



VOCES NOVAE PRESENTS

WORLD PREMIERE

VONNEGUT:
REQUIEM

MAY 11 AT 7PM AND MAY 12 AT 3PM, 2019 | UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BLOOMINGTON

VONNEGUT: *REQUIEM*



Text by
KURT VONNEGUT (1922-2007)

1 REQUIEM AETERNAM

Cary Boyce (b. 1955)

2 A DAY OF WRATH

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

**3 THE INNOCENCE
OF SLEEP**

Dale Trumbore (b. 1987)

4 A PLACE AMONG

Gabriel Lubell (b. 1983)

5 THE LITIGIOUS

Malcolm Dalglish (b. 1952)

6 O COSMOS

Lauren Bernofsky (b. 1967)

7 HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Don Freund (b. 1947)

8 GRANT THEM REST

Malcolm Dalglish (b. 1952)

9 LIGHT PERPETUAL

Moira Smiley (b. 1976)

Kindly hold your applause until the end of the complete work.

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Bloomington, Indiana

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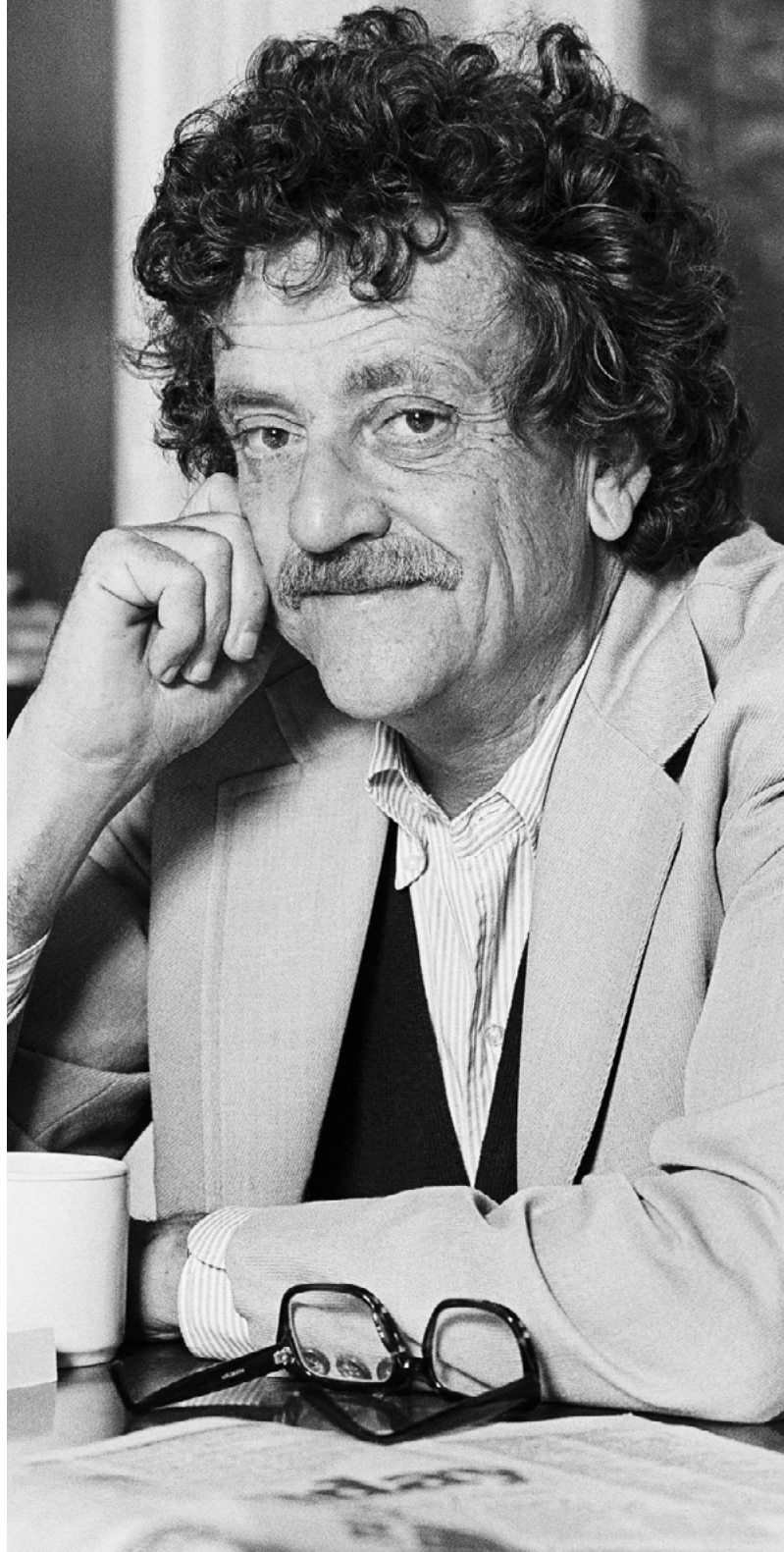


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TEXT AND TRANSLATION

MASS PROMULGATED BY VONNEGUT

Text not included in the Voces Novae

VONNEGUT: REQUIEM is included here in italics.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN MASS

Promulgated by Pope St. Pius V in 1570 by Decree of the Council of Trent

REQUIEM AETERNAM

by Cary Boyce

Rest eternal grant them, O Cosmos,
and let not light disturb their sleep.
A hymn is naught to Thee, O flying Stones,
nor a vow unratified in a dream in Jerusalem.
Yet I pray:
From Thee all flesh did come;
Time, have mercy upon us;
Elements, have mercy upon us.
Rest eternal grant them, O Cosmos,
and let not light disturb their sleep.

Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
A hymn befits Thee, O God, in Zion,
and to Thee shall be paid a vow in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer,
to Thee all flesh shall come.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them.

