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Why compose a Requiem? A Requiem is a mass for the dead. My Requiem is a dramatic composition for a modern audience which honours the dead and recognises the struggles of the living. Opera North estimates there have been over two thousand Requiems composed to the present day¹. I am sure there are considerably more than two thousand in existence, but there are only a select few with which we are familiar. The long-standing history of the Requiem mass proves that it is one of the biggest musical endeavours for a composer. What I am attempting in my research is to find out whether I can successfully add my edition to the vast cannon of Requiems. Moreover, can I do this whilst also introducing new concepts and novel compositional ideas? In the opening section of this commentary, I will discuss the repertoire and sources that have influenced my composition. I will then explain where these new concepts have been integrated into my composition. I shall discuss the challenges of these concepts.

Requiems traditionally use the Latin Requiem liturgical text. Famous examples include Mozart's Requiem, Verdi's Requiem and Fauré's Requiem. In some instances, the texts are in slightly different orders or movements are omitted. I have used the original Latin text; I have also used English. Additionally, I have used an extract from the Robert Laurence Binyon poem, 'For the Fallen'². In my research I have found that using English is not unique to my Requiem. Examples that use English include Britten's 'War Requiem', Rutter's 'Requiem', Delius' 'Requiem' and Dan Forrest's 'Requiem for the Living.' Nevertheless, my use of Latin and English was chosen firstly because I have familiarity with composing for both languages. Furthermore, I have chosen to compose in English and Latin. This is because there have been many occasions when listening to Requiems where I have felt no connection to the text as I do not know what most of it means (without the translation next to me).

¹ Opera North, "What is a Requiem," (2023), <https://www.operanorth.co.uk/news/what-is-a-requiem/#:~:text=The%20name%20comes%20from%20the,2%2C000%20to%20the%20present%20day!> (accessed 2/9/2023).

²The Great War, "For the Fallen" (2021), <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/poems/laurence-binyon-for-the-fallen.htm> (accessed 15/8/23).

Therefore, I decided to compose using both the Latin and English translation of the traditional Requiem text. This is so that my target audience will feel a connection to the piece as they should understand the lyrics. In my composition the larger choir at the front of the performance space sings almost entirely in Latin. This is called the ‘main choir’. The quartet at the back or in the middle of the performance space sings in English (the ‘rear choir’). The position of the rear choir creates the idea that the rear choir are the voice of the audience. I will discuss this idea later.

Benjamin Britten’s choral composition, ‘Hymn to a Virgin’, uses two choirs. Britten not only separates the language but also the location of the choirs. One choir at the back of the performance space sings in Latin and the other at the front, in English. The opening of the piece can be seen below.

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The image shows a musical score for the opening of Benjamin Britten's 'Hymn to a Virgin'. It is divided into two systems. The first system is for CHORUS I, with parts for SOPRANO ALTO and TENOR BASS. The lyrics are 'Of one that is so fair and bright'. The second system is for CHORUS II, with parts for SOPRANO ALTO and TENOR BASS. The lyrics are 'Ve - lut ma - ris stel - la'. Both systems include the performance instruction 'pp molto legato sempre'.

Separating choirs or simply moving different voices around a performance space has been a practice for hundreds of years. In John Guzik’s ‘Elements of Space: Exploring the Matter of Spatial

³ Benjamin Britten, *A Hymn to the Virgin* (London: Boosey and Hawks). 3

Relationships in Choral Music' he discusses Leopold Mozart's account of witnessing spatial choir splitting in Salzburg Cathedral. Guzik also discusses earlier examples dating back to the Renaissance period and earlier. Whilst discussing Renaissance composers Gioseffe Zalrino and Nicola Vincentino, Gusik references 'Salmi Spezzati'. In short, this is a Psalm-focused variation on the Italian, antiphonal practice of 'Chori Spezzati'. This literally means 'separated choirs'. Most sources converge around this term as the most likely point of origin for this kind of split choir concept in churches. Valerio Morucci suggests the heritage of the idea is not confined to Northern Italy⁴. However, Morucci and other sources recognise Flemish composer Adiran Willaert as one of, if not *the* earliest, to put the antiphonal style ('chori Spezzati') into practice.

