

**Threnody 1 for Strings** (op 37) ('Rage, rage against the dying of the light', as the piece was originally titled) is dedicated to the memory of a young boy -Bernard Fortuin- who was shot and killed in May 1980 at a time of political unrest in Cape Town.

The work, which is programmatic, commences with a chord of death, symbolizing the killing of the boy. The boy's own theme is never stated, but may be imagined in the silent bars of mourning that occur at the beginning and end of the piece. The 12-note pleading theme of his mother, introduced on first violins and violas, provides the main thematic material of the work. The ever-present programme - dissent and violent reaction, funeral laments, tolling bells, the devil tuning his violin - is left to the listener's imagination.

The work is scored in thirteen parts. The number of strings may be increased proportionately with appropriate balance adjustments where necessary.

Threnody 1 has a close connection with the University of Natal, because it was to have been premiered there in late 1981. Tragically the conductor, Gerry La Pierre, was killed in motorbike accident shortly before the concert. Because of its political content it was first performed as late as 1992 -by Eric Rycroft and the Stellenbosch String Ensemble. Its South African performances have included a live television one (1993), featuring the former National Symphony Orchestra of the SABC.

Threnody 1 heralded a short series of orchestral works that were the composer's response to the situation that prevailed in South Africa at the time. These works included 'Requiem for Orchestra' and Violin Concerto (both BBC premieres).

J.S.

8.12.21

# THRENODY 1

'RAGE, RAGE AGAINST THE DYING OF THE LIGHT'

for string orchestra (1980)

JOHN SIMON

opus 37

Largo

$\text{♩} = 40$

Violin I 1 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Violin I 2 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Violin I 3 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Violin II 1 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Violin II 2 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Violin II 3 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Viola 1 his theme hear it con vibrato *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Viola 2 con vibrato *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Viola 3 con vibrato *p* con vibrato con molto espress.

Violoncello 1 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Violoncello 2 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Violoncello 3 *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

Contrabass *p*  $\leftarrow$  *f* *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *pp*

A

6

Vln. I 1  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
*p* *con molto espress.*

Vln. I 2  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
*p* *con molto espress.*

Vln. I 3  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
*p* *con molto espress.*

Vln. II 1  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz. arco pizz.

Vln. II 2  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz. arco pizz.

Vln. II 3  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz. arco pizz.

Vla. 1  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 his theme  
 hear it  
 pizz.  
*p*

Vla. 2  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz.  
*p*

Vla. 3  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz.  
*p*

Vc. 1  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz.  
*p*    *mp*

Vc. 2  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz.  
*p*    *mp*

Vc. 3  
 pizz. arco  
*p*    *p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >  
 pizz.  
*p*    *mp*

Cb.  
*p* < *f*    *ff* > *ff* >

11

Vln. I 1  
pizz. arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vln. I 2  
pizz. arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vln. I 3  
pizz. arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vln. II 1  
arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vln. II 2  
arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vln. II 3  
arco  
*pp* *p*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vla. 1  
arco dolce vibrato  
*p* < *mf*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vla. 2  
arco dolce vibrato  
*p* < *mf*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vla. 3  
arco dolce vibrato  
*p* < *mf*  
*p* < *ff* *ff* > *p*

Vc. 1  
arco dolce vibrato  
*p* < *mf*  
*ff* *ff* > *p*

Vc. 2  
*pp* *p*  
arco *ff*  
pizz. arco *ff* <sup>6</sup>

Vc. 3  
*pp* *p*  
arco *ff*  
pizz. arco *ff* <sup>6</sup>

Cb.  
pizz. arco  
*pp* *p*  
*ff* *ff* <sup>6</sup>

drammatico

**B**

15

Vln. I 1 *ff*

Vln. I 2 *ff*

Vln. I 3 *ff*

Vln. II 1 *ff*

Vln. II 2 *ff*

Vln. II 3 *ff*

Vla. 1 *ff* *f* *con forza* *ff* *f* *fff*

Vla. 2 *ff* *f* *con forza* *ff* *f* *fff*

Vla. 3 *ff* *f* *con forza* *ff* *f* *fff*

Vc. 1 *ff* *f* *con forza* *ff* *f* *fff*

Vc. 2 *ff* *ff* *pizz.*

Vc. 3 *ff* *ff* *pizz.*

Cb. *ff* *f* *cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

18

Vln. I 1  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vln. I 2  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vln. I 3  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vln. II 1  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vln. II 2  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vln. II 3  
*ff*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vla. 1  
*sf sf sf sf*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vla. 2  
*sf sf sf sf*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vla. 3  
*sf sf sf sf*  
*p patetico* 3  
*ppp*