So it Goes.



KURT VONNEGUT



A DAY OF WRATH

by Stacy Garrop

A day of wrath, that day:
We shall dissolve the world into glowing ashes,
as attested by our weapons for wars
in the names of gods unknowable.
Let not the ashes tremble,
Though some Judge should come
To examine all in some strict justice!
Let no trumpet's wondrous call sounding abroad
In tombs throughout the world
Drive ashes toward any Throne.
*Let ashes remain as ashes
though summoned to approach in terror,
as in life, some Judge or Throne.
Must a written book be brought forth
In which everything is contained
From which the ashes shall be judged?
Then when some Judge is seated,
and whatever is hidden is made known,
let him understand
That naught hath gone unpunished.
Let Death and Nature say what they will
when ashes sleep like ashes
when commanded to give answers to some Judge.
What shall I, a wretch, say at that time?
What advocate shall I entreat
when even the righteous have been damned
By wars in the names of gods unknowable?*

A day of wrath, that day,
It will dissolve the world in glowing ashes,
As attested by David together with the Sibyl.

What trembling will there be
When the Judge shall come
to examine everything in strict justice!
The trumpet's wondrous call sounding abroad
in tombs throughout the world
shall drive everybody toward the throne.
Death and nature shall stand amazed
When Creation rises again
to give answer to its Judge.
A written book will be brought forth
in which everything is contained
From which the world shall be judged.
So when the Judge is seated,
Whatever sin is hidden will be made known.

Nothing sinful shall go unpunished.
Death and nature shall stand amazed
When Creation rises again
to give answer to its Judge.
What shall I, a wretch, say at that time?
What advocate shall I entreat to plead for me
when scarcely the righteous shall be safe from damnation?

THE INNOCENCE OF SLEEP

by Dale Trumbore

Structure of awesome majesty,
donor of sleep or wakefulness,
Thou fount of random pain or pity,
give me the innocence of sleep.

*Gambler with flesh,
Thou are the reason for my journey:
Do not cast the dice again on that day.
My wild and loving brother
did try to redeem me by suffering death on the cross:
Let not such toil have been in vain.*

*I groan like one condemned;
my face blushes for my sins.
Spare a suppliant from more such wakefulness.
Thou who didst neither condemn nor forgive Mary Magdalen
and the robber on the cross
hast given me hope as well.*

A PLACE AMONG

by Gabriel Lubell

My prayers are unheard,
But thy sublime indifference will ensure
that I burn not in some everlasting fire.
Give me a place among the sheep
and the goats, separating none from none.
leaving our mingled ashes where they fall.
*That day will be one of comical disappointment
to any who hoped to see rise again from the embers
The guilty to be judged.*

King of awesome majesty,
Who to those that are to be saved givest the grace of salvation,
Save me, O fount of Pity.

Recall, dear Jesus,
That I am the reason for Thy journey into this world:
Do not cast me away from Thee on that day.
Seeking me, Thou didst sit down weary.
Thou didst redeem me, suffering death on the Cross:
Let not such toil have been in vain.
Just Judge of vengeance, grant me the gift of pardon
before the day of reckoning.
I groan like one condemned;
my face blushes for my sins;
spare a suppliant, O God.
Thou who didst absolve Mary Magdalen,
and heard the prayer of the robber,
hast given me hope as well.

My prayers are not worthy;
but Thou, of Thy goodness, deal generously with me,
that I burn not in the everlasting fire.
Give me a place among the sheep,
and separate me from the goats,
setting me on Thy right hand.
That day will be one of weeping,
on which shall rise again from the embers
the guilty man, to be judged.

THE LITIGIOUS

by Malcolm Dalglish

When the litigious have been confounded
and sentenced to comical disappointment,
count me among the gratified.

*That day will be one of comical disappointment
on which shall rise again from the embers*

No guilty man or woman or child to be judged.

I depend on you to spare them, O Stones,

O Time, O Elements.

Grant them rest. Amen.

O COSMOS

by Lauren Bernofsky

O Cosmos, O structure of awesome majesty,
deliver without exception the souls of the departed
from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit.
Save them from the lion's jaws, that hell
may not engulf them, that they may only fall into darkness
which is still and sweet.

*Dazzle them not with light promised in a dream
to Abraham and his seed.*

*Sacrifices and prayers of praise to Thee, O Cosmos,
we have offered for millennia.*

*Reward us with Thy continued indifference to the
destinies past death of those souls whom we this day
commemorate.*

Life was sport enough!

Allow them to pass from death unto sleep.

When the accursed have been confounded
and sentenced to acrid flames,
call me along with the blessed.

That day will be one of weeping,
on which shall rise again from the embers
the guilty man, to be judged.

Therefore spare him, O God,

Merciful Lord Jesus:

grant them rest. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
deliver the souls of all the faithful departed
from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit.
Save them from the lion's jaws, that hell
may not engulf them, that they may not fall into darkness,
but let Saint Michael the standard-bearer lead them into the
holy light

which Thou of old didst promise to Abraham and his seed.

Sacrifices and prayers of praise to Thee, O Lord,
we offer:

Do Thou receive them on behalf
of those souls whom this day we commemorate.

Allow them, O Lord, to pass from death unto life.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

by **Don Freund**

Holy, holy, holy, Time and the Elements:
Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Humbled and amazed are he and she who have
experienced life.
Hosanna in the highest.
A day of wrath, that day:
We shall dissolve the world into glowing ashes,
As attested by our weapons for wars
In the names of gods unknowable.
Thus I pray to Thee,
from whom all flesh did come.

