

ACTIVITY SIX: JOHN FOULDS A WORLD REQUIEM

Learning Objectives

- To listen to a piece of music analytically;
- To interpret the music thinking specifically about the moods.

Resources

- Listening equipment. Please use the YouTube example given in [Historical Context 21. Creative Responses to the War](#) for this activity as all timings have been taken from this. Please note that this clip only contains extracts of the piece.

Introduction

The Requiem has its origins in the Catholic Church where the music formed part of services, which celebrated the dead (for example funerals or memorials). These services were entitled *Missa pro defunctis* 'Mass for the Dead' or *Missa defunctorum* 'Mass of the Dead'. Therefore traditionally Requiems, even those which had not been composed specifically for the Church, followed the prescribed pattern of: *Introit, Sanctus, Pie Jesu, Kyrie Eleison, Dies Irae, Agnus Dei, Libera Me, and In paradisum*.

However, as more composers started writing Requiems, and they became more popular as concert pieces, composers started playing around with the form and even the texts used. The term Requiem is now a generic term for a large-scale choral work, which is used to commemorate the dead. Texts no longer have to be religious, although many composers choose to combine religious and secular (non-religious) texts.

MAIN TASKS

1. Introduce the idea of a requiem.

Listening

2. John Foulds' *A World Requiem* is a substantial work. The following is broken down into sections with specific questions relating to each section. You can either do this as a class discussion or in groups.
3. Listen to the first 3 minutes of the piece
 - a. What atmosphere does the opening 3 minutes evoke? There is one specific instrument that really makes the purpose of the piece clear in the opening bars – what is it? (Bar Chimes)
 - b. What other instruments can you hear? Do they give the piece any particular flavour?
 - c. When does the choir come in? Is it just male or female voices?
4. Listen from 7.00 – 8.30
 - a. Does the mood seem to change?
 - b. Why is this?
 - i. Think about the instruments and also the register of the voices

- ii. Also take note of any instruments and sounds which are always there? Have you heard a particular instrument before?

5. 8.42 – 10.23

- a. Even if you can't decipher the words, try to describe what is going on in this scene.
- b. What role does the solo voice play?
- c. Compare the instrumentation from when the chorus is playing to when the chorus is playing – what differences can you hear?

6. 18.30 – 21.00

- a. Much of the text in the *World Requiem* is secular (non-religious), with sections being taken from *The Pilgrim's Progress* and a Hindu Poet called Kabir as well as parts being written by Foulds' wife, Maud MacCarthy. There are also sections of religious text as well, which this is one of. Why do you think Foulds incorporates these sections, and do you think that the way that the text is set here highlights the religious nature of the text? (Possible hints – the highlighting of the Praise Him; the Gloria's being set in a more melismatic way (where one word is set to a whole series of notes without interruption. A well-known example of melisma being the Glory section from *Angels to the New Born King*).
- b. What compositional technique is used at the start of the passage? (Call and Response)

7. 21.00 – The end

- a. Describe what is happening at the end. Does it feel like a fitting conclusion?
- b. What instruments are being used to increase the dramatic nature?

Review

Overall, what did you think of the piece? Did you enjoy it? Did you think it was a fitting commemoration of the First World War? If you were to write a requiem commemorating the First World War are there things that you feel he missed out, and you would put in?