Experiments in spatial musical composition have drastically advanced since Adrian Willaert's original conceptualisation of the practice. In Emma Kate-Matthews' 'Activating Audiences: How spatial music can help us to listen', Matthews describes how spatial music pre-dates even Willaert⁵. However, Matthews also explains how even during Willaert's time the practice was not an integral part of the composition process. Matthews describes how Willaert wrote in this style due to the opposed positioning of the choir lofts of the time. Similarly, Guzik comments on how Bach used slight variations of choir positioning in Bach's 'St. Matthew's Passion'. I maintain that these examples are analogous to the splitting of choirs in church stalls. This is an idea also posed in an article by Hanna Rijken. Rijken and other commentators in the article explore how choir positions in early churches depended on availability of space which could be heavily influenced by factors such as the availability of stalls and placement of the organ⁶. In this period, a primary reason for the different locations of

⁴ Valerio Morucci, "Reconsidering 'Cori Spezzati': A New Source From Central Italy," *Acta Musicologica* (2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24595484> (accessed 11/8/2023).

⁵ Emma-Kate Matthews, "Activating Audiences: How spatial music can help us to listen," *Organised Sound* (2019), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/organised-sound/article/abs/activating-audiences-how-spatial-music-can-help-us-to-listen/5A4BB7850570864E8F349F0A82579E89> (accessed 20/8/23).

⁶ Hanna Rijken, "Turning East. Turning Exit? Turning to the Music! Spatial Practice in Choral Evensongs in the Netherlands," *Sage Journals* (2016), <https://journals-sagepub-com.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1177/00393207160461-215> accessed (20/8/23).

the choirs was not due to compositional technique, but because of unique church layouts. Quintessential spatial compositions composed more recently use space as a foundational tool for composing. It is from these compositions that I take inspiration for the utilisation of space in my composition. My Requiem uses performance space for specific compositional purposes which I shall outline below.

Composers such as Janacek, Brant, Xenakis and Ives use space in a more deliberate and sophisticated way. John Dyck in his article 'Spatial Music' discusses Brant and Xenakis. From this article I found Iannis Xenakis' 'Eonta'. This piece consists of brass ensemble and piano. In the piece the brass players are required to walk around and turn on the spot whilst playing⁷. This piece, as well as Benjamin Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols', inspired me to compose the procession at the opening and ending of my piece. Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols' features a procession and recession⁸. In Dyck's article he also discusses Henry Brant. Brant is mentioned by several sources. Most sources including Dyck and Matthews agree that Brant was influenced by composer Charles Ives. Maria Anna Harley also acknowledges Ives' influence. Harley maintains that it was Ives' 'The Unanswered Question' which spawned the immense output of 76 spatial compositions by Brant. 'The Unanswered Question' did not influence my composition, but the influence it had on Brant may well have. Harley explains Brant's article in which he explains his four rules when composing with regards to spatial compositions. These rules were of immense help to me. They are as follows⁹.

⁷ Ensemble Linea, "ENSEMBLE LINEA - IANNIS XENAKIS – EONTA" (2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzUPAMY2A8k> (accessed 27/7/23).

⁸ Tartu Noortekoor, "Benjamin Britten – 11. Recession – A Ceremony of Carols – Tartu Noortekoor" (2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sm7MSmwWPY> (accessed 19/8/23).

⁹ Maria Anna Harley, "An American in Space: Henry Brant's 'Spatial Music,'" *American Music* (1997), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3052698> (accessed 5/8/23).

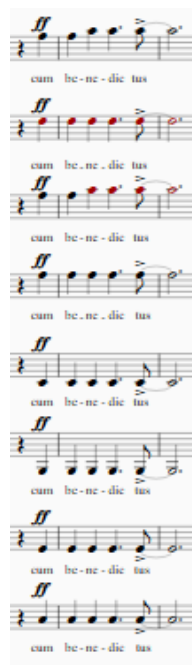
1. Spatial separation clarifies the texture.
2. Separated groups are difficult to coordinate.
3. Spatial separation is equivalent to the separation of textures in pitch space (if the performers are together on stage).
4. 4. Spatial arrangements must be panned exact but allow adjustments of details.