GRANT THEM REST

by **Malcolm Dalglish**

Merciful Time, who buries the sins of the world,
grant them rest.
Merciful Elements, from whom a new world can
be constructed,
moist, blue-green and fertile,
grant them eternal rest.
Let not eternal light disturb their sleep.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,
heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.
A day of wrath, that day:
It will dissolve the world into glowing ashes,
As attested by David together with the Sybil.

Hear my prayer,
to Thee all flesh shall come.

Merciful Jesus, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.
O Lamb of God,

who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them eternal rest:

LIGHT PERPETUAL

by Moira Smiley

*Let not eternal light disturb their sleep,
O Cosmos, for Thou art merciful.*
Deliver me, O Cosmos, from everlasting wakefulness
on that dread day when the Heavens and Earth
shall quake,
when we shall dissolve the world into glowing ashes
in the names of gods unknowable.
I am seized with trembling and I am afraid
until the day of reckoning shall arrive
and the wrath to come.
Hence I pray.
Deliver me, O Cosmos, from everlasting wakefulness
on that day of wrath, calamity and misery.
Rest eternal grant them, O Cosmos,
And let not light perpetual disturb their harmless sleep.

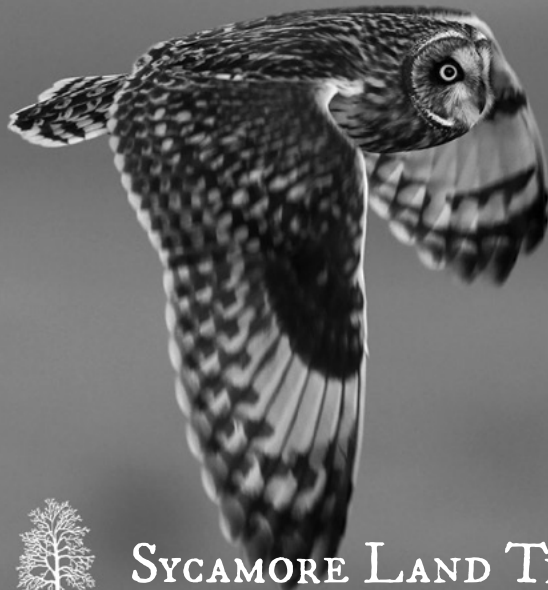
Let eternal light shine upon them,
O Lord with Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.
Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death
on that dread day when the heavens and earth shall quake

when Thou shall come to judge the world by fire.

I am seized with trembling and I am afraid until
the day of reckoning shall arrive
and the wrath to come.

Hear my prayer.

Deliver me, O Lord, from everlasting death.
That day, a day of wrath, calamity and misery:
Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them.



“We have to continually be
jumping off cliffs and developing
our wings on the way down.”

Kurt Vonnegut
“If This Isn't Nice, What Is?: Advice for the Young”



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COMPOSERS' NOTES

REQUIEM AETERNAM

by Cary Boyce

"We want you to write the *Requiem Aeternam/Kyrie* sections of Vonnegut's text," says Sue. We have the choir and a little *L'Histoire du Soldat* orchestra."

"All right," Cary says, "So Stravinsky and Vonnegut and Pope Marcellus II walk into a New York Beatnik Bar in the Village, see, and the Pope says ..."

"I don't really want to hear this, do I?" she says, disrupting my flow.

"Well, maybe not about the Pope. But I gotta have some bongos."

"Bongos ..." she wonders aloud. "Why bongos?"

"Well, it's a Beat poetry slam with martinis, jazz, and cappuccinos, see? Ward Swingle and a duck are already sitting at the bar, and the duck says..."

"OK, already. You get the bongos," Sue says, more or less reasonably.

"And a shaker and a triangle."

"AND the bongos?" (She exhibits a note of resistance.)

"The singers can play the triangle and shaker," I say logically.

"No! One player has to handle all the percussion. One percussion player in the orchestra, and that's it." (Conductors can be so rigid. It's all about "staying on budget" and such.)

"And a trombone."

"NO!"

"But I can have the bongos and the shaker and the triangle and the rest?"

"Yes, fine! One percussion player, no trombone!"

So it goes ... This little timequake is a setting of our hero's special take on an ancient text. I added Renaissance riffs, a little paper jazz, and some Vonnegut-inspired fusion. Thanks, Sue, Voces Novae, and friends—for the bongos, *et alia*.

A DAY OF WRATH

by Stacy Garrop

As part of Voces Novae's VONNEGUT: *REQUIEM* project, I was excited to be assigned a fierce section full of high drama. When sitting down to set the text to music, I read *Slaughterhouse-Five* to get in a Vonnegut frame of mind. The book's depiction of the madness of war, the cruelty of humanity, and the quirky, time-traveling coping mechanisms of Billy Pilgrim (the protagonist) gave me a sense of how and where to insert some irreverence into this otherwise dark portion of the Requiem. The irreverence manifests in two forms: an off-kilter waltz employed in the middle of the piece, and casual commentary that I added to a few choice moments in the text, the most striking of which is "and so it goes," a refrain Vonnegut used repeatedly in *Slaughterhouse-Five* to reflect the absurdity of Billy Pilgrim's life.



THE INNOCENCE OF SLEEP

by Dale Trumbore

In setting this brief text to music, I wanted to capture the dual meaning of “sleep” as literal sleep and, in the context of a requiem, as death. The elusive feeling of falling sleep inspired the sonic world of this movement. As we lose consciousness, our perception of what we know and see becomes hazy. Our perception of time blurs. The line “Thou fount of random pain or pity” inspired the pattern of randomly shifting beats and emphasis heard here, and as each melody is repeated, it becomes slightly distorted and more abstract.

