

# VONNEGUT REQUIEM

## Light Perpetual

SATB (div.) + chamber ensemble

Music by Moira Smiley

Text by Kurt Vonnegut

Commissioned by:

Voces Novae, Bloomington, Indiana

Supported by:

Indiana University Arts & Humanities Council Charles and Linda Pickle  
in honor of the Schelbitzki family Paul and Susan Sullivan

In memory of:

Marian and John Gaskill

John Lawson, Sandy Wood, Taylor Evans Woollen III

Moira Smiley Music Publishing, ASCAP

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## INSTRUMENTATION

B-flat Clarinet  
Bassoon  
C Trumpet  
Percussion: Timpani (non-tuned) or Bass Drum/Floor Tom(s) w/Mallets  
Violin  
Double Bass  
SATB Choir

## COMPOSER'S NOTES:

This piece is written as the FINAL MOVEMENT of a multi-composer, multi-movement commissioning project. 'Light Perpetual' can also stand alone as a setting of Vonnegut's emotional text – a re-writing of the Latin Requiem that expresses the deep anxiety of living in the nuclear age. Kurt Vonnegut referenced the institutional light of prisons, mental health institutions, and of course, the earth-destroying light of nuclear explosion. Ultimately, it's a call to the powers-that-be – human or divine – to give us all softness, rest, sleep in the face of our destruction.

## TEXT

by Kurt Vonnegut:

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

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S. *ff*  
When we shall dis-solve the world in - to glow-ing ash-es in the names of

A. *ff*  
When we shall dis-solve the world in - to glow-ing ash-es in the names of

T. *ff*  
When we shall dis-solve the world in - to glow-ing ash-es in the names of

B. *ff*  
When we shall dis-solve the world in - to glow-ing ash-es in the names of

Timp.

Cl. *fff*

Bsn. *fff*

C Tpt. *fff*

Vln. *fff*

Db. *fff*

V.S.

**D** I am seized - anxious crescendo to 'wrath'

32

S. gods un - know-a-ble I am seized with trem - bling, and I am a -

A. gods un - know-a-ble I am seized with trem - bling, and I am a -

T. gods un - know-a-ble I am seized with trem - bling, and I am a -

B. gods un - know-a-ble I am seized with trem - bling, and I am a -

Timp.

Cl. **D**

Bsn.

C Tpt.

Vln.

Db.

35

S. fraid, a-fraid, un - til the day of re - cko - ning(!) shall ar -

A. fraid, a-fraid, un - til the day of re - cko - ning shall ar -

T. fraid, a-fraid, un - til the day of re - cko - ning shall ar -

B. fraid, a-fraid, un - til the day of re - cko - ning shall ar -

Timp.

Cl.

Bsn.

C Tpt.

Vln.

Db.

V.S.

38

S. rive \_\_\_\_\_ and the

A. rive \_\_\_\_\_ and the

T. rive \_\_\_\_\_ and the

B. rive \_\_\_\_\_ and the

Timp. *mf* *f* *mf*

Cl.

Bsn.

C Tpt.

Vln.

Db.

39 *fff*

S. *fff*  
wrath, the wrath to come

A. *fff*  
wrath the wrath to come

T. *fff*  
wrath the wrath to come

B. *fff*  
wrath the wrath to come

Timp. *f* *ff* *f* *p*

Cl. *fff*

Bsn. *fff*

C Tpt. *fff*

Vln. *fff*

Db. *fff*

V.S.