Harley describes Karlheinz Stockhausen's approach to spatial music. As I was not greatly influenced by Stockhausen, I will not discuss his approach here. However, Harley describes Brant's view of Stockhausen's approach as 'hostile'. This is most evident in Brant's attitude towards Stockhausen's piece, 'Gruppen'¹⁰. In this piece Stockhausen uses three separate orchestras. Unfortunately for Stockhausen, Harley maintains that composer John Cage shares Brant's view towards Stockhausen's approach to spatial music. The cause of this hostility towards Stockhausen's techniques may be due to Cage and Brant's shared appreciation for Ives. This is important to note as Stockhausen receives criticism from the other composers for using orchestration that is too similar in the three orchestras used in 'Gruppen'. The criticism is concerned with what Brant calls the 'coexistence of independent layers' and Cage calls 'a tonal antiphony'. This is their idea - that if you are to have separated musical forces, they must be different. Brant criticises the potential for textual chaos in Stockhausen's work. This is something I also have concerns about and is something I have considered when composing for the split voices in my piece.

Enda Bates' 'Sea Swells' balances the four rules of spatial composition that I previously mentioned by Brant, particularly rule three. In the referenced recording of 'Sea Swells' the 360-degree recording of the piece allows the listener to be immersed in the vocal effects and harmony in each group of

¹⁰ Maria Anna Harley, "An American in Space: Henry Brant's 'Spatial Music (accessed 5/8/23).

singers¹¹. I do not believe that Bates isolates tonal landscapes in each choir. However, I do believe the utilisation of space surely helps the performers engage in the beautifully vast and yet closely related harmony of the piece. Roderick Williams’ ‘O Adonai’ also successfully separates textures in two isolated vocal groups. This piece features a choir at the front of the performance space. In this piece there are also tenor and soprano soloists at the rear of the performance space. The recording is almost certainly not akin to the in-person experience, but I believe a recording by the ‘ORA Singers’ achieves something close to the desired spatial effect in the piece¹². I was inspired by Williams’ use of a dissonant soprano over the chorus texture. In my ‘Liberia Me’ I have briefly used this effect, but in my piece the solo sings diatonically and the voice is used for a harmonic suspension. I have been inspired by William’s reduced number of separated voices in the rear choir. I have also been inspired by Bates’ wide-spread and clustered harmonies across the four choirs in her composition. An example of where I used this influence can be found in the ‘Confutatis’ section of my Requiem. Here the rear choir sing a D major chord over the C major chord that is sung by the main choir. This can be seen below.



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¹¹ Enda Bates, “Trinity360: Sea Swell - Enda Bates Zêzere Festival Choir / Aoife Hiney” (2022), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76ZN3Loa_ng (accessed 5/7/23).

¹² Roderick Williams, *The Mystery of Christmas*, with the ORA singers, conducted by Suzi Diby, 2018, Spotify.

¹³ ‘Requiem for Mankind’

The utilisation of space in my composition is linked to language and text. In my Requiem the 'rear choir' sings in English, which is the reverse effect of the previously mentioned 'Hymn to a Virgin' by Britten. In my composition the rear choir sing in English because they are deliberately positioned among the audience to represent them. The position and language of the rear choir are intended to create a contrast to the main choir. The aim of this contrast is to create the idea that the main choir are singing a more typical neo-classical Requiem (in Latin). Meanwhile, the rear choir sing in English to allow the modern English audience to engage with the emotion of the text, which is supported in the music. In Janacek's 'Elegie na smrt dcery Olgy' he separates a tenor soloist, piano and chorus. In the piece, the tenor depicts grief; the piano is the unifying medium through music and the chorus is the chant of heavenly souls. The three concepts are explored as separate and unified entities both metaphorically and physically¹⁴. Another example of a metaphorical use of space is in Berlioz's Requiem. In the thundering 'Tuba Mirum', four brass sections stand in four corners of the performance space. This creates the 'sheer terror of the call to judgement'¹⁵. Discussions with my tutor inspired me to use a metaphorical use of space in my composition.

My tutor and I discussed Britten's War Requiem. My tutor described moments in the piece as though Britten had composed a novel Requiem whilst a classical Requiem is 'going on in the background'. In Mervyn Cooke's 'Britten: War Requiem' he discusses the influence of Verdi's Requiem on Britten's War Requiem. This is an example of the concept to which my tutor was alluding. Britten composed a forward-looking Requiem whilst perhaps inadvertently, in this case, acknowledging the past (see 'Britten: War Requiem' page 58). Cooke compares the similarity in choice of key (G minor) for both 'Dies Irae' sections in each of the composers' requiems, as well as the use of 'off-beat bass drum

¹⁴ John Guzik, *Elements of Space: Exploring the Matter of Spatial Relationships in Choral Music* (Montreal: John Guzik, 2020©), p65.