A PLACE AMONG

by Gabriel Lubell

Contrary to the Christian requiem’s prayer for the eternal light of paradise, Vonnegut’s seeks a different kind of peace. It is one devoid of judgment, absolutely egalitarian in its requests of the void. In this there is a kind of beautiful unity, one in which the traditional pastoral model is transformed into a fearless landscape absolutely lacking in hierarchy. But this is achieved through the cosmos’ “sublime indifference”—a potentially horrifying attribute. Historically, the concept of the sublime has been mobilized to convey awe-inspiring vistas and soul-shaking confrontations between humanity and nature. Is the idea of cosmic *indifference* commensurate with such cataclysmic feelings? Perhaps, but I think Vonnegut’s sublimity is of a different species. It is

one that comes from the knowledge that all things are part of a grand eternity—one that encompasses all possible lives and non-lives. Surely that qualifies as sublime; to think of leaving one life, only to become commingled with all the others that have come and gone. For an indifferent void, that’s quite a lot of life, and a rather comforting idea—after all, indifference need not imply emptiness or loneliness. (Likewise with voids; ask an astronomer.) Maybe the only real downside to this cosmology is that none of us will be able to consciously experience it, but so it goes.

THE LITIGIOUS

by Malcolm Dalglish

In “When the litigious have been confounded,” I heard a smug, cartoonish committee quickly dissolve into an argumentative, teeth-baring, legalese-slashing “monkey fight” with a lot of chatter and grumpy nonsense. Then the piece changes meter, waltzes out of the courtroom, and goes back to the opening melody. Originally depicting snooty self-righteous buffoons, that melody now transforms into a majestic beseeching of the deities of time, stones, and elements to spare the judges and the judged and grant them rest.

O COSMOS

by **Lauren Bernofsky**

When I composed this movement, I had two levels of “thinking” going on: my conscious and my subconscious. On the conscious level, my considerations for the choral writing were parts that would fit the voice types well and work fairly naturally for the voices, to be put together with a moderate amount of rehearsals. For the instrumental writing, I was thinking about bringing out the individual character of each instrument; I sought to write idiomatically for each instrument—for instance, giving the moving 16th-notes to the violin, where they would be heard more clearly than in the other stringed instrument, the bass.

I listened to my subconscious for the actual writing of the notes. I started by reciting lines of the text out loud, and slowly melodies took shape that followed the rhythm and rises and falls of the words. It was important to me for the audience to be able to understand the words their first time hearing the piece without referring to the printed text, so I tried to set the music in a way that imitates our natural speech.

Since the Vonnegut Requiem is a collaboration of eight composers, and therefore eight quite different “voices,” I also thought about tying in my movement with some of the other music. I was particularly attracted to the major/minor interplay that Cary Boyce uses in his movement, and I reflect this feature in my ending vocalise, where the singers sing on the syllable “ah.”

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

by **Don Freund**

“Holy, Holy, Holy” begins with an incantation, a suggestion of an ancient ritual that predates the Latin rite, evoking the eternity of Vonnegut’s “Time and the Elements.” As things move into sharper focus, the “Heaven and Earth” and “Hosanna” texts are treated in the classical tradition’s contrapuntal texture (but with a swinging subject!) building to an overstated glory—which is quickly deflated. What we find in the aftermath is a warm, simple celebration of the amazing and humbling experience of life.

GRANT THEM REST

by **Malcolm Dalglish**

A refreshing notion of Kurt Vonnegut’s Requiem is that we accept and even relish the mystery of darkness. In its healing effects, we imagine darkness creating a restful, dreamlike tabula rasa (in which all knowledge comes from experience or perception). Stones, the elements, and merciful time acquire divine properties. I wanted a slow gentle waltz, a rock-a-bye lullaby, but one with a mysterious openness to paint the image of “merciful time.” I chose quintal chords and parallel fifths for the opening chordal melody. The words and music then reach for a new world. With the words: “moist, blue, green and fertile” the voices descend through fourths, traversing stratified tonal centers as the word “fertile” morphs into the word “eternal.” The song then returns to a lullaby on the word sleep to invoke the hope that this dark journey be restful and undisturbed by eternal light.

LIGHT PERPETUAL

by Moira Smiley

“Light Perpetual” expresses the deep anxiety of living in the nuclear age—or any age in which we sense that humans could truly destroy themselves. Kurt Vonnegut referenced the institutional light of prisons, mental health institutions, and of course, the earth-destroying light of human-made nuclear explosion in writing his Requiem. The voices of this last part of the Requiem begin with utter vulnerability within a shimmering but indifferent cosmos (created by the instruments). These voices grow increasingly frightened as they realize their own ability to destroy themselves and their world: they viscerally describe the wrath and suffering they see coming. This moment of death is imagined into being. Silence. Then, I took the word “pray” to resemble any action that works against calamity and suffering. It becomes a uniting rhythm that allows these voices to re-envision true rest or peace: sleep. Ultimately, these final words felt like a call to the powers-that-be—human or divine—to give us all softness, rest, sleep in the face of our own destruction.



KURT VONNEGUT ON HIS REQUIEM

I went to hear the world premiere of a *Requiem* by Andrew Lloyd Webber (born 1948), composer of the music for “Cats” and “Evita” and “Jesus Christ Superstar” and so on, at St. Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City on the evening of February 12th, 1985. It was the place to be. The combined choirs of St. Thomas and England’s Winchester Cathedral took part, as did Placido Domingo and Webber’s wife Sarah Brightman, an orchestra under the direction of Lorin Maazel, and an angelic, cat-faced boy treble soprano named Paul Miles-Kingston.

A requiem is of course a mass for the dead, and is customarily sung in Latin. To those who know little Latin, which is my case, it is nonsensically beautiful, like Hindi or Hawaiian, or the song of a nightingale. Who cares what it means?

