

21M.260: STRAVINSKY TO THE PRESENT

ASSIGNMENT due at Class 13, March 29

Reading: Auner, p. 170-181.

Anthology works: Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem*, "Requiem aeternam"

Supplemental: Richard Strauss, *Vier letzte Lieder*

Before you begin, skim the Grove Music Online article about Britten. Read the Auner pages and explain below how the *War Requiem* fits into the rest of Britten's oeuvre and style.

Now, listen to the anthology excerpt at least twice. It is the longest excerpt in the book, and while it is "one movement," there are clear breaks within it. In the table below, use the text's structure as a guide and take notes on what makes each section *distinctive* (objectively) and *interesting* (subjective) through changes in mood (with corresponding musical features), forces, texture, emphasized parameters, etc.

Text of section (see Auner for translation)	Notes on musical features
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis.	
Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion: et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem; exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet.	
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis.	
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.	
Kyrie eleison Christe eleison Kyrie eleison	

Why might Britten have chosen to frame the Owen poem in English with Latin texts?

In your genuine opinion, does the horror of war and genocide make musical beauty more *impossible* or more *necessary*, and why?

Supplemental listening (Strauss)

Listen carefully with *no distractions* except a notetaking apparatus (pencil/pen/keyboard) to all of Strauss' *Four Last Songs*. While you listen, take notes on what you hear. Then answer the following:

Why is the human voice appropriate to situations of mourning and loss?

How does Auner characterize Strauss' situation and mood when he wrote this? Are you sympathetic or not, and why?

Pick one of the four songs whose musical features resonate with you. Look up a translation of the poem in that song and sketch out a few correlations between the sentiments in the text and the musical style.

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