¹⁵ Peter Gutmann, "Hector Berlioz Requiem (Grande Messe des Morts)" (2016), <http://classicalnotes.net/classics5/berliozrequiem.html> (accessed 2/9/23), 12.

strokes' in both 'Dies Irae' movements¹⁶. Many Requiems contain similar influences whilst others are specifically influenced by other Requiems. Some examples include Frank Martin using whispered text in his 'Dies Irae' which could also have been inspired by Verdi's 'Dies Irae'. Another example is the influence of Gabriel Fauré's Requiem on Maurice Duruflé. In Duruflé's 'Libera Me' the basses open the movement with the main 'Libera Me' theme which, like the Fauré, is then later repeated in all sections of the choir in unison¹⁷. It is always debatable whether any similarities in potential influences are deliberate or not. In my own composition there are influences of other works implemented in my work that are deliberate. I will now explain how I used these influences in my composition.

In the conversation with my tutor to which I alluded; I was introduced to the concept that Britten composed a classical requiem 'in the background' of a modern requiem. I have attempted to implement this concept into my requiem. In my 'Rex Tremendae' section I utilise a metaphorical use of space. In this section, at bar 407 I introduce a fugue section. This is an intentional pastiche of the fugal sections in Brahms' 'A German Requiem'. The primary example from which I have taken inspiration is the 'Der Gerechten Seelen' fugue¹⁸. In my Requiem, I then repeat the short fugue in the choir and strings at bar 424. During the repeat of the fugue, the strings are muted, and the choir sings to a vocable: 'Mmm'. Also, during this 'muted' repeat of the fugue, the rear choir sing over the recapitulation of the fugue with a development of the initial 'Rex Tremendae' material. Here, there is literally a modern fugue 'on top' of a neo-classical fugue which is 'going on in the background'.

¹⁶ Mervyn Cooke, *Britten: War Requiem, 1st edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 51.

¹⁷ Maurice Duruflé, *Requiem* (Paris: Durand Éditions Durand, 2001), 75.

¹⁸ Johannes Brahms, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 2017), 38.

This Brahmsian fugue in my Requiem occurs in the 'Rex Tremendae' section which traditionally comes after the 'Dies Irae'. I have moved many sections of my Requiem from their traditional places to enhance the emotional narrative of the piece. I have composed my piece so that the intensity reaches its climax in the final moments, notably, in the 'Dies Irae'. This is due to the other significant metaphor in my composition. My composition honours the lives of the dead and the struggles of those still living. I am aware that concepts such as this can suffer from over sentimentalisation. Despite this, I maintain that the composition follows an emotional journey echoing that of real life. I will explain how this journey unfolds whilst also outlining my main influences.

Originally, the opening of the piece did not have a solo violin as it was inspired by Cherubini's Requiem in C minor. In the opening of Cherubini's Requiem, the first movement opens with unison cellos and Bassoon. It is quite common to use a slow tempo and lower register at the opening of a Requiem, especially a low register in the strings. Examples of this include the opening of Dvorak's 'Requiem', Berlioz's 'Requiem' ('Grande Messe des Morts'), Verdi's 'Requiem' and Delius' 'Requiem'. The use of a texturally sparse and slow opening portrays the beginning of life. One reason for choosing the violin is because it mimics the sound of a crying baby. Cherubini's Requiem is unique as the first violins do not feature in the first or second movements. The opening of Cherubini's Requiem can be seen below.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Dvorak's Requiem. The score is in C minor, 3/4 time, and marked 'Larghetto sostenuto. (♩ = 50.)'. The orchestral parts include Timpani in C.G., Corni in C, Fagotti, Viola I., Viola II., Violoncello I. II., and Contrabbasso. The vocal parts include Soprano, Alto, Tenore, and Basso, with the word 'CORO.' written vertically between the vocal staves. The lyrics for the vocal parts are 'Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam'. The score shows the beginning of the 'Requiem aeternam' section, with the vocal parts entering with the lyrics 'Re-qui-em ae-ter-nam'.