I would have had nothing but Webber’s beautiful new music for a very old mass to ponder that night, if the program I was handed hadn’t contained a translation of the Latin into English, along with the information that the words had come from “...the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope St. Pius V in 1570, by decree of the Council of Trent.”

The program did not go on to say so, but that famous Council was a badly attended, acrimonious gathering of Catholic churchmen and their notable patrons who hoped to restore some sort of unity to Christendom after so many worshippers, following the lead of Martin Luther, had doubted the spiritual supremacy of the Pope in Rome. English churchmen pointedly

declined to take part, and the presiding Pope would eventually excommunicate Queen Elizabeth I. So I have to ask: Why was this Papist mass, put together in times far closer to our own than those of Jesus, and by men whose divinity might be questioned, be given, when set to new music by Webber, such high honors in an Episcopalian church?

But what really bothered me were the actual meanings of the words of the mass, which sounded so majestic and hopeful and reverent and so on in Church Latin. They were so vengeful and sadistic! They were acceptable only when put into a language almost nobody understands—only after having been passed through what I choose to call “the Hocus Pocus Laundromat.”

The expressions on the faces of all the superb musicians who performed Webber’s Requiem that night, and especially that of the enraptured boy soprano, had us believing that God loved us and that death was something to look forward to, when their messages when decoded were as humane as *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler....

When I got home that night, I told my wife that I enjoyed the music, but that the words were a fiasco. I supposed out loud that composers who set to music words they themselves hadn’t written considered it none of their business what words might mean. Language was simply a metronome. Thus were singers doomed to careers of bellowing bullshit in public places....



To translate it [this dreadful piece of poetry by committee from the Council of Trent] into a modern language is to reveal it to be, its feudal sadism and masochism aside for the moment, as junky in its sequence of ideas as the by-laws of a volunteer fire department. Yet, when Webber's *Requiem* was reviewed during the following week, not one critic, although each critic was surely a dealer in careful language, said how bad the words were. It was as though scholars called in to examine the several copies of *Magna Carta* in the British Museum, say, had spoken only of ink and parchment. Thus is demonstrated yet again the human defect which makes the work of magicians and quacks and demagogues and creators of utterly vacuous entertainments so simple: our attention is easily directed away from what is really going on.

I do not propose to remedy this defect, which has had so many comical and tragical consequences over the millennia. It is so universal, it has to be congenital, like our very bad teeth and snoring. All I could do anything about was the Council of Trent's *Requiem*, which I have amended...in order to make it more sane and comforting to those with death on their minds.

In the same year that Pope Pius V gave his approval to that *Requiem*, as I say, he excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I, whose father had caused to be founded in England that anti-Papist branch of Christianity espoused by the church where I heard Andrew Lloyd Webber's and Pope Pius V's *Requiem* performed.

I...showed [my] English version to Paul Moore, a personal friend and the Episcopal Bishop of New York, who is headquartered at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. I explained that I did not consider it good poetry or theology, but a clumsy sort of damage control on a ramshackle contraption which had gone uninspected for more than four centuries. He was quick to point out that my aversion to any light or any action whatsoever after death was a quirk not widely shared. It seemed to him that it was gratuitous of me, to say the least, to insist on this total blackout for everyone...

This is a product of my impatience...with the uncritical veneration of all the rascals and nitwits and sociopaths and hustlers who by means of armies, torture chambers, alliances with tyrants, theatrical obfuscation, and cynical misinterpretations of the Bible have entered history as the closest friends God and Jesus could ever have. Saint Pius V indeed!

Vonnegut, Kurt, et al. "Requiem: The Hocus Pocus Laundromat." *The North American Review*, vol. 271, no. 4, 1986, pp. 29-35. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25124784.

DAN WAKEFIELD ON VONNEGUT AND HIS REQUIEM

When I came home from King's Chapel (Boston) on the Sunday I published an article called "Returning to Church" in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1985, I had a message from Kurt Vonnegut on my answering machine.

"This is Kurt," his voice said. "I forgive you."

My becoming a Christian again in mid-life (after many years of post-collegiate atheism) and Vonnegut's Humanist views became a running—and always good-natured—series of gibes between us. Several decades after his message of "forgiveness" I saw a poem Kurt had published in *The New Yorker*, and fired off a postcard to him (a self-proclaimed Luddite, he scorned computers and email). My postcard said "I see you have become a poet. I forgive you." Almost by return mail I got back a postcard from Kurt that said "Not as bad as you becoming a Christian."

Kurt was proud of coming from a long line of German Freethinkers; his great-grandfather, Clemens Vonnegut, founded The Freethinkers Society of Indianapolis, and Kurt was named Honorary President of The Humanist Association. He explained in his novel *Timequake* that "Humanists try to behave decently and honorably without any expectation of rewards or punishments in an afterlife. The creator of the Universe has been to us unknowable so far. We serve as well as we can the highest abstraction of which we have some understanding, which is our community."

If it turned out there was an afterlife, Kurt reserved places in it for people he cared about, including his first wife Jane, and his longtime publisher, Seymour Lawrence, who he said "saved me from smithereens" by publishing his novel that three former publishers had

turned down (*Slaughterhouse-Five*) and bringing his former books into standardized new editions. Kurt loved to tell the story of how he let his heavenly sentiments slip before the wrong audience while delivering a eulogy for his predecessor as President of The Humanist Society, the science fiction writer Isaac Asimov.

"I said I was sure that Isaac must be in heaven now," he told me once with a smoky laugh and a cough. He elaborated on his lapse in *Timequake*, adding "That was the funniest thing I could have said to an audience of Humanists. I rolled them in the aisles."

That I had become a Christian in the largely humanist Unitarian Universalist Association...provided Kurt with an added source of amusement. In 2003 he sent me one of his silk-screen drawings inscribed "Dear Dan Wakefield, Unitarian Universalist fanatic."

