

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI CHOIRS AND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
THE MEISTERSINGERS OF HATTIESBURG

# AN AMERICAN REQUIEM

Music by Edwin Penhorwood

Gregory Fuller, conductor

Text from the Latin Requiem Mass, the Psalms  
and poetry by Callum MacColl

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Soloists: Kerrin Hightower, Maryann Kyle, Sarah Mabary  
Marc Schapman, Taylor Hightower



Mady McNemar, Brad Gilmore, Courtney Lindahl, Nikisha Williams, Allan Cahela  
Brett Barnes, Tyrone Hayes, Joseph Powell, Patricia Ramirez-Hacker

## No. 1 Introit

Chorus and Orchestra

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine:  
*Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord,*  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.  
*And let perpetual light shine upon them.*

The three loud and dissonant passages signify the unexpected transition from life to death. In reaction there are three calm and soothing requests from the chorus. I have come to realize that the many descriptions of death by those who have been revived have influenced me: traveling through a tunnel and coming into a brilliant calm light.

## No. 2 Psalm 43

Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:  
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.  
For thou art the God of my strength:  
Why dost thou cast me off?  
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?  
O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me:  
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.  
Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy:  
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.  
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
And why art thou disquieted within me?  
Hope in God:  
For I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance,  
And my God.

Like the other two psalms used in this work, the music is reworked from earlier settings. The first version was a duet for soprano and alto (1966), the second version was set for chorus and symphonic band (1988). This last version has been revised for this performance for four soloists, chorus, and full orchestra. The repeated chords of the opening remind us of the judgment of God. The repeated chords of the chorus represent pleading with God to grant us justice and to judge us kindly.

### **No. 3 Canto I**

**Baritone Solo and Orchestra**

Upon the earth,  
Now upon our houses,  
Now upon our heads  
And our children's sweet heads,  
Comes blizzard, thunderstorm:  
Great sheets of rain  
Followed by sere famine  
On our weaknesses  
Comes hurricane.

Following storm,  
Inundation.  
We are stranded.  
We are wingless petrels  
Gathered on desolate sands,  
Our cries pathetic, weak.  
How do we survive  
The shattering?  
We're now dumb beasts. . .

Cantos 1 through 6 progress from tragedy and demoralization through a search for and reconnection with God. I have employed a four-note descending figure to represent this progression. At first the figure is depressing; but gradually it is transformed into a four-note figure that represents the revelation of God's grace.

### **No. 4 Canto II**

**Alto Solo and Orchestra**

From without  
Comes radiation, massive,  
Aggressive.  
Excessive.  
Comes from our own hands  
Clouds of chemicals,

Poisons of slow death  
Spewed into air,  
Fatal electronics  
Strewed in every city; water we murder,  
The Earth  
We butcher. . .

The damage done to our earth by man is represented by the artificial harmonics in the strings. The reappearance of the descending four-note figure underlies the discouraging text.

### **No. 5 Canto III**

**Tenor Solo and Orchestra**

Families,  
Their remnants  
Gather in gloom  
A dusk devoid of our sacred  
Electricity: the twilight  
Without the blue-glow  
Of the TV Diety.

Some pray  
In what remains  
Of a kitchen:  
Some despair  
And cheaply moan,  
Lifting not a finger,  
Nor arms to make walls.  
And raise beams  
And rafters,  
Much less lift  
The mind and heart  
to God.

The depiction of the aftermath of natural disaster is carried in the text; but the music that underlies the text is urging comfort and finally, a return of our thoughts to a comforting God. The movement leads into the 23rd Psalm with a more comforting descending four-note figure.

**No. 6 Psalm 23****Chorus and Orchestra**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul:  
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil:  
For thou art with me:  
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
Thou anointest my head with oil:  
My cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The first setting was written for soprano and piano for an undergraduate harmony class assignment (1963). The second version added the instrumental interludes for woodwinds and revised the soprano part into a choral setting (1990). This setting substitutes strings for the harp part of version two. The setting depicts the outdoor atmosphere of a shepherd tending his sheep.