Dvorak's Requiem inspired me to use the very opening line as a leitmotif throughout the Requiem. I have been guilty of overusing leitmotifs in past compositions, so I have tried not overuse the technique of revisiting the opening melody. Moreover, it was Dvorak's blatant reuse of the theme in his 'Tuba Mirum' section that encouraged me to not overuse the theme. The opening and reuse of the theme in the trumpet can be seen below. I have used fragments of the opening motif on just a few occasions to be a subtle reminder of the opening theme. One example of this is in the opening of the 'Sanctus'. Here, the theme rapidly jumps between pizzicato strings and piano. Another example is the slight variation on the opening theme at the end of the 'Confutatis'. I used this technique to gain a sense of familiarity with the piece's structure. The theme's progression also mimics the change and progression in life. These examples can be seen below.

¹⁹ Luigi Cherubini, *Requiem in C minor* (Leipzig: C.F Peters, 1987), 1.

1 *Soli and Chorus REQUIEM Æ*

Poco lento ♩ = 60

pp

20

Andante ♩ = 69

fz *p* *fz* *pp*

lunga corona

²⁰ Antonín Dvořák, *Requiem* (Prague: Novello, 2001), 1, 28.

In my research I found that reusing orchestral textures is a prominent technique used in Requiems. In some cases, whole sections of material are repeated. Examples include the repeated 'Dies Irae' sections in both Verdi's 'Requiem' and Dvorak's 'Requiem'. Britten repeats material in his 'Kyrie eleison' in the final moments of his 'War Requiem'. Another famous example is the material from the 'Kyrie' repeated in the closing 'Cum Sanctis' of Mozart's 'Requiem'. However, I was particularly inspired by John Rutter's and Dan Forrest's use of textural repetition. Rutter's reuse of a simple timpani ostinato creates a chilling ambience in the piece. In a performance by the 'Rivertree Singers' this texture is first heard in the opening at 1:12. This then returns at 19:05 and again at 29:55. In the third instance where the timpani ostinato occurs, it is different and feels interrupted. This is a technique I have implemented at the end of my Requiem in the solo violin. Here, the violin acts as a distant, interrupted and chilling final voice in the Requiem. In Dan Forrest's 'Requiem of the Living' he reuses the opening texture later in the opening of the 'Sanctus'. Initially, Forrest uses a high semitonal clash in the violins which is cemented in D minor in the cellos and double basses. When this texture is repeated in the 'Sanctus', the introduction of the harp and glockenspiel bring the tonality safely to F major. I have used this technique in my 'Kyrie' and 'Sanctus'. Here, I reuse the simple melody, but in a completely new style.

In my 'Requiem', the 'Kyrie' section is mostly influenced by two themes from film and television. The first of which is John Williams' 'Hymn to the Fallen'. In the opening trumpet melody, which occurs multiple times in the piece, Williams briefly uses the fifth chord in the key (D major) over the tonic pedal (G)²¹. The same effect is used in the main theme from the TV show 'Band of Brothers' composed by Michael Kamen²². The use of snare drum in my composition was inspired by many war film themes. The most influential example is the use of the snare drum in the 'Main Theme' from

²¹ John Williams, *Saving Private Ryan (Music from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)*, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Williams, SKG Music L.L.C, 1998. Spotify.

²² Various Artists, *Band of Brothers – Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, with the London Metropolitan Orchestra, SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT, 2001. Spotify.

Ron Goodwin's 'Where Eagles Dare' film soundtrack. Goodwin opens the piece with a snare drum ostinato. The snare drum is joined by other percussion to create an intense opening before a mighty brass-dominated exposition of the theme²³. This is an idea I have implemented at the start of my 'Dies Irae' and 'Tuba Mirum'.

I have also been influenced by John Williams' soundtrack from the film 'Artificial Intelligence' called 'Stored Memories and Monica's Theme'. The opening two minutes of this piece consist of an SATB choir singing to an 'Ooo' sound at a low dynamic. The low dynamic, slow tempo, close intervals, use of tritones and well-worked use of quaver motifs creates an eerie and mournful feeling to the piece. This was something I wanted to implement at the end of my Requiem. In bar 635 I have composed a unison choral passage which is meant to evoke 'silenced voices of the dead'. The aimless nature of the melody creates a sense of crying out and desperation in the voice. This is also achieved by the constant attempts of the melody to rise in pitch. At bar 671 the phrase is interrupted almost as though the voices are giving up. Additionally, the falsetto in the voices of the tenors and especially basses should create a coarse element to the sound. This will also reinforce the idea that the voices are crying out in desperation. The protracted phrases rely heavily upon staggered breathing. The apparent lack of breathing conveys the idea that the singers are voices of the dead. The choir is turned to help mute the voices and create a different sound world which I will explain later in my practical research. The turning of the choir is the most theatrical point in the piece. Here, the journey of life that the composition portrays has come to an end. This happens at bar 634. Before the choir sing the protracted passage as voices of the dead, the choir exhales. In this moment the final breath of the life portrayed in the Requiem is exhaled.