Kurt told a General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, "In order not to seem a spiritual paraplegic, to strangers trying to get a fix on me, I sometimes say I'm a Unitarian-Universalist." He also described himself as a "Christ-loving atheist" in that same talk, and in a Palm Sunday sermon he gave at St. Clements Episcopal Church in New York City in 1980, he said he was "a Christ-worshipping agnostic." He belonged to no church, however, and made clear that he was not a Christian. He wrote Don Farber, his longtime friend, lawyer, and Executor of his Estate (8/7/99) that "I am not, nor have I ever been a Christian, so I should not be given a funeral or memorial service under any sort of Christian supervision or in any Christian space..."

I was inspired when I heard that a graduate of my high school in Indianapolis had stories in *The Saturday*



Evening Post, one of the popular "slick" weekly magazines of the 'fifties, a literary Valhalla where giants like F. Scott Fitzgerald had published. This writer named Vonnegut had written for our high school paper, The Shortridge *Daily Echo*, ten years before I did, which gave me hope. I went to the barber shop to search for his stories in the magazines, and eagerly read his novels when they started to appear, feeling a kinship with his humor and his conversational style.

I first met Vonnegut in 1963 while I was on a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard and a mutual friend in Cambridge invited me to dinner with Kurt and his wife Jane, who were living on Cape Cod. Kurt was a tall, shaggy, friendly man, and in the laughter-filled conversation at the table with eight guests, he and I didn't talk about writing, we talked about high school. Our bond was that we both were failures at high school sports (we could laugh about it then, decades later.)

...

Vonnegut had attended the world premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's music composed for the "Requiem Mass Promulgated by Pope St. Pius V in 1570, by decree of the Council of Trent." ... When he got home from hearing (and reading) the Requiem Mass, Vonnegut "stayed up half the night" writing his own version, with a more merciful message: "I got rid of the judges and tortures and the lions' mouths, and having to sleep with the lights on." Kurt changed the opening and closing line "let light perpetual shine upon them" to "let not light disturb their sleep." He explained that he didn't want his beloved sister Alice and his first wife Jane and all the other dead people to have to try to "get some sleep with the lights on." In his translation Vonnegut wrote of Jesus:

"My wild and loving brother

did try to redeem me by suffering death on the cross:

Let not such toil have been in vain."

Making the Requiem Mass more merciful was so important to Vonnegut that he found a specialist in Church Latin to translate his words into Latin, found a composer (Edgar David Grana) to set them to music, and after being turned down by several churches in New York City, his mass was given a premiere by "the best Unitarian Universalist choir in the country" in Buffalo, New York.

That was quite a labor for a non-believing Humanist.

Vonnegut was 63 when he translated the Requiem Mass, and five years later he wrote to his lifelong friend Ben Hitz "I am now, because of my age and my steadfast lack of faith, at least a Bishop in my own religion, German Freethinking, and am, in fact, treated as a peer by the likes of Paul Moore [then Episcopal Bishop of New York], who has become one of my closest friends. I also get along fine with Jesuits. It wasn't until I was 64 that I came across a statement by Nietzsche that I could articulate why committed Christians and Jews sometimes find me respectable: 'Only a person of deep faith can afford the luxury of skepticism.'"

Dan Wakefield edited and wrote the introduction to Kurt Vonnegut Letters as well as *If This Isn't Nice, What Is?: Vonnegut's Advice to Youth*. His memoirs include *New York in the Fifties* and *Returning: A Spiritual Journey*. He lives in Indianapolis.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

By Susan Swaney

Here are a couple of surprising reasons this project came into being: my husband, Ian Woollen, grew up in the same house in Indianapolis where Kurt Vonnegut spent his young childhood; and his Aunt Kithy dated the author Dan Wakefield in high school. Ian and I met Dan for lunch several years ago, and Dan, who was editing Vonnegut's letters at the time, told me about the Vonnegut Requiem and its musical setting by Edgar David Grana. I thought it might be just the thing for my Unitarian Universalist Church choir and ordered the recording. As it called for a full orchestra, it was on too large a scale for my purposes.

I really loved the text and worked through a couple of hare-brained ideas about how to use it. Then I attended a gorgeous concert by the professional choir The Crossing in Philadelphia. The program, called "Quartets for Jeff," consisted of multiple four-minute commissions from different composers. This was a way to create a set of accessible pieces from Vonnegut's great text!

Next I sat down with Voces Novae singer/astronomer/composer Gabriel Lubell. He had recently shepherded a group commission and had good advice about how to go about it. He also knew that Vonnegut had authored a new narration for Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Tale*, which led us to the idea of using some of the same instruments. (We thought the two pieces could make a nice concert pairing.)

Our goal was for the individual movements to be diverse and accessible, and have a life after the premiere with school, community, and church choirs.

We asked for a five-minute time limit, no solos, minimal divided parts, and limited instrumental forces. (Originally we selected just five instruments from "A Soldier's Tale," but expanded to include percussion at the request of a couple of the composers—but only instruments percussionists were likely to have on hand. I know too well how hard it is for a community choir to rustle up a marimba or timpani.)

The next decision: how many composers to commission? Voces Novae has always operated on a shoestring, and even one commission would be a stretch. But when I proposed commissioning eight composers, Voces Novae's incomparable board of directors gave an enthusiastic thumbs up and got to work to support the project. A couple of members of the choir, Sally Gaskill and Abby Henkel, came forward to help manage the project. We received the rights to use the text from the Vonnegut estate, developed an overall plan, and began raising funds.

