

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Text: Wilfred Owen

Music: Michael Winikoff

The image shows a handwritten manuscript of the poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' by Wilfred Owen. The title is written at the top in a cursive script, with 'Doomed' crossed out and 'Doomed' written above it. The word 'Nation' is written in the top right corner, and the number '17' is written next to it. The poem is written in a cursive script with many corrections and annotations. The text is as follows:

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 ^{music} ~~for all them~~ ^{now} ~~for them~~; ^{nor no} ~~from~~ } prayers ^{nor} or bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,
The shrill ^{lamented} ~~disconsolate~~ choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling ^{sad} ~~for them~~ ^{across the} ~~from sad~~ shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the lustrous glimmers of goodbyes.
And the pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of ^{silent patient} ~~sweet~~ minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Image:%22Anthem_for_Doomed_Youth%22_by_Wilfred_Owen_%28English%29.jpg

Performance Notes

The poem *Anthem for Doomed Youth* paints in vivid imagery the funeral of soldiers in the great war.

Those who fall like cattle do not have the usual trappings of a funeral: passing bells, prayers, bells, mourning voices, bugles or candles. Instead, they have only the guns' monstrous anger, and the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle. The voice of mourning is that of the shrill demented choirs of wailing shells.

I have set this text as a funeral march which follows Wilfred Owen's text and paints the guns' rapid rattle, the bugles, and the wailing demented choirs. The march closes with a quiet *a capella* section, bringing peace to the fallen.

Like Owen's poem, I hope this piece of music manages to evoke the horrific nature of war, and perhaps encourage us all (and especially our leaders, elected or otherwise) to try harder to avoid war and seek peaceful solutions instead.

The piece was composed in 1995 and revised in February 2008

Performance notes:

The pianist should add octaves as appropriate to the acoustics and volume of the choir.

In bars 18-21 each singer should freely repeat the words "rapid rattle" over and over at their own individual speed until they cut off (at the start of bar 21 for sopranos and altos, and at the end of that bar for tenors and basses).

Michael Winikoff

February, 2008

Melbourne, Australia

Anthem for Doomed Youth

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 now for them; no prayers nor 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 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 patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

Composed 1995, revised February 2008. Duration: approx. 5:10

Michael Winikoff

Grave, ♩ = 52

p

Soprano

What pas - sing bells, for these who die ____

p

Alto

What pas - sing bells, for these who die ____ as cat - tle

p

Tenor

What pas - sing bells, for these who die ____

p

Bass

What pas - sing bells, for these who die ____ as cat - tle

pp

simil.

Piano

7

f

as cat - tle as cat - tle as cat - tle of the

f

as cat - tle as cat - tle as cat - tle of the

f

as cat - tle on - ly the mons - trous an - ger of the guns of the

f

as cat - tle what pas - sing bells on - ly the mons - trous an - ger of the guns of the

13

guns as cat-tle on - ly the stut-ter-ring ri-fles' stut-ter-ring ri-fles' rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ...

guns on - ly on - ly the stut-ter-ring ri-fles' stut-ter-ring ri-fles' rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ...

guns on - ly on - ly the stut-ter-ring ri-fles' stut-ter-ring ri-fles' rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ...

guns on - ly on - ly the stut-ter-ring ri-fles' stut-ter-ring ri-fles' rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ...

20

... rapid rattle ... can pat-ter out their has - ty o - ri - sons ...

... rapid rattle ... can pat-ter out their has - ty o - ri - sons ...

... rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ... their has - ty o - ri - sons ...

... rapid rattle ... rapid rattle ...

no

no

no

rit.

28

A little faster (♩ = 58) *mf*

no prayers nor bells nor

no prayers nor bells nor

no cke - ries for them no prayers nor bells nor

no cke - ries for them no prayers nor bells nor

no cke - ries for them no prayers nor bells nor

34

a - ny voice ____ of mour-ning save ____ the cho - irs Ah ____ the shrill de - men-ted choirs of

42

Ah ____ wail ____ ling shells ____ and bu - gles ____

50

cal - ling bu - gles ____ cal - ling bu - gles ____ cal - ling and bu - gles ____ cal - ling

60 *tempo I* (♩ = 52)
mp *p*

cal - ling for them from sad shires _____

mp *p* *whispered*

cal - ling for them from sad shires _____ as cat-tle ra-pid

mp *p* *whispered*

cal - ling for them from sad shires _____ as cat-tle ra-pid

mp *p*

cal - ling for them from sad shires _____

67

Ah _____ Ah _____

Spoken

rat-tle as cat-tle rap-id rat-tle as cat-tle as cat-tle rap-id rat-tle ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle

Spoken

rat-tle as cat-tle rap-id rat-tle as cat-tle as cat-tle rap-id rat-tle ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle

what

73

Ah _____ Ah _____

Sung gradual cresc.

ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle ra-pid rat-tle ra-pid rat-tle on - ly

gradual cresc.

ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle ra-pid rat-tle ra-pid rat-tle

pas-sing bells for these who die what pas-sing bells

on - ly on - ly the stut-te-ring ri-fles' as cat-tle as cat-tle ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle

as cat-tle and bu-gles

for those who die as cat-tle as cat-tle ra-pid rat-tle as cat-tle

mf

as cat-tle of the guns

on - ly as cat-tle and bu-gles of the guns

bu-gles on - ly the mons - trous an - ger of the guns of the guns

on - ly on - ly on - ly the mons - trous an - ger of the guns of the guns and bu-gles

sp *f*

cal - ling bu-gles cal - ling

bu-gles cal - ling bu-gles cal - ling

bu-gles cal - ling bu-gles cal - ling

cal - ling and bu-gles cal - ling

ff *fff*

102 $\text{♩} = 42$
mp

what can-dles may be held to speed them all? shall

what can-dles may be held to speed them all? Not in the hands of boys but in their eyes

mp

Mm

108

shine the ho-ly glim-mers of good-byes The pal-lor of girls' brows shall

shine the ho-ly glim-mers of good-byes The pal-lor of girls' brows shall

113

be their pall their flowers the

be their pall their flowers the

shall be their pall their flowers the

shall be their pall their flowers the

117 *Slower* *rit.*

ten-der-ness of pa-tient minds and each slow dusk a dra-wing down of blinds

ten-der-ness of pa-tient minds and each slow dusk a dra-wing down of blinds

ten-der-ness of pa-tient minds Mm

ten-der-ness of pa-tient minds Mm