²³ Ron Goodwin, *The Film Music of Ron Goodwin*, with the BBC Philharmonic orchestra, Chandos Records, 2004, Spotify.

In sections of Berlioz's *Requiem* and William Walton's 'The Twelve', a similar texture is followed by deliberately high and thin textures. In Berlioz's 'Dies Irae' the change in texture from strings to flute, oboe, clarinet and or cor anglais occurs several times²⁴. Walton's 'The Twelve' is a work about the martyrdom of the twelve disciples. Midway through the ten-minute piece there is a moment where the textural approach is similar. This occurs immediately after the words: 'they were tortured, and slain'. What follows is a discordant and dark passage in the mid to low range of the organ. There is then a mezzo-soprano solo over an organ passage in a higher texture²⁵. The organ, under the soloist, plays a descending line to underpin the texture as well as the crippling mood in the moment of the piece. In following the influence of Walton and Berlioz, after the 'Dies Irae' movement in my *Requiem*, the 'Liberate Me' that follows is of a comparatively lighter mood and texture.

In the same passage of the Walton there is an obvious case of word painting. On the word 'slain', Walton uses a semitone clash in the organ to punctuate the harrowing nature of the phrase. Unlike Walton's use of word painting, Frederick Delius uses a juxtaposition between music and words in his 'Requiem'. In the 'Hallelujah' section of the *Requiem*, Delius uses a D7 chord in the brass over a G pedal in the timpani and bass strings. Coincidentally, this harmony is the same harmony in 'Hymn to the Fallen' and 'Band of Brothers' that influenced the harmony in my 'Kyrie'. Delius uses the same compositional device in the fifth movement of his *Requiem*. Here, there is a cacophonous orchestral texture whilst the choir repeats the seemingly harmless words 'Springtime'. I have experimented

²⁴ Hector Berlioz, *Requiem* (New York: Broude Brothers, est. 1992), 12.

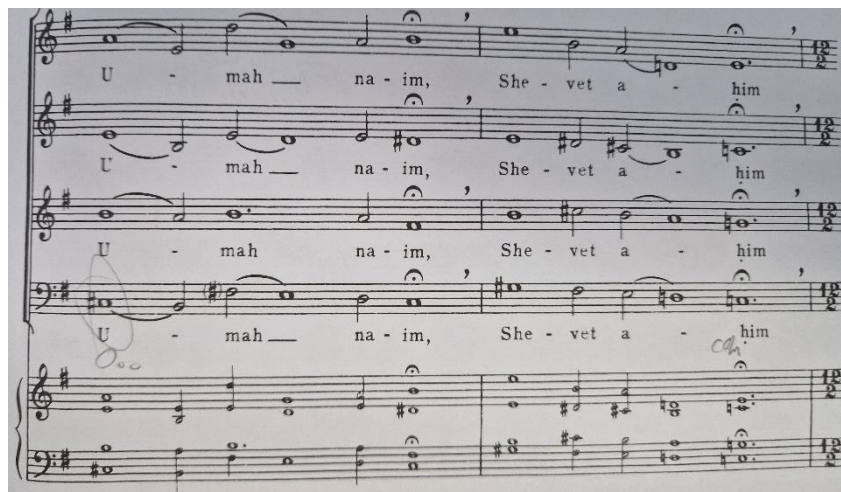
²⁵ Joshua Gawley, "William Walton - The Twelve (score video)" (2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0m8FCDmZQ> (accessed 2/9/2023)

with the juxtaposition of music and words in the phrase 'Hosanna in excelsis' from the 'Sanctus'. In Fauré's 'Requiem' and Karl Jenkins' 'The Armed Man', these words are used in a more conventional manner to create a moment of elation. After all, the words are proclamations of worship: 'Hosanna in the highest!'. I set the short and simple phrase in C harmonic minor. This encapsulates the mood in the context of the piece. Death is coming at the end of the piece and this phrase acts as a hopeless attempt at a worshipful cry before the chaotic 'Dies Irae'.

