This setting ends with the ultimate reconciliation when the baritone identifies himself to the tenor as “the enemy you killed, my friend.” The World War I poet Ivor Gurney noted that among the English soldiers there was “absolutely no hate for the Germans, but a kind of brotherly though slightly contemptuous kindness—as to men who are going through a bad time as well as themselves...” Through this mutual suffering the two soloists are able to recognize a special bond as together they sing Owen’s final line to a gentle pentatonic melody: “Let us sleep now....” The boys’ choir enters from afar with the Latin text of the burial service, *In paradisum*, tenderly singing the soldiers into heaven (significantly, Britten omits the line from “Strange Meeting” that places the dead men in hell). All forces now join together: the tenor and baritone continue their duet with the chamber orchestra as the large orchestra and chorus enter with a great wash of benevolent sound, the soprano soloist eventually rising above them, and the boys continue to intone their benediction from above. But reconciliation is aborted with the tritone of the bells, and the boys chant the opening lines of the *Missa pro defunctis* as a stark reminder of what has come before.

Attempts to restart the *In paradisum* are abandoned as the chorus concludes the piece with the same a capella material that ended the first two movements. The music longs to fulfill the resolution that has just now seemed so achievable, but the overwhelming sorrow and suffering that have come before are indelibly seared into the listener’s conscience. One does not need to have lived through battle or air raids for Britten’s lamentation of human violence to have the same effect it had on its first audience in Coventry Cathedral. Britten realized that it was up to each of us individually to cope with this horror, and that the slow process of healing can only come when we confront it. Where that final F major chord may lead us is yet to be seen.

*Dona nobis pacem.*

## OUR SOLOISTS

**ELEANOR STALLCOP-HORROX**, a Seattle native, studied at Central Washington State College and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. As a 1989 Bel Canto competition winner, she pursued advanced studies in Siena, Italy with Maestro Walter Baracchi of La Scala.

She has been featured as a soloist with the Philadelphia Singers, Colorado Opera Festival, Colorado Springs Chorale, and locally with Seattle Opera, Orchestra Seattle and Portland’s Bel Canto Northwest.

She is a student of Ellen Faull and has been a Seattle Opera Regular Chorister since 1997. She was most recently heard this past October as Giorgietta in Puccini’s *Il Tabarro* with Willamette Concert Opera. She has most recently been heard with OSSCS in Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony, ending last year’s season.

**WESLEY ROGERS** divides his busy singing career between opera and oratorio. Recent concert engagements have included performances of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Bach’s *Magnificat*, Haydn’s *Creation*, Honnegar’s *King David*, Kurt Weill’s *Seven Deadly Sins*, and the world premiere of Hawley’s *Seattle*. Wesley has appeared with the Seattle Choral Company, the Meridian Symphony, the Cascadian Chorale, the Bremerton Symphony, and Belle Arte Concerts. In March 2003, Wesley performed the role of Damon in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* with Santa Fe Pro Musica. On the operatic stage he was most recently seen in the role of Martin in Sun Valley Center for the Arts’ production of Copland’s *The Tender Land*. Summer 2002 found Wesley returning to the Lake

Chelan Bach Festival where he performed the role of Bastien in Mozart’s *Bastien und Bastienna*. He performed the role of Laurie in Mark Adamo’s *Little Women* at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, California. Shortly after moving to the Pacific Northwest, Wesley made his Seattle Opera debut in 2001 as Maintop in Britten’s *Billy Budd*. He returned the next season as the Fourth Jew in Strauss’ *Salome*. Wesley has also performed roles with companies including Opera Memphis, Washington East Opera, Obsidian Opera, Seattle Community Outreach Productions, and the University of Washington Opera Theatre. He recently completed his Master of Music degree from the University of Washington.

**MICHAEL DRUMHELLER** is originally from Richland, Washington. A favorite baritone in the Northwest classical music scene, he has been a soloist with Boston Lyric Opera, Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Philharmonic, Orchestra Seattle, Music of Remembrance, Seattle Opera Previews, Longwood Opera, and many other organizations, under the batons of renowned conductors such as Gerard Schwarz, Leonard Slatkin, and Robert Spano. Mr. Drumheller holds BS and MS degrees from MIT, as well as a Master of Music degree from Boston University, where he was a student of the singer and teacher Phyllis Curtin. He is also an alumnus of the Tanglewood Music Center. His diverse musical background includes playing tympani in symphony orchestras and drumming and singing for his own original rock band. Mr. Drumheller has been a featured performer in many productions of the late, distinguished conductor Hans Wolf and regularly volunteers as a soloist with the Northwest Chorale, which raises money for Northwest Harvest.

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