

Program Notes

This work, conceived in three continuous movements, makes use of symbolic references as a means of producing a cohesive musical structure. The first movement borrows from the Gregorian Chant Responsorium: "Libera me" which was normally sung at a burial service. The responsorial form contained a choral refrain and the response alternated with various verses which were sung by a soloist. The initial choral refrain: "Libera me, Domine, De morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda" (deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death, on that awesome day) and two of the soloistic verses: "Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde (That day, day of wrath, of calamity and woe, great day and bitter in truth) and "Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis" (Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may eternal light shine upon them) become the source as well as the basis of the first movement (Deliver me, O Lord....). They appear in the piano part only as fragmented musical phrases and are disguised in a very rich and ponderous harmonic setting while the strings are playing contradictory short musical phrases against them with child-like connotations (marked "cantinela" in the score). All attempt to pose through this juxtaposition the unanswerable question" Why?

The second movement, a very agitated one, acts as the centerpiece of the work – the actual disastrous event unfolding through the eyes of any bystander (On that awesome day....). The experience, though, is expressed through personal anger even though there is much in the development of the musical ideas which tends to be descriptive. The entire movement is generated from a single somewhat percussive theme contrasted by a secondary one which does not play a major role but again which is child-like. The strident musical effects which are present throughout are there to dramatize the tragedy and the inconceivability of what has occurred.

The third movement (Grant them eternal rest....), which is the most

absorbing, contains three different musical ideas. The first one is derived from this writer's previous work: For Robert (for chorus and piano) which was completed in December of 2001 and dedicated to Robert DeAngelis (husband of a cousin) who perished on that sorrowful day. The second, also simplistic in nature, is played only by the piano. Finally, the third one is more uplifting in character, but it also finds itself ultimately in an incremental strident context. The three musical ideas, though, interact with one another in a consistently reflective manner designed to impact the true meaning of this introspective prayer of resignation.