The final 'Age shall not weary them' section in my 'Requiem' is influenced by the final passages of Britten's 'War Requiem' and Bernstein's 'Chichester Psalms'. Both passages subvert any kind of harmonic expectations. Below is a section from the final passage of the 'Chichester Psalms'. The final chord in the first bar below contains stacked fourths (on the '-im' of 'na-im'). This unexpected chord feels like a C#11 which makes the C major chord at the end of the next bar even more engaging. The extracts from Bernstein's 'Chichester Psalms' and Britten's 'War Requiem' can be seen below. An example of harmonic subversion in my 'Requiem' is in the unexpected Asus2 chord over the word 'old'.

A further influence from the final section of the 'War Requiem' is the use of tritones. Importantly, tritones are ubiquitous in Britten's 'War Requiem'. In this section of the 'War Requiem' Britten integrates tritones into a texture that consists of only chorus and bells. The slow tempo and closely related intervals of each passing chord allows greater accessibility for singers whilst subverting harmonic expectations. I have used a similarly sparse texture and clashing harmony in my 'Age shall not weary them' section. Here, the voices are voices of the dead. Use of tritones enforces the unnerving quality I wanted in the music. Furthermore, I have placed my 'Age shall not weary them'

section at the end of my composition. Here, both choirs sing in English. This helps to create a sense of unity at the end of the piece. This also creates a tranquil ending to the piece. This tranquillity is somewhat disturbed by the sudden reference back to the material from the procession. I reuse this material to portray death. The first use of the material in the opening is accompanied and in a minor key. Here, at the end of the piece it is unaccompanied and is entirely based on the pentatonic scale. The use of pentatonic harmony appears in the final movement of Britten's 'War Requiem'. I have used the pentatonic scale as I think Britten's use of the scale creates an ambiguous tonal quality in the movement. I wanted to capture a similar ambiguity in my Requiem.



²⁶ Leanoard Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms (in Three Movements)* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1965), 41.

The image shows a page of a musical score for a Requiem. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a percussion staff for bells. The tempo is marked 'Very slow (molto lento)' and 'rall.'. The lyrics are 'Re-qui-e-scant in pa-ce. A-men, A-men.' The score includes dynamic markings such as 'ppp sustained', 'ppp dim.', and 'div.'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The score is attributed to Alder.

My composition features several experimental compositional techniques. For this reason, I conducted practical research to give me an understanding of how the effects would work in a live performance. Firstly, three singers and I sang standard SATB music as four solo voices. This has helped me understand how I can best utilise a reduced force of voices in the ‘rear choir’. Secondly, in one rehearsal with the same singers I asked the singers to turn around and sing to the wall at the back of the hall in which we were singing. The effect had a profound impact on me. I walked around the room to gauge the effectiveness of this positioning of the singers. The suppressed nature of the voices gave me the idea to use the voices in my composition as ‘silenced voices of the dead’. I use this effect in my composition after the final breath is exhaled. I found that physically turning the choir around to be the most appropriate and striking transformation in character of the sound. The visual aspect also reinforces the metaphor of death. Thirdly, I arranged several sessions experimenting with a violinist. In these sessions I composed the opening as well as the procession (the ‘col legno’ idea). This was a good opportunity to hear how the solo violin part would sound in context.

I will conclude this commentary by stating that I am satisfied that my ‘Requiem’ meets the objectives I set out to achieve. There are aspects I would potentially change. The main aspect that I would

²⁷ Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, est. 2000), 238.

potentially change is the use of space. Whilst I believe that I successfully utilise space to enhance the performance experience of the Requiem, I believe I could have utilised space in a more radical way. I do not want to create an experience where audiences become distracted by the spatial aspects of the composition. For this reason, I think that the prudent use of space in my composition has been successful. I am satisfied that I have composed a Requiem that proves the 'Requiem' is not a thing of the past. Many references and endless inspiration from previous Requiems have been an integral part of my composition process. Like composers before me however, I do not think that my Requiem merely celebrates Requiems of the past. The aspect that I love most about my composition is that it acknowledges great pieces of the Requiem's history whilst looking to the future of the Requiem. My 'Requiem for Mankind' is a successful musical representation of the struggles of the living who in turn honour the dead.

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