**No. 7 Canto IV****Soprano Solo and Orchestra**

On bended knees  
Let us seek sustenance;  
Bow heads  
For the reaching,  
Arms raised palms up  
Beseeching,  
Succour  
For some  
Comes too late.  
For so many  
What remains  
Is neglect. . .

The four-note descending scale represents heaven luring the singer into a prayerful dialogue. Ascending musical lines represent prayers directed to God. The listener can hear the musical influence of Samuel Barber, one of America's great composers.

**No. 8 Canto V**

**Mezzo-Soprano Solo and Orchestra**

Have the crows  
Of our past  
Come to roost  
On the fragile bones  
Of our children?  
Ravens to snatch gray hair  
From our grandmother's heads?  
Have we become so shameless?  
In the midst  
Of misery  
And abject pain  
We are forgetting  
God.

The mournful melody of the English Horn accompanies the text about our past sins. Again, the four-note descending scale is transformed into a passage on the flute representing extended grace from God. The musical setting changes from mourning our sins to hopefulness, a seeking after our connection to God.

I believe  
most things of life  
come back to us  
in dreams.  
In dreams  
there is sustenance.  
And anguish.  
And hope.

*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to your bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide, O, receive my soul at last!*

I believe in heroes:  
policemen, firefighters, medics,  
nurses, soldiers, guardsmen:  
I believe in those volunteers  
of every race, creed, color, gender,  
persuasion, nationality,  
who under toppling girders,  
into blazing flames,  
even into the ashes,  
showed compassion  
and love.

*Other refuge have I none; in your hands, my destiny;  
Leave, O leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on you is stayed, all my help from you I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of your wing.*

I believe  
we all must become selfless,

and heroic  
not only in disaster  
but in all things  
every day  
and try to make every breath  
a prayer.

*Plenteous grace in you is found, grace to cover all our sins;  
Let the healing streams abound, make and keep us pure within.  
Fount of life, your love impart, fill our cups abundantly;  
Spring up now within our hearts, rise to all eternity.*

Dona nobis pacem.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis.

*Lord, grant us peace.  
Lord, grant them eternal rest.*

The original version was a choir anthem with organ written on the anniversary of 9-11 in 2006. I felt an American requiem written in the early 21st century could not be without a movement dedicated to the memory of the victims of 9-11. I use the hymn 'Jesus Lover of My Soul' to anchor the feeling that even in tragedy and disaster, we are not left alone. Even though the hymn is an English one, it might as well be American, it is so ingrained in our culture. The movement ends with the Latin and English texts of Dona nobis pacem set against the melody of the hymn.



## No. 10 Dies irae

Dies irae, dies illa,

*Day of wrath, that very day,*

Solvat saeculum in favilla:

*Shall dissolve the world into embers,*

Teste David cum Sibylla.

*Witness David with Sibyl.*

Quantus tremor est futurus,

*Oh, how great the trembling will be,*

Quando iudex est venturus,

*All things to investigate strictly!*

Tuba mirum spargens sonum

*Trumpet wondrous sending out sound,*

Per sepulchral regionum,

*Sending out sound throughout the tombs of every land,*

Coget omnes ante thronum.

*All before the throne to summon.*

Mors stupebit, et natura,

*Death will be stunned. Likewise nature,*

Cum resurget creatura,

*When creation shall rise again,*

Judicanti responsura.

*One judging all shall answer.*

Liber scriptus proferetur,

*A written book will be brought forth,*

In which all shall be contained,

*In quo totum continetur,*

Unde mundus judicetur.

*And from which the world shall be judged.*

Judex ergo cum sedebit,

*When therefore the judge is seated,*

Quid- quid latet apparebit:

*What lies hidden shall be revealed.*

Nil inultum remanebit.

*No wrong shall remain unpunished.*

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?*

*What then am I, poor wretch, going to say?*

*Quem paronum rogaturus?*

*Which protector shall I ask for?*

*Cum vix Justus sit securus.*

*When even the just are not secure?*

*Rex tremendae majestatis,*

*Qui salvandos salvas gratis,*

*Salva me fons pietatis.*

*King of terrifying majesty*

*who freely saves the saved*

*Save me, fount of pity.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

*Comin' for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

*Comin' for to carry me home.*

*I look'd over Jordan,*

*What did I see,*

*Comin' for to carry me home?*

*A band of angels comin' after me,*

*Comin for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

*Comin' for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

*Comin' for to carry me home.*

I open the movement with a twelve-tone row to represent the chaos of the Day of Judgment. Brutal chords introduce the 'dies irae' musical theme based on the famous Gregorian chant. It is then picked up by the chorus and orchestra in many guises; some loud, some quiet, mysterious, and threatening. Approaching the climax of the movement I invert the theme – instead of it descending, it rises. At 'Rex tremendae' all the power of the chorus and orchestra bring the movement to its climax and the chorus sings only in Latin. Suddenly, solo voices break in quietly and represent an alternative to the uncompromising strict judgment that has preceded it. In my mind, this quiet humming represents many possibilities – God luring us to his grace, the Holy Spirit working its way, or angels revealing to humankind, forgiveness. The chorus responds with a prayerful plea for entrance into an eternal home.

## No. 11 Elegy

Chorus and Orchestra

Wings unwaxed unlike Icarus,  
They fell.  
Full of talent and hope,  
They fell  
And their music is stilled.  
Odd that several fabled ladies  
Mourned Icarus, a Mortal.  
It must have been youth,  
And beauty, and potential,  
The need for freedom  
For which they keened.  
With ashes on our fingertips,  
We now mourn  
The fallen,  
Their budding future  
All consumed.  
Neither too high,  
Nor too proud they flew.  
And fell.  
As we all shall.  
Were they prayerful  
In their plummet to earth?  
Whispering alleluias  
As they fell?  
Now en masse  
We sing out prayers,  
To remember  
Sweet comets  
Extinguished.

Dedicated to the Memory of Five Departed Friends from the Jacobs School of Music of Indiana University, this movement is based on slowly ascending chords until the chorus sings the words, 'and fell as we all shall.' From that moment the chords begin slowly descending until they break off into silence. The chorus

has a final utterance remembering ‘Sweet comets extinguished.’ Five repetitions of a highly placed chord honor the memory of the five students – each chord the same, but at the same time individual. When I composed this passage I remembered how in Greek mythology the departed were placed as stars in the heavens.

## No. 12 Canto VI

Baritone Solo, Chorus, and Orchestra

Oh we sheep beware!  
Such as we are.  
Silly things, we.  
Always led  
By the dominant,  
The strongest,  
The cleverest.  
Even over the cliffs. . .

Come now.  
Ask nothing more!  
Embrace the Shepherd’s feet.  
Kiss the divine Hands.  
Oh then rise up!  
Dance with Him!  
Come, there are no answers.  
Let us dance it.  
Let us dance with God.

The only canto with soloist and chorus begins as a blunt march to represent the text which describes how mankind too often follows blindly the forces of evil, forgetting the enlightened path. The soloist then entreats the chorus to embrace a different path and the movement ends with an invitation to dance with God. I thought it was appropriate to use the hymn, ‘The Gift to be Simple’ to lead into that dance.

**No. 13 Agnus Dei****Soprano Solo, Chorus, and Orchestra**

Agnus Dei,  
*Lamb of God,*  
Qui tollis peccata mundi:  
*Who takest away the sins of the world,*  
Miserere nobis.  
*Have mercy upon us.*

Agnus Dei,  
*Lamb of God,*  
Qui tollis peccata mundi:  
*Who takest away the sins of the world,*  
Miserere nobis.  
*Have mercy upon us.*

Agnus Dei,  
*Lamb of God,*  
Qui tollis peccata mundi:  
*Who takest away the sins of the world,*  
Dona nobis pacem  
*Grant us peace.*

Written in 2002, before I had been invited to write this work; it is evidence that I was thinking of writing a requiem. It employs a rocking theme that occurs five times, alternating between minor and major modes. The chorus sings in Latin, the soprano soloist in English.