Vc. 1  
*sf sf sf sf* *agitato*  
*p*  
*mf molto espress.*  
 solo

Vc. 2  
*sf sf sf sf* *agitato*  
*p*  
*mf marcato*  
 pizz.

Vc. 3  
*sf sf sf sf* *agitato*  
 arco  
*p*

Cb.  
*sf sf sf sf*







A tempo

8

26 *tutti*

Vln. I 1 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vln. I 2 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vln. I 3 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vln. II 1 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vln. II 2 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vln. II 3 *mf* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vla. 1 *tutti* *mf marcato* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vla. 2 *mf marcato* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vla. 3 *mf marcato* *ff* *sul pont.* *nat.*

Vc. 1 *tutti* *f* *ff pesante* *p* *f*

Vc. 2 *f* *ff pesante* *p* *f*

Vc. 3 *f* *ff pesante* *p* *f*

Cb. *f* *ff pesante* *p* *f*



32

Vln. I 1  
*>ppp* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vln. I 2  
*>ppp* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vln. I 3  
*>ppp* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vln. II 1  
*>ppp* *pizz.* *p*

Vln. II 2  
*>ppp* *pizz.* *p*

Vln. II 3  
*>ppp* *pizz.* *p*

Vla. 1  
*pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vla. 2  
*pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vla. 3  
*pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp con molto espress.* *p*

Vc. 1  
*pizz.* *p*

Vc. 2  
*pizz.* *p*

Vc. 3  
*pizz.* *p*

Cb.  
*pizz.* *p*

36

accel. **A tempo**

Vln. I 1 *ff*

Vln. I 2 *ff*

Vln. I 3 *ff*

Vln. II 1 *arco ff*

Vln. II 2 *arco ff*

Vln. II 3 *arco ff*

Vla. 1 *ff*

Vla. 2 *ff*

Vla. 3 *ff*

Vc. 1 *arco p marcato ff*

Vc. 2 *arco p marcato ff*

Vc. 3 *arco p marcato ff*

Cb. *arco p marcato ff*

*con tutta forza*

6 6



41

pizz. arco sul G

appassionato

tranquillo

Vln. I 1 *ff sfff ff sfff sub.p*

Vln. I 2 *ff sfff ff sfff sub.p*

Vln. I 3 *ff sfff ff sfff sub.p*

Vln. II 1 *ff sfff ff sfff p marcato*

Vln. II 2 *ff sfff ff sfff p marcato*

Vln. II 3 *ff sfff ff sfff p marcato*

Vla. 1 *ff sfff ff sfff sul C sub.p marcato*

Vla. 2 *ff sfff ff sfff sul C sub.p marcato*

Vla. 3 *ff sfff ff sfff sul C sub.p marcato*

Vc. 1

Vc. 2 *ff arco sub.p*

Vc. 3 *ff arco sub.p*

Cb. *ff arco sub.p*

appassionato

poco a poco più tranquillo

appassionato

**G** tragico

45

Vln. I 1  
 Vln. I 2  
 Vln. I 3  
 Vln. II 1  
 Vln. II 2  
 Vln. II 3  
 Vla. 1  
 Vla. 2  
 Vla. 3  
 Vc. 1  
 Vc. 2  
 Vc. 3  
 Cb.

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff fff* *ff poco a poco dim.* *pp ff*

*ff* *sub. dim. ff* *pp ff* *pp*

*ff* *sub. dim. ff* *poco a poco dim.* *pp ff* *pp*

*ff* *sub. dim. ff* *poco a poco dim.* *pp ff* *pp*

*ff* *sub. dim. ff* *poco a poco dim.* *pp ff* *pp*

his theme  
 hear it  
 solo dolce vibrato  
*p con molto espress.*