In selecting composers, we started with "our own:" Gabriel Lubell and Cary Boyce sang in the choir for years, and we had often sung the music of Bloomington composers Malcolm Dalglish and Don Freund. We felt it was important to have gender parity, so the other composers would be non-male. I had worked with another nationally known Bloomington composer, Lauren Bernofsky, when she won a competition to compose a piece for the Dalai Lama's visit to Bloomington. Moira Smiley and I had collaborated on projects in the past. Then we searched out the coolest choral-savvy composers



with a sense of humor, and so Stacy Garrop and Dale Trumbore rounded out our group.

I typed out the text and suggested how it might be divided into five-minute-sized bites. Each of the composers chose three sections and ranked them by preference. All the composers received either their first or second choice. Interestingly, nobody chose the text we thought was most typical of Vonnegut: “When the litigious have been confounded and sentenced to comical disappointment, count me among the gratified.” After Malcolm Dalglish finished his piece, *Grant Them Rest*, he turned his wit and creativity to set the orphaned *Litigious* text as a bonus movement; thus there are nine pieces and eight composers.

Some of the composers chose to set smaller portions of their texts, and a few interpolated amusing interjections, evoking the ancient compositional technique of troping. (A famous example is Benjamin Britten’s troping of Wilfred Owen poems into his setting of the Requiem.)

During the summer of 2018, the movements started rolling in—glorious, beautiful, interesting pieces! They were all so different from each other, yet Vonnegut’s voice shone through all of them and unified their flavor. It was interesting how many composers integrated modal harmonies and vocal slides. Each one stands on its own, and they work together beautifully.

Rehearsing these pieces has been extremely rewarding. Each holds up a gem of Vonnegut’s prescient thought for us to contemplate. We have

discussed the eternal light of computer screens and the monkey fight of current events, sought to find just the right vocal color for each line of text, patiently dissected the hard passages, and luxuriated in the beautiful harmonies.

We believe each of these pieces and this text as a whole have much to say to our world. We are so grateful to each of our donors for believing in us and making this happen. We look forward to sharing this new VONNEGUT: *REQUIEM* with you and hope it will have a long life after our premiere!

BIOGRAPHIES

Lauren Bernofsky's music has been heard at Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Rathaus, Tanglewood, the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival, and the Spanish Brass Alzira Festival. Her works are published by Boosey & Hawkes, Hal Leonard, Alfred Music, Theodore Presser, and others. Her catalog includes solo, chamber and choral music as well as larger-scale works for orchestra, film, musical, opera, and ballet. Inspired by the expressive potential of each instrument, her distinctive language speaks both to musical history and the present day. Her artistry grew out of her doctoral studies with master composer Lukas Foss. She holds degrees from the Hartt School, New England Conservatory, and Boston University, where she earned a doctorate in composition. Her philosophy of composition is simple: music should be a joy both to play and to hear. Her music has been performed across the United States and Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa, Australia, Norway, and Iceland. She lives in Bloomington, where she performs with ROK (Reimagining Opera for Kids) and is the Music Director of MAYO (Musical Arts Youth Organization).

Cary Boyce (DM, Indiana University 1994) is an Emmy Award-winning composer and co-director of the new music ensemble and production company Aguavá New Music Studio. His music has been heard in concerts and festivals throughout the United States, and around the world in film, radio, and television including NPR, PBS, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and France 3. Film credits include the Prix de Rome film *ARIA: ou les rumeurs de la Villa Medici*, the documentary *André Pieyre de Mandiargues* (2000),

American Horizons and Harp Dreams (WTIU/PBS). He has appeared as a peripatetic guest composer and performer at festivals and concerts around the US, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Boyce's work as a radio producer includes syndicated shows and specials including WFIU's *Harmonia* (early music), *Nightlights* and *Afterglow* (jazz), and special music programs such as *An Early Music Christmas*, *A Latin American Christmas*, and *Latin Love Songs* with soprano Sylvia McNair in partnership with IU's Latin American Music Center. In his spare time, he serves as president of Spokane Public Radio serving the Pacific Northwest, and adjunct professor of composition and token humanist at Whitworth University in Spokane.

Malcolm Dalglish graduated from National Outdoor Leadership School in his teen years, then failed to graduate from Oberlin College (where he was in residence with an experimental theater troupe) and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (where he studied music education.) Instead, he built and then became a master of the hammered dulcimer, founded the popular folk music trio Metamora, and recorded 15 albums with labels such as Windham Hill, Rounder, and Times Music of India. He's received more than 80 commissions for vocal works that have been performed throughout the world. For over 20 years, he has run an off-the-grid performance camp near Yosemite. His music is inspired by the outdoors and the writings of Wendell Berry and others. He lives in Bloomington where his publishing company Ooolitic Music is based and where his vocal group the Ooolites



perform an annual production, *Love Songs for a Lasting World*, a benefit for Middle Way House. Voces Novae has collaborated with Malcolm on several projects.

Don Freund is a world-renowned composer, lecturer, pianist, educator, and conductor who has been teaching composition at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music since 1992. “Exciting, amusing, disturbing, beautiful, and always fascinating” (*Music and Musicians*, London), “Don Freund has showed himself to be a composer thoughtful in approach and imaginative in style” (*The Washington Post*). Freund has composed works ranging from solo, chamber, and orchestral music to pieces involving live performances with electronic instruments, music for dance, and large theatre works. His works are published by Lauren Keiser Music, Boosey & Hawkes, E. C. Schirmer, Seesaw, and Vivace Press. He has received several grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Guggenheim fellowship, and holds a DMA in composition from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. He has collaborated with Voces Novae on several occasions and is a loyal audience member.