**No. 14 Dona nobis pacem****Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra**

Dona nobis pacem.  
*Grant us peace.*

Two soloists introduce the movement directly from the Agnus Dei. A solo violin presents a melody that is peaceful and unending. Gradually, the whole orchestra takes up the melody and the chorus enters pleading *Dona nobis pacem*/'Lord grant us peace'. The movement ends with the feeling that peace, indeed, is granted.

To thee, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me,  
lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the Pit.  
Hear the voice of my supplication, as I cry to thee for help,  
as I lift up my hands toward the most holy sanctuary.

Take me not off with the wicked, with those who are makers of evil,  
who speak peace with their neighbors, while mischief is in their hearts.  
Requite them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward,

Blessed be the Lord! for he has heard the voice of my supplications.  
The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts;  
so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

The Lord is the strength of his people,  
He is the saving refuge of his anointed.  
O save they people, and bless thy heritage;  
be thou their shepherd, and carry them for ever.

The original version was written for my wife, Costanza Cuccaro, trumpet solo, and organ in 1981. I revised the work for soloists, chorus, and orchestra as I felt its text brought much to An American Requiem. It is the longest movement in the requiem; for that reason I have endeavored to bring as much variety as I could to the use of soloists, chorus, and to the orchestration. The text is one, though intended for ancient Israel, certainly speaks to our country and our times.

## No. 16 Dona nobis pacem

Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra

Dona nobis pacem.  
*Lord, have mercy upon us.*

This movement follows directly after Psalm 28, again pleading for God to grant us peace. The repetitions carry a change of the text to 'Lord, have mercy upon us' leading quietly into the last movement.

Requiem aeternam dona eis.  
*Lord, grant the eternal peace.*  
Requiem aeternam dona eis.  
*Lord, grant them eternal rest.*  
Amen.

This prayerful movement pleads to the Lord 'to grant them and us eternal rest.' The melody of *In Memoriam* returns and the chorus whispers its final words in Latin and English before all the forces end the movement with an affirming 'Amen.'

I did not want to write a traditional requiem mass. Instead, I chose three elements as the basis of the text. 1) Parts of the Latin Requiem Mass; but with almost simultaneous English translations in order to communicate the meaning of the Latin text. 2) I asked the poet Callum MacColl to provide poems that memorialize the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the tragedy of 9/11, and the airplane accident that took the lives of five music students at Indiana University. 3) I set three Psalms, as they are pertinent to all of us who have lost loved ones. The poetry and the psalms have much to say to us as a people.

- Ed Penhorwood



**Edwin Penhorwood** is a composer, pianist, organist, and vocal coach. He studied chamber music at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia and operatic repertoire with Luigi Ricci in Rome. Dr. Penhorwood taught at the Church Music Conservatory in Berlin and has accompanied singers and instrumentalists in North America and Europe for many years. He has been the musical director of the Graduate Opera Workshops at Missouri University and Indiana University. Dr. Penhorwood's songs have been broadcast by the Paris and Berlin radio networks and were featured at the Glimmerglass Opera, the Chautauqua Opera, and the National NATS Convention. His choral works have been performed throughout the United States and Europe. His New York City debut as a song composer was with the Horne Foundation's *On Wings of Song* and was one of the composers presented at Marilyn Horne's

70th Birthday Celebration in New York City. T.I.S. Publications have published his songs and his comic opera *Too Many Sopranos*. Dr. Penhorwood teaches at Indiana University and is married to soprano and Indiana University Chancellor's Professor, Costanza Cuccaro.





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN  
MISSISSIPPI

1. Introit.....	1:25
2. Psalm 43.....	3:40
3. Canto I.....	2:40
4. Canto II.....	2:25
5. Canto III.....	2:20
6. Psalm 23.....	5:51
7. Canto IV.....	2:45
8. Canto V.....	2:33
9. In Memoriam.....	6:07
10. Dies Irae.....	8:40
11. Elegy.....	3:57
12. Canto VI.....	3:28
13. Agnus Dei.....	4:21
14. Dona Nobis Pacem.....	3:23
15. Psalm 28.....	8:08
16. Dona Nobis Pacem.....	0:49
17. Requiem Aeternam.....	6:08