Stacy Garrop’s music is centered on dramatic and lyrical storytelling. She shares stories by taking audiences on sonic journeys—some simple and beautiful, while others are complicated and dark—depending on the needs and dramatic shape of the story. She received a DM in composition from Indiana

University, taught composition at Roosevelt University from 2000-2016, and now composes full-time. She has collaborated with a number of performers and organizations, including Anima Singers, Boston Choral Ensemble, Fifth House Ensemble, Gaudete Brass Quintet, Sinfonia Salt Lake, Carthage College Wind Ensemble, and a consortium of fifteen saxophonists. Recent works include *Quicksilver*, a concerto for alto saxophone and wind ensemble commissioned by a consortium of fifteen universities; *Krakatoa*, concerto for viola, string orchestra, and percussion to be premiered by Michael Hall and both the Bandung Philharmonic (Indonesia) and Baroque on Beaver Music Festival; *Mother of Exiles*, a choral piece for the 2018 Golden Gate International Choral Festival featuring the text “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus; and a new string quartet for Kronos Quartet that will feature recordings of Studs Terkel, the legendary oral historian, author, and radio host. Theodore Presser Company publishes her chamber and orchestral works; she self-publishes her choral works under Inkjar Publishing Company.

Gabriel Lubell has had a lifelong interest in both music and astronomy. He holds advanced degrees in those fields, including a doctorate in composition from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His scientific curiosity has led to papers about the sonification of gravitational wave data, a collaboration with the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and Indiana University astronomy professor emeritus Richard Durisen on a scientifically-informed performance of Holst’s *The Planets*, and a fair amount

of original science-based music. His works have been performed here and there, one of which found its way to the BBC-produced radio show *Short Cuts*. Also a music theorist, he has produced analyses of the large-scale structure of albums by The Beatles and Pink Floyd, and is working on a book about album structure in general. His own album, *Studies in Light and Sound*, was released in 2014 and features the award-winning Tesla Quartet and many Bloomington friends. He sang bass with Voces Novae throughout his time in Bloomington, and has composed and arranged a number of works specifically for the group. He is currently a visiting assistant professor of music at Kenyon College, and has also taught at Indiana University, Knox College, and Macalester College.

Moira Smiley was a Wells Scholar at Indiana University, where she was a favorite vocal soloist of recording artist Paul Hillier. While in Bloomington, she formed a women's vocal group, Vida. Since then, she has performed a huge range of music, from American folk to Bulgarian to Baroque to Contemporary. Her compositions are equally eclectic. A musical polyglot and vocal shape-shifter, her voice and compositions are heard on feature films, BBC and PBS television programs, NPR, and on more than 60 albums. When not leading her own group, moira smiley & VOCO, Moira has toured and recorded with indie-pop stars Tuneyards, Irish super-group SOLAS, the pioneering Jayme Stone's Lomax Project, Billy Childs' "Laura Nyro Re-Imagined" and with Paul Hillier, KITKA, New World Symphony and various ensembles for early music. Recent solo performances include a TED talk, Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, the London Proms Festival, features on BBC3's *The*

Choir, and ABC Australia's *Books & Arts*. Moira's recordings feature spare, vocally driven collections of warped traditional songs, original polyphony and body percussion. In addition to her performing work, she is in high demand as a choral clinician, composer and arranger, with a Carnegie Hall concert featuring her music coming in 2020. In 2018 she released her latest solo album and choral songbook, 'Unzip The Horizon.' She recently relocated from Los Angeles to Vermont.

Dale Trumbore is a Los Angeles-based composer and writer whose music has been praised by *The New York Times* for its "soaring melodies and beguiling harmonies." Trumbore's compositions have been performed widely in the United States and internationally by ensembles including the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), Los Angeles Master Chorale, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Modesto Symphony, and Pasadena Symphony. Trumbore is currently Composer in Residence for Choral Chameleon. *How to Go On*, Choral Arts Initiative's album of Trumbore's choral works, was a #4 bestselling album on iTunes the week of its release. Her choral music is published through Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, and MusicSpoke. She has written extensively about overcoming creative blocks and establishing a career in music in essays for 21CM, *Cantate Magazine*, the Center for New Music, and NewMusicBox, and is currently at work on her first book, *Staying Composed*. Hear more of Trumbore's music at daletrumbore.com.

SUSAN SWANEY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Susan Swaney became music director of Voces Novae in 1999 and has been artistic director since 2004, creating innovative programming that has been recognized regionally and nationally. She was music director for Cardinal Stage's *West Side Story*, *Les Miserables*, and *My Fair Lady* and vocal director for Cardinal's *Next to Normal* and *Wizard of Oz*. She also conducted Twyla Tharp's *Sweet Fields* at the IU Jacobs School and *Pirates of Penzance* for the IU Theatre and was vocal coach for the Midwest tour of John Mellencamp and Steven King's *Ghost Brothers*

of Darkland County. As a singer, she performed lead soprano roles in *Nixon in China*, *Ghosts of Versailles*, *Candide*, and with Aguava New Music Studio in Mexico, Israel, the Library of Congress, and the New York Microtonal Festival. Swaney is music director at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, teaches voice at the IU Department of Theatre, Drama and Contemporary Dance, and recently founded the Sing for Joy! senior choir. She believes choral music holds the answer to every question.

ABOUT VOCES NOVAE



Founded in 1996, Voces Novae is a Bloomington-based community chamber choir.

Our vision is to engage audiences with unique and creative musical experiences by presenting thematic programs in both traditional and unexpected settings. By drawing from the arts and beyond, we hope to stimulate deep engagement with enduring ideas and contemporary issues to provide meaningful and aesthetically rich experiences.

We hope these experiences will have an enduring impact on you—our audience, choir members, and the local community; that they will touch your lives in profound and personal ways, cultivate a deep intellectual and spiritual awakesness about daily life, nurture community, and encourage all of us to reflect on our values and on how we